Our Syracuse Public Schools just completed the 31st observance of "American Education Week," a period during which schools all over our nation offer citizens the privilege and opportunity to meet and know the teachers of our children and to learn how our young people are being prepared to understand and preserve the priceless heritage of freedom that has been handed down to them from their forefathers.

It is indeed fortunate that the American public has always shown a great concern in the quantity and quality of education. A professed confidence and faith of our people in our public schools has been strongly in evidence since our early pioneer days. This faith in education is founded in the basic fact that education does something to and for our people which is beneficial. The American people have wisely put forth effort to invest generously of their earnings that larger and larger benefits may accrue to us as a collective group of people. It has been the great glory of America to boast that we make our people intelligent enough to permit committing to them the destinies of our country and its public welfare.

The broad concept of our American education is to train in the art of using all our resources advantageously. Only a brief reflection of the growth of our country suffices to give a satisfying feeling of a great and successful nation - successful in business and industrial development, in cultural growth and high standards of living. These great achievements are the end results of the creative power of man and the ingenuity, or "know-how" fostered and nurtured through the process of education.

Educational gains have brought man, little by little, perhaps, from the illiterate to the literate. It is a common philosophy of our schools that each individual through his initiative and creative power should rise above that of the goal of the ordinary man. He should rise above that of the ordinary man's behavior.
Ambitious for their children, the early settlers of America soon turned their attention to the framing and erecting of a school that the children of the colonies might obtain sufficient education to be able to read and write. From such humble beginnings has developed modern American public education of the 20th century with its myriad complexities.

The little red schoolhouse is all but gone and in its stead are great consolidated and central schools both urban and rural. Television has replaced the “horn-books” and the slate. Schools and classes for the physically and mentally handicapped, summer schools, radio schools of the air, evening schools, adult classes, all these in response to the demands of the present, are making their contribution to the growth of the intelligent citizens – the men and women of tomorrow’s America.

We believe that schools are the undergirding strength for freedom and progress. Whatever great achievements have taken place in business, industrial, social, or economic life, we cannot escape the force of education; which in some manner has given direction to the activity. Indeed it is no statement of our idle imagination, but rather a beautiful realistic statement when we record the past half century as a miracle of achievement on all international fronts. This record cannot be equaled by any other nation or any other political or economic system.

To recount only briefly matters of significance in American freedom and progress, we can now freely boast that we have increased our supply of machine power more than four times in the last half century. We have more than doubled the production of man in his business and industrial life. We have more than doubled the annual income for services rendered. We have reduced our average work week 15 to 20 hours. It is even more fantastic to think of the responsibilities that we must assume as our counterpart for the next long distance run.

The child is the parents’ greatest investment and what is done to the investment is serious business: It is the right of every parent to know about what happens to his child.

Our program of public education can and should provide for every child, youth and adult attending our schools, the kind and amount of education which will (a) make him more useful to himself and to others according to the principles of American democracy and (b) lead him to contribute all he can to the
development and preservation of a peaceful cooperation and equitable world order.

Written November 18, 1951