and insects, to the leaves on the topmost branches of the Eucalyptus tree which were for the long-necked giraffes to forage, natural food for all animals until some of them would eat one another. Then I mused that that natural order would again be restored in the New Earth when, as Isaiah saw in a vision, the wolf shall lie down with the lamb

and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.

Musing on such foreknowledge, such insight, such preparedness, such "seeing ahead" as He was providing for the coming life, from bugs to slugs, from frogs to snakes, from animals to man, is too much for me to grasp!

Oh God, how great Thou art!

Dear Miss Roole,

We're happy to have, already, a couple of questions for Miss Koole. We remind you all that this rubric is for you. If you have any education-related questions you'd like answered, or issues addressed, direct them to:

Dear Miss Koole 2068 Cranbrook Dr. N.E. Grand Rapids, MI 49505.

Deadline for next issue is June 1,

QUESTION 1:

From a colleague comes the following question: "There seems to be a growing conviction in some quarters that the school year in our country is too short—at least when compared to that of other countries, the students in which are reportedly outdistancing their counterparts in the U.S. in a manner most disturbing to Congressmen, columnists, and school administrators. What do you think, Miss Koole, is that an undue emphasis on academic achievement? Or is it a legitimate

concern? And if it is the latter, should we as Christian schools be studying it and taking action of some kind on our own, or should we let the public schools modify the length of their school day and/or year and then simply follow suit (as we are expected to do)?"

ANSWER:

Recently I viewed a short segment on education in Japan. It appalled me. Education in Japan is made a god. From earliest childhood, education is considered the chief and only good in life because only the best educated persons are considered for work that leads to success and wealth.

Almost every waking hour is spent in studying, and even the greater part of any "vacation" period is also devoted to studies – although the environment may be a camp setting. One of the students, who had previously lived in the U.S. for several years, commented on Japanese education as consisting of more memorization than of development in the thinking process. She believed that Japanese students miss many of the "extras" that make for a well-rounded education.

That extreme and that attitude we should avoid.

Much of the education in our country tends to swing toward the other extreme. Everything seems to be more important than education. Just getting by is far more prevalent than a desire to achieve academic excellence. The legitimate place of memorization is deprecated or negated. our school days are shorter, our vacation periods longer, homework is required (and that at a much later age) than in any other country. Of the 365 days in a year, less than half are school Many persons, and edudays. cators included, realize that it is becoming apparent and urgent that more time be spent in the

classroom. And some school districts (Rochester, New York is one) are planning to do just that. It will involve a much greater expenditure of tax money. Rochester plans to raise the maximum annual salary of its teachers to around \$75,000.

Would I advocate longer schooldays and a longer school year? I think we should have both in moderation. What I would prefer is a summer school structured quite different from that of the regular school year. There are many worthwhile subjects that could better be taught in a less structured way to smaller groups during a summer period. If one divided the summer into three or four three-week periods and limited the students to one of those periods, some of the following subjects could be taken: art, music, physical education, work on the computer, video viewing, beginning of a spoken foreign language, games in math and reading, geography history games, science experiments, etc. Many of these things are necessarily curtailed in our crowded school day.

I discussed this with my fourth graders and almost all of them were very enthusiastic about the proposal. Even the students that need much help during the school year said that summers can become "very boring." I believe these same students would benefit

greatly if the material they need to master is presented in a different way, yet in the controlled school situation rather than at home.

There are many who deplore the waste of empty schools during the summer. And there would be as many who might question the cost of educating small groups in the summer in the variety of subjects suggested. I believe it could be worked out if parents could be convinced that it would be beneficial for their children, and that it is proper stewardship of the time and abilities and responsibilities that God gives us.

QUESTION 2:

From a Grand Rapids Parent: "We received a note from school regarding a sale on the World Book Encyclopedia. We are vitally interested in encouraging and helping our children in whatever ways we can. Should an encyclopedia be a priority item in our home for our children? At what age will children begin using an encyclopedia and in what ways will children be using an encyclopedia?"

ANSWER:

My advice is to take advantage

of World Book Encyclopedia's sale being advertised at this time. An encyclopedia, in my opinion, is one of the most valuable reference books that children (and adults as well) can use for many years. It is an expensive tool, but compared with other educational and noneducational items its value can't be surpassed. Most classrooms contain at least one set, and the library has several sets; but pro-rated only a limited number of students can use them and then only at specified times.

From the third grade on, teachers will assign simple or more complex topics or reports that require students to use supplementary materials. The encyclopedias provide the most concise and most easy to locate information. Answers to many questions can usually be found in an encyclopedia. Also, the colored pictures make it easy to identify animals, birds, plants, and such.

One can also buy the year-books. I would order them to keep up-to-date with certain subjects in flux.

Both parents and teachers should be alert to provide children with opportunities for learning using the encyclopedia.

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Spring, 1988