THE EVALUATION OF THE DEGREE OF DEMOCRACY
IN A COMMUNITY SITUATION

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THE EVALUATION OF THE DEGREE OF DEMOCRACY
IN A COMMUNITY SITUATION

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Nature of Study

The problem of this study is to develop and apply a technique to evaluate the degree of democracy in a community situation.

There are many problems confronting the modern community in promoting the general welfare for its people. Whether these complex problems of administration and adjustment can be solved in a system based on the consent of the many or of the few has been a central point in political thought for many centuries -- from the days of Plato and Aristotle down to the times of the modern theorists and proponents of despotism and democracy. One position depends upon the defense of the irresponsible determination of the policies of commonwealths by the few or by the one; another position is dependent upon the responsible determination of the policies of commonwealths by the bulk of society. Needless to say, there are many intermediate stages and forms between these competing systems.

The purpose of this study is to analyze these ideas in their modern forms, to examine their assumptions and
their implications, to appraise them in the light of modern political theory and in the presence of emerging trends and problems.

Can democracy survive in the present world, or must it go down before other types of political association?

From the broadest point of view there can be little doubt that forms of democracy will emerge in the world from time to time. Whether democracy rides the present storm possibly depends upon whether it is able to develop a program and an organization adapted to the needs of our day.

Our problem is deeper than the reorganization of the machinery of political association. It reaches into economic structure, into human ideals and goals, into reconciliation between tradition and modern science. If democratic associations can adapt themselves to modern conditions, making use of modern productive forces and interpreting modern ideals, they will survive; otherwise democracy must yield to other forms under which the ideals and practices of fellowship are supplanted by rougher methods with the domination of the many by the few.¹

Plan of Procedure

The plan of procedure is to accomplish the purposes set forth in Chapter I by making a thorough investigation

of research material and recording the data gathered, along with the writer’s own observations in the light of research data.

Chapter II includes modern democratic assumptions taken from books and the writer’s own observations, and the validation of these assumptions.

Chapter III is devoted to the application of these democratic assumptions to a modern community situation.

Chapter IV presents the conclusions and recommendations reached through combining the contributions of research materials with the writer’s deductions.

Sources

The material and information for this study have been gathered from a variety of sources. Most of the basic information came from books and reports. This information combined with the writer’s deductions therefrom constitutes the majority of this work.
CHAPTER II

DEMOCRATIC ASSUMPTIONS AND VALIDATIONS

The Meaning of Democracy

The concept of democracy has been one of long evolution. For its earliest beginnings we must go far back into antiquity, to the founders of the Christian religion, to the ancient Hebrews, to the Greek city-state, and beyond. Democracy is more than a form of political government; it is a moral and social conception and way of life. All aspects of life are involved. Belief in the worth and dignity of human personality is the foundation of the democratic idea. In the words of Theodore Roosevelt:

We . . . believe: that human rights are supreme over all other rights; that wealth should be the servant and not the master of the people. We believe that when representative government does not absolutely represent the people it is not representative government at all. We test the worth of all men and all measures by asking how they contribute to the welfare of the men, women, and children of whom this nation is composed. We are engaged in one of the great battles of the age-long contest waged against privilege on behalf of the common welfare.

Democracy has its own system of moral and social values. It emphasizes the brotherhood of man, cooperation, and not selfishness.
Democracy is government of, by, and for the people. This means not only government by consent, but also active participation by all citizens in the process. To this end freedom of discussion is essential. Political democracy, of course, takes many forms depending upon circumstances. The democracy of the Greek city-state was a very direct democracy, but these states were small, and citizenship was limited, for the democracy rested on slavery. The town meeting met the needs of the small New England communities where every citizen could participate directly in the making of laws. In a large state or nation the device of representation must be used, based either on geography or on functional groups. In any event it is the people -- that is, their interest -- that must be represented. Policy flows from the people. But this does not mean that there is no place for authority in a democracy. Authority is essential, but it must be exercised by the chosen representatives of the people, in their interest, and always under their control.

Democracy has far-reaching economic implications for the modern world. Only free men can carry on a democracy, and as we have seen, men who do not have economic security and power are not free. Where such a state of affairs exists, authority is exercised by the forces that control the means of livelihood of men who have no economic freedom.
A century ago in the United States, economic freedom meant economic individualism. The nature of our economy has so changed under economic individualism and industrialism that the problems of security now involve more of collective control and planning of many economic functions.

Democracy accepts social change as a fact and believes in the possibility and desirability of social progress. The question is, how can social change be directed in the interest of all members of society? Democracy places its reliance upon experience and tested knowledge. It is thoroughly scientific and experimental in its outlook and method. This does not mean that long-term planning is impossible, but it does mean that planning should be based, as far as possible, upon scientific data and that plans must always be subject to review in accordance with ways provided for by law, and open to criticism under the protection of historic guarantees of civil liberty.

Democracy is a positive and dynamic conception and way of life involving every aspect of culture. It is not just the middle way, not merely the line of least resistance, not just a balancing of great social forces or the achievement of an equilibrium in society.¹

Democracy is more than institutions and ways of life. It is a great social faith which, in response to the

¹Jesse H. Newlon, Education for Democracy in Our Times, pp. 67-69.
yearnings and struggles of many races and peoples, has been developing through the centuries. It is a bold and positive faith which, now as in other times, calls men to battle for the defense and realization of noble and lofty conceptions of the nature and destiny of men. It is the finest of all social faiths that mankind has fashioned and followed during the thousands of years of human history. It is incomparably finer than the totalitarian rivals with which it is engaged in struggle for survival today. It is a social faith that, in spite of the darkness which now seems to be settling over much of the world, will in the course of time conquer the earth. And it will conquer not by force of arms and use of terror, but by the power of its ideals and its hopes. It will conquer because it is the only social faith that can bring justice and mercy to all men.²

Validation of Democratic Assumptions

The dignity of man. -- The program of democracy follows naturally from its principles. Popular government must adapt itself to widely differing conditions in various stages of cultural development, in various periods of tension, and in various phases of the dynamics of development.

²Educational Policies Commission, The Education of Free Men in American Democracy, p. 33.
In an agrarian era, the program would develop its details in one form and in an industrial era in another fashion; in emergencies, pestilence, war, famine, depression, and other social, political, or economic crises, one pattern may appear, and in times of peace, prosperity, and content, when tension is easier, quite another type of policy might be shaped.

