

EDUCATION, POLITICS AND SOCIETY IN LEICESTER 1833-1940

by

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## MAPS

For the convenience of the reader two maps have been inserted at the end of the thesis. The first one shows Leicester as it was in the early nineteenth century, before major industrial expansion. This was the town that formed the scene of quickening antagonism in educational and other matters between Anglicans and Dissenters. The second map, drawn in 1875, shows the town after major industrial expansion at mid-century, at the time when the Leicester School Board, in the first decade of its existence, was engaged on its most active phase of school building.

Both maps have been photocopied from Colin D. B. Ellis's History in Leicester (Leicester, 1948).

## ABSTRACT

The period of educational history between 1833 and 1940 has been one of rapid change, to be compared with the mid-seventeenth century, with its Commonwealth thinkers and experimenters, and its aftermath of dissenting academies, promoting disparate philosophical outlooks. Acting and reacting upon one another in 1833-1940 were conflicting groups, that a newly achieved democracy allowed to flourish. An increasingly articulate electorate able to encompass many different points of view made it certain that bodies like the short-lived school boards would be microcosms of the communities that they served.

Many existing accounts discuss the effects of occurrences at the national level; the Education Acts of 1833, 1870, 1902 and 1918 significantly altered the direction of educational growth, as also did changed economic circumstances, people's ideas and demands, and the disposition of power. However, repercussions at the local level varied, for each community was different, and those who made decisions had their own ideas and plans.

This thesis examines the development of education in Leicester, with particular reference to the interaction of political and social factors. During 1833-1940 Leicester changed from a Liberal-Dissenting town with a single industry to a relatively conservative city with a complex industrial structure.

Educationally it was not a smooth transition, for the provision of schools for the working-classes in Victorian times was one focus of the struggle between Liberal-Dissent and Tory-Establishment, while in the early twentieth century the development of secondary and higher education was bedevilled by the struggle between those who still viewed them as a middle-class preserve and those who cried 'Secondary Education for all'. Moreover, there were unique elements and personalities that precluded Leicester from being a national stereotype.

In 1833 Leicester was a substantial growing town. As canal construction had approached from the north, to provide a link with the Trent Navigation, just before the beginning of the century, it had been noted that 'the banks of the Soar in the vicinity of this town, already wear the appearance of increasing commerce. Speculations are increasing, Wharfs are preparing, and Manufactories are erecting to welcome the approach of our expected Navigation'.<sup>1</sup> Thereafter supplies of coal from Derbyshire had made industrial expansion possible, and the town had grown from a population of 17,000 in 1801 to more than 40,000 in 1831.

All was not well with Leicester, however, for John Curtis, in his Topographical History of the County of Leicester (1831), had stated with truth that: 'While the town in less than thirty years has expanded to twice its former bulk, too little, it must be confessed, has been gained in elegance and beauty. The new streets have been laid out without much, if any, regard to taste and regularity, and the new buildings are in general destitute of ornament and uniformity'.<sup>2</sup> Its municipal affairs were in a serious condition, with a Tory oligarchy controlling the Council, and a Dissenting Liberal group of businessmen resisting all Council efforts to extend its authority, or the scope of its enterprises, so that the town was one of only four incorporated boroughs without improvement commissioners.<sup>3</sup> The only substantial industry, hosiery, though employing more people than ever before, was in a state of chronic stagnation. By 1810 the fancy hosiery favoured

throughout the eighteenth century had gone out of fashion, and the demand was mainly for cheaper plain hose.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the end of the boom created by the Napoleonic Wars had worsened the effect, so that, until the development of the factory industry in mid-century, there was virtually a permanent depression, punctuated by even greater depressions.<sup>5</sup> As more people migrated from the countryside, often as a result of dispossession of land following parliamentary enclosures, they merely swelled the ranks of the poor.<sup>6</sup> The tendency for hosiers to keep a higher number of stocking frames in production than was warranted by the demand, so as to maximize frame-rents, meant that work was shared among a great many people, many of whom would otherwise have drifted away to seek work in other towns, but who, in the circumstances, remained where they were, in relative poverty. Hosiery was not an industry that needed an educated work-force. Youths became fully-proficient by fifteen or sixteen. From then on they earned as much as their parents, adding to the over-supply of labour.<sup>7</sup>

The situation in Leicester, so far as the working classes were concerned, was more favourable to political action than education. The town was not particularly revolutionary, but there had been disorders. There had been food riots in 1792 that were savagely suppressed, for fear of a re-enactment of the French Revolution on English soil.<sup>8</sup> Luddism had broken out in Loughborough in 1814, and, since it was followed by the founding of the Leicester Hampden Club (one of thirty-five such clubs that developed in Leicestershire),

which was undoubtedly popular with framework-knitters, who joined in substantial numbers, it was assumed by the authorities, not altogether incorrectly, that both Luddism and the Hampden Clubs were different expressions of the same discontent. Suspected of plotting insurrection, the latter were, consequently, watched somewhat uneasily, as were similar clubs throughout the country. A Committee of the House of Commons noted that in the Hampden clubs, 'and particularly those that are established in the great manufacturing districts of Lancashire, Leicestershire, Nottinghamshire, and Derbyshire....nothing short of a revolution is the object'.<sup>9</sup>

The very real murmurings of discontent among framework-knitters had been supported locally by the eloquence of Robert Hall, the Radical Baptist minister, and nationally by William Cobbett, who upbraided the stockingers in 1821, for turning away from the hope of parliamentary reform to the cause of trade unionism.<sup>10</sup> But suppression had been the order of the day throughout the country as well as in Leicester. The peace was achieved by vigilance in rooting out, not the cause of disorders, but the people who might incite riots.

In such a situation the only associations that had had any educational intent, other than the societies founding day and Sunday schools for small children, were middle-class in origin and membership. William Gardiner, the son of a hosier, and a man of considerable cultural attainments, particularly in the realm of music, belonged to the Adelphi Club, which had formed around the

flamboyant personality of Richard Phillips in 1790, to foster the discussion of philosophical subjects.<sup>11</sup> Phillips, a restive, though extremely talented young man, who later, in 'Dick Whittington' fashion, set out for London, earning there a fortune and gaining a knighthood, had set himself up at the age of twenty-one as a schoolmaster in 1788. He gave his pupils a 'thorough knowledge of spelling, reading, writing and arithmetic', but was financially unsuccessful. Thereafter he 'set up in the hesiery line'.<sup>12</sup> Before long he had changed again, becoming the editor and proprietor of the Radical Leicester Herald, in connection with which he also had a bookseller's business. It is possible that his ventures into the founding of cultural societies were conducted, as Patterson suggests, with an eye to the bookseller's profits.<sup>13</sup> Yet it is equally certain that he was the kind of person with a genuine need to communicate with kindred souls. Not only did he found the Adelphi; There was also the literary society known as the Leicester Constitutional Society. He was able to find kindred spirits in Dr. Arnold, a physician and Liberal Churchman, who was persuaded to become president of the latter, and also a number of prominent Dissenters. Both societies, however, had disappeared in 1793, having hastily disbanded when Phillips was imprisoned for selling a copy of Paine's Rights of Man.<sup>14</sup>

Whenever framework-knitters organised themselves it was mainly with the intention of fighting their miserable conditions. During the 1820s and early 1830s they wavered between political reform

and direct action, not supporting either with very great enthusiasm. What interest they had in combining tended to disappear whenever a period of relative prosperity came along. In 1824, for instance, the Leicester Framework-knitters' Society was disbanded for lack of interest. Thereafter came wage reductions, which soon forced the men to renew their association.<sup>15</sup> Later still, when a particularly severe depression hit the hosiery industry at the end of the 1830s, and the organising talents of Thomas Cooper were available, it was Chartism, itself wavering between the 'moral force' of William Lovett and the 'physical force' of Fergus O'Connor, that had more appeal. Not only was there no real yearning for education, for there would surely have been Sunday school classes for adults early in the century if there had been, as there was in Birmingham as early as 1789, a demand for them, but there were no inspired enthusiasts, like William Singleton and Samuel Fox in Nottingham, or William Smith and Stephen Prust in Bristol.<sup>16</sup>

Developments in Leicester had to await the spread of mechanics' institutes to the midlands. The first one in the area was at Birmingham, where in 1825 a combination of Non-conformity (particularly Unitarianism), Radicalism and moderate Liberalism prevailed over the general feeling among manufacturers that it was injudicious to encourage any combinations of working men, in view of the unrest and the spread of trade unionism following the repeal of the Combination Acts.<sup>17</sup> Others came into being at the large towns of Hanley (1828), Leicester (1833), Coventry (1833),



