

Your Knowledge Against Professional Opinions

CLARENCE L. BROWN, Northwestern University

Geographers are frequently confronted with the problem of the choice of texts and supplementary teaching materials which are best suited to specific courses. There are many standards which may be used in measuring the quality of such materials. One of these standards is the determination of materials used professionally. This paper presents a summary of a survey which was not planned to produce exhaustive and final results but rather to show highly selective and directional results.

With an anticipated increase in the number of teachers securing master's degrees, the question was raised concerning the adequacy of departmental reference libraries in specific materials. These materials relate to a one-semester college course in the Geography of North America. This course was emphasized because of its importance in the high school curriculum. In order to have a means of comparison, it was decided to make a survey of the specific professional materials recommended by a highly select group of nationally recognized institutions.

"The institutions included in this survey are all members of the Association of American Universities, which is recognized as one of the leading accrediting agencies in the country. This association, consisting of thirty-two universities, is deeply concerned with raising the standards of work in colleges and universities. It was therefore assumed that responses to this survey from these institutions would give a picture of practices in superior institutions."¹ Thus, with the establishment of a sound principle and practice it was decided to enlarge the survey for the professional benefit of the teachers and students, by including typical, specific geography courses in the junior and senior high schools. The survey was interested in securing judgments and recommendations as to textbooks, atlases, wall maps, and collateral readings of these three levels of maturation. The questionnaire was sent to those institutions of the Association of American Universities which offered courses in geography. Of the twenty-three universities to which the questionnaire was sent, returns were received from fourteen.

I. Junior High School Material Recommended.

Textbooks: Whitbeck, Whitaker, and Durand, *The Working World* (2).*

Atlases and Maps: Goode, *School Atlas* (7).

¹ Brink, W. G., Professor of Education, Assistant Dean Graduate School, Northwestern University.

* Refers to the number of times the material was recommended. Hence, the numerical values may serve as indices. No attempt has been made to arrange these materials in any form of classification other than by giving numerical value.

Collateral Readings: *Journal of Geography* (1). *Geographic News Bulletin* (1). Huntington, *Principles of Economic Geography* (1). Salisbury, Barrows, and Tower, *Elements of Geography* (1).

II. Senior High School Material Recommended.

Textbooks: Colby and Foster, *Economic Geography* (6). Smith, J. R., *North America* (2). Smith, *Men and Resources* (2). Ridgley and Ekblaw, *Influence of Geography on Our Economic Life* (2). Jones, C. F., *Economic Geography* (2).

Atlases and Maps: Goode, *School Atlas* (9). Philip and Finch, *Standard School Atlas* (2). Philip, *Senior School Atlas* (2). Philip, *New Handy General Atlas* (2).

Collateral Readings: Jones, C. F., *Economic Geography* (3). Colby and Foster, *Economic Geography* (2). Ridgley and Ekblaw, *Influence of Geography on Our Economic Life* (2). Case and Bergsmark, *Modern World Geography* (2). Smith, J. R., *Men and Resources* (2). *Journal of Geography* (2).

III. Recommended Material for a One-Semester, Regional College Course in the Geography of North America.

Textbooks: Smith, J. R., *North America* (9). Atwood, *Physiographic Provinces of North America* (1). Smith, J. R., *Men and Resources* (1). Miller and Parkins, *Geography of North America* (1).

Atlases and Maps: Goode, *School Atlas* (10). Lobeck, *Physiographic Diagram of the United States* (4). Atwood, *Regional Map of North America* (3). Denoyer-Geppert, *Economic Maps* (2). Philip, *Senior School Atlas* (2). Philip, *New Handy General Atlas* (2). *Geological Maps* (2).

Collateral Readings: English and American Periodical Literature (9). *Geographical Review* (4). Fenneman, *Physiography of the Eastern United States* (3). Fenneman, *Physiography of the Western United States* (3). Miller and Parkins, *Geography of North America* (2). Parkins and Whitaker, *Our National Resources and their Conservation* (2). Parkins, *The South* (2). Bennett, *Soil Conservation* (2). Foreign and United States Government Reports (5). *Economic Geography* (3). Statistical Abstracts of the United States (3).

Taking the survey as a whole, it is interesting to observe that of the thirty-two institutions which make up the Association of American Universities, twenty-three offered courses in geography. Of these twenty-three institutions covered by the questionnaire, fourteen responded. In these fourteen institutions the paucity of knowledge relating to the teaching materials and techniques of the junior and senior high schools was astonishing and seems rather disheartening.