This is true of the mechanics of democracy as well as of its policies and program. The organization and the selection and continuity of officialdom may vary from time to time; the organization and methods of representative bodies will inevitably shift with changing social factors and needs; and if we were to run through the various power "patterns" we would find wide room for democratic variations in practically all of these power relations.

Mass rule is primarily a principle and secondarily a special form of organization; it is an idea or an attitude rather than a mechanical institution. A structure is also a function in process of action, and a democratic "institution" has no validity except as it serves a democratic purpose -- as a means, not as an end. At all times both assumptions and institutions are open to challenge, but the institution cannot well be defended against the basic assumption on which it rests. When the form of mass rule is habitually used to defeat its fundamental purpose, there
is need for re-examination of these mechanical arrange-
ments, of their workings in a given social situation, and
there is need of revision to insure adaptation of form to
function. Here as elsewhere it may be said that the letter
killeth, but the spirit giveth life. If the forms of legal
liberty stand in the way of substantial liberty, if nominal
justice covers substantial injustice, if "rights" become
the continuing defenses of vested wrong, then the validity
of the system is pro tanto subject to challenge and review.
If then it is found that such abuses are typical and charac-
teristic, that they tend to recur on a wide scale, then the
institutional arrangements become a subject of readjust-
ment.3

In considering a positive program for mass-governed
political society, the following topics will be discussed:

1. Validation of the assumption of the essential digni-
ity of man and the importance of treating the human dif-
fferences on a fraternal basis.

2. Validation of the assumption of the continuing per-
fectibility of mankind.

3. Validation of the assumption that the gains of
civilization are essentially mass gains and should be dis-
tributed throughout the community as rapidly as possible.

4. Validation of the assumption of the desirability of mass decision on basic policies by establishment of procedures, forms, and understandings adapted to this purpose.

5. Validation of the assumption of the desirability of deliberate social change, typically non-violent in method.  

The essential dignity of man and the importance of protecting and cultivating his worth upon a fraternal rather than a differential principle may be validated partly through a wide range of attitudes.

It is easy to lose this way at the very beginning. Starting with actual inequalities among men, one finds that it is a short step to the fixed establishment of permanent status, and then to the hereditary transmission of status. The actual differentials become formal differentials not necessarily corresponding to the actualities any longer. The son of the military hero, or the son of the man of economic genius, or the son of the savant takes over the advantage of the superiority of a past generation. He may take for granted a status once based upon genuine capacity for a status not at all related to capacity. Groups of such individuals may be formed and may forget the foundation upon which their standing rests. In a fluid money

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4Ibid., pp. 72-73.
economy this is especially easy, as broad claims to power are concealed under the protective coloration of gold or its equivalent in credit. In such instances the dignity of all mankind may be forgotten -- on both sides, indeed -- in the deference owed to the nominally distinguished. Manners, accent, garb, the phenomena of "conspicuous waste" may all add to the false position of the favored status. Political power and military position may in large measure be determined by the same type of consideration.

Sharp contrasts of opportunity and circumstances which deprive some classes of the means of development deemed essential for others, are sometimes defended on the ground that the result of abolishing them must be to produce, in the conventional phrase, a dead-level of mediocrity.

Once developed in a social system, the inequality of the equal becomes difficult to modify. Indeed, the more the nominally superior are uncertain of their actual superiority, the more arrogantly they may emphasize the external evidences of their nominal superiority.

The aristocratic spirit tends in general to:

1. Overemphasize the significance of differentials in the pattern of social organization.

2. Regard the differentials once established as permanent in nature -- transmissible, hereditary, or even purchasable.
3. Resist changes in the social and political rules that alter the meaning of types of differentials — as in the case of wealth, birth, social standing, education, or other indices.

The guaranty of respect for the dignity of the person and for the fraternal treatment of human differentials will be validated partly by guaranties of civil rights, partly by suffrage, partly by free participation in the shaping of public policy, partly by education, partly by basic standards of human existence, partly by a democratic way of life, partly by an opportunity to participate in the common gains of our civilization, partly by rules and regulations designed to prevent the rise of privilege or undue concentration of prestige, particularly in permanent form.

We cannot measure accurately the differences between men as a basis for rewards until we have determined to what extent society is responsible for the differentials. But we need not be so influenced by the assertion that men are variously unequal as to forget policies that will tend to equalize opportunity.

Laws forbidding primogeniture and entail, prohibiting perpetuities, providing for progressive inheritance taxes have been directed against undue concentration of prestige as a means of preserving the position of the average man. From time to time it has been found necessary to re-examine
the laws of inheritance and to study more thoroughly the conditions under which the holding of properties with their possibilities for good or evil may be justified. Property is a bundle of rights, it has often been said judicially, and there is no absolute right to utilize ownership against the interest of the community.  

The enduring protection of the dignity of mankind is not, however, primarily a question of laws and orders. It is a problem of avowed and energized attitudes and objectives in the given society. If the aim is democratic and the attitude is democratic, prevailingly, the outcomes will be democratic. In the doctrine of Nietzsche this theory of human recognition is the gospel to the fullest development of liberty.  

In democratic theory and practice, liberty has had a negative and a positive side. On the negative side mechanisms have been set up with the design of protecting the citizen against arbitrary and oppressive conduct. The apparatus of civil rights was devised for this purpose. In earlier days emphasis was laid upon small-size states, upon decentralization, and upon the separation and balance of powers, following Montesquieu, as guaranties of the liberty of citizens. Positive mechanisms were also set up, providing

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5 Ibid., pp. 74-75.
for participation in the affairs of the state, as in suffrage and in representation, giving to the electors control over the general direction of the policy of the state. 7

But the terms "liberty" and "individualism" were taken captive by the economic world at times, even under democratic and semi-democratic forms of association. The techniques of government were turned to the fostering of a special type of "economic" freedom -- one among many -- even at the expense of the civil or political liberties of the citizen, who might be and was oppressed by the very machinery he set up to emancipate himself. 8 It was Anatole France who referred to "the majestic equality of the laws, which forbid rich and poor alike to sleep under the bridges, to beg in the streets, and to steal their bread."