Wolverhampton (1835), and Nottingham (1837), as well as in many smaller towns, like Leek, Tamworth, Loughborough, Hinckley, Dudley, Rugby, Uttoxeter, Rugeley and Stourbridge. In almost all of them there were three factors evident, a group of artisans ready and willing to take up membership, a sponsoring group of middle-class people, who were typically Liberals, with a majority of Non-conformists among them, and an opposing group, usually predominantly middle-class and Tory. Sometimes, however, the opposing Tory group was small, its numbers having been reduced by other Tories who preferred to help in sponsorship of an institute. At Nottingham, for instance, there was a strong nucleus of skilled artisans enjoying the sponsorship, not only of middle-class Liberals, but also of sympathetic members of the aristocracy, like the Dukes of Newcastle and Portland, Earl Manvers, and the Earl of Scarborough. Only a very small group was left to express its hostility and its fear of 'the revolutionary spirit'.<sup>18</sup> In almost all cases, Leicester included, the attempt was made to allow the artisans to run the institute, or at least to allow a generous proportion of the committee membership to the artisans. Wolverhampton seems to have been the most significant exception. There the artisans, though much in evidence among the membership, were so dominated by the middle-class sponsors that the latter formed the whole of the committee.<sup>19</sup>

Middle-class sponsorship in Leicester was similar to that in other towns, in that it sought to divert working-class energies from specifically working-class objectives toward the improvement

of industry. Those who held this view felt that the study of science should be the main objective; through it might come a new relationship between employers and workers, the latter taking an interest in improving production, and in the process increasing his own wages. It was a fanciful, but not entirely selfish view, though it was regarded as such in the pages of the New Moral World in 1840, when it was stated that mechanics' institutes were instructing in those things that were in line with 'the interests of the clergy and wealthier classes'.<sup>20</sup> To men like William Gardiner, however, the formation of a mechanics' institute in Leicester was seen as an opportunity also to introduce to the working-classes some more advanced cultural pursuits. He was not averse to the dissemination of 'useful information', which he regarded as essential, for the resulting increase in technology and trade would provide increased leisure as well as more money, that might be devoted to a wider education, in which the literary and musical arts would be able to flourish.<sup>21</sup>

There was an aspect peculiar to Leicester, however, which was associated with Dissent and with the political struggle to reform the Corporation. This struggle was to reach its greatest height during the two years after 1833. Some Liberals were only too pleased to encourage an effort that would embarrass and annoy the Church-Tory establishment. There were men like William and John Biggs, successful hosiers, members of the Great Meeting Unitarian congregation, and future mayors of the town, to whom it was one more arena in which to fly the flag of Radical Dissent, and

gain support for the overthrow of an unrepresentative Corporation.<sup>22</sup>

Middle-class Anglicans tended, as has been observed, to oppose mechanics' institutes, especially if they were strongly supported by Liberal-Dissent. This was not merely because they feared insurrection as a possible consequence, but also because Liberal-Dissenting sponsorship tended to result in their general adoption of scientific studies unrelated to religious principles. For science was often equated with materialism, and materialism was only one step away from the active promotion of irreligious tendencies.<sup>23</sup> That irreligious tendencies already existed among working men in Leicester is not to be doubted. Agnostic socialist groups to the left of the Chartists were certainly in existence in 1840. Thomas Cooper acknowledged them, and the sympathy they aroused in some members of his own Shakespearean Association of Leicester Chartists.<sup>24</sup> On the other hand, there were Church-Whigs, like Matthew Babington, Isaac Hodgson and the Reverend George Holt, who supported the Leicester Mechanics' Institute from the beginning.<sup>25</sup>

The artisans who formed the core of the Institute's membership were generally apolitical, and conformed readily to the already established tradition of the movement regarding the exclusion of politics and religion from study and discussion. Among the sponsors there was a subtle difference of opinion. Babington and Hodgson, fearful of blasphemy and sedition in an organisation not under ecclesiastical control, supported a total ban on polit-

ics and religion. The Dissenters, however, engineered a compromise, in the form of an agreement to avoid party politics and controversial religion.<sup>26</sup>

There can be little doubt that the aim of the Dissenters, consciously or unconsciously, was to absorb the artisans, through the kind of social mixing that occurred. They also wished to be seen to be identifying themselves with the problems of the working-classes. This annoyed even the Liberal Churchman George Holt, who observed, with much displeasure, that 'they insist on the most respectable ladies being placed at the Lectures on a level with Mechanics' wives'.<sup>27</sup>

Like most of its contemporaries throughout the country the Leicester Mechanics' Institute enjoyed a brief measure of success in its purely educational activities, and then deteriorated to the point where it served only as a library and social meeting place for people inhabiting the fringes of middle-class life. By 1835 it had been housed partly in the New Hall in Wellington Street, described as being 'the severest and plainest version of the classical style, using the newly popular stucco' and as being 'saved from ugliness by its good proportions', and partly in rooms in Bishop Street.<sup>28</sup> In the former there was a reading room and library, which by 1871 (when it was given to the Town Council) was to house more than 5,000 books, and a room in which lectures, ranging in scope from 'Electricity' to 'Domestic and Social Economy', and concerts were held.<sup>29</sup> The membership fee

was a minimum of eight shillings per annum, but quarterly membership was also available.<sup>30</sup> This fee must have been prohibitive for the average framework-knitter; so it is no surprise to learn that in January 1838 the committee were regretting that less than 600 people had participated in the Institute's programmes during the preceding year. Even the classes in elementary subjects were not very well attended, as table 1 indicates.<sup>31</sup> In this case the poor quality of teaching may have been partly to blame, for, when one arithmetic class was more successful than usual, it was noted as having been taught by the master of the British school in Mill Street, whose work 'had been greatly appreciated'.<sup>32</sup> By 1854

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**Table 1**      **Leicester Mechanics' Institute Classes in 1838**

	<u>Evening</u>	<u>No. registered</u>	<u>Average attendance</u>
Arithmetic	Tues.	10	?
Algebra	Mon.	?	?
Drawing	Wed.	16	12
French	Thurs.	?	6
English grammar	Thurs.	12	9
Latin	Wed.	?	6
Music	Tues.	?	14
Writing	Mon.	11	8
Mutual instruction	Sat.	11	9

Source: F. B. Lott, The Story of the Leicester Mechanics' Institute 1833-1871 (Leicester, 1935).

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the lectures and classes were seriously reduced in number and scope; the Institute was fast becoming 'a club with a library and reading room'.<sup>33</sup> Three years later, though the library was more successful than it had ever been, the teaching activities had entirely disappeared, when, for all practical purposes, the Institute ceased to

exist as a serious educational venture.<sup>34</sup>

Right from the beginning mechanics' institutes had gained most of their membership from the ranks of the artisan class, rather than from the working-classes generally. The result was that activities were related much more to the interests of ambitious skilled workers and clerks; other working-class membership tended to fall off as time went on. Before its collapse in 1843 the Birmingham Institute had been reduced to only 300 members, hardly representative of the town's population of 142,000, while Coventry was reduced to only 200 out of a population of 30,000.<sup>35</sup> So that Leicester was not unusual in its decline.

The drifting away of working-class membership cannot be attributed merely to the problem of fee payment or to poor teaching, though the effects of these combined with trade cycles were very discouraging. Men who were earning no more than four shillings and sixpence a week during the depression of 1837-1843, as framework-knitters in Leicester were, could hardly be expected to remain in membership over a long period.<sup>36</sup> Taking out membership for a quarter at a time, they often found it impossible to pay the fee for the next quarter. This meant that, for people only on the fringes of literacy, for whom early reinforcement was needed, there were disastrous breaks in study of three, six or more months. When they did return, their earlier efforts having been dissipated, and often overtired from a long day's work, they became discouraged. This severe disadvantage, coupled with poor

home conditions, where lighting was frequently inadequate for home study (making the loss of the right to use the reading room more serious), daunted the spirits of all but the keenest.

Social divisions also added to the discomfort of working-class membership. In an age when social class was clearly demarcated by distinctiveness of dress, language and cultural attainments, it was not likely that the ill-fed, poorly clothed framework-knitter would have felt comfortable beside a well-dressed conversationalist like William Gardiner, or the Reverend George Holt, the Liberal, but somewhat arrogant curate of Oadby, who seemed to feel that the master-servant relationship of everyday life should be reflected in the Institute's administration. Holt savagely reproached two aspiring, though unbusinesslike, mechanics, who had in their turn occupied the committee chairmanship. 'If', he said, 'Mr. Cort, their master....had also been elected a Committee man, what a becoming sight it would have been some evening, for him to have found one of his workmen elevated to the chair, in preference to other members of higher rank'.<sup>37</sup>

In a town of Leicester's size the Mechanics' Institute could only achieve reasonable success if it appealed to a large number of people, constituting a much larger percentage than was necessary at, for instance, Manchester. Had substantial numbers joined in the early years a varied programme to suit a wide range of tastes could have been attempted. Those institutes that maintained activities with increased membership after 1850 were often in smaller towns than Leicester, and where recognition was given to

the problems of working men with little money and negligible basic education. At Evesham, for instance, membership increased from 75 in 1850 to about 130 during the 1860-1875 period, and was mainly a result of the development of a working men's section from 1857.

Within a very short time there was a constant membership of more than fifty working men, paying a subscription of twopence per week, and enjoying activities related to their level of understanding.

At Stourbridge the institute combined with a working men's institute in 1857, the latter retaining its separate identity within the total structure until 1891.<sup>38</sup> The Leicester Institute lacked any inspired move of this kind.

