ICELAND
The world's oldest living democracy
(See Page 7)
**UNESCO's Seventh General Conference**

UNESCO's Seventh General Conference opened in Paris on November 12 and will conclude about December 10. It will discuss UNESCO's programs and budget for the period 1954 and 1955. On the opening day, Sir Sargent, president of the Conference, spoke on the theme, "How can we build a better tomorrow," and the conference was formally opened by the French Minister of Education.

The Conference will consider a number of important questions, including the organization of UNESCO's work, the improvement of education and culture, and the development of international cooperation in the field of education. It will also review the activities of UNESCO since its inception and consider ways in which the organization can be strengthened and made more effective.

The Conference will be attended by representatives from member states, as well as observers from non-member states. It is expected that the Conference will make important contributions to the further development of UNESCO and its work in promoting education, culture, and international cooperation.

**UNESCO**:

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) is a specialized agency of the United Nations, established in 1945 after the Second World War. UNESCO was created to contribute to peace and security by mass education, by strengthening international co-operation in the educational, scientific, and cultural fields, and by encouraging respect for others' cultures and the natural and physical environment.

**UNESCO**:

UNESCO works in many areas, including education, science, culture, and communication. It works to promote peace and understanding, and supports development and cultural diversity.

**UNESCO**:

The organization's work includes providing access to education, promoting cultural diversity, and supporting scientific research. UNESCO also works to protect cultural heritage and promote international co-operation.

**UNESCO**:

UNESCO's work is implemented through a network of offices and representatives around the world. The organization is financed by member states, and governed by a General Conference, which meets once every two years.

**UNESCO**:

In 1945, UNESCO was established by the United Nations to promote peace and international understanding through education, science, and culture. UNESCO's work includes providing access to education, protecting cultural heritage, and promoting scientific research.

**UNESCO**:

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TEACHING WORLD UNDERSTANDING IN THE GEOGRAPHY CLASS

by Louis FRANÇOIS

In what way can geography teaching help foster better international understanding? In the past few years Unesco has provided a number of replies and clarifications to this question. In 1950, Unesco called an international seminar on the subject at Montreal and published a small volume entitled Some Suggestions on the Teaching of Geography (1). Now, as a complement to this booklet, it has brought out a Handbook of Suggestions on the Teaching of Geography (2) which embodies the main conclusions and suggestions of those who took part in the seminar.

I think that it would be worth while to return to this subject for it seems to me that neither the authors of the first booklet (of whom I was one), nor the members of the seminar (in which I also participated), nor even the author of the second booklet, have sufficiently stressed the tremendous possibilities for the development of world-mindedness which geography offers. Nor have they, I feel, laid sufficient emphasis on the serious difficulties which teachers are likely to meet in encouraging an attitude of mind favourable to better international understanding among their pupils.

But first let us try to reach a clear definition of the fundamental involved: What do we mean by education for better international understanding and what, exactly, do we mean by geography?

First of all, one thing that education for international understanding should not be is just a high-sounding, vague phrase. For it is only when we understand exactly what we are trying to achieve through such teaching that we can determine with any degree of precision or clarity what methods to use.

The definition that I propose is one that I formulated with my study group at the recent Unesco seminar in the Netherlands on teaching about Human Rights.

The definition, as formulated by the group, was:

1. Give youth an understanding of the past and present-day life of peoples in other countries—their traditions, their chief characteristics, their problems and the solutions they have found for them.

2. Make youth conscious of the contribution of each nation to the common heritage of humanity: technology, science, arts, literature. Civilization is a vast network of reciprocal debts between nations.

3. Make youth conscious of the fact that, if the world remains dangerously divided as far as interests and passions of political origin are concerned, its solidarity in the fields of economics, science, techniques and culture is nevertheless becoming daily more evident, and that a deep desire for peace exists in all peoples. The organization of the world on an international basis is not only possible, but has become a necessity. It is a question of making the different citizens conscious of their future responsibilities towards this international organization, and towards world peace.

4. Make youth conscious of the fact that the nations must work together in international organizations for the common good, and must find ways of collaborating even if they are separated by different ideologies. The world cannot be uniform, but the different nations must unite to maintain peace.

5. Organize schools and universities so that they are able to initiate children and youth in all their future social responsibilities from a material, as well as from a moral and intellectual point of view, and in the idea of liberty through self-discipline. Youth can serve this same apprenticeship in the various youth movements. It is the personal example which will turn and drive both as citizens of their own country and as citizens of the world.

To this definition, however, must be added a double word of caution:

(a) Education for living in a world community is merely the complement and the development of living in a national community.

(b) To understand is not always to accept; it is sometimes to censure, even to show opposition and resistance when certain great higher principles such as liberty, justice and solidarity are in danger of being destroyed or of disappearing.

Geography consists in locating, describing, explaining and comparing scenery and human activities on the face of the globe. This definition may appear rather sweeping with regard to human activities. Do painting and philosophy, for example, come within the scope of geography? Here we should perhaps give a more precise explanation.

We mean human activities insofar as they are directly affected by natural conditions and insofar as they exercise a direct influence on the appearance of the world's landscape. Thus, the Moslem religion is of interest to the geographer, not in its complicated doctrines nor in the literary and artistic works it has inspired. The geographer is concerned with its essential elements; first because it reflects an image of the desert and semi-desert world from which it sprang and in which it expanded; second because it has inspired original ways of life; third because Moslem cities with their houses crowded around their mosques have given the landscape an appearance distinctly different from that of European cities dominated by their churches.