In democratic theory, however, liberty is not merely negative, but also positive in its nature. Liberty connotes the fullest and richest possible development of the possibilities of the personality of the citizens. In a sense liberty is life, the "good life" of the Greeks, the "spiritual life," the "more abundant life" of our time. But the personality is set in a framework of social and spiritual interests and values. Even anarchism in its later phases as developed by Kropotkin recognized the values of association

7 Merriam, op. cit., pp. 76-77.
8 Reginald Heber Smith, Justice and the Poor, p. 245.
and cooperation.

Political liberty, economic liberty, religious liberty, social liberty, artistic liberty, liberties of many modes and tenses are all involved in the whirling social equilibrium. And we must reckon further, not only with personal liberties, but also with corporate liberties of endless types in the given society. Racial, regional, occupational, cultural associations of widely varying forms and purposes are intertwined in the complex movement of the period, whatever it may be.

These liberties are not necessarily exclusive, one of the other. The state provides the setting for all of them, balancing their impact upon each other, and adjusting and adapting otherwise more severe collisions and conflicts.

In most discussions the problem of liberty is oversimplified. In reality there are many liberties balanced against each other, or revolving around each other in plural fashion. The personality lives in a complicated, whirling system of choices, not always related to each other in the realm of conscious personality. Furthermore, there are many other factors in the social equilibrium and movement. Liberty must be balanced against order; against justice; against equality; against the rate, type, and direction of social change or social tension; against internal, international, racial, religious, regional interests and demands.
Free choices may be blocked not merely by law but also by custom. Not only do power holders themselves unduly magnify the importance of their office, or seek to prolong their brief authority, but the bulk of the community bears down heavily upon variations from established habits and customs. An invention of intelligence such as the school may itself be used to repress the spontaneous development of other ideas from other intelligences. Tendencies toward stability and conformity, which possess importance in their elements of value in the functioning of a community, may operate against the life and vitality of the nation by becoming an obstacle to adaptation to new conditions. The graves of the ancestors may not only block the building of railways in China but the reorganization of international relations in the interest of human happiness. Education itself may be used to stifle free thought.

One of the greatest causes of confusion in our own time is the identification by some persons of democracy with a special form of liberty, notably with economic liberty. There are those who are not in reality interested in democracy except as it provides a shield for a particular form of industrial organization in which what is called "economic liberty" is provided, and what is more important, a special economic status is preserved. 9

9 Merriam, op. cit., pp. 80-81.
From the uncommon point of view, an aristocratic or absolutistic system of political organization which preserved special industrial privilege might be taken in preference to a genuinely democratic system which placed the general welfare of the community ahead of a special industrial system; and if democracy is not the protection of plutocracy (designated by the term "economic liberty"), it will be given up for whatever form of government will provide the necessary protection.

What is to happen when we must choose between liberty and equality? It may be asked. The possible rivalry between the ideas of equality and the idea of liberty is based upon the assumption of an absolutely quantitative form of equality in democratic association.

Equality involves a recognition of a certain status, and capacity to act -- to choose -- within the framework of that recognized status. Equality is not identity as much as it is similarity. Liberty does not carry with it the right to interfere with the choices of others within the general assumption of democracy. One's unlimited freedom of choice -- liberty -- may, to be sure, interfere with the free choices of others, with their liberty, or with social justice, or with public order and the commonwealth itself, or with their equality. If one's system of free choices interferes with the dignity of man, with
the possibility of his development, with his fair share in the gains of civilization, one's system must be revised in accordance with the systems of others in a democratic society at any given stage of its development.\textsuperscript{10}

Government is not in reality wholly negative. Power as repression speaks in force and expresses itself in commands, rules, laws; but power as creation speaks in terms of invention, of spontaneity, of creative faculties, and in this role power may plant and water, cultivate and encourage the precious seeds of variation, with their incalculable values for the growth of the productive power of the nation.

It is important, accordingly, that there be formal recognition of this fact and an appropriate policy of the commonwealth, and that the declaration of policy be followed by proper instrumentation in terms of institutions, attitudes, and material support.

This, it may be said, is a hard task for any government, and it may be further said, especially for a democracy, with the consciousness of power in its huge masses. It is really easier, however, for the mass than for the few to recognize spontaneous and creative ability. The ranks of the few are constantly concerned about the

\textsuperscript{10}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 81-82.
continuity of their line, fearing that the thread will weaken or break. The mass, on the other hand, need have no fear that their power will end because of any shift of special talents within their numbers. They will go on, whatever the variation in the immediate holders of power. They may look with toleration on the activities of those whom they have encouraged to study variations. In this sense the many can better afford to be tolerant than the few.

Thus democratic association may make possible free choices in the light of:

1. The essential dignity and worth of all mankind.
2. The consent of the bulk of the community to the conduct of the commonwealth, freely expressed.

In democratic society, regard for the dignity of man stands behind the throne of public order, a constant reminder of the need for liberty and justice as well as order, a constant plea that the human personality shall not be forgotten in the multiplication of law, in the ramification of administration, or in the antiquarianism of formal justice. Other systems may, as lords, leaders, masters, teach respect for their serfs, their slaves, their subjects, or their inferiors. Democracy breathes respect for all

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men and for their choice of a way of human life.\textsuperscript{12}

The problem of democracy is not merely absolute, but also relative; not merely negative, but also positive in character. It is not merely political, or merely economic, or merely ethical, religious, or merely racial, regional, occupational; not merely artistic, scientific. It is a general task which calls for a general view of the total situation, requiring insight, judgment, sense of balance and proportion in a dynamic, moving situation.

On one hand democracy protects its citizens against arbitrary governmental intervention, and on another against encroachment upon the citizens' personalities. It strives to foster the optimum conditions for the unfolding of all human personalities positively and aggressively.\textsuperscript{13}

The mechanisms of democracy are designed to be constant reminders of the nature of human association and the importance of an expanding range of free life. Its popular forms and procedures refer to the understandings and objectives of fraternal association and cooperation as a way of life.

Frames and forms of government are essentially psychological in nature. They rest upon and induce understandings, reactions, conditionings, operating with enough regularity to make possible the forecasting of behavior and

\textsuperscript{12}Merriam, op. cit., pp. 84-85.

\textsuperscript{13}Ibid., p. 86.
counter-behavior. The symbols of democracy are the symbols of liberty, of free life, of wide choice, of the expansion and expression of the personality of its citizens.

In a non-democratic system of the superiors, one or the few assume the trusteeship of the community, with a general undertaking for the well-being of the nation or other political unit in which they function. They must determine their own position in the total general scheme of things political, and they must observe the relative position of all others in a broad scheme of values over which they stand in general charge.

