

## 5. Another Critic

By KENNETH W. COLEGROVE

Among a number of groups and organizations which have pledged themselves to the review and supervision of textbooks, with the aim of preventing subversion and misrepresentation of American ideas, is the Conference of American Small Business Organizations through its Committee on Education, in New York. It publishes *The Educational Reviewer*, a quarterly, edited by Mrs. Lucille Cardin Crain. Many of the communities where textbooks used in local schools were criticized found that the critics relied heavily on the Reviewer's analysis of books, as did Fulton Lewis, Jr., radio commentator, in his broadcasts.

Asked to suggest an expert who might represent *The Educational Reviewer's* point of view on this broad symposium, Mrs. Crain named Kenneth Colegrove, professor of political science at Northwestern University, in Evanston, Ill. Professor Colegrove, who was educated at Iowa State Teachers College, the State University of Iowa, Harvard and Columbia Universities, is author of many books, including *"American Citizens and Their Government"* (1921), *"Militarism in Japan"* (1936), and *"The American Senate and World Peace"* (1944).

**W**E ARE not told whether Mark Hopkins, sitting on a simple bench in a log cabin with a student of Williams College, held a textbook in his hand. Presumably not; but today the relationship of teacher and pupil almost invariably includes a textbook. It is an indispensable part of the apparatus of mass education.

In the case of the immature or inexperienced teacher, the textbook and the accompanying teacher's guide determine the content and method of instruction. This is particularly true of textbooks in the social sciences, in history, economics, government, and sociology. In the case of the mature and experienced teacher, the textbook may reinforce the viewpoint expressed by the teacher or else serve to illustrate a different conclusion whenever the teacher disagrees with the tendency followed by the textbook.

The public schools have always been a vehicle of indoctrination, and probably always will be used in such a manner. This means that whoever controls the schools will control the propaganda employed by this important institution in American life. Traditionally, we like to think that it is the American people, in their local districts, that govern the schools. Who within the locality should be the judge of the selection of textbooks as well as of the qualifications of teachers?

The answer is, obviously, the local school boards, who are under state legislation, who are elected by the people of the district to supervise the administration of the schools, and who are directly responsible to the people. Except in the smallest districts, the school board cannot well engage in the direct

employment of teachers and selection of textbooks. This task is turned over to professionals, namely school administrators. Nevertheless, school boards should not shirk responsibility for supervision of the school administrator. They have a right and a duty to inquire whether the teachers that the superintendent employs are satisfactory, or whether the textbooks are sound.

More than this, a responsibility also rests upon the voters. In recent years, school board elections have been notorious for the small number of ballots cast. By the same token, the attention that the average citizen gives to the intellectual administration of the public school is amazingly slight. Devoted mothers, organized in a Parent-Teacher Association, will give minute attention to the food served to their precious darlings in the school cafeteria, while they bestow little or no attention upon the kind of propaganda served to their offspring in the history class.

Who should review school textbooks? Certainly not such an organization as the National Education Association. This group is the professional lobby of the teaching fraternity, and is properly prejudiced in favor of teachers. Labor unions have reviewed textbooks. But their criticisms, while helpful, are naturally biased. For the same reason, review by churches is subject to discount.

In the American system of local education the ultimate judge of both teachers and textbooks is the local school board elected by the voters. But the people can be assisted to carry out this responsibility by many private agencies entirely outside of Federal



—Burck in the Chicago Sun-Times.

"Cat and Canary."

and state government. *The Educational Reviewer* is one publication which attempts to meet this need. This review, however, covers only a small fraction of the thousands of textbooks published each year. It would be helpful if there were a dozen such organs, representing many political and economic views, and covering all textbooks used in both public and private schools. Naturally, such a periodical is the object of attack by many school administrators as well as the National Education Association, who feel that their professional superiority is questioned by this outside audit of their indoctrination. Such a private investigating organ is, of course, not infallible. Neither is the National Education Association. But the vehemence with which school administrators attack *The Educational Reviewer* suggests that the teaching profession is unduly sensitive to criticism or that some educators are desirous of concealing deviations from the historic path of American democracy.

**M**ILLIONS of parents would be deeply shocked if they closely examined the history and government textbooks of their children. During the last thirty years a sweeping movement toward Socialism and even toward Communism has appeared in many widely used textbooks. Under the influence of brilliant educators in the Teachers College of Columbia University and other educational centers, undue emphasis has been placed upon the element of change in social institutions. Some contempt for the principles and experience of the older institutions of the Republic has also been instilled into the youthful mind. Thus, a teacher's guide for beginning civics in the Chicago high schools recently stated the chief aim of civic education to be: "To create an awareness of the cer-

tainty of change; to develop in students the habit of looking for such changes and to develop the ability to analyze them and to act upon the basis of this analysis." Not a word was said about the need for studying the principles of the American Republic and the free economic system. The assumption was that all change was for the good of the people.

