

book to serve the special needs of the culturally disadvantaged child, he had almost no one to sell it to and no way to see it reach the child.

All this has been radically changed by the enactment of the Federal Library Services and Construction Act and the Economic Opportunity Act and especially by the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. For the first time there are funds to buy library books in quantity for poor children and a will to meet their special needs. Schools and libraries are able to gain experience, do research, and sharpen their definitions of the kinds of books needed for this purpose. Publishers can afford to invest in the preparation and production of books and series specially intended to serve the disadvantaged child and the child of ethnic minorities, knowing that a market will exist for good books so designed.

The result has been an outpouring of general books, in addition to textbooks, which is just beginning. Witnesses have described to the committee three special programs of distinction in this field: the Youth Books series published by Doubleday and Company, the Portal Books series published by John Wiley and Sons, and the book program of the Johnson Publishing Company. These could be paralleled by similar undertakings of a number of other companies, in addition to literally hundreds of individual titles that have appeared or are in progress.

The production of actual books is, of course, the province of individual companies; but the industry as a whole, through its trade organizations, has long devoted its efforts to encouraging and stimulating attention to this problem. As early as 1954 the American Book Publishers Council sponsored a conference on the Development of Lifetime Reading Habits, which led to the publication of an influential report that emphasized the basic importance of a strong system of school libraries to provide a wide range of books to appeal individually to children with special interests, abilities, or problems. Constant emphasis of this need over the years through such means as National Library Week, the Knapp School Library Demonstration Project, and the 1961 Conference on Books in the Schools helped to build up state, local, and finally Federal support for school libraries for all children and not just those of the privileged suburbs.

More recently there have been a series of organized conferences and meetings intended to bring publishers and editors together with librarians, educators, and public officials specially concerned with problems in this area. These included a conference, 1964, sponsored jointly with American Textbooks Publishers Institute on books for adults and young adults with limited reading ability; a conference sponsored jointly with the National Book Committee and the Harvard-M.I.T. center for urban studies in 1963 which was largely devoted to the problems of book and library services for culturally deprived children and youth and which resulted in the publication of *The Public Library and the City* by the M.I.T. Press; a conference in April 1966 on the school and library market for trade books which enabled publishers to learn more about the dimensions and character of the need for books in the new Government programs; and a conference in May 1966 jointly sponsored with the National Book Committee, the Children's Book Council, and the International Reading Association on "Children's Books in a Changing World" which was primarily devoted to the special book needs of culturally deprived children.

Obviously it is not the role of either the Government or of organizations like the American Book Publishers Council to undertake to prescribe the editorial content, treatment, or point of view of books. We see our role at the Council as one of creating the maximum possible opportunities for communication between teachers, librarians, educational leaders, social agencies and others working with children on the one hand, and publishers, editors, and authors on the other, so that those who create and issue children's books may have a sensitive awareness of needs and a sharing of psychological and cultural insights. We shall continue to do everything we can in that direction.

The educational legislation for which your Committee has been so largely responsible has opened a new era. For the first time in our history society has manifested a deep and focused interest in providing books for children for whom their ethnic background or the economic hardships of their parents create special needs, and for the first time there is money to achieve something. For twenty years or more authors, editors, and publishers and the educators and librarians with whom they work have had almost a missionary sense of the potential role of children's books in helping to open the whole world to these isolated children. Now an opportunity has been created to make that role a reality. All of those concerned with children's books will be doing their utmost to make it so.