What is the bearing of this system, we may ask, on the preservation of the dignity of men?

It is not clear in the first place what responsibility the overlords will assume.

Shall the supermen assume that the welfare of mankind is best served by their own super-developments, with the benefits trickling down to others as time goes on? Or shall they undertake some more immediate and direct diffusion of the gains of greatness for the weak? Or shall they perhaps assume that their own glorious development is itself a flower that may well satisfy the imagination and the desires of all the others?

Shall they decide to educate the masses of the people in such a way as to fit them ultimately for the aristoi, or in such a manner as to render them ineligible and content
with a humbler lot? Shall they educate for class status on the whole or for mass status?

What type of race will they choose to breed, if they better understand the art of eugenics? Will they give preference to the breeding of superior types, or might they conclude to grow morons as once suggested by a psychologist -- morons to do the hard work of the world, while others live upon the fruit of their labor? Shall they breed a class or a special race, or breed for mass development upward toward final universal eliteness?\textsuperscript{14}

How far will they go in the assumption of responsibility for direction of control over the instruments of production, the process of distribution and consumption, and of standards of living?

What shall they say to capitalism and to communism in developing national policies appropriate to the domination of the few? Theoretically they might go either way -- a long way -- or they might go another way which was neither one nor the other in form or process.

The curse of aristocracy is not that great men fill great places, but that small men fill great places and piece out their inferiority with arrogance. Truly great natures are likely to find response in the mass of mankind. They need not fear the many as much as the jealous few.

\textsuperscript{14}H. G. Wells, \textit{The Shape of Things to Come}, p. 131.
We may sum up this discussion by concluding that the chief defect of anti-democracy as it actually develops is that of choosing the few, but not the best. The institutions or machinery set up to choose the few tend to emphasize status rather than ability. A group made up in formal manner or on the basis of land, or of birth, or of property, or of force does not tend toward the choice of the most competent, but tends to draw in one generation of competence and many generations of incompetence, or even of impotence. Autocracy may choose the great and the good at times, but it tends to substitute standing for reality, form for substance.\textsuperscript{15}

The perfectibility of mankind. -- In recent times a livelier faith animates mankind, as they come nearer to the long-distant goal. For this purpose it is important that attention be given to such areas as:

1. The development of science and the practical application of its results to human affairs.

2. The fullest possible development of educational and guidance facilities, both for the young and for the adult, and the completest utilization of these facilities.

3. Insistence upon the highest standards of human living possible in a given stage or level of development.

\textit{Every effort may be made toward the encouragement of}

\textsuperscript{15}Merriam, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 91-92.
science and technology and of social invention as well; for these are the continuing bases of progress. Science in all its phases may be regarded as one of the nation's greatest resources, and stimulated in every way possible, directly or indirectly, to the end that the very highest level of achievement may be obtained. There is no prospect that science will take a holiday, but on the contrary, there is every reason to anticipate its increasing development.

It will be found essential to lay greatest emphasis on the scientific attitude in the great process of education. The trend of modern times is in the direction of democracy and of science -- of mass rule and of high intelligence on a scale hitherto never approached. Science itself will have neither meaning nor security unless it is reflected not only in higher standards of living, but also in richer values of human life and in better attitudes toward life.

One of the weaknesses of many recent systems of politics and economics has been the failure to present a picture of what might reasonably be attained within a not too distant future. In modern times no system can rest upon its past alone. It must develop a future or suffer the consequences, and it must be a future in terms of the social-scientific possibilities indicated by the present and increasing knowledge of our social world, and the possibilities
of social engineering within that world. There are systems and emotional drives that grow out of the past, but there are others that beckon out of the future. They come out of hope and expectation of another and a better day.

Of the great burdens of humanity -- pestilence, poverty, war, and famine -- two have been driven back into their caves. Poverty and war still stalk abroad, resisting the nets thrown around them. But there is no longer a valid excuse for poverty since the forces of nature have been subdued. The stream of scientific invention will roll on, in all human probability, and if the devices of social invention are able to keep pace with the scientific organization of nature, the new world may be a fairyland of human achievement. The burdens of hunger, disease, toil, fear may be lifted, the book of leisure may be opened, and treasures of human appreciation and enjoyment may be made available to the masses of mankind.\(^\text{16}\)

This is true not only of mechanical contrivances which minister to our enjoyment of life in many ways, but also to the inner life of the personality, so long filled with the vile broods of haunting fears and doubts and dreads. Science and social arrangement will conquer these jungles also, and open them to the sunlight of happiness, hitherto unattainable to many. Miracles have already been wrought,

\(^{16}\text{National Resources Committee, Technological Trends and National Policy, p. 91.}\)
and others are on the way. Beyond any question of doubt, science will bring life and light and healing on its wings.\textsuperscript{17}

Educational and cultural opportunities are indispensable for the mass of the community, and that not merely in so-called "formal school education," but continuing also throughout life. Theoretically everyone has the opportunity for an education, but the economic situation eliminates many who might well take the higher training. It is of vital importance not only for the purpose of national morale, but also for national inventiveness and ability, that the gates of opportunity shall be open to all who wish to enter and possess the necessary qualifications. No nation is rich enough to throw away these priceless assets coming up from the population.

This section of the program of validation of democratic assumptions cannot be written down in complete and final form, never to be changed. On the contrary, the assumptions of the perfectibility of humanity involve the unending readjustment of the conditions of human living to the highest possible level at any given time. This level is not to be determined by a special few, with views colored by indifference to others or by special consideration for themselves, but as part of a community program, determined by and for the common good of the commonwealth. The

\textsuperscript{17} Merriam, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 95-96.
The production and distribution of food, shelter, clothing, health, recreation, education, security in person and substance, and cultural advantages should be limited only by the given level of technique, organization, and national resources. The test is not merely the quantity of goods and services available, but the spirit in which the decision is made and the realization by the community of its responsibility for its own welfare. The "door of hope" is not closed upon any group in the community, but it is left open for all the members of the democratic society of which they are a part.