It is little wonder that when a criticism was directed at "Magruder's American Government," a textbook used in the Chicago schools, on the ground that it neglected the Declaration of Independence, a committee of teachers replied: "There is no call for a study of the Declaration of Independence in a book on American government." It is comforting to note that the leading textbook on American government used in our colleges and universities, namely Ogg and Ray's "Introduction to American Government" (Appleton-Century-Crofts), gives due attention to the Declaration of Independence.

The changes in the principles emphasized in high-school and college textbooks have been devastating. Instead of picturing the United States as the land of freedom and opportunity, the beauties of the "welfare state" are expounded.

One of the worst offenders is Blaich and Baumgartner's "The Challenge of Democracy" (Harper). This book makes a slashing attack on capitalism without offering much criticism of Communism (pp. 122-142). It gives a most misleading account of the size and advantages of consumer's cooperatives (pp. 242-251). In its eagerness to promote ultra-internationalism it makes the astonishing claim that the United Nations settled the political dispute over Korea (p. 693). Another leftist book, exposed by the *Chicago Tribune* in 1950, is Gavin, Gray, and Groves's "Our Changing Social Order" (Heath). This Socialist-slanted text makes an unfair attack on conservatives (p. 59), and a dishonest condemnation of advertising (p. 253). It presents a one-sided argument for socialized medicine (pp. 290-397) and a biased review of economic planning (pp. 416-417).

Shortly after winning the Second World War the American people found themselves in the midst of a cold war. Preparation for defense against Soviet Russia has increased the American budget to eighty billion dollars per year. We are engaged in a Korean War which was instigated by Soviet Russia in which we have suffered 110,000 battle casualties. It would seem that under these circumstances the true nature of the Soviet

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## 6. A School Superintendent

By GILBERT S. WILLEY

Gilbert S. Willey, superintendent of schools in Winnetka, Ill., knows that the perfect textbook has not yet been devised. He suggests ways of providing better textbooks and outlines methods of selecting the best of them wisely. Like most understanding educators through the ages, Mr. Willey scorns the pat solution and stresses that as teaching methods change the tools of teaching must be changed to keep pace with them.

Amid all the sound and fury over the "political" criticism of textbooks—usually focused on a small number of books and repeated over and over again—it is easily forgotten that there are many more natural and, perhaps, more important aspects which might profit from constructive criticism. Those who work with textbooks—the authors, editors, publishers, school administrators, and, most important, the teachers and pupils—know that good textbooks are hard to come by. They also know that this is generally so not because evil forces stand ready to corrupt innocent texts but because, next to good teaching, hardly anything is more difficult than the preparation of good teaching materials.

**H**ISTORY shows that since colonial times the textbook has been the chief tool in the education of the American people. As a rule the texts used in this country during the last three centuries have reflected the spirit of the times in which they were written. Publishers have been ever alert to new ideas in educational circles which seem practical and sound. Texts appearing on the market reflecting these innovations, which later have become generally accepted, have contributed significantly to our educational progress. This is because textbooks down through the years have been the chief source of information which the majority of teachers have used in "imparting" knowledge to their students. The fact that many adults of today accept without question what they read on the printed page is a reflection of the dominant role that textbooks have played in the process of their learning.

Schools today are endeavoring to provide an environment for learning which permits pupils to advance at their individual rates, especially in the skill areas. They seek also to provide a variety of teaching materials which will help give students broadened and enriched learning experiences as well.

The result is that in the modern school the text, a copy for each child, serving as a sole source of information, is quite inadequate in meeting individual needs of the members of any given class.

To remedy this, many school systems are now producing some of their own text materials to be used in addition to textbooks published by commercial firms. In my own city of Win-

netka, for example, textbooks and workbooks have been used in combinations in arithmetic and the language arts for many years, the workbooks having been prepared by members of our teaching staff and designed to permit pupils to progress at their respective rates of achievement. One process in the skill subjects is presented at a time and the amount of drill required varies with each student's ability to pass a test covering the process with 100 per cent accuracy. Drills and tests are continued until this degree of accuracy is achieved.

We have found it helpful, moreover, to supplement materials developed for this relatively complete plan of individualized instruction with commercial textbooks in order to provide the enrichment desired for the total learning situation.

This trend is becoming more general as time goes on. An informal survey of the practices of twenty-four school systems conducted under the direction of the Winnetka Board of Education revealed: (1) twelve of the school systems use teacher-made ma-