The Leicester Institute also failed to appeal to the majority of middle-class people in the town. By the 1860s, when Henry Lawrence noted that membership was almost entirely limited to middle-class citizens,<sup>39</sup> it was clear that even among this group the institution had failed to attract a substantial enough following to ensure survival. The annual report for 1839 had mentioned the 'diminution of the prejudice against the Institute which had long existed in many persons, and had rendered them, if not unfriendly to it, unwilling to take any active part in its work'.<sup>40</sup> Its guarded phraseology, however, indicated the sober truth that many remained opposed. The Leicester Journal continued to accuse the Institute of being a 'mere political union'.<sup>41</sup> Already though, even Liberal middle-class people were turning their attention elsewhere. In 1835, when they were still embroiled in the final stages of the struggle to reform the Corporation, there was a feel-



ing on both sides of the political fence that 'where there were many men equally educated yet kept apart by sectarian or party feelings, there ought to be some common ground of union'.<sup>42</sup> So that, when the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society was founded, the aims were stated to be 'the reading and discussion of papers on literary and scientific works, and the formation of a museum and library of scientific works'.<sup>43</sup> In order that there should be no split in membership it was ruled that questions of theology and politics were to be strictly excluded, though this sometimes proved to be difficult to maintain. When, for instance, a Dr. East gave a lecture on 'The Life and Times of Savonarola', he was accused by Captain Harris of breaking this rule.<sup>44</sup> The society did, however, contribute to a better understanding between the opposing forces in the civic and religious life of the town, at the cost of the Mechanics' Institute, from which it took away the most enquiring minds.

It was clearly important for the Institute to keep what membership it had among the artisans who aspired to middle-class status. As early as 1838 classes at the Manchester Institute consisted of small numbers of apprentices from shops, and very highly skilled artisans, 'who have received a superior education', and who demanded a high level of instruction.<sup>45</sup> In the West Riding of Yorkshire it was noted that those attending classes were 'not of the class of mechanics, but are connected with the higher branches of handicraft trades, or are clerks in offices, and in many instances young men connected with liberal professions'.<sup>46</sup>

Yet in Leicester even this aspiring group was lost. Mechanics' Institutes that remained successful, even after losing working-class support, were those that provided tuition for the variety of examinations, like those of the Science and Art Department and the Society of Arts, that became available from the 1850s and 1860s. Wardle notes that the Nottingham Institute held Science and Art classes after 1862.<sup>47</sup> The Birmingham and Midland Institute, which was formed in 1854, was much more successful than its predecessor because, through the initial urging of Dr. Lyon Playfair, an early liaison with the Science and Art Department was established. By 1859 Society of Arts examinations were also in use there.<sup>48</sup> In Leicester though, the development of science classes by Edward Atkins at St. Martin's School during the 1860s successfully forestalled any possibility of such a development at the Institute.

During the 1830s there were other educational developments in the country that were to have their repercussions in Leicester. Ironically these new forms of association came about, at least in part, as a result of the workers' reluctance to join the Mechanics' Institute. For although the latter had aroused their interest in education, it was a different type of schooling that was needed. It was argued that men who were enslaved by machines for the greater part of their lives were not interested in industry during what few leisure hours were available. The malaise of the hosiery industry did not, in any case, encourage them to think in terms of devising means of increasing production. The workman felt that he knew his job well enough. If he wanted education at

all, it was as a means of escaping from the degradations of the economic system. This explains why, when the Mechanics' Institute was virtually moribund, in 1865, a literary and musical entertainment in the New Hall was attended in large numbers by working-class people, who were said to be 'greatly delighted'.<sup>49</sup> It also explains why many men preferred the informal atmosphere of the public house, with its cheerful conviviality, and the opportunity to exchange ideas and opinions in an unstructured situation, without deference to anyone, or restrictions on the topic.<sup>50</sup> In many cases the public houses were also the venue of friendly societies, which were the only kind of insurance available to the poor.<sup>51</sup> There were also those, echoing the ideas of Robert Owen, who sought more than escapism, by proposing a new political and social order, for which education, based on moral principles, was important, so that the machine could be subordinated to the will of society. At the opening of the Hall of Science in Manchester it was said that, whereas the mechanics' institutes had subordinated moral science to physical science, the new institution would study 'man's relations with his fellows as well as with the universe'.<sup>52</sup>

There was no hall of science in Leicester, though there were Owenites. At the time when the Manchester operatives were opening their hall in 1839 the Leicester framework-knitters were in the midst of a particularly severe depression. The death rate was high. In a lecture delivered by Dr. George Shaw to the Literary and Philosophical Society in 1843 it was noted that the death rate was thirty per thousand, substantially higher than the

national average of twenty-one per thousand.<sup>53</sup> It was hardly surprising that throughout the Midlands the Chartists drew away many working men from the mechanics' institutes.<sup>54</sup>

Chartists were not involved in direct political activity all the time. Often they felt the need to prepare themselves educationally. There was a religious atmosphere about their classes, despite Joseph Dare's observation that there was an almost universal neglect of public worship in working-class areas of Leicester.<sup>55</sup> The fervour of the evangelical, seeking redemption (particularly if it included a new social order in their own time), was appealing. Even at its worst it offered an escape from the immediate circumstances of life, replacing alcoholic stupor with emotional appeal. Thomas Cooper's Leicester Association of Shakespearean Chartists was clearly evangelical in character. Cooper had attended a charity school in Gainsborough up to the age of fifteen, and continued his education by learning to read Latin, Greek, French, Italian and a little Hebrew, and memorizing Shakespearean plays, while working as an apprentice shoemaker. Thereafter he had become a teacher and Primitive Methodist preacher. At the time when he had suddenly become fired with enthusiasm for the cause of Chartism in Leicester he had been working as a reporter for the Leicestershire Mercury, then engaged in a campaign against the Church Rate. Subsequently the editor of the short-lived Chartist Illuminator, he was soon in a position to oust John Markham from the leadership of the local Chartist group.<sup>56</sup> When he began to make political speeches in the Market

Place on Sunday evenings during the summer of 1841 he 'commenced with worship, and....always took a text from the Scriptures, and mingled religious teaching with politics'.<sup>57</sup> During the following winter Cooper and his associates continued the meetings indoors, in the Shakespearean Room of the 'Amphitheatre' in Humberstone Gate. A Sunday school was constituted, and Cooper began 'to teach Temperance more strongly than before'. Hymns, composed by two members of the group, were also sung.<sup>58</sup> In reminiscing, Cooper recalled the occasion when an adolescent named A. J. Mundella (the future politician) 'sprang upon our little platform and declared himself on the people's side, and desired to be enrolled as a Chartist'.<sup>59</sup> It was remarkably like the religious testimony of the chapels.

Cooper's Sunday school was effective in the sense that it linked the warmth of comradeship with the learning of facts, in a way that the more competitive spirit of the mechanics' institutes did not do. The touch of romanticism that had classes named after Andrew Marvall, John Milton, William Cobbett, and other folk heroes, also added to a feeling of identification with reformers in general, as well as with each other. The school drew large numbers, so that the room was 'filled on Sunday mornings and afternoons'. There were also meetings on week-nights. Cooper mentions the assistance of the more intelligent members in teaching, and the use of the Bible and Channing's 'Self-culture', as well as other tracts, as text-books. One gains the impression, however, of a very low literacy level, almost certainly instilled by an adapt-

ation of the monitorial system. The kingpin was Cooper himself, who clearly used his oratorical powers to good effect, reciting 'Paradise Lost', 'Hamlet' and 'Tam o'Shanter', discussing topics from history, geology, phrenology, local political topics, and, with his passion for biography, setting 'the portraits of great Englishmen before young Chartists'.<sup>60</sup>

Cooper's classes did not last long. Within a year, having thrown in his lot with Fergus O'Connor, he found himself in prison. The framework-knitters' condition had become more wretched, and he had realized that knowledge was no substitute for food. So he had engaged in activities that were interpreted as sedition at the Stafford Assizes, and been imprisoned. His leadership within the Chartist movement was at an end.

The gap left by the disintegrating Chartists was filled by the Unitarians. Among the Dissenters, the congregation of the Great Meeting Chapel were the most fitted to help in combatting the problems of the poor. Their day school had been in existence since the chapel itself was built in 1708.<sup>61</sup> Its Sunday school, predating others in the town, had been started in 1783.<sup>62</sup> The congregation was led by talented businessmen of the Liberal or Radical stamp, who supplied most of the mayors of the town for the first decade after the reform of the Corporation in 1836. These same men were prominent in the affairs of the Literary and Philosophical Society and the Mechanics' Institute. Their experience led them also to be prominent among the membership of a

new committee set up to consider the desirability of social work in northern areas of the town. Perhaps fortunately, the work itself was not congenial to them, and the Leicester Domestic Mission in All Saints' Open was put into the hands of Joseph Dare, a man of genuine compassion and good sense, who met the people on their own terms, identifying with them and their problems.

