
Shri M.C. Chagla: The next thing that has got to be done is that text-books have to be improved. Progress has been handicapped at present by vested interests. It is necessary to prepare text-books at the national level. The National Council of Educational Research and Training is preparing textbooks for secondary schools with the best talent available at the national level. These will be circulated to the States, who may adopt them with necessary modifications. Textbooks are being prepared in history, mathematics, physics, geography, commerce, agriculture, chemistry, biology and technology.

I would like to deal with the ~~many~~ criticisms made by Shri Masani about textbooks. I am a great believer in experiments in education. You must have experiments, otherwise you cannot advance. As in science, there must be experiments in any subject. But I also attach great importance to textbooks, because they leave an imprint upon the minds of young boys and girls, an imprint which would last for ever. And I want textbooks to be so prepared that the young boy or girl realises the unity of India, its great cultural and spiritual heritage, its philosophy, its policies, its great national leaders.

I agree that textbooks must be adjusted to regional considerations. As I just stated, in all these subjects we are preparing first class textbooks, and sending them out to the States, asking them to translate them in the regional languages, so that we have some sort of uniformity, and we are sure of what we are teaching our boys.

Tying a little more in detail to what Shri Masani said about textbooks, I do not agree with my hon. friend that the situation would be better if it was left to private enterprise.

Shri Ranga: Also.

Shri M.C. Chagla: I do not think there is any point in suggesting that the standards have gone down because there is a sort of State monopoly. What we need is that both the State and other publishers should send

the textbooks, and there should be a proper textbook Committee, which should decide which is the best book to be prescribed.

Shri M.R. Masani: Quite right. There should be competition.

Shri M.C. Chagla: The quality of textbooks depends upon -- let me put it this way -- four factors: the subject knowledge of the specialist working at the highest level, the skill and experience of the best classroom teachers, the collaboration of the best illustrators and the best production by printers and the use of best paper. Unless these four factors combine, you cannot get a first-class textbook. What we are doing in Delhi is to combine these four to produce the finest textbooks that educational research can make possible.

Shri Ranga: Here it sounds well:

Shri M.C. Chagla: Let us see what we have done about text books at the University stage. We are working with three countries, United States, United Kingdom and USSR to produce cheap textbooks for Universities. The hon. Member said that a book on medicine costs Rs.40-50. I am conscious of it; I know how difficult it is for students to get textbooks; I know how people queue up in the library to get one or two copies that are there; it is a shame and a scandal. We are trying our best to see that we have cheap reprints through the help of these countries.... (An Hon Member: It can be done) It can be done and it will be done. As regards the secondary stage, I have already mentioned that we have set up panels of the best experts and textbooks are being prepared. In the elementary stage, I am sorry that no work has been undertaken so far and the work has been left to the States; we have advised the States that they should produce textbooks on a no-profit-no-loss basis and a recent survey showed that except for one State, all the other States were following this policy and charging a small margin of profit....

Shri Ranga: Yet, prices are going higher and higher.

Shri M.C. Chagla: Quite; I think one legitimate criticism Mr. Masani made is that prices are high and therefore they have pirate editions. The main solution is to bring the prices down when it would not be profitable for anybody to pirate these editions

or plagiarise them. There is something more that we have done. We have been able to obtain a gift of 2000 tons of paper from Australia and 8000 tons from Sweden and this paper has been sent to the States to print the textbooks so that they could be sold cheaply. We have been able to get three printing presses from West Germany; they would be set up at Mysore, Bhubaneswar and Chandigarh and used for production of books. When these presses start functioning they will help to improve the quality of the text books and to cut down the prices.

I was rather surprised to hear the sentiment that legal compulsion will not be the answer because you cannot legislate against human nature. I suppose that Mr. Masani legitimately could use that argument with regard to prohibition. I do not know that pirating of books was part of human nature.....

(Interruptions). The deputation from Bihar to which Mr. Masani referred waited on me; I pointed out to them that we should get the law amended. Penal Code was a concurrent subject and the State of Bihar can easily make the offence cognisable; they can take it up and legislate. Apparently Mr. Masani has got the facts and the easiest thing in the world would be to suggest to the States to make this offence cognisable. What is happening today - this is what I was told - is that bookstalls have got these books; they could not be arrested because they answer: we do not know that they were pirate editions. If it is made cognisable, the bookshops can be raided and you will be able to put down this evil.