The torch of future attainment has been and still is the symbol of democratic aspiration for higher material and spiritual recognition of the mass of mankind. Most of the time, most of the way, in the history of the human race, the mass of men have been slaves -- slaves of ignorance, of fear, of status, of custom. The democratic vocabulary has no place either for slave or for master; but for fellowship, fraternity, cooperation in the long struggle for higher standards of living and higher levels of personality. 18

Mass gains and the many. -- In order to bring about the distribution of the gains of the commonwealth, which are essentially mass gains, it is necessary to know what

18 Ibid., pp. 97-98.
these gains are. It is important to survey existing resources accurately, that the gains in our assets be systematically reviewed from time to time and appropriate measures devised to insure any necessary adjustments.

It is important for any commonwealth to consider systematically in the light of the given productivity of the nation the possible living standards, as, for example:

1. Whether higher levels of education are possible.
2. Whether better levels of housing are possible.
3. Whether higher levels of medical care as perfected by modern research are possible.
4. Whether wider ranges of recreation are possible.
5. Whether higher standards of security in our cultural surroundings are possible.
6. Whether the burdens of industrial depression and other national crises are fairly distributed and how injustice may be remedied.
7. Whether rewards to individuals or groups are excessive or inadequate and if so how may they be remedied.

It is possible to make an analysis of the productive capacity of a nation and of the modes of further expanding the volume of production of commodities and services. Such a survey would present the volume of productivity as it is, and a picture of production as it might be with the
possibilities more fully utilized. This development is not so simple as it might seem, since it involves the calculation of various factors of production in relation to each other. Nor are all of the satisfactions that enter into a social equilibrium susceptible of analysis by the statistician. These factors must be determined in another way.

Over against this, there may be set a survey of the patterns of consumption, revealed by inspection of representative budgets or other modes of determining consumption, and their advance with advancing income.

When the work is completed at any given time, it would show, some experts declare:

1. The actual production pattern over against the actual consumption pattern, and

2. The idealized production pattern over against the idealized consumption pattern.

In the light of these estimates it might be possible to indicate new patterns and mark out new standards of living within the range of national production. This might be made the basis of a national policy directed toward expanding the national income and insuring that the possibilities of life within the given economy are realized in practice.

19National Resources Committee, Patterns of Resource Use, p. 35.
What this eventually involves is a scrutiny of the national income with the view to observing its distribution, the priorities in its allocation, and its possibilities of expansion. This would reveal what it is, if anything, that takes precedence over the minimum fair essentials of human living: what it is that is more important than food, clothing, shelter, care, hygiene, security, and education.

In the United States, for example, this might involve the development of a minimum American standard of living, guaranteed by America as to certain fundamentals. It goes without saying that such a standard would be subject to review and revision from time to time, as significant changes occurred in the productive mechanism of the nation that raised or lowered the productive capacity of the community.²⁰

In general theory, democracy has no inherent and necessary relationship with any special form of economic production or distribution, although the accident of historical evolution may bring about special connections. Economic devices are not ends for democracy but means, subordinate to the larger framework of understanding in which they are set -- namely, that the gains of a nation are essentially national gains and the assets of the nation.

²⁰ National Resources Committee, Consumer Incomes in the United States and Consumer Expenditures in the United States, p. 185.
To say that men are limited to one of two systems of economics worked out a century ago under special conditions long since out of date is a gigantic misrepresentation of the possibilities of democratic rule.

It cannot be too strongly stated that one of the primary methods of validating the assumption that the gains of civilization are essentially mass gains and should be distributed throughout the community as rapidly as possible is the deliberate, continuing, systematic analysis of civilization's gains in a commonwealth, the mode and range of their distribution, the enlargement of national income and the consequent adjustment of mass gains to total gains. The underlying principle is more important than the particular mechanisms or methods adopted. 21

From time to time aristocratic, oligarchical, plutocratic influences have been able to determine a governmental policy of ignoring the mass welfare. It was indeed maintained at times, not only that democracy had no concern with a positive type of social policy, but that indifference or neutrality was itself the very essence of democracy -- its peculiar and distinguishing characteristic.

This was never a doctrine squaring with the general theory of democratic association. It represented a phase of development in which the machinery of government was captured by undemocratic influences or by those restricting

21 Merriam, op. cit., pp. 102-103.
their interpretation of democracy to a narrow and untenable line of activity or inactivity.

We are passing out of this period, and in the oncoming epoch it may safely be predicted that democratic societies will assume responsibility for the guaranty of the commonwealth enjoyment of commonwealth gains. Democratic theory demands this course, and democratic machinery is more readily adapted to this program and purpose than any other yet devised.\(^{22}\)

**The consent of the governed.** -- It is essential that there be a body of understandings and of institutions through which the mass may express itself and formulate basic decisions.

A basic factor in popular rule is that the person who determines the policies of the commonwealth shall be responsible to the community through some workable contrivance. The most common device for this purpose is the electoral process, which is based on general suffrage and free and uncontrolled pollings, preceded by free discussion of the personalities and principles at issue.

A factor of deep meaning in the validation of the electoral process is that of open channels of intercommunication. Free speech, freedom of assembly and association, free press, freedom of the air, freedom of other ways and

\(^{22}\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 104.\)
means of interchange of ideas are a prime requisite for democratic government. Without this the process of popular choice of personnel or policy becomes an empty shell. Not all the laws of order adopted by one generation can bind another, if the latter does not wish to be bound.

The voting process has no validity unless it is reinforced by a democratic way of life and a democratic practice of free choice. In theory, the voting process recognizes the dignity of citizens, consults their consent, assumes their willingness and capacity to accept responsibility for the basic policy of the commonwealth.

Representative bodies of a public and formal type attempt the combination of groups thinking and group solidarity of sentiment. Obviously a precondition of their success is a willingness on the part of the bulk of the group to deliberate and to effect an agreement, or to accept an agreement when reached, even if not wholly satisfactory. If this feeling is not present, the assembly may, of course, become an arena of battle rather than a concourse for consideration. The old Austro-Hungarian Parliament and the German Reichstag of 1932 present striking examples of this.23

The process of conscious lawmaking is relatively new in the history of the world, and has developed in the last

23Adolf Hitler, Mein Kampf, p. 83.
century in the midst of a whirlwind of social change. Most of the time in human history laws were not deliberately made, but were in large measure inherited customs and traditions which were accepted and applied, modified to be sure in the course of their application. Large-scale law-making is a distinctly modern phenomenon. In the midst of an economic revolution, a technical revolution in the means of communication, legislative bodies are groping their way toward insight and action appropriate to the problems of our day.24

The organization of public administration is of far-reaching significance in the system of democracy. The body of practices and principles gradually accumulating in this field, the growth of technical skills, developing in modern times, the advance from the domain of art to the edge of science -- all these point to the emergence of administration as a more significant factor in the realm of government than ever before.

