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The Education Commission

Questions are being asked as to what has happened to the Education Commission which was set up to investigate and suggest remedies for deteriorating conditions in education. It was expected to submit its findings by July, but we have seen no sign of its recommendations anywhere. To our surprise it did not consider it necessary to issue a questionnaire to elicit public opinion, nor are men and women interested in education known to have been either interviewed or been asked to submit their views in writing.

We have no intention of calling in question the integrity of the Commission; we are sure something has been done or is being done. But the public has a right to know and also to be consulted. We have had occasion repeatedly in the recent past to voice concern about the standard of education in general and the quality of text-books prescribed for schools and colleges. Information continues to arrive in a steady flow about gross errors in the contents of these books, about shortcomings in their language and style, and about anarchy in the distribution system. At college and university levels, the problem is compounded by student unrest and violence. The universities have not for years been able to keep to their normal schedule for admissions and examinations.

One unfortunate factor which is too often allowed to influence our choice of books is the belief that the imposition of sub-standard books on the young rather than importing books from outside would advance nationalism and encourage local writers. We have not forgotten the row over a book entitled English For Today Book Eight which was unthinkingly prescribed for the higher secondary stage. The critics showed it to be full of numerous errors in both content and language. In this connection the place of English in our educational system also needs to be decided showing its indispensability as a vehicle of modern knowledge.

It is problems of this kind that the Education Commission must carefully examine. Education, it is needless to say, is not a matter of structures: its quality is determined by what is taught and how it is taught. Our responsibility to the future generations demands that we must do what is humanly possible to guarantee that they receive, and are exposed to, the best the world has to offer intellectually.