Geography, then, is a natural science, but even more is a human science. These two aspects cannot be separated because nature directly affects man's mode of living and because man exercises a limited or complex action on nature which varies in degree with time and place. The pattern of human existence on the earth's surface is thus one of the basic concerns of the geographer.

Every society has its individual traits and sometimes even exceptional characteristics caused by different factors. It is up to the geographer to emphasize them for the very destiny of man speaks for his greatness and explains the flowering of civilizations. But like every science, geography seeks to generalize and to find a common measure for natural and human factors by means of appropriate explanations and comparisons.

The mode of life of the Tibetan people, for example, permits many picturesque descriptions with which any teacher may let himself be carried away and by means of which he may strongly impress his class. But the explanation for this pattern of life is to be found in Tibet's high altitude, and the restrictions of mountain life there are also found in other mountainous regions of the world. By the same token, Buddhist practices of Tibet are to be found in many parts of China and South East Asia. In this way, the geographer succeeds in situating people within the framework of humanism as a whole, and in fitting them into one vast and common undertaking. And this applies even to those people who live at an altitude of 18,000 feet on the "roof of the world."

If geography is a science, it must also be an art. It does more than list facts and explain them; it ingeniously assembles ideas and shows their relationships, especially through descriptions of countries and their inhabitants. To "put over" his subject in such a way that people will really profit from reading his work or listening to him the geographer must possess a mastery both of his subject and of the art of expression, without which he may well fail to meet his objective.

Let us take as an example Holland's polders which are tracts of low-lying land reclaimed from the sea. First of all, the geographer describes these "low countries" just as they were painted by Ruisdael and van Goyen; peaceful, majestic.

(Continued on next page)
GEOGRAPHY AND INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDING

(Continued from page 4)

For pupils to live and raise their living standards, men must either fight nature or work for it. Naturally enough, according to different regions, but the experience and the efforts are common to all and will benefit from these efforts to some extent.

1) No nation, even under conditions of freedom and peace, is self-sufficient. All have need of one another to live and prosper.

2) To recognize the speed of recent economic progress in the U.S.S.R., which has immense reserves of manpower and resources, does not constitute a defence of Communism. It is an expression of the manifold possibilities of a natural environment and the co-ordinated activity of men. Nor is it criticism of Germany's economic revival, its departure from the brutal grasp of sea and river waters, from the bloody conflict and to reach as informed and reasoned an opinion as possible. When the person concerned is a geography teacher, it is his task to describe and explain a world in which the struggle for peace and for some young people, there is an instantaneous enthusiasm of youth under a ponderous and heavy tradition from these efforts to some extent.

The geography teacher needs a clear vision of his audience—the young people who must go out the world they must discover the natural beauties too, extremely clear and exact.

The geography teacher must have a clear vision of his audience—the young people who must go out into the world and form part of its development. Geography also remains apart from politics. It is the facts supplied by the geography teacher that are explained by the absence of natural beauties, and where new hatreds are growing; in a word, for propaganda tends to deform facts.

Objective teaching is patterned on its subject matter. It is not vitiated with subjective preferences of a personal, social or political nature or character. Because its aim is truth it eschews propaganda and all poltical tactics, as propaganda tends to deform facts.

To take the form neither of a paealogue nor an ingenious wall of scientific facts, insofar as it strives for objectivity and seeks after the truth, and insofar as it repudiates passion and prejudice, it is the facts supplied by the geography teacher that are explained by the absence of natural beauties, and where new hatreds are growing; in a word, for propaganda tends to deform facts. It takes the form neither of a paealogue nor an ingenious wall of scientific facts, insofar as it strives for objectivity and seeks after the truth, and insofar as it repudiates passion and prejudice. Hence it will be the task of the teacher to describe and explain a world in which the struggle for peace and for some young people, there is an instantaneous enthusiasm of youth under a ponderous and heavy tradition from these efforts to some extent.

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Courier

Aviso at a port of call one day, Captain Kelly, master of the merchant ship Irish Cedar found a letter addressed in a child's hand waiting for him. He opened it and read:

"Dear Captain Kelly,

My name is Patrick Smith. I am eleven years old, and I am a boarder at Avoca School. There are 254 boys in the school, of whom 14 are boarders.

"Please could you send me some information about your ship? I know that it weighs 8,000 tons and I have read your messages. I have also seen its photo and I like it very much. You see, I am very interested in ships, the things they carry and what ports they are calling at. When you come back to Dublin I should like to come on board.

"I also hope that you will be glad to receive this and many other letters.

Patrick Smith, 8, Avoca School, Blackrock, Co. Dublin.

The let ter came as no surprise to Captain Kelly, for he knew that Patrick Smith and the other boys of Avoca School at Blackrock, County Dublin, had just "adopted" his ship. Like thousands of other children in Western Europe and Scandinavia, these Irish boys go to one of the schools associated with a Ship Adoption Society, through which boys and girls are in constant touch with the captains and crews of hundreds of ships sailing in all parts of the world.