The Domestic Mission was not a phenomenon peculiar to Leicester. It originated in the social work of Joseph Tuckerman, the Minister-at-Large of a Unitarian Church in Boston, Massachusetts, during 1826-1839. After Tuckerman's visit to England in the 1830s, similar missions were established in Liverpool, London, Birmingham, Bristol, Leeds and Manchester, as well as Leicester. In each case the objective was that of establishing contact with the poorest families, and helping them to improve their homes by raising the level of their tastes and aspirations.<sup>63</sup>

With a much more limited income than was available in, for instance, Liverpool, where subscriptions and donations were always more than £200, and in one year, 1858, as high as £471, the Leicester Domestic Mission, with its average income of £130, was forced to confine its activities to one small area of the town. Education in the formal sense was not its main activity. Visiting was the most important means of making contact with the poor. For this purpose Joseph Dare made about 4,000 visits a year. In one week's work during 1853-4 he made 81 visits, taught in evening classes in the one room that the mission rented, and also conducted a service on Sunday.<sup>64</sup>

Through his contact with people in the slums Dare was able to build up a fund of detailed knowledge about one small area of Leicester, and to put much of it into invaluable statistical form. Left to administer the mission's affairs in his own way he used to draw attention to the economic problems of a one-industry town, as the borough was when he commenced his work, to the problems caused by drunkenness, for public houses had doubled in the street in which he lived, and there were 545 drinking establishments in the whole town, and to the appalling problems of sanitation, especially in the low-lying areas of the town, where the river Soar periodically flooded the cess-pits, causing outbreaks of cholera. As a campaigner in each of these causes he was tireless, though he was without originality of ideas, and said little that was not repeated many times over in other contexts. He was no more distinctive in the field of education. Like many Liberals of his time, he perceived that elementary education was a means by which social evils could be countered. The blankets that he supplied to needy families, the food that was put into the mouths of hungry children, the friendly society functions that he initiated, were essentially short-term answers to the problems of the poor; education provided the means by which long-term answers could be found.<sup>65</sup>

Educational functions could not be the main thrust of Dare's work. There was too much present misery to alleviate, but teaching was, nevertheless, not unimportant. In his annual report he stated that, in the room they were using, there were: 'A Sewing school; an Adult Class, for men; a Boys' and Girls' Class, - on



separate evenings; a Reading Room, Library, and Sunday School have been established, and attended....with various but decided success. The Sewing School meets weekly on Monday and Tuesday afternoons. It was opened on Nov. 10th, 1845, with sixteen children; and there has been an average attendance ever since of not less than forty to fifty, except during the harvest weeks'.

Although Dare ran a regular adult class, which was attended by between forty and sixty men, with instruction given in 'reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, and familiar illustrations of the arts and sciences', he realized that the best results could be obtained from younger pupils. He described the management of the boys' class as 'a most arduous undertaking', bemoaning the fact that, because they were 'exposed to all kinds of evil influences when away from tuition', they were 'scarcely susceptible to government'. Yet he persevered, because he was convinced that moral change could be effected by long and repeated efforts on the part of himself and his voluntary helpers, and was satisfied later that 'they have become more attentive, more governable, and many show signs of improvement; several who could neither read nor write when they were admitted, can now read the Testament, and write long copies, of which they seem quite proud'.

Dare had great difficulty in retaining volunteer teaching assistants. He gracefully accepted though, that: 'The process of learning seems tedious and the progress slow; so that after a few attempts they disappear'.<sup>66</sup> Accordingly he and his friend Mills were forced to do almost all of the teaching of the boys,

who turned up in great numbers during the depression of 1847. In February there were more than eighty, which forced Dare to continue using the monitorial system, though he declared it: 'worse than useless in the "ragged school"; it is not the best in any; it is a mere apology for education'.<sup>67</sup>

Apart from the Mechanics' Institute, Cooper's Chartists, and the Domestic Mission there do not seem to have been any other significant providers of education for working men until the 1860s. Little is known of the Socialists that Thomas Cooper recognised as existing separately from the Chartists. In having given up belief in a God who 'let us suffer as we do' they shared the feelings of many framework-knitters, but they were not well-organised or numerous yet.<sup>68</sup> During 1839 an attempt was made by George Fleming, an Owenite propagandist, to organise the men. He opened a 'Social Institution' in a hall in Hotel Street, very close to the Market Place, where his lectures were attended, not only by working-men, but by 'respectable females, teachers of infant and private schools'. The highlight of the year was a series of visits, four in all, by Robert Owen, whose lectures, followed by organised discussions, were well attended. The formal structure seems to have disappeared as rapidly as it appeared. By the 1840s the Owenites were reduced to gathering as a small group in the Market Place on Saturday evenings.<sup>69</sup>

Leicester was much more prosperous in the 1860s than it had been during the preceding decades. The growth of the boot and shoe industry since the mid-point of the century was providing

more work, thus relieving hosiery of its stagnating surplus.<sup>70</sup> Eng-  
 ineering also was in process of growing beyond the stage where it  
 was making machines and equipment for purely local use.<sup>71</sup> With the  
 development of railways, Leicester's position in the centre of a  
 country whose population, and therefore its internal market, was  
 growing rapidly, became an advantage. Along with prosperity the  
 health of the people was also improving. The 1867 presidential  
 address by John Buck, M.R.C.S., to the Literary and Philosophical  
 Society, on 'The Present Sanitary Condition of Leicester' showed  
 that 11,916 houses out of the total of 18,915 were on the mains  
 water supply. To this factor, and also to a drainage scheme  
 carried out in 1849 in low-lying areas of the town, as well as a  
 general vaccination of the population, he attributed a 'great im-  
 provement in the health of the town'.<sup>72</sup> By 1869 even Dare was able  
 to record that 'Leicester's lean stockinger' had disappeared.<sup>73</sup>

Dare felt that the time had come when, for the second time,  
 he should urge drastic action in the town to provide facilities  
 for the education of working youths. The first time he had tried  
 was in 1849, when he had been asked by William Biggs, the mayor  
 in that year, to make an educational survey of Leicester. Horr-  
 ified by his discoveries, Dare had advised 'that all the school-  
 rooms in the town should be thrown open for cheap evening instr-  
 uction, for the establishment of mutual instruction societies, and  
 reading rooms'. Hoping that compulsory education would result in  
 the following year, when the Education Bill proposed by Lancashire  
 industrialists was presented in Parliament, he suggested in the

meantime that 'Employers might insist upon all their hands attending these places, who were unmarried, or who could not read or write'.<sup>74</sup> But the Liberal 'Improvers' were not yet more powerful than the 'Economists', and even the urging of Biggs, in a public address, had no visible effect. The failure of the Education Bill seemed to justify the town's apathy.

In 1863, when Dare tried again, he reflected something of the general concern for efficiency in education that was intensified by the Revised Code of the previous year. He had asked a teacher one evening, in order to provide supporting material, to examine a number of boys in the mission. Dare's report noted:

'Out of eighteen so examined, he found fourteen who could not read, and the other four could only do so imperfectly. Their ages ranged from thirteen to seventeen years, only one being younger. Twelve had been to no day-school. Only one had been so long as a year. All of them seemed to have been put to work at from six to nine years old'.

This time the response was more positive, for in the next year Dare was able to report that: 'At nearly all of the public schools, evening instruction is imparted, though with restrictions as to age and character'.<sup>75</sup>

Dare's work was also reflected in the free evening schools that developed a few years later. During June 1869 a public meeting was held in the Town Hall, to make arrangements for free evening classes. The Reverend John Whitton, a Congregationalist, was appointed as superintendent from 1 September 1869.<sup>76</sup> A return, dated 8 November 1869, gave the following statistics:

Sanvey Gate:	236 boys and 166 girls enrolled;
Carley Street:	103 boys and 114 girls enrolled;
Paradise Row:	51 boys enrolled;
Total:	670 pupils enrolled, with an average attendance of 356.

Dare, who quoted these statistics at the end of 1869, commented that by then, less than two months later, the average attendance had nearly doubled.<sup>77</sup> By 18 February 1870, John Lorimer, the treasurer of the Free Evening Class Committee, was able to state:

'The number of scholars on the books is now nearly 1000, and the average attendance is about 500.... One very encouraging feature of the classes is the number of Young Women who attend (nearly 100) and the increase is steady. The demand for admission is as great as ever (over 3000 since the commencement). The number of Scholars is limited only by the accommodation and the teachers'.<sup>78</sup>

Two months later the girls accommodated at Sanvey Gate, having increased to 290, were transferred to the Society of Friends' schoolroom in Soar Lane. At Carley Street there was some increase in the number of boys, who totalled 130, but the figure for girls had more than doubled, and stood at 260.<sup>79</sup>

The Free Evening Schools, supported by public subscription, constituted a significant development. Now that the number of voluntary schools was increasing rapidly, and the Education Bill was being discussed, the proportion of people with an elementary education (however limited) was increasing. There was no disgrace attached to illiteracy when few people had been to school, but when some kind of education was available for 13,175 (if the dame schools are included) out of an estimated child population of less than 20,000, the inability to read and write was more keenly felt.<sup>80</sup> Moreover, with industrial establishments rapidly increas-

ing and diversifying in the town,<sup>81</sup> there was a greater need, not just for people who could tend machines, but for those who, with a grounding in the 3R's, could handle correspondence and accounts in the unmechanised offices of growing factories.

