

## *Look Here First!*

WITH THE coming Spring issue a new feature will be added. We will publish subscriber reactions to articles or comments on other topics pertinent to Extension personnel. This feature will be on the order of "letters to the editor." Commentaries to be published will be chosen on the basis of their analytical content or their identification of points of view that deserve consideration. Such commentaries can be in a variety of forms: i.e., those of a critical nature (taking exception to what some contributor to the *Journal* has stated); in a manner of elaboration (identifying points appropriate to some article topic that have been omitted by the author); a commentary of a general nature. Reactions of this sort are solicited.

You may find articles in this issue that will stir you to argue, to take issue, to want to elaborate, or to wish the author had elaborated or clarified. For example, Shannon and Schoenfeld identify two possible futures for Cooperative Extension: Do the two alternatives they identify encompass the range of possibilities? Are these realistic ways of viewing the possible future of Cooperative Extension? On what evidence can the future of such an organization be determined?

Some may wish to raise questions with Lidster about 4-H. How sufficient systematic observations been made of 4-H (in circumstances other than those reported by Lidster) that either compliment or relate her findings? What do we know about those who remain in 4-H for several years? Do we know anything about what 4-H really could offer to those who drop out after short membership tenure? What bases do we really have for appraising the effectiveness of 4-H?

Some clues to levels of preciseness in appraising program effectiveness are outlined by Alexander. He plots levels of evaluation on a continuum. Are the levels identified really meaningful ways of thinking about evaluation? In line with this discussion, at what levels of preciseness do we obtain most of the evidence we use in relation to 4-H effectiveness?

Much of what is reported as clues to Extension effectiveness is in terms of participation in programs or activities—i.e., how many were present, how many belong to the organization, etc. Warner contends that organizational participation can be viewed as a problem. Do officers of some volunteer groups actually operate in a manner to prevent extensive member participation? Are there appropriate "levels" of participation depending on the type of organization? As Mitchell and Moore have analyzed a situation, do influentials in the local power structure want participation in decisions that concern the welfare of a community?

You will probably find other articles in this issue raising questions that deserve your thought and reaction.

*The Editors*