These Societies have already been formed in five countries: Denmark, Great Britain, Holland, Ireland and Norway. The oldest and largest is the British Ship Adoption Society, founded in 1938 after a successful experiment in 1934, when a London ship-owning company allowed four of its ships to be "adopted" by four London schools.

In Norway, a similar organization was set up shortly before the war through the efforts of teachers' associations and ministry representatives serving on the committees of management.

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The Dutch Ship Adoption Society, Neve, which was also founded in 1946, today has 200 "adopted" ships.

The President of the Netherlands Ship Adoption Society explains to a class the history and voyages of the mail steamer 'Merweda' — which the boys and girls have adopted — and presents them with a coloured painting of 'their' ship.

All types of ocean-going vessels ranging from whalers to weatherships and from merchant ships to cable ships (above) have been adopted by schoolchildren in five European countries. As soon as "their" ship docks at her home port the children are eager to go aboard to meet their sailor friends. (Photo COI).

MY SCHOOL HAS 'ADOPTED' A SHIP

A

The soil is very fertile and three or four crops a year can be produced.

Maize and beans are the principal crops, others are wheat, millet and barley. Sugar and beet are also grown, and fruit grows abundantly — there are sweet potatoes, pineapples, grapes, bananas and abricots. Tea, coffee, tobacco and flax are also cultivated, and there are sugar and tobacco factories.

From such first-hand descriptions as this, the chapter on the Azores in the geography textbooks takes on a new interest. During the voyage which took him to the Bahamas, to Florida, New Orleans and Curaçao, through the Panama Canal and across the Pacific, Captain Spearman sent accounts of what he saw — vivid pictures and instructive and picturesque details which all helped to enrich classroom lessons.

The children bombard their seafaring friends with innumerable questions: How long did the voyage last? Where do you go to refuel and how much did it cost? The replies are detailed and instructive. They teach the schoolchildren how sailors live and work at sea, the kinds of products imported and exported by different nations.
Not all the stories the children hear from their sailor correspondents have happy endings. Sometimes they read of storms, typhoons, of ships being disabled or even wrecked. But such accounts only tend to bring them closer to the seasons of storms at sea, and perhaps make them grow more respectful of the sea, the ships and their crews. In their reply the children illustrated their answers to this friendly general knowledge test with simple drawings and decorations (shown above).

Lesbian Maritime Institute has become a voyage to reality

(Continued from the previous page) and the customs and habits of peoples in foreign lands. Here, for example, is an extract from a letter sent by a member of the crew of the "Lutterkerk" to the boys and girls of a Dutch school:

"This time we have been making a trip to the Persian Gulf. One of our stops was Ashar which lies in Irak near Shatt-e-Arak, a river which flows from the Euphrates into the Tigris. I want to tell you something about Ashar which was, according to legend, the birthplace of Sinbad the Sailor.

"The women in the street are heavily veiled and dressed in black—a practical garb offering protection from the millions of flies which exist here even in winter." The value of this exchange of letters extends far beyond the geography class. Details of shipping arrangements are used in economics courses. Descriptions of feeding arrangements on board are useful for domestic science classes; copies of the engineer's logs can be used in the mathematics period; an article on Palestine will illustrate a Bible lesson; a letter on the growth of a port of a coastal town may provide historical information.

Sometimes they provide material for a lesson on international cooperation. For instance, one captain whose tanker visited Rotterdam wrote:

"We spent about four days at the loading berth, and during this time I was able to go down to the Hague and have a look over the International Court of Justice building—the Dutch call it the Peace Palace. It is really a very lovely building. Every country that is represented has contributed something. England's gift was the lovely stained glass windows, Italy contributed marble from which they made the floors—a marvelous bit of work, as it is composed of thousands of inch-square blocks set into the most intricate design. A Dutch painter and a set of beautiful tapestries, made only the Japanese can make them: Burma contributed teak and mahogany, and so it goes on. An Englishman was responsible for the lay-out of the gardens which surround the palace."

If the maximum benefits are to be drawn from the ship adoption scheme, teachers must play an important role. They must link facts recounted in the letters with classroom lessons, encourage children to use their initiative, and arrange all sorts of activities to help bring children in touch with the work of their adopted ship.

Photographs of the ship are pinned on classroom walls together with copies of telegrams giving her position, notes on the types of weather experienced, details of the cargoes carried, and so on. The children follow the ship's progress on a map of her route and mark each stage of the voyage with small flags.

The headmaster of one Irish school is even arranging for a filmstrip to be made, a typical voyage of one of the ships. This will be distributed to schools for use during geography lessons. Many Irish schools have already seen the excellent films which an Irish shipping organization has made of its growth and activities. Nearly all exhibit in their libraries or reading rooms, books, magazines or collections of photographs and postcards which are souvenirs of a call "their" ship made in Sweden, Finland, Canada, the United States or Cuba.

The Irish Ship Adoption Society has close contacts with its British counterpart, and from France it has also received an informative material sent to Ireland by two shipping companies.

In Norway, schools have received collections of many strange objects brought back from voyages by their friends. These objects include a sword from Africa, live crabs, musical instruments from Madagascar, large shells and dried plants coming from many latitudes.

The interest and activities stimulated in the school by the exchange of letters is unending. Some children make models of ships, or of farms, factories and plants described by their sailor correspondents. Girls are given an incentive to improve their needlework, for they send gifts to the crews at Christmas.

