

NOTES ON, AND EXTRACTS FROM:

VIGANDER, Haakon, "Mutual Revision of History Textbooks in the Nordic Countries", UNESCO/ED/78, Paris, 15 July 1950 (36 pages)

The Norden Associations were set up to take an interest in the mutual heritage of the Scandinavian countries. Their approach to textbook improvement was based on three commonly accepted principles - namely, that it should be international, mutual, and positive as well as negative. Most of the success has been achieved in the field of history, with some beginnings made in geography and literature.

A Joint Committee for History Teaching was appointed in 1933 with a couple of members from each country. These two members have usually been the Chairman and Secretary of the Commission of Experts in each country, with the Chairman usually being a university professor of history, and the Secretary being a secondary school history teacher. The Commission of Experts undertook the following tasks:

(1) Following up in their own countries the editing of history textbooks concerned with Nordic history, and trying to make these books conform with the principles that each should give considerable information about neighbouring countries and that each should avoid statements likely to give offense to other peoples.

(2) Examining and reporting to the Joint Committee on all textbooks sent to them by official bodies, by other Commissions of Experts, or by publishers and authors.

(3) Taking any other necessary steps on their own initiative.

Expenses have been borne by the Norden Association in the country concerned.