

Mr. HOWE. It was largely left to the determination of State school authorities, who in turn reflect the requests made of them by local school authorities. The determination reflects in large part the complete lack of library resources in a very large number of schools and the desire to build some library resources in those schools. It reflects, at the same time, the fact that the economics of a State school system is adjusted to a certain degree to making basic textbooks available, but not adjusted to providing supplementary materials, library materials, special materials for all sorts of extra uses in the school.

Perhaps Mr. HARRIS would like to comment further on this point.

Mr. HARRIS. I think that, as indicated by the Commissioner's statement, the paucity of library materials influenced State departments of education in setting the percentages or the relative amounts to be devoted to purchases of library resources, of textbooks, and of other printed and published materials which includes largely the audiovisual materials.

With respect to the needs of socioeconomically deprived children, you probably know that as long as 35 years ago, in Hawaii, for instance, the child who could not afford to buy textbooks could have textbooks provided without charge. That provision exists in almost every State today, whether or not the State has a provision for providing free textbooks generally, throughout the State. So that—

Mrs. MINK. I am aware that textbooks are provided in order to have a school in the process, but I wonder if there is any material or research conducted by the Office of Education in terms of determining whether the textbooks that are being used are current? What percentage would be considered obsolete by standards set up by educators?

Mr. HARRIS. We do not have such information that I am aware of—any recent study on this particular problem. We do know that there are districts, that there are States in which adoptions are made for a period of years. If the subject matter field happens to be one in which new knowledge is being developed rapidly, it is true that even within a 5-year period the material in a textbook may become obsolete.

We know, also, that in some of the poorer school districts textbooks are sometimes hand-me-down textbooks. As was true many years ago, a textbook sometimes is used by an entire generation of children of a family, simply handed down from the older child to the next oldest, and to the youngest, and so forth. This is not as common as it used to be, but we have reason to believe that it does exist in some of the poorer school districts. There probably are school districts in which there are physics books being used which have not discovered the splitting of the atom. There are math books being used which are unaware of some of the more recent developments in the field of mathematics. This certainly is the exception rather than the rule.

Mrs. MINK. Mr. Commissioner, did I understand your testimony, or perhaps it was a response to a question, that in the whole area of presenting of a whole of America in terms of the rich, multiethnic heritage that we have here that supplemental materials are not as adequate as, perhaps, materials that are presented direct to the child through a textbook?

Mr. HOWE. No, I don't think I tried to make a judgment about that, Mrs. Mink. I would say that both are inadequate, and I wouldn't know how to make a judgment as to which is more inadequate. I