But the ship adoption system is not a one-sided affair. Through letters from the children, officers and crews are kept in a special way in close contact with life at home, the sort of news that really gives them the impression of being closer in touch with daily life in their country. Postcards, books and newspapers they receive help to break the monotony of a long voyage, and help them in their understanding of other peoples and their problems.

The success of the system is shown by the long list of schools waiting for a ship which they can adopt. War losses, the slowing down of building today, and the normal depreciation and loss in all shipping make it impossible to provide a sufficient number of ships for all schools.

But the Ship Adoption Societies are finding other ways of maintaining the children's interest in the activities of the movement. Booklets on great ports of the world are published by the British Ship Adoption Society which has already produced a book entitled Seafarers, Ships and Cargo.

The adoptions are also proving an effective aid to international understanding. When the Japanese merchant ship Vatsafford called at Takoradi in the Gold Coast, it was visited by a group of English children who were told that this ship had been adopted by the children of the Alvial School at Osterdalen, Norway, and suggested that they write to the boys and girls who should write to them.

About a week later the children at Osterdalen received a letter from Takoradi accompanied by a collection of cards and pictures made by the Norwegian and Dutch boys and girls.

The English children wrote:

"Dear girls and boys:

"It is a great pleasure to send you a collection of letters written by our school. Our friend, Captain Kristiansen, who operates a ship in your school high up in the mountains, I expect, will have to wear sweaters and furs to keep warm, while we try to keep cool by wearing cotton clothes. Our school is held on a verandah of a low wooden building. We have sixteen pupils in the whole school including the nursery department. Our ages range from five to fourteen. Seriously, in the heat of the day I'm sure we do our best, as most of us are going home to the United Kingdom in the near future.

"Would you write to us and tell us about your school? Perhaps one day we shall have the pleasure of meeting you. On another page of our book you will find the names and addresses of the girls and boys who would like to start a pen-friendship. We hope, however, to be delighted to receive a letter from you. If you would like to write to us, please let us know. In the meantime we wish you, your parents and teachers every happiness."

The spirit which inspires the Ship Adoption Societies and useful purpose served by the movement are well summed up in the words of one of the organizers of the Irish Ship Adoption Society:

"While we wish to remain independent, we do not wish to isolate ourselves from the peoples of the world with whom we wish to cooperate in the building of a happier and more prosperous world. The interest which hundreds of boys and girls in the leading secondary schools have for three years been showing in the ship adoption scheme is also a small contribution of the Irish people towards the building here of a great understanding of other peoples and their problems.

"There is no reason why every country should not have its Ship Adoption Society, and why ship-owners throughout the world cannot promote such a scheme in their own countries."

Schoolchildren in the Norwegian valley of Gudbrandsdalen received a letter containing a series of questions from the crew of the "Herva" which they have written back from the Euphrates. In their reply the children illustrated their answers to this friendly general knowledge test with simple drawings and decorations (shown above).
THE OLDEST LIVING DEMOCRACY
by Michel SALMON

O n the quayside of Reykjavik, capital of modern Iceland, stands a Viking carved in granite, stern-featured beneath his winged helmet. With his back to the sea, he leans on the shaft of his steering-oar, his stony gaze fixed upon the rugged circle of black and purple volcanoes dominating the bay. It is Leifur Eriksson (Leif the Fortunate), who discovered America 500 years before Columbus and established a settlement in the snowy wastes of Labrador. Left the Fortunate ranks not only as the first of history's great explorers but also as an early humorist, for, to attract colonists, he gave the pleasant name of "Vineland"—the country of wine—to Labrador. (It was a tradition begun by his father, Eric the Red, who discovered and christened "Greenland").

Everything about Iceland, incidentally, has a similar stamp of fantasy—pay or tragic—and if there is any part of the world where Puck, fleeing from conformity with its levelling effect on scenery and customs which is a sign of our times, may have found refuge, it must surely be here in Ultima Thule, "the most distant land", where stood, according to the Ancients, the gate of Hell.

Iceland is a country of paradoxes, of sharp geographical and human contrast. Though it still bears the misnomer it was given by a near-distant land", where stood, according to the Ancients, the gate of Hell.

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Whalemeat is a favourite dish. Iceland’s only whaling station is situated in the Fjord of Hvottpóurr, to the north of Reykjavik, where during the season at least one whale is processed each day. Whale steaks, a popular item on the family menu, are eaten with potatoes cooked in sugar and a sweetened tapioca sauce. Fish, too, is an important item of diet, as well as being the country’s main export.

The Stone Igloo Home of an Artist. Near to Reykjavik is found this curious stone dwelling—home of the sculptor Sogur Jon Olafsson, who finds his models among the local people and works in the open air. Iceland can boast a galaxy of artistic talent out of all proportion to its population of 120,000 and area of some 40,000 square miles. In few other lands is there a more widespread love of good literature.

Grass—The Backbone of Farming. Icelanders have made grass, which grows well in the thin soil, the backbone of their farming. They raise cattle and small, hardy sheep and horses. In Spring the sheep are marked and put to grass on the hillsides where they are left until the farmers go out to collect them in the Autumn. This photo shows the “Rettir” or rounding up of the small and long-wooled flocks.