Also reflected in the development of the Free Evening Schools was a growing concern for the education of women and girls. Nationally this concern was felt in the provisions of the Endowed Schools Act of 1869 for the re-applying of obsolete charities to schools for middle-class girls. On the local scene women had worked alongside men in the hosiery industry over a long period. They had attended the Mechanics' Institute from its inception, and had at an early stage qualified for admittance to the Literary and Philosophical Society, 'to prevent the society falling to the ground for want of attendance', as the aged William Gardiner admitted.<sup>82</sup> Moreover there was at least one young lady teaching in Leicester who had decidedly feminist inclinations. Isabella, the intelligent, articulate and hard-working daughter of Joseph Dare, was, as the wife of the Reverend William Evans, to become, in 1879, the first woman to be elected to membership of the Leicester School Board.<sup>83</sup> The interest of girls in acquiring basic literacy is not, therefore, so surprising.

The Free Evening Schools suited younger people, but they were not much in favour with older men and women. Older men tended to prefer institutions which continued the tradition of Cooper's Chartists in providing companionship and other benefits together with a modicum of learning. Dare's annual report for 1864 drew

attention to the most significant development of this kind, noting that 'the liberal Vicar of St. Martin's has a working-men's reading room and discussion class, at a nominal charge, in successful operation. His kindly and Christian manner has secured the respect and affection of a large number of the more intelligent operatives'. David James Vaughan, the vicar in question, had returned to his native town in 1860, to occupy the vicarage in which he had been born, and to continue the family tradition. His father and two of his brothers had earlier been incumbents of St. Martin's. As the priest-in-charge of St. Mark's, Whitechapel, from 1858 to 1860, he had become acquainted at first hand with F. D. Maurice's work at the Working Men's College.<sup>84</sup>

Maurice and his friends had founded a natural successor to 'knowledge' Chartism. They rejected individualism and the laissez-faire society, and offered, as the Owenite villages of co-operation also offered, a means by which working-men, as a group, could bring about changes in society by non-revolutionary means. Politics were not to be ousted, as they had been in the mechanics' institutes, but were to be subordinated to Christian ideals. Christian Socialism, starting in 1848, on the fateful 10th April, as the rain-sodden remnants of O'Connor's disastrous demonstration trickled away from London, went a stage further than Cooper's romanticism, but it had the same roots. It began with the men as they were, and infused them with a dream of the future. Where it advanced further was in making a positive link between the objects of study and the striving for Freedom and Order under

God. Cooper had taken subjects like Shakespeare's plays, that were outside the experience of working-men. Maurice took the stuff of everyday life, the 'general knowledge of public affairs, an awareness of right and wrong, experience of suffering and sickness, a highly developed skill with his tools, and the responsibility of family life around him', and wove curricula around them.<sup>85</sup>

Vaughan, on coming into contact with the Working Men's College, was enthused. His experience, as a schoolboy, of Arnold's ideals at Rugby, had made him a very different kind of clergyman from his father, the Reverend E. T. Vaughan, who, as a High Tory, had vigorously defended the old Leicester Corporation, which he served as chaplain.<sup>86</sup> From his student days at Cambridge the younger Vaughan had maintained a friendship with F. B. Westcott, which had left him sympathetic toward biblical criticism. He had also sympathised with T. H. Huxley rather than Bishop Wilberforce in the Darwinian controversy.<sup>87</sup> So that he returned to Leicester as an unusually liberal Churchman.

Vaughan interested himself immediately in the work of the parish school in Friar Lane, and helped in the development of the new school for infants in Union Street. There was a night school already in existence, for youths and men who had had little formal education.<sup>88</sup> There was also a science school, which met in the evenings, and provided courses in mathematics, physics, chemistry and mechanics. Assisting in the work of the latter, as its headmaster, was Edward Atkins, an energetic young



man and a model of Smilesian self-help, who had gained a London University B.Sc. degree by external study. It was Atkins who was to support Vaughan throughout his venture, and who subsequently, after a distinguished teaching career, became vicar of St. Nicholas' Church.<sup>89</sup>

It is doubtful if Vaughan, whose normal role was that of loyal supporter and follower of new ideas rather than that of originator, would have begun a new venture if the tide of events had not offered a peculiar challenge. It is more likely that he would have watched the continued growth of Friar Lane, and sought to make his own contribution to it. However, on 24 February 1862, the Reverend T. W. Barlow read a paper of Maurice's on 'Working Men's Colleges' to a meeting of the Literary and Philosophical Society. The discussion that followed indicated that the middle-class membership regarded the ailing Mechanics' Institute as a similar institution. Since, therefore, it was observed that the Institute was in course of decline, it was assumed that a working men's college had no chance of success in the town. Vaughan, who may have suggested the topic, must have regretted his inability to be present on that occasion. Incensed by the apparent obtuseness of his fellow members, he determined to prove them wrong. He had hand-bills distributed among working-men in St. Martin's parish, inviting their attendance at a meeting at the Friar Lane premises. The meeting, on 21 March, began at 9.00 p.m. to accommodate the framework-knitters, who usually worked late. It was resolved to open a reading room and library for working-men of the parish

'at the rate of 2d. per week and 6d. per month for the Reading Room and Library and half that sum for the Reading Room alone'.

By the next winter Vaughan's experiment had become the 'Working Men's Institute', and, having attracted the members of the existing evening school at Friar Lane, was offering courses in the 3R's, book-keeping, mensuration, grammar, history, geography and drawing.<sup>90</sup> One disadvantage shared with the Mechanics' Institute (when the latter had organised courses) was the physical separation between the library-reading room and the venue of the classes. For the former was housed at Union Street, the latter at Friar Lane. The difficulty was partially alleviated by giving free tickets for use of the reading room to men who attended classes three times a week.<sup>91</sup>

It is unlikely that F. D. Maurice would have recognised the new institution as a working men's college in its first two years. Its classes were traditional rather than of a kind that he envisaged. But at least the Institute belonged to the men themselves. They made the decisions, without any attempt on the part of Vaughan to dominate the proceedings. Vaughan's opportunity to exercise a stronger influence came in the third year, when a discussion class, which he was asked to chair, was established. It ranged over topics of interest to working-men, like 'Strikes', 'Trade Unions', 'The Franchise' and 'English Lyrics and their Influence upon the People'. A Sunday afternoon Bible class was also formed in the next year. The range of activities also increased. There were annual outings to Bradgate Park and other

beauty spots. A sick benefit society, an essential element if the men were to be kept away from the public houses, was also started. Special classes were formed on Sunday evenings 'for the benefit of those who, from want of suitable clothing to attend a place of worship, yet feel anxious for self-improvement'. By 1868 the name had been changed again to the 'Working Men's College and Institute'.<sup>92</sup>

Vaughan's college was not the only venture of its kind. Associated with the Society of Friends was the adult school movement, which had started in Bristol as early as 1812, and had developed also in Nottingham, Sheffield, Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle, Yarmouth, Ipswich and London before 1820.<sup>93</sup> In 1861 the Leicester Quaker congregation was addressed by George Thomas and William Tanner of Bristol, who urged the formation of an adult school, for the purpose of teaching reading to working-men. Attracting a 'lower' social stratum than the Working Men's College, it developed very rapidly. A new building erected in 1864 was enlarged only four years later. There <sup>were</sup> 105 members in 1864, and double that number in 1870. Organised democratically, the adult school had a sick benefit society, benevolent fund, library, and night school classes, for which there was a charge of one penny per night.<sup>94</sup>

There was also the Royce Institute. Like the others it owed its origin to the religious impulse to be of service to the poor, but unlike them it was not part of a formally structured network. It owed its success mainly to the commanding personality of Mary Royce. As the Sanvey Gate Mission was supported by the Gallowtree Gate Independent Chapel, it formed the venue for various enter-

prises initiated within it by middle-class members of the latter. The Reverend J. A. Picton, then minister of the chapel, encouraged Miss Royce, the daughter of a hosier, who was also a member of the Town Council, to lead a group of young people in starting adult classes for working-men. A disagreement soon arose between the leader and the minister in charge of the mission, the Reverend John Whitton. Whitton saw the classes as a means of increasing attendance at his services. Mary Royce did not feel that there should be any pressure to attend Sunday services. What had been intended, therefore, as part of a missionary enterprise became a separate institution.

That the Institute belonged to Miss Royce personally is abundantly clear. She found such money as was needed, taught classes, arranged for lecturers to attend, and dominated in decision making. Even when she became a medical student at London University she spent week-ends in Leicester, attending to the Institute's business, to the detriment of her health.

