

There was general recognition, of course, that it would be dangerous to assume that all that is necessary to make men love one another is to teach them to read and write. The example of Japan, which has by far the highest literacy rate in the whole of Asia, is sufficient to refute such easy optimism. Because this truth is obvious, UNESCO has labelled the project "Fundamental Education" and not "Attack on Illiteracy." Fundamental education involves not only teaching to read and write, but also simple education, particularly for adults, in agriculture, handicrafts, health, citizenship, and some understanding of world problems.

The Conference realized that UNESCO could not hope to make any noticeable impression on illiteracy by itself setting up to teach half the world. But it was held that there is still a very important place for an international agency not only in stimulating and encouraging countries to start fundamental education programmes, but also in working out techniques, providing expert advice, and training key workers for the field. The first step proposed is the appointment of a panel of experts, most of whom will not be permanent members of the UNESCO staff. On invitation, they will assist in the development of programmes of education, making contact with workers in the field. The central staff of UNESCO will assist in providing suitable materials, in clarifying language difficulties, and in utilizing all forms of instruction—books, pictures, films, and radio—that may serve the purposes of the programme. Pilot projects in mass education are to be begun this year in Haiti, China, and Africa.

This is a project in which New Zealand, with her high literacy rate and her successful education of the Maori, may have more to offer than to receive, though the accumulated knowledge of UNESCO's panel of experts may well be of great value to her in the education of the peoples of the Pacific Islands.

II. Education for International Understanding

UNESCO proposes to attack this problem simultaneously from several different angles. The approach is, first of all, to eliminate education for misunderstanding. All speakers agreed that cases are by no means unknown of countries deliberately distorting the teaching in their schools in order to bolster up their own prestige or policies at the expense of their neighbours, and that there are many more instances of ignorance, carelessness, or unconscious bias in text-books and teaching causing generations of children to grow up with quite false ideas of other countries. UNESCO intends to make a survey of the main social studies text-books of the world.

The technique to be adopted is the one proposed by New Zealand. Countries will be invited to send in to UNESCO copies of their most commonly used text-books in history, geography, civics, and related subjects. This will, admittedly, be easier for those countries that have fixed official text-books than for those that allow freer