The statue of a Viking—one of many in Iceland—dominating this “Swan I with present-day life in the island. Nameplaces on maps still mark the sites today there is simply bare ground. Despite their everyday struggle to gain fish (below), from a more bountiful sea, the people of Iceland cherish...
THE ISLAND OF ICE AND OF FIRE Most of central Iceland is a wind-swept desert of sand and lava, ridged by mountains and strown with glaciers and snowfields that never melt. The valleys of the firths and the narrow coastal plains in the west and south are almost the only places where man can live. An eighth of all Iceland is buried under snow and ice and more than half is mountainous. But winters are mild.

this “Swan Lake” (above) is a reminder that the past remains bound up with the present. Old marks the site of former villages or the scene of long-past deeds where men struggled to gain a livelihood from a poor soil or, like these women salting fish, to cherish the Viking heritage in language, story-telling and customs.

EVERY ROOM HAS ITS OWN ROOF The traditional Icelandic farm is built partly below ground level with a separate roof for each room. The row of roofs seen on the left of this photo all belong to one farmhouse and represent a link with old Viking architecture. Typical also is the form of the Lutheran church often found in Iceland’s countryside. Newer houses are made of imported timber or concrete.

"STORI GEYSIR", THE GREAT GEYSER More than a hundred volcanoes, some still active, make Iceland one of the most volcanic regions of the world. The volcanic rocks heat countless hot springs and geysers, the largest of which is the famous Geysir (from geysa, Icelandic word meaning "to rush forth furiously"), from which the world’s geysers take their name. The warm spring waters are piped to heat houses.
When, one bright summer morning in 1944, Iceland re-established the Republic in the very spot where it had been hanged up, in the majestic amphitheatre of Thingvellir, hollowed out in the rock and lava beside a mighty lake—the members of parliament quite naturally and unfailingly donned the leather cape and breeches of the godards. The language they used, Islaenska, the root-language of the Scandinavian peoples—with its archaic system of writing and its total resemblance to the Romance languages—was very nearly the same as that spoken by their ancestors.

The Icelandic vocabulary is still extraordinarily rich. It comprises no fewer than 200,000 words and is far purer than any other European language, so it has preserved 57 per cent of the original Indo-European roots. It has fewer than 3,000 borrowed words. Icelandic has also preserved the old declensions and conjugations, with all their cases and tenses. One hundred and twenty-five out of its 130 suffixes date from the Aryan period. This extraordinary, complicated “Mandarin” is spoken by 140,000 people.

The town of Reykjavik was to include, almost unchanged, considerable portions of the Jonsbok, the old custom house which was destroyed in 1281. The past is everywhere alive, even in the most common daily practices, in the survival of customs which, today, sometimes strike us with a sense of the familiar. The Icelanders, for instance, have no patricians, no surnames handed on from father to son. They still observe the Viking custom, which was common in medieval Europe, of using only the Christian name. Children add the suffix son in the case of boys and dottir in the case of girls. Married women do not take their husband’s name, but retain the name of their fathers which reflects the respect shown to women in primitive Germanic society.

With the disadvantages of this system, not one Icelandic would agree to give it up. This attitude is something more than a childish, provincial chauvinism. It is this proud self-assertion of a small but determined nation which has, for centuries, withstood the combined assaults of malignant nature and men—volcanic eruptions (about 100 to date), earthquakes, periods of deadly cold, epidemics, famines, the ravages of English or Barbary pirates and the despotism of ambitious kings already thinking of Iceland’s strategic position. Despite so many heavy blows, whose effects are shown in the fluctuations of the country’s population (estimated at 80,000 in the eleventh century, and declining to a mere 50,000 at the time of the 1801 census), the people of Iceland have never lost faith in their future; and this justifies their proud, non-aggressive patriotism.

“In the past few decades, holiday-makers have been discovering the beauty of our scenery, sportsmen have made acquaintance with our trout streams, and military leaders have begun to appreciate our strategic importance, but the word Iceland has a name that is misleading

Natural hot springs tapped near Reykjavik provide water almost at boiling point for 3,000 homes and warm water for 33,000 homes, the rate of flow being about 88 gallons a second. The houses are grown bananas, pineapples and other tropical fruit. In some places water is piped through the soil to warm it for growing green peas, and it is also used in open-air swimming pools. Indeed, the climate of Iceland is rather misleading, for this country is much more temperate than Switzerland, the land of flames than the land of ice.
commentators appeared to display methods are prominent. As he which the most up-to-date teaching educational work being done, in shown by the tremendous amount of templation of the past. This is become petrified in fruitless con-

remarkable erudition. is struck by the large number of obscure saga, in which my seamen-
on some obscure point in a no less but was in fact a literary discussion on about women or liquor smuggling, 28,000, or 20 per cent of the popu-

pupils come by jeep, or riding ponies,

months, however, they are not hotels able stopping-places for travellers. small aerodromes. they are comfort-

springs, their pleasant guest-rooms,

themselves far away from the town.

swimming pools fed by warm mineral springs, their pleasant guest-rooms,

themselves far away from the town.

goes about the country, the traveller about women or liquor smuggling,

felt in university circles. On a more general basis, the inclusion of the country in a great international organization would meet one of the deepest wishes of the Icelanders, who still feel the hereditary dread of cultural isolation.