If the spirit of science and the spirit of democracy enter into administration, many of the historic evils of officialism will tend to disappear. Administration as a tool of the superior for the superior will be transformed into administration for the mass -- as a road to general welfare.

More revolutionary than the changes precipitated by violent overturns accompanied by blood and fire in the course of human history is the quiet revolution going on in the nature of public administration, in the transition from arbitrary and rigid inflexibility to modern personnel with scientific equipment, with objective determination of standards and their application. No war has been fought to establish better administration. Technology, science, and training have quietly taken their places in branch after branch of public service as doctors, engineers, teachers, welfare workers, technicians in industry, agriculture, labor, geology, botany, chemistry, etc., have filtered into the administration. Partisan and personal administration still survive over great areas of service and will not disappear at once, but they are on their way out.

Democracy in the future may take more initiative in planning, in looking at the proposed policies as a whole, and in intelligent efforts to indicate a course for the future. In the end, the determination of national plans will and should be made by those authorized to make political decisions, but alternative suggestions may well come out of administration.

A planning agency may well be made a central point in the coming development of public administration, serving as advisor to those who make the ultimate decisions regarding the policy of the state.
There have been different types of planning and from time to time variations have occurred. A national planning board appointed by the executive and responsible to him, serving for an indeterminate tenure, is the best type of planning to be used. Such an organization might act as a long-time planning agency for the coordination of various plans among departments or bureaus, and for the elaboration of further lines of long-time national policy in the larger sense of the term.

It is apparent that such an organization should not be an "economic planning" board, since this defeats the whole purpose of broader integration of national policies. Business planning alone, or welfare planning alone, or educational or scientific planning alone, is not adequate to meet the genuine needs of the situation in any long-time view. The value of planning in these special fields is evident, but somewhere these various separate plans must be brought together and considered in their interrelationships, balanced against each other, and so organized that the different plans shall not work at cross purposes.

A set of rules to be used by social planners during the transition are as follows:

1. Don't let going "concerns" run down; keep the wheels turning.

2. Don't try to change non-essentials.
3. Don't scrap any existing institution or social habit you can use; a slight change of direction may be all that is necessary.

4. Don't let the credit structure with its paper values collapse; otherwise you can't observe rules 1 to 3.

5. Don't attack any myth unnecessarily, while you are building new ones.

6. Don't set yourself or your word magic up on any pedestal; we are all in this together, and the more of us who can take an active part in working out our way, the better for all concerned. This means: no dictator, no orthodoxy.

7. Don't centralize any power or function unless vital; automatic controls and decentralized administration are always to be preferred.

8. Don't bother with "ownership." The controls you want are almost never dependent on it.

9. Don't aim at the politically impossible; proposals are no good if they can't be passed as legislation and applied.

10. Don't try to do piecemeal what must be done in a lump; you can't jump over a ditch by a series of short tentative jumps; all non-essential steps, however, can be postponed and taken one at a time.25

25 Alfred M. Bingham, Man's Estate, p. 379.
Some of the defeatist critics are indeed quarreling with modern life rather than with democracy, for their wishful thinking looks back to the days of primitive simplicity. Our social life is complicated, and it will be more and more complicated as we advance in the next generation. The remedy is not to retreat but to advance, not to suspend liberty and call out the troops but to apply the techniques of modern intelligence in the field of organization and administration to the emerging problem. The difficulties of modern industry and society present no problems that need make us tremble and quiver with fear; they are all capable of solution by the exercise of our intelligence, our will, and our faith.

Consciously directed and peaceful social change. — It is an assumption of democracy that political changes may normally be made by peaceful methods rather than by violence. The doctrine that change may be brought about by the slow process of custom was an ancient doctrine employed in the defense of the status quo; the doctrine that important change comes by way of violent revolution or by the instrumentality of the club -- these are the assertions of communism and fascism.

The democratic assumption does not exclude the use of force, but maintains the priority and normality of peaceful change. One of the thorniest problems of the
modern state is the dual organization of persuasion and of violence; and so to speak, how to keep the peace between them. The rivalry between the brass hats and the frocks is one of long standing. An organization of violence is necessary under modern conditions for the purpose of national defense and the preservation of internal order — an essential condition of survival in our time. Democratic statesmanship can ignore this only at its peril. But military rule and martial law, projected permanently as a dominant institution, are inconsistent with the genius of a government operating on the principle of persuasion and the consent of the governed. 26

Conclusions

In the preceding paragraphs, methods of validating the assumptions of democracy have been traced in broad outline and in general principle. Evidently particular policies and programs will vary widely with the special situations arising from time to time but the general direction and trend will be of the broad type indicated.

In sum, the short-time program of democracy, based upon its assumptions, may be summed up with reasonable clearness in general terms. There is involved:

1. A positive social program including the guaranty of full employment, of economic stabilization and security,
of increasing productivity with equitable distribution of national gains, and a guaranty of minimum standards of living appropriate to our stage of civilization.

2. Adequate machinery to make democracy work, including the sharpening of legislative organization and objectives, the further development of public administration, attention to planning and planning of national resources.

3. The development of a system of juridical order in the world, by force if necessary, through which war may be outlawed as an instrument of national policy by some effective form of understanding or association and more intelligent adjustment of the relationships between the organization of violence and the organization of consent in commonwealth.

4. Faith in democracy's political ideals with (a) greater stress upon human values in the larger sense and (b) greater emphasis on the broad possibilities in the coming era of abundance.

Democracy's program must conform to the newer ideals and possibilities of our new day. It must guaranty a fair share in the vast gains of civilization, national wealth, material and higher culture, to members of the democratic society if it is to survive under modern conditions. It must validate the assumption of democracy in the everyday life of the community.\(^{27}\)

\(^{27}\)Ibid., pp. 187-188.
CHAPTER III

THE APPLICATION OF DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES TO
A COMMUNITY SITUATION

In this chapter a community situation will be taken and the democratic principles and assumptions which were discussed in the preceding chapter will be applied to the situation. This application will be made to such topics as:

2. Housing.
3. Labor.
4. Education.
5. Ownership and use of land.
7. Private and public income.

Health

For years evidence has been piling up that food, clothing, and housing influence not only the sickness rate and the death rate but even the height and weight of school children. In the South, where family incomes are exceptionally low, the sickness and death rate are unusually high. Wage differentials become in fact differentials in
health and life; poor health, in turn, affects wages.