The Royce Institute filled an immediate need for primary education, but it also filled other needs. Mary Royce was a mother figure, who supplied a wealth of maternal affection. She disciplined the younger members into the acceptance of a measure of responsibility for the conduct of the classes. They learned how to debate, how to handle financial affairs, and to do reliably the many monitorial tasks necessary to the smooth running of the Institute.<sup>95</sup>

Working-men had, of course, varying tastes. Some did not have either the mental or physical energy for any thing more than light leisure pursuits, and were catered for by the Working Men's Club and Institute. Within six months of its formation in 1866 this institution had 424 members, who sustained it by the purchase of refreshments. Joseph Dare, who was a member of its first management committee, observed that: 'An extensive list of newspapers and periodicals has been provided, but the majority of the members do not patronize the reading department. The rooms best filled are those for general conversation and popular games'.<sup>96</sup> Others, repelled both by the Working Men's Club and by the promise of heavenly reward, determined instead to advance the cause of social justice on earth, by building upon the earlier Owenite foundations. In 1845 a Freethinkers' discussion group met in the Church Gate house of a Mr. Knox, a seller of Movement, New Moral World, North-ern Star, and other Chartist literature. The same group was succoured by Dare, whose broad sympathies and equal concern for righting social wrongs, persuaded him to allow them to use the Domestic Mission room in All Saints' Open. By 1853 there was a Leicester Secular Society meeting regularly on Sunday evenings, and advertising its lectures in the Reasoner. Success was not assured, however, until in 1869, with the financial backing of Josiah Gimson, the most successful ironfounder and engineer in the town, it was possible to emulate the other successful purveyors of adult education, in providing an Institute and Club, with refreshments and lighter leisure activities as well as a mutual improvement class.<sup>97</sup> There were others, at the higher levels, who were eager

to achieve examination successes, and who attended Science and Art Department classes.

The most significant institutions - Vaughan's Working Men's College, the Adult School and the Royce Institute - had several things in common. Each depended upon the goodwill and personality of the founders. Each began its life, as had the Domestic Mission also, as a religious enterprise, and had continued as a quasi-religious institution. Each had, initially, been for men only, a necessary reflection of nineteenth century mores. Mixed undertakings would have had little support from the type who provided leadership, upper working-class men, who in other walks of life were foremen, trade unionists, deacons and Sunday school teachers. Each institution had given opportunities for the exercise of decision-making. Each had also had friendly society functions, which were necessary, not merely for humanitarian reasons, but to take away custom from the public houses.

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96. L.D.M.S.: Annual Report, 1866.
97. F. J. Gould, op. cit. (1900), 9-10.

There were two significant items of legislation that quickened the development of schools in 1833. One of them was Lord Althorp's Factory Act, which not only regulated working hours for juveniles in textile factories, but also made it incumbent upon employers to ensure that some educational provision was made for employees under thirteen years of age. This provision, which became effective in 1835, was necessarily minimal, for it was still possible to go to work at the age of nine, and even lower in the silk industry, for a maximum of nine hours per day, and 48 hours per week. So that instruction was limited to twelve hours per week, two of which were intended for attendance at Sunday school. Religious instruction and reading were the only subjects specified. The Act's effectiveness was limited by the distribution of textile factories, and by the inability of four factory inspectors to cover the whole of England and Wales.

Since Leicester's hosiery industry was still mainly domesticated at this time a much smaller proportion of the population could be reached than in the cotton spinning towns of southern Lancashire or the woollen manufacturing towns of the West Riding of Yorkshire, but there were some woollen mills in the town. When the mill owned by Thomas Gamble was inspected in 1838, in the course of the preparation of a report on the educational provisions of the Act, it was clear that Gamble and three other employers had made an arrangement with a dame school. Of some 20 boys and 23 girls attending in three sets, 14 of the boys and all but one of the girls worked in the Gamble establishment.

More ambitious than some, which taught only reading and scripture<sup>+</sup>, 15 boys and 21 girls were able to read the Bible,<sup>\*</sup> and 8 boys and 3 girls had progressed to writing. The girls also learned to knit and sew for one hour of each day.<sup>1</sup>

The Factory Act, therefore, stimulated attendance in Leicester at one dame school and several Sunday schools, for it was reported that all children attended Sunday schools according to denomination. It is possible also that other children attended elementary schools elsewhere, for although the report on Gamble's mill mentioned nothing about it, one of the grumbles that some employers had, especially in the West Riding, was that, even though they had set up schools in their mills, many children preferred to attend denominational schools, whose growth was stimulated by the new system of grants.

The second important item of legislation was the Act which, for the first time, authorised the use of government funds for educational purposes. The £20,000 made available in 1833 was divided equally between the National and British and Foreign

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+ Inspector Bury's visits to 11 mills in his large district, stretching as far north as Malifax, showed that 5 did not go beyond this limitation.

\* Some may have been able to read before attending this school.

Schools Societies to aid the building of schools. As a stimulant this provision was important, but it was only one factor among many, some of which we now consider.

At this time Anglicanism was making the most progress in school development in Leicester. Of the eleven public day schools in existence, six were Church schools. Another was the old Free Grammar School, which was in process of decay, and was soon to disappear.<sup>2</sup> One of the Church schools had been set up under the terms of Alderman Gabriel Newton's will in 1785.<sup>3</sup> It was educating about one hundred boys.<sup>4</sup> Another was St. Mary's School. The indenture of sale relating to the formal establishment of the school in 1785 noted that the vicar of St. Mary's, Thomas Robinson, had for several years, at the expense of himself and other charitable persons, educated and clothed some fifty poor children. The nucleus of the school, therefore, was already in existence by the time of the indenture, wherein it was stated that John Wood, the master, was 'to teach and instruct the said poor children, agreeable to the principles of the Christian religion as professed in the Church of England, and in reading, writing and casting accounts, and other useful learning necessary for poor children', who were to be between the ages of six and fourteen years.<sup>5</sup> By 1832 this school had 120 boys in attendance.<sup>6</sup> The other four Church schools were all in association with the National Society, and were stated to be educating a total of 670 boys and 308 girls.<sup>7</sup>

Two of the National schools had been in existence before the founding of the County of Leicester Society for the Education of the Infant Poor in the Principles of the Church of England in 1812.<sup>8</sup> The Charity Commissioners noted an indenture of sale dated 24 March 1790, referring to premises in St. Martin's parish 'to be used as a charity school for the teaching and instructing of boys and girls, children of the poorer sort of the inhabitants, the boys to read and write and the girls to read and work....'<sup>9</sup> Another indenture of sale dated 28 June 1806 referred to land sold for the purpose of erecting a school in St. Margaret's parish, 'to be supported by voluntary contribution'.<sup>10</sup>

The other two National schools were the St. George's and the Central Schools. The latter was the most ambitious National Society project in the town, for it was intended that it should serve as a model school, so that teachers could be trained there to serve other schools to be developed in Leicestershire.<sup>11</sup> The Reverend Richard Davies (headmaster of the Free Grammar School), in his report as secretary of the County branch of the National Society in 1815, stated that there were already more than 300 children, and that accommodation had recently been made for 200 girls. For both boys' and girls' sections there were impressive subscription lists headed by the Duke of Rutland, and his mother, Isabella, Duchess of Rutland.<sup>12</sup> Numbers fluctuated from year to year, and the hopes of attracting 200 girls were never realised; in 1832 there were 282 boys and 68 girls. The school was evidently attractive to those who attended it. It was commented that: 'In punctual-

ity of attendance....it may challenge competition with any similar institution in the kingdom....in nearly 300 children, there is not an average of one absentee a week - whereas in most such schools, an average attendance of two-thirds is considered satisfactory'.<sup>13</sup> One suspects that there was some curious juggling with figures, for the total number of children varied from 354 to 318 in different sections of the report, while the figure on which average attendance was based was less again. The caution advised by J. S. Hurt in interpreting pre-1860 educational statistics would appear, in this instance, to be amply justified.<sup>14</sup> Despite the discrepancies, however, the school was a relatively popular one.

Dissenting schools had grown more spasmodically. The Great Meeting School had been functioning since the early eighteenth century. By the 1830s it was educating and clothing thirty boys and ten girls.<sup>15</sup> In 1828 had come the formation of the Infant Schools Society. Officially non-denominational, so that it was able to gain some support from Anglicans, the main support nevertheless was from Dissenters. The society's work extended only to the development of one small infants' school in Newarke Street.<sup>16</sup>

The British and Foreign Society did not extend its operations to Leicester until 1832. During the early part of the year a public meeting was held in the Town Hall. It was arranged by members of the Reform Party, who at the time were pressing for the reform of the Corporation. Those present listened to the Reverend Samuel Wigg, an agent of the Society, who explained 'the nature and principles of the schools conducted on what was called the



British system'. A decision was made to build a school in Sandpit Lane (soon to be changed to Mill Street) in St. Margaret's parish. Within a few months the school was in operation, and Alfred Burgess was embarked on a long career as the secretary of the managing committee. The first anniversary was celebrated by a meeting, at which members passed a resolution to the effect that they were 'duly impressed with the importance of education, and exceedingly anxious for its diffusion among all classes of people'.<sup>17</sup>

The growth of schools in Leicester up to 1833 shows a marked contrast with developments in the Whig borough of Nottingham. Wardle notes that in the latter it was the Dissenters who dominated before 1835. Up to that time they provided, in day schools, almost exactly twice the number of places supplied by the Church.<sup>18</sup> In Leicester, despite the growing strength of Non-conformity, it was the Establishment that had remained dominant. This dominance was to some extent a reflection of the political status quo. The Tory controlled Council had given some active assistance to parish schools. In 1806, for instance, it gave up its financial interest in the renting of the Butt Close, so that the income could go to St. Margaret's School.<sup>19</sup> Yet the Council was by no means generous, even to Church schools, for in 1814 a request for an annual subscription to the Central School was refused. One hundred guineas had, however, been donated in the preceding year.<sup>20</sup> After its refusal, the Council relented a little. Having realised more than six thousand pounds from the sale of land in the South Fields, it decided to make another donation of one hundred guineas to the school.<sup>21</sup>