Without dealing exhaustively with intellectual developments in Iceland — with its wide variety of newspapers, its national theatre where works by Shakespeare, Pirandello and Bernard Shaw are presented in the language of the Vikings, its symphony orchestra and so forth — I should like to mention the most surprising feature of this small country's intellectual life, namely its great wealth of contemporary artists and writers worthy of international fame. If the word had not lost much of its force, this might well be described as a miracle; but it is a miracle brought about by intelligent action, by wise State patronage, which enables men who cannot count on a large enough audience within the boundaries of their own country to maintain a decent standard of living while practising their art. Among these men are Halldor Eiljan Laxness, the powerful novelist, considered by Scandinavians as comparable with the world's great writers; Gunnar Gunnarsson, the novelist and essayist, some of whose works written in Danish have earned him an honoured place; the painter Johannes Kjarval, a Van Gogh of the Arctic; the portrait-painter Jon Steffansson, a brilliant pupil of Matisse; the sculptor Sogurjon Olafsson, and others. This galaxy of talent gives the smallest and least favoured of the Nordic nations a prestige out of all proportion to its poverty and its tiny population.

The picture Iceland affords us is not merely that of a progressive people clinging doggedly to life in the most inhospitable of geographical surroundings. It is that of the triumph of the Spirit where Matter is most difficult to master, that of Arctic solitude overcome by a bond of union which links the dweller in Farthest Thule to all mankind, in the love of the truest treasures of humanity. It is an outstanding example of spiritual vitality.
It is light that makes plants grow but it is darkness that makes them blossom. By day the leaves absorb the energy of the sun and build the body of the plant from materials that are taken from the soil and the air. Water and carbon dioxide gas are chemically combined to make the materials that constitute the stem, the leaves and the roots. Without the right amount of darkness even healthy plants do not bloom and without seeds most food plants would soon die out. So the alternation of light and darkness is needed for the continuance of life on earth.

But plant life cannot go on unless there are seeds, which usually come from flowers or blossoms. And the development of flowers is dependent on periods of darkness, according to recent botanical research. Without the right amount of darkness even healthy plants do not bloom and without seeds most food plants would soon die out. So the alternation of light and darkness is needed for the continuance of life on earth.

The role of darkness is so important that it controls the geographical distribution of many types of plants over the earth. Some need a short night, some a long one. In the tropics the night does not vary much in length at various times of the year; in summer, as in the winter months, both day and night are about twelve hours long. But in the higher latitudes, towards the poles, both north and south, the summer nights are short and the day long. Only those plants can survive there which need only a short night for their flower production.

Sugar cane, for instance, needs a twelve-hour night and will never come to flower away from the tropics because in the temperate zones the summer nights are too short. The cockle-burr, on the other hand, needs only a nine-hour night and will thrive as far north as 60° of latitude, where the nine-hour night comes in August so that blooms may come and seeds may form before the coming of frost. Still farther north (or south) of the equator the nine-hour night comes too late in the season so that seeds do not ripen in time and the plant dies out. Plants that grow wild in the far north or south need only a short night to stimulate their flowerings.

The discovery of the important role of darkness in plant reproduction is a story of modern botanical research, told by Professor A.W. Nay and Dr. P. Knorr at Cornell University in a recent issue of the Scientific American. The most surprising discovery was the simple fact that it is the length of the dark period that counts in flower formation. A chrysanthemum flowers only when the dark period exceeds five hours. Darkening it by day does not affect its blooming but if it is put into artificial light for even a short time during the night it does not bloom. The darkness is then too short. Florists are learning to bring their plants to flower whenever they want them by controlling the length of the dark period. But flower-lovers who bring blossoms and seed. In this case, chemicals that are sprayed on plants from flowering and others can be sprayed with different chemicals to increase the number and size of the flowers produced. In a few commercial operations these methods have proved profitable.

In Hawaii also, experiments are now under way to increase the flowering of the litchi-nut trees. A chemical has not become commercial in Hawaii or anywhere else but 100 percent of the trees come to bloom. But when the leaves are sprayed with an imidazole-acetic acid nearly 90 percent of the trees blossom and bear fruit. This discovery may create a new industry for Hawaii and for other areas of the earth.

In other plants it is desirable to prevent flower formation. In the case of cotton, for instance, the leaves are edible and important and the flowers wish to be prevented from blossoming and seed. In this case, chemicals can be used to delay the formation of flowers. On the other hand, growers of pineapples can spray with a different chemical and thereby prevent flower formation.

Interference with the natural growth of plants for the benefit of man is thus not uncommon in special cases, but the largest and most important development will come when botanists come to learn the chemical nature of the substance that is produced by all plants and that is necessary to begin the formation of buds, followed by blossoms and seed. Present plants depend on the light to form this hormone, the chemical, but once it is identified, and manufactured, darkness may be used to stimulate it because that chemical could then be injected into the stem of the plant. It is as if animals and men were freed of their circadian variation. The major prospect perhaps is that in that case the far-northern and far-southern parts of the world might become productive because the long days and even the midnight sun would no longer interfere with the production of valuable food crops.
LIBERIA HAS APPOINTED THE FIRST U.N. TRAVELLING TEACHER

by André BLANCHET

I never thought I would come across a young white girl walking all alone along a jungle path in Liberia. It surprised me all the more in this country — the only independent Negro state in Africa — where only Negroes can become naturalized citizens, and where until seven years ago, only a handful of foreigners even lived in the capital, Monrovia.