The low-income belt of the South is a belt of sickness, misery, and unnecessary death. Its large proportion of low-income citizens is more subject to disease than the people of any similar area. The climate cannot be blamed -- the South is as healthful as any section for those who have the necessary care, diet, and freedom from occupational diseases.

Several years ago the United States Public Health Service conducted syphilis-control demonstrations in selected rural areas in the South. These studies revealed a much higher ratio of syphilis among Negroes than among whites, but showed further that this higher ratio was not due to physical differences between the races. It was found to be due to the greater poverty and lower living conditions of the Negroes.¹

Of the first two million men examined for the Army in 1940-1941, almost half of this number were rejected because their physical condition was below Army standards. These were the men supposedly in the healthiest years of their lives, in a great rich country which spends many millions for doctors, medicines, hospitals, and advertisements about health and sanitation. Yet half of these young men were not physically fit for Army work. Some of these ailments

¹National Emergency Council, Economic Conditions of the South, p. 29.
were beyond the power of medical science to cure, but a large fraction can be laid squarely to insufficient medical, dental, clinical, hospital, and public health attention.\(^2\)

In the South many American women give birth to children without the help of a doctor. Only twenty-five percent of rural births take place in hospitals. Two-thirds of all rural communities lack child-health centers. Of the many thousands of stillbirths each year, over half of them could be saved by better medical attention.\(^3\)

There is no "gold standard" for medical care, any more than there is for clothing. It is possible to estimate the number of doctors, dentists, nurses, and hospital beds needed to serve the community. This estimate has been made, and it shows that the available supply of such services is far below the present need.

**Housing**

The effects of bad housing can be measured directly in the general welfare. It lessens industrial efficiency, encourages inferior citizenship, lowers the standard of family life, and deprives people of reasonable comfort. There are also direct relationships between poor housing and poor health, and between poor housing and crime.

The type of slum most ordinarily found in southern

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\(^2\)Stuart Chase, *Goals for America*, p. 72.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 75.
towns consists of antiquated, poorly built rental quarters for working people. The rows of wooden houses without any modern improvements, without proper sanitation facilities, and often without running water, are usually in congested areas in the least desirable location. The southern slum has often been built to be a slum. It is simply a convenient barracks for a supply of cheap labor.

That there are two and a half million below-standard houses in the South would be a conservative estimate. Of three million farm houses in fourteen southern states surveyed in 1930, only 5.7 per cent had water piped to the house, and only 3.4 per cent had water piped to the bathrooms. More than half the farm houses were unpainted. More than a third of southern farmhouses do not have screens to keep out mosquitoes and flies.

By the most conservative estimate, four million southern families should be rehoused. This is one-half of all the families in the South.4

Labor

The rapidly growing population of the South is faced with the problem of finding work that will provide a decent living. Neither on the farm nor in the factory is there a certainty of a continuing livelihood, and thousands of

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4National Emergency Council, op. cit., p. 35.
southerners shift each year from farm to mill or mine and back again to the farm.

The average worker in the cotton, lumber, furniture, iron and steel, and coal mining industries in the South is paid low wages compared with the rest of the country. The average differential in rates for new labor between the South and the rest of the country in twenty of the country's important industries in 1937 amounted to sixteen cents an hour.

Low wages and poverty are in great measure self-perpetuating. Labor organizations have made slow and difficult progress among low-paid workers, and they have had little collective-bargaining power or organized influence over social legislation.

Unemployment in the South has not resulted simply from the depression. Both in agriculture and in industry, large numbers have for years been living only half-employed or a quarter-employed or scarcely employed at all.5

Education

In the rural regions of the South particularly, there is a marked disparity between the number of children to be educated and the means for educating them. For example, in 1930 the rural inhabitants of the Southeast had to care for 4,250,000 children of school age out of the country's

5Ibid., pp. 38-39.
total, although they received an income of only about two per cent of the nation's total. In the non-farm population of the Northeast, on the other hand, there were 8,500,000 children in a group that received forty-two per cent of the total national income — twenty-one times as much income available to educate only twice as many children.

The South must educate one-third of the nation's children with one-sixth of the nation's school revenues.

A quarter of a million men, physically fit, have been rejected by draft boards because of illiteracy, lack of education, or low mentality. The largest group was composed of neither aliens nor Negroes but of native whites, who came mostly from the South.

According to the 1940 census, of all Americans twenty-five years of age or over, almost sixty per cent never progressed beyond grade school; more than thirteen per cent never went beyond the fourth grade, and almost four per cent never went to school at all. How many good potential doctors, scientists, businessmen, poets, administrators, mathematicians, artists, and other valuable persons lie buried in these figures? 6

Ownership and Use of Land

The farming South depends upon cotton and tobacco for

6Chase, op. cit., p. 83.
two-thirds of its cash income. More than half of its farmers depend upon cotton alone. They are one-crop farmers, subjected year after year to risks which would appall the average businessman. All their eggs are in one basket -- a basket which can be upset, and often is, by the weather, the boll weevil, or the cotton market.

This process has forced more than half of the South's farmers into the status of tenants, tilling land they do not own. Whites and Negroes suffer alike. Approximately half of the sharecroppers are whites living under economic conditions almost identical with those of Negro sharecroppers.

Tenant families form the most unstable part of the community. More than a third of them move every year, and only a small percentage stay on the same place long enough to carry out a three-year crop rotation. Such frequent moves are primarily the result of the traditional tenure system, under which most renters hold the land by a mere spoken agreement, with no assurance that they will be on the same place the following season.

Under these circumstances the tenant has no incentive to protect the soil, plant cover crops, or keep buildings in repair. On the contrary, he has every reason to mine the soil for every possible penny of immediate cash return.}

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7 National Emergency Council, op. cit., p. 47.
Soil

Nature gave the South good soil. With less than a third of the nation's area, the South contains more than a third of the nation's good farming acreage. It has nearly half of the land on which crops can grow for six months without danger of frost.

This heritage has been sadly exploited. The soil has been mined as well as the people working it.

