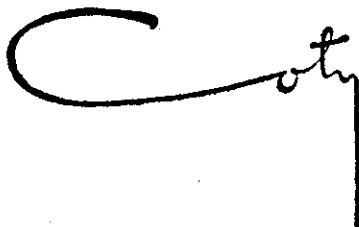


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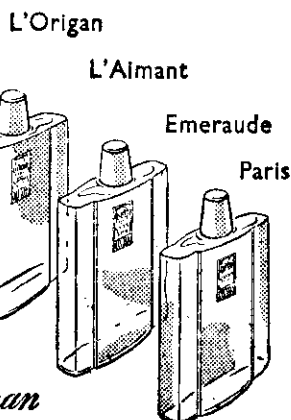
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Education for the World

THE conception of world education given by Dr. C. E.

Beeby in an interview printed on pages 8-9 should make it easier to understand what is being done, and what can be done, by an international organisation. Unesco has suffered from optimism, pessimism and downright apathy in its member States. Some people believe that it can perform miracles; some believe that it is a way of wasting public money; and others see it vaguely as "something to do with United Nations." It may not be generally known that New Zealand spends far more money on education in a year than is available for the budget of Unesco—a budget which has to be spread over education, social and natural sciences, mass communications and various cultural activities. Obviously, Unesco cannot enter upon vast and spectacular projects. Nor would heavy spending be desirable, even if it were practicable. An international body with great resources would need superhuman guidance if it were to avoid enterprises which would bring it into collision with national and private interests, and it might become an agency for cultural imperialism. Even today, when the budget is lean, allegations are sometimes made that Unesco is too much influenced by western ideas. It would be strange, perhaps, if the allegations were entirely false, for it is in the western countries that material techniques in science and education have been developed most fully. Countries which are trying to overcome illiteracy can gain better results if they turn to the west for guidance. Ways of pooling and sharing experience in education have been explained by Dr. Beeby. Some people have been known to ask if intellectual co-operation of this sort is not without its dangers. Could literacy become the servant of an Asiatic nationalism at a time when the world's

greatest need is for an international outlook? But a new outlook cannot be based on ignorance, and only the children of darkness are afraid of the light. The "backward" countries would become literate if Unesco did not exist. Unesco's task in fundamental education is to help national authorities to do their work efficiently, to place the best methods—the technical equipment of teaching—in the service of indigenous cultures. There is by no means a one-way movement of ideas from west to east. It may be true that at the present time the west has more to give than to receive, if we think of the gifts as teaching and administrative methods. The important fact, however, is that ideas cannot move freely, in either direction, until education is broadly based. Moreover, international co-operation in the attack upon illiteracy, and throughout the whole field of education, is making it easier for the ideas to be understood. Old prejudices do not always disappear when the representatives of nations meet in conference or at a seminar; but they may stand out more distinctly, like hills which rise from a misty landscape to press upon the mind. An obstacle that is no longer hidden can be studied. Enough has already been done to reveal differences of outlook which in years to come will have to be removed. If there are some regions which cannot be explored, until more experience has made the venture possible, it will at least be found that people who have learned a little of alien ways of thinking have learned enough to make them wonder about their own, and therefore to discover tolerance. Much patience is needed. Perhaps we could do better if we took a first lesson from the east by revising our conceptions of time. It is good to work, but sometimes it is also good to wait; and co-operation between east and west requires the passive as well as the active virtue.

N.Z. LISTENER, NOVEMBER 18, 1949