It was not until 1945 that a forward-looking president opened the frontiers of Liberia to whites. Even today the white population is made up of only a few hundred foreigners, most of them employees on an American rubber plantation, businessmen, officials working on a contract basis, or diplomats. There are also a number of missionaries.

I suppose you would call the young American girl I found walking in the jungle a missionary too. But she is probably the only one of her kind in the world. Her "mission" is the United Nations, and the words that she spreads are those of international cooperation. Her name is Miss Dora Lee Allen and she is the world's first "Travelling Teacher for the United Nations".

The strangest thing about this unusual "missionary" is that she is not officially connected with the United Nations at all. The idea originally came from the President of Liberia, Mr. William S. Tubman, who conceived the travelling teacher scheme as a gesture of gratitude towards international organizations such as Unesco, the World Health Organization, the International Labour Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization, whose technical assistance experts are helping to modernize the country.

Miss Allen thus is an official of the Liberian Government, and all facilities and transport for her work are provided by the authorities. Every day she goes off to tell the schoolchildren in the different primary schools about the United Nations, the things it stands for and the work it is doing.

Primary schools in Liberia are far from rich. Few of them, even in Monrovia, have enough desks or tables. Almost always the children have to sit crammed together on tiny benches. And since none of the schools is provided with electricity, Miss Allen is unable, for the moment at least, to illustrate her lessons with films which the U.N. Information Centre could provide free of charge.

There are many things in the countryside of Liberia which remind one of the American South. Between 1821 and 1860, about 10,000 American Negroes landed on the West Coast of Africa and set up the first independent Negro Republic on the African continent. They brought with them an architectural style which was far removed from the traditional mud hut one usually associates with Africa. They constructed their homes in the Southern Colonial style — tall wooden houses with corrugated iron roofs and a verandah built on all sides.

The old Baptist church in Johnsonville, with its bell tower housed in a separate wooden structure, also makes one think of the South. For want of better accommodation, this rusty iron church, with its dilapidated floor-boards and — more important — its benches, is used as a school for 150 pupils.

Soon after Miss Allen arrived, the school was brightened up by a small multi-coloured tree with 60 branches and — more important — its benches, is used as a school for 150 pupils.

The University of Monrovia is now developing its faculty of science. With Unesco aid, classes have been equipped with microscopes and other laboratory equipment. The University of Monrovia is now developing its faculty of science. With Unesco aid, classes have been equipped with microscopes and other laboratory equipment.

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The spirit of Christmas and the New Year, which is a time of colour and gaiety, and above all, a time of joy for children, has been captured delightfully in a series of five Greeting Cards for 1952 produced by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund. On the theme “Round the World with UNICEF” the cards depict some of the favourite animals of children in different parts of the world—the camel, the elephant, the reindeer, the donkey and the water buffalo—bearing cargoes of food and medicine to the needy.

These cards serve as a reminder of the work UNICEF has been carrying out among many millions of the world’s children, and of the need for continued contributions to its fund. Each box of five cards sold will help UNICEF to provide enough BCG vaccine to immunize 12 children against TB; or enough DDT powder to protect 10 children against malaria; or enough skim milk to give eight children a glass of milk every day for a week.

UNICEF helps countries to help themselves, the nations receiving its help “matching” the value of the Organization’s aid locally, thereby doubling and often trebling the numbers of children reached. When present programmes are completed, one out of every 15 children in the world will have received some form of UNICEF aid.

In addition, this year’s official United Nations Greeting Card, an interpretation of the U.N. building in its New York setting—designed and donated by the famous French artist, Raoul Dufy—is being sold for the benefit of UNICEF.

**THE REINDEER:** Even in a tiny Finnish village some 70 miles north of the Arctic Circle, needy children are not forgotten by UNICEF. Supplies are sent to them by reindeer and sleigh.

**THE CAMEL:** In the desert cross of Jordan, Gaza and Lebanon, a caravan of camels laden with parcels of powdered milk marked UNICEF, have been making the journey. They are destined for mothers and children among the Middle East refugees. Other supplies go to 30,000 children and mothers in Gaza who are non-refugees, but whose families have lost their lands and their livelihood.

**THE DONKEY:** Across the thirsty scrub and high savannah, a small boy guides a mule donkey laden with milk and other supplies to distribute to needy children, a journey of 500 miles. Donkeys have been a great help in the rural areas. They have enabled UNICEF to reach children in remote parts of the world.

**THE WATER-BUFFALO:** In South-East Asia, where 125,000 mother and child welfare centres have been equipped by UNICEF, there are many areas where transporting supplies is a difficult problem. During the rainy season even jeeps cannot penetrate to the remote villages. Supplies are sent in sailing sampans and unloaded into sampans which go down the canals.

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FOR THOSE WHO LIVE BY THE PEN

by José de BENITO

In their leisure time, like Sir Francis Bacon. For one Erasmas or Voltaire, favoured by a sovereign and with some care of penmanship, there is an unnumbered multitude of writers of essays, both in the news-papery and in the philosophical, who paid for the boldness of their thought with their lives. We must not forget Galileo, Servet or Pico della Mirandola.