The Church also had other advantages. One of them was the ability to levy rates within each parish. Although bitter opposition to the Church Rate was to grow in the 1830s, there was no serious opposition earlier in the century. There may have been resentment, but it only smouldered, until, with rapid increases in the Dissenting proportion of the population, and the general attack upon the Establishment at the national as well as the local level, the flames of open opposition appeared.<sup>22</sup> During the earlier period, when rates were collected, in part for the assistance of Church schools, numbers of Dissenters sent their children to these schools. The Reverend E. Irvine stated, at a St. Margaret's vestry meeting, that 'the children of Dissenters were not excluded, but many of them are taught and clothed there'.<sup>23</sup> Even at the Alderman Newton's School, whose charity was administered by a committee responsible to the Town Council, it was noted that many boys were enrolled 'contrary to the regulations and the foundation upon which the school is established - Children of dissenting Parents as well as of Parents chargeable to the Parish have been recommended and admitted'.<sup>24</sup>

By 1832 the situation was already changing, with Dissenters in St. Margaret's parish actively opposing the use of parish money for purely Anglican purposes. When, at the annual public meeting, it was proposed to make a grant of £25 from the rent of the Parish Piece to St. Margaret's School, the representative of the British and Foreign Schools Society, Samuel Wigg, argued that, since Dissenters formed the majority of the people, they ought

also to have 'a slice of the Parish Piece'. A decision was made 'that one half of the rent should be applied to the use of St. Margaret's and St. George's Schools, and the other half to those of the dissenters'.<sup>25</sup> On 15 May 1833 the Dissenters met at the Gallowtree Gate Chapel to share out the sum of £48 9s.<sup>26</sup> The criteria used to determine the amounts are not known, but the shares were:

Wesleyans	£7 - 0 - 0
General Baptist, Archdeacon Lane	5 - 10 - 0
Particular Baptist, Charles Street	1 - 10 - 0
Independent, Gallowtree Gate	2 - 10 - 0
Calvinistic Baptist, York Street	1 - 15 - 0
General Baptist, Dover Street	3 - 10 - 0
Independent Methodist, Denman Street	2 - 0 - 0
Primitive Methodist, George Street	5 - 10 - 0
General Baptist, Carley Street	2 - 0 - 0
Boatman's	4 - 0 - 0
Infant School	5 - 0 - 0
British School	7 - 0 - 0
Union School	1 - 4 - 0

Most of these schools were Sunday schools rather than day schools.

Church dominance in the development of day schools was attributable, not merely to the exertions of its own members, but also to the nature of Dissent in Leicester. Together, the several Baptist congregations assumed the leadership of the Non-conformists. The independence of their chapels, and their reluctance to resolve differences in order to present a united front, determined that long-term co-operative ventures would be less successful than relatively spontaneous demonstrations. With their stress upon affective rather than intellectual witness, they were well-equipped for joining together in protest against injustices, but were less adept at the continuing work of administering schools. The

fact that they had attracted the disaffected led them to view all authority, beyond that which was biblical, with suspicion. For many of them, education, beyond the rudimentary literacy needed for Bible-reading, was as much a cause for concern as state control. In 1852, Joseph Goadby, secretary of the General Baptist Academy in Leicester, found it necessary to state: 'The importance of an educated ministry in this age of progress, inquiry, and mental activity, cannot be a matter of question to any reflective mind'.<sup>27</sup> However, there were not many reflective minds in the denomination, and as late as 1870 the Reverend William Evans pleaded for an educated ministry. Admonishing the General Baptists for their lack of support for the academy, he wrote: 'Is it not amazing that out of one hundred and eighty-two churches there are at least one hundred churches which have done nothing this year for the funds of the College'.<sup>28</sup>

The Dissenting climate clearly favoured Sunday schools more than day schools. Before the efforts of Robert Raikes at Gloucester there was a John Moore who reputedly taught poor children on Sundays in Leicester in 1778. The Great Meeting Chapel established a Sunday school in the same premises as its day school in 1783. But the main thrust had come in 1785, when, between them, Anglicans and Dissenters established eleven Sunday schools.<sup>29</sup> These early Sunday schools, though housed denominationally, were not developed in a spirit of rivalry. They were genuine attempts to provide facilities for a minimum of elementary education to children with no other opportunities. Within a few years, how-

ever, they had become the main vehicle through which the Dissenters provided education, while the Church's contribution to the Sunday school movement was declining as it opened more day schools.

Where Anglican Sunday schools continued to exist it was usually because the parish was unable to maintain a day school. By 1816 Sunday schools had ceased to exist at St. Margaret's and St. Nicholas'. Between 1816 and 1833 similar schools at St. Martin's and St. Mary's, each attended by about 150 pupils at the earlier date, had also ceased to function.<sup>30</sup> The only one still functioning as a Sunday school in 1832 was All Saints', with 70 boys and 30 girls attending; the day school there had become defunct.<sup>31</sup>

Initially Church Sunday schools had accepted the children of Dissenters without hindrance, but there were cases where, with increasing demand from those with Anglican connections, discrimination began to appear. This provided some impetus for the development of Dissenters' Sunday schools. The school established at Friar Lane General Baptist Chapel in 1796, for instance, was attributed to the refusal of St. Mary's to admit Dissenters.<sup>32</sup> During the next few decades, with the rapid growth of Dissent and its political expressions in Liberalism and Radicalism, the point was reached where it was able to assert numerical dominance. Then any apparent unfairness was enough to produce a powerful counter-blast. Every attempt by the Church to limit admission to its schools was met by the growth of new Dissenting Sunday schools. The parish of St. Margaret's, for example, housed more than 15,000 people in 1821, and was continuing to grow rapidly. It had been

necessary to build the new Church of St. George to cope with the suburban increase.<sup>33</sup> With Anglican resources strained it was understandable that preference should be given within the schools to the children of Churchmen. Radical Dissenters could not, however, see the situation within this frame of reference. They saw themselves as being in the vanguard of reform, representatives of the forces that would sweep away the privileges that Church Tories had enjoyed for so long. Whenever they could they opened up new frontal attacks. By 1833 they were battling on a number of different fronts. Cheered by the success of their efforts at the national level, as expressed in the Great Reform Act, they were poised for the assault on the old Corporation, which was to result in the reform of 1836. The battle for the abolition of Church Rates was soon to commence; in the meantime the aim was to obtain a fair share of any funds raised, particularly in the area of education. Sunday schools formed another front.

In 1816 there had been at least seven Dissenting Sunday schools in Leicester. Three of them were at Baptist chapels. Harvey Lane represented the efforts of the Particular Baptists, while Archdeacon Lane and Friar Lane represented the General Baptists. The Great Meeting (Unitarian), Bond Street (Congregational), Millstone Lane (Methodist) and Hephzibah Chapel (Huntingtonians) represented the other denominations. Friar Lane claimed at that time to be educating 216 children, while at the Great Meeting there were some 135 children under instruction.<sup>34</sup> The total number of Dissenting Sunday schools in the town in

1833 is not known, but developments in St. Margaret's suggest that there was a very large increase. Judging by their share of the Parish Piece revenues the Wesleyans must either have had a very large Sunday school or a number of smaller ones. Other Methodists with schools were Denman Street (Independent) and George Street (Primitive). Since the latter received five pounds ten shillings, the same as Archdeacon Lane (Baptist), it was presumably one of the larger schools. Archdeacon Lane had been joined by Baptist confreres at Charles Street, York Street, Dover Street and Carley Street. The Congregationalist cause was represented in Gallowtree Gate.<sup>35</sup> In 1835 the Dissenting command of the Sunday school movement was intensified still further, when six of the churches involved founded a local branch of the Sunday School Union, whose member institutions increased rapidly to twenty within the town by 1840. By this time some 4,000 children were said to be receiving instruction.<sup>36</sup>

During the period 1818-1833, Morace Mann calculated, the greatest advances in English education had been in the development of Sunday schools. They had, he claimed, increased by 225 per cent., while day schools had shown an increase of 89 per cent. At the same time population had increased by 24 per cent.<sup>37</sup> Leicester was, therefore, within the mainstream as far as Sunday schools were concerned. Between 1833 and 1870, however, and particularly after the mid-point of the century had passed, significant changes occurred, as a result of which the contribution of the Sunday schools to basic literacy, as distinct from their

instruction in religious and moral virtue, declined rapidly.

As a means of secular instruction the Sunday school was at a serious disadvantage compared with day schools. The horizons were clearly limited by lack of time. William Biggs stated in 1849 that 'Sunday scholars go on an average for about five years, i.e. for a few hours a day, for fifty two days in the year, or 260 days altogether: not quite three-quarters of a year of education thus falling to the lot of these children'.<sup>38</sup> Even had the children wanted it, there was generally no possibility of additional instruction. The rule made in 1832 by the Great Meeting Sunday School, that day pupils be not admitted, was by no means unusual.<sup>39</sup> Nor was the Friar Lane rule that no child should be admitted 'who was capable of reading in the fifth class'.<sup>40</sup> Moreover Millstone Lane's proud boast that its pupils had memorised 10,000 scripture verses in one year indicated the direction and quality of much of the instruction.<sup>41</sup> It perhaps justified Kay-Shuttleworth's statement to the Select Committee on Education in 1833 that: 'The gallery is particularly suited to convey instruction, in which the sympathy of a large number can be brought to bear on the feelings of the rest, and therefore....singularly well adapted to convey moral and religious instruction',<sup>42</sup> but hardly encouraged hope for the attainment of a high level of literacy.