The South's chief crops are cotton, tobacco, and corn; all of these are inter-tilled crops -- the soil is plowed between the rows, so that it is left loose and bare of vegetation.

The top-soil washes away much more swiftly than from land planted to cover crops such as clover, vetch, and small grains. Moreover, cotton, tobacco, and corn leave few stalks and leaves to be plowed under in the fall; and as a result, the soil constantly loses its humus and its capacity to absorb rainfall.

Forests are one of the best protections against erosion, yet the South has cut away a large part of its forests, leaving acres of gullied, useless soil. There has been comparatively little effort at systematic reforestation.

The South is losing more than $500,000,000 worth of fertile topsoil through erosion each year, according to
estimates. This is not merely a loss of income -- it is a loss of irreplaceable capital.

Private and Public Income

The wealth of natural resources in the South -- its forests, minerals, and fertile soil -- benefits the South only when it can be turned into goods and services which people of the region need. So far the South has enjoyed relatively little of these benefits, simply because it has not had the money or credit to develop and purchase them.

In the "prosperous" year 1929 southern farm people received an average gross income of only $186 a year as compared with $528 for farmers elsewhere. Out of that $186 southern farmers had to pay all their operating expenses -- tools, fertilizers, seed, taxes, and interest on debts -- so that only a fraction of that sum was left for the purchase of food, clothes, and the decencies of life.

For more than half of the South's farm families -- the fifty-three per cent who are tenants without land of their own -- incomes are far lower. Many thousands of them are living in poverty comparable to that of the poorest peasants in Europe. A recent study of southern cotton plantations indicated that the average tenant family received an income of only seventy-three dollars per person for a year's work. Earnings for sharecroppers ranged
from thirty-eight to eighty-seven dollars per person, and an income of thirty-eight dollars annually means only a little more than ten cents a day.

So much of the profit from southern industries goes to outside financiers, in the form of dividends and interest, that state income taxes would produce a meager yield in comparison with similar levies elsewhere.

Under these circumstances the South has piled its tax burden on the backs of those least able to pay, in the form of sales taxes. (The poll tax keeps the poorer citizens from voting in eight southern states; thus they have no effective means of protesting against sales taxes.) The efforts of the South to increase its revenues and to spread the tax burden more fairly have been impeded by the vigorous opposition of interests outside of the region which control much of the South's wealth.\(^8\)

\(^8\)Ibid., pp. 22-23.
CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

The modern long-time trend is in the direction of democracy. The advance of science and education, the growth of respect for human personality, the decline of brute force, the growth of the world's jural order, the nature of massed industrial life, and the reorientation of our modern value systems all point in this direction.

1. **Public administration.** -- The bulk of government is administration. The modern kind of administration will command not only the services of the old-time jurists, but also those of the modern scientists, educators, engineers, doctors, technical workers, and managers recruited from the ranks of the people through a system of general education for all.

2. **The growth of education.** -- Another factor of far-reaching significance in mass rule is the spread of universal education. Most of the time in the history of the world, most men have died in ignorance, excluded by class or caste barriers from the circle of trained intelligence of their time.

Educational standards demand that child labor be eliminated and every normal child be kept in school until he
finishes high school. They demand the liquidation of illiteracy among adults. This means the training of many more teachers and the building of many more schoolhouses. Small rural schools should be consolidated so that rural children could get the same educational attention they now receive in the cities. Federal aid for schools in low-income areas, especially in the South, is certainly necessary.  

3. The era of abundance. -- The vastly increased productivity of mankind fundamentally changes many aspects of human behavior. It particularly diminishes the role of fear and force in human relations, and narrows the field of human domination through exclusive possession of some very limited commodity or utility. Land hunger, poverty, unemployment, and insecurity were easy roads to slavery and submission for centuries of human existence.

We have an enormous private business machine already functioning. It would be foolish to tear it up by the roots.

We should use the production facilities and the producers of the community. Employ the profit motive as widely as possible. Encourage businessmen to do all they can, and to take the responsibility wherever they can and will. The critical point is to have in the federal government a

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¹Chase, op. cit., p. 122.
conning-tower control charged with the duty of plugging any gaps in the front of full employment.

If private businessmen do not want to undertake mass housing except with government financing, then arrange the financing. If doctors are unable to take care of all sick people on the orthodox fee basis, then make it possible to help doctors take care of all sick people. If private business cannot absorb all unemployment, keep the great public works program going side by side with private business. Everyone should have an opportunity to work and should work to earn his living. This opportunity should be furnished by private business or by the government.

4. Liberty and equality. -- When the commonweal is determined by the community, using the consent of the governed as a basis of political theory and action, it is entirely feasible to maintain liberty as against the arbitrary decisions of autocrats, and it is entirely feasible to maintain equality against inroads of the few.

Liberty and equality are not exclusive but complementary. The recognition of the equality of human personalities involves their freedom to develop; freedom of choice is indeed the very condition for the unfolding of the human personality and its progressive development.3

5. Industrial democracy. -- The burdens of the

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2Ibid., p. 120.
3Merriam, op. cit., p. 529.
democratic state will be easier to bear when the commonwealth actively carries out the democratic assumption that the gains of the community are essentially mass gains and should be distributed through the mass of the community as rapidly as possible.

To meet shelter requirements, a huge program of government-subsidized housing is undoubtedly necessary. Rural units are needed in large numbers. The Federal Security Agency's building program offers good models to follow here.

To meet health requirements, the Wagner bill or its equivalent should be passed by Congress. As in the case of diet, a big program of health education is essential. More talented young people should go into training to become dentists, technicians, nurses, doctors, and psychiatrists. Group medicine should be greatly expanded. In short, we should go along the road that we are now going, only faster, and more comprehensively.

6. The growth of the more abundant life. -- Finally, the dawn of the creative role of mankind is just beginning to be dimly seen. Not only do we observe that the bonds of tradition are being broken in many places, and that the role of change in human affairs is being recognized in modern times, but that all society seems to be keyed up to an anticipation of better times ahead for all men.

The greatest of all revolutions in the whole history of mankind is the acceptance of creative evolution as the
proper role of man; for this will eventually transform the spirit and the institutions of education, of industry, and of government, opening a broad way to the realization of the highest and finest values of human life, in a form of association wherein leaders no longer scream and curse and threaten, and wherein men no longer shuffle, cringe, and fear, but stand erect in dignity and liberty and speak with calm voices of what clear eyes may see.
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