There was yet another hardship under which the writer laboured. He had to decide which to make of his work. Whether to write the fact or the fable, the adage or the aphorism, the ad-lib or the essay, the quip or the pun, the couplet or the satire? He might have been a tiny Leech, an apothecary, in the service of some great personage, a political or social satirist, a blind poet, or a learned man. He might have been a kind of priest, a lawyer, or a doctor, depending on the interests of those who had to live by their pen. However, the writer, not without the help of the corporate spirit of authors was a cumulative process in the development of the author's rights. The survival of the writer's interest in the right to enjoy the fruit of their toil.

In 1798, under Queen Anne, Act was promulgated in England by the Statute of Apron, learning, by vesting copies of printed books in the authors or purchasers of such copies, during the tenure of the author's life or during the lives of the author's children, or as long as there were that number of living descendants. The act was intended to be a means of assisting the progress of science and the useful arts, and to continue the fight, with the profit from their works, to the benefit of their authors and book-sellers. In France, Beaumarchais concerned himself with the protection of the rights of playwrights and as a result won for them the laws on performance and publication rights were promulgated in 1791 and 1795 respectively.

As far as copyright and its accompanying financial benefits were concerned, the second half of the 19th century was a real spring-time. In every country there was a move to found an organization copyright, while international dealings in literary work presaged the future. Other languages raised new problems. The first in the French, and as such was forbidden to exploit his priestly position for his own gain. However while the actual book was merchandised, the author did the manufacturing. The normal work of the scribe — the man who did the writing — was the sale of his work of the writers whose loving care created the intellectual heritage of mankind. Writing was the privilege and responsibility of a small caste and from the times of the earliest Greeks these men regarded themselves as the spiritual guides of their people. Again, because the written word is "imprintable," the law has been "written" even since the tables of stone of the 19 Commandments on Sinai and the Twelve Tables of early Roman law were produced and printed. For centuries, the written word has been eagerly sought and, both before and after the invention of the books, the writer was much better placed than a serf's case, on foot and unaided, the peril of his life, but, in the service of his master, he fetched fabulous sums. However, as often happens, the awakening of there being "no property more peculiarly a man's own than that which is produced by the labour of his mind," it was not until the 19th century, the maker of man's fight for freedom, it is. Fame—if he won it—was the greatest reward of man's fight for freedom, it is. Fame—if he won it—was the greatest reward of man's fight for freedom, it is. So the process was a long one and for

THROUGHOUT the centuries the history of writers as a class has been one of continuous struggle with the obstacles of poverty, neglect, and persecution. The earliest writers, such as the Scribes who recorded the laws of the ancient Egyptians, were not always highly regarded. They were often slaves and their work was not always given due recognition. However, as societies developed and the need for written record increased, the status of writers improved. The early Greeks were particularly fond of written expression, and their writers were highly respected. The early Romans also valued written expression, and their writers were often well paid. However, despite the respect shown to writers, they often faced financial difficulties and were at times forced to seek alternative means of support. This was particularly true in times of war, when writers were frequently conscripted to serve in the military. Nevertheless, the dedication of writers to their craft remained steadfast, and they continued to strive for recognition and reward.

The early Christians were also significant in the history of writing. They developed the use of written expression to spread their message, and their scribes and authors were highly respected. However, the Christian Church also faced persecution, and many of its writers suffered for their beliefs. Despite this, the Church continued to value written expression, and its scribes and authors were able to continue their work and spread their message.

As societies continued to develop and the need for written expression increased, the status of writers continued to rise. The medieval period saw the rise of the scribal culture, and the work of scribes and authors was highly valued. The Renaissance period saw the rise of the printing press, and the work of writers was able to be disseminated more widely. Despite this, many writers continued to face financial difficulties and were at times forced to seek alternative means of support.

In the modern era, the status of writers has continued to rise. The 19th century saw the rise of the Romantic movement, and the work of writers was able to be disseminated through the publication of novels and poetry. The 20th century saw the rise of literary theory, and the work of writers was able to be analyzed and interpreted in new ways. Despite this, many writers continue to face financial difficulties and are at times forced to seek alternative means of support.

In conclusion, the history of writers as a class has been one of continuous struggle with the obstacles of poverty, neglect, and persecution. However, through the dedication of writers to their craft, the status of writers has continued to rise over time. The work of writers has been able to be disseminated through a variety of means, and the work of writers continues to be valued and appreciated today.
there are few schoolboys who have never dreamed of living the life of a master mariner. How, during their geography lessons, many children must have wished that they too could set off on a voyage to places they read about in their textbooks and see it all for themselves instead of having to memorise the names of cities and long lists of national products. How different too it would be if Columbus, or Balboa, or Cook could visit the classroom to tell his story. Something approaching this ideal is possible today for thousands of children in schools associated with Ship Adoption Societies which have been formed in five European countries. Thanks to these Societies the schoolchildren are in constant touch with scores of ships on the oceans and in ports and harbours. They follow the fortunes and progress of the ships through the eyes of the captains and crews with whom they exchange visits and letters. In this way, geography—a human science—makes an important contribution to international understanding. Thanks to the accounts of voyages and visits they receive from "their" captains and crews, the schoolchildren get really "live" lessons for, as an old Dutch proverb puts it, "He who travels a great deal has a great deal to tell." The interest and enthusiasm aroused in schools gives a general impetus to a child's desire for learning. For an account of this link between ships and schools see Page 3. (M.S.A. photo.)