The manner in which the average Sunday school was administered was hardly inspiring. With untrained teachers attempting to cope with large numbers of unruly children, the regime tended to be oppressive. Children were often excluded if they could



not or would not attend regularly. Isolated instances of inattendance resulted in detentions, 'and when these did not suffice, the log and shackles were called into requisition'.<sup>43</sup>

The founding of the Sunday School Union and the rapid development of Dissenting Sunday schools during the 1830s stimulated the Church once more to compete for the minds and souls of working-class children.<sup>44</sup> The 1851 Census indicated that there were nine Anglican schools, instructing some 1,911 children. The Dissenting bodies had, however, been more than equal to the competition. Between them they had established 24 Sunday schools, with a total of 5,854 children under instruction. Some 2,565 of these children attended eight Baptist schools.

Table 2

Sunday Schools in Leicester in 1851

	<u>No. of Schools</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Total</u>
Church of England	9	878	1083	1911
Independent	4	492	548	1040
Baptist	8	1133	1432	2565
Unitarians	3	160	254	414
Wesleyan Methodist	2	210	197	407
Primitive Methodist	3	364	360	724
Wesleyan Association	1	157	170	327
Wesleyan Reformers	2	145	141	286
Latter Day Saints	1	61	30	91
	33	3600	4165	7765

By the year of the Census (1851) it was calculated that one in 7.85 of the population was attending Sunday school. The correspond-

ing figure for day schools was one in 10.81. Soon, however, with the continued development of day schools under the stimulus of the grant system, the position was to be reversed. When, on the eve of the Education Act of 1870, S. R. Pattison spoke on the role of the Sunday school, at the autumnal session of the Baptist Union, held in Leicester, it was to acknowledge a past contribution to the secular education of the poor, and to indicate that this would soon be unnecessary. 'Double culture', he said, 'will yet be requisite for awhile, but purely religious teaching will rapidly preponderate, until it has exclusive place in connection with church-work'.<sup>45</sup>

With the dissolution of the old Corporation in Leicester in 1836, and the subsequent preponderance of Liberals and Radicals in the reconstituted Town Council, it looked as if all barriers to the development of Dissenting day schools were being swept away. Yet there was no massive surge of activity, though some new schools were established. Various forces had combined, as we have noted, to found the Infant Schools Society. There were some Churchmen, but the Dissenting congregations were the main source of support. The Infant School movement was, however, already in decline. It had begun with the founding of the Spitalfields Infant School in 1820, by Samuel Wilderspin, an idealistic young man of 28.<sup>46</sup> Wilderspin's work resulted in the establishing of more than 2,000 such schools throughout the country. His backers though, were not nearly as idealistic as he was. They were more concerned with 'rectifying particular abuses which threatened social stability than in transforming human nature and the social system'.<sup>47</sup> Influenced by the French Revolution, they sought to use the

infants' schools as a defence against insurrection. As with most negative efforts enthusiasm had soon waned, and the Infant School Societies experienced falling subscriptions as revolutionary activities declined in the late 1820s.<sup>48</sup> Founded on the ebb tide of the movement, the Leicester Infant School Society was not able to achieve more than a very modest contribution, with schools in Archdeacon Lane (1838), Paradise Place (before 1846) and Metcalfe Street (before 1846). The Wesleyans founded schools, but not before 1867.<sup>49</sup> The British School in Mill Street used grant aid to build a separate department for girls. Others also developed schools, but most of them were very small and inadequate, and did not survive into the school board era. The Independents, for instance, had a school at the Gallowtree Gate Chapel, attended at one time by A. J. Mundella.<sup>50</sup> There was also a school at the London Road Chapel, of which more will be said.<sup>51</sup>

Of the 184 schools enumerated in the 1851 Census, 27 were stated to be 'public day schools'. Nineteen of these were religious foundations, but, since 12 were Anglican and 3 were Roman Catholic, only 4 were specifically Non-conformist. It must be noted, however, that the latter schools were considerably larger than the schools established by the other denominations, as Table 3 indicates. There was also a substantial Dissenting contribution to the other schools listed. The Infant Orphan School was located in an undenominational female asylum, and served eleven of its younger inmates. Schools described as 'Others - of no specific character', of which there were five,

with a total of 567 children, included the schools administered by the largely Non-conformist supported Infant School Society.

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Table 3                      Denominational Schools in Leicester in 1851

	<u>No. of schools</u>	<u>No. of pupils</u>	<u>Average no. of pupils per school</u>
Anglican	12	1766	147
Dissenting	4	1040	260
Roman Catholic	3	159	53
	19	2965	156

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Although the number of schools had increased, and there were many more children at school by the middle of the century, the number of school places exceeded attendances, a factor which encouraged Dissenters to concentrate on the provision of Sunday schools. Even those attending day schools frequently did not do so for any great length of time. Throughout the country as a whole it was noted that slightly less than 12 per cent. of those leaving elementary schools in 1859 had attended for more than four years, while 60 per cent. had attended for periods less than two years.<sup>52</sup> In Leicester Joseph Dare commented, in 1851, that: 'There is now more school room in Leicester than is occupied'. He also pointed out that at the Great Meeting School more than half the children disappeared in less than two years.<sup>53</sup> Thirteen years later the situation had not changed. At the same school Dare discovered that 'the average age of the children is only eight years and a

half, and the average time they remain at school is but one year five months and two weeks'.<sup>54</sup> Another problem was that attendance was frequently irregular. As school pence were paid weekly the tendency was for children who were sick on Monday to be kept away for the rest of the week.<sup>55</sup> This problem was particularly serious after the Revised Code made government disbursements dependent upon the attainment of individual children. Dare stated that, because of the high incidence of absences in Leicester, 'numbers are not allowed to undergo inspection, hence the capitation fees are lost'.<sup>56</sup>

There were some Dissenters who favoured the development of a system of education that was national, in the sense that throughout the country as a whole children would be educated in a non-sectarian fashion, and local, in the sense that the system would be maintained mainly from the proceeds of an education rate. William Biggs, as mayor of the town in 1849, advocated a system of education 'like that in operation in America'. Supporting the Lancashire Plan, which foreshadowed the main provisions of the Education Act of 1870, but which failed to impress the parliamentarians of 1850, he declared that it was 'the duty of Society to impart Education'. As with most middle-class capitalists there was a measure of self-interest in Biggs' advocacy of public education, which he described as 'the best security for the morality of a people, and therefore the strongest safeguard of property', but it was mingled with genuine concern for universal education.<sup>57</sup>

Dare, whose statistics Biggs had used, was even more out-

spoken about educational needs. He had recorded that 'not half the number of children from five to fifteen years of age, attend school .... In a population of fifty-six thousand, there are not more than six thousand at the Daily Schools'.<sup>58</sup> Two years later, while acting as an enumerator in the 1851 Census, he noticed that in one district of the town some two-thirds of the children were not receiving instruction of any kind. His conclusion was that there should be 'a sound system of National Education'. While Biggs avoided the compulsion issue, Dare stated bluntly that 'as regards certain classes, there must be compulsory attendance'.<sup>59</sup> 'There are hundreds of poor children in all our larger towns', he declared, 'on whom it would be conferring the greatest of all blessings to take them from their present associations, and place them where they might be duly trained and instructed'. Ruefully he noted that compulsory education was provided for child inmates of the workhouse, but that whenever an attempt was made to assist education from the rates, 'there is a cry set up of expense and infringement of liberty'.<sup>60</sup>

There were other Dissenters, however, who did not share the views expressed by Biggs and Dare. It is significant that, though Biggs' public lecture had been delivered 'to a crowded and deeply attentive auditory composed of all sects, parties and classes, and also....of both sexes, and young as well as those more advanced in years',<sup>61</sup> there was no move to give practical expression to his ideas. In trying to allay some Dissenting suspicions he had stated his own dislike of centralisation, and emphasised that the

Lancashire Plan was an antidote to this possibility, but 'mutual distrust and strong sectarian feelings' had prevailed. It is likely that distrust within Non-conformity was aroused by Biggs' adherence to Unitarianism. Moreover, the text of his speech bears more than a trace of the priggish verbosity for which he was noted, and sometimes disliked.<sup>62</sup>

The personality of Biggs was not, however, the main issue. As R. M. Evans has indicated, the 'Improvers' did not come to the fore in the affairs of Leicester until after 1870. While the Dissenters reformed municipal affairs by making the Council more representative, its finances accountable to the rate-paying public, and its system of public order more efficient by the development of a good police force, their puritan attitudes 'introduced a spirit of parsimony which reduced the functions of municipal government to managing the corporate estates, paying off the debts of the old order and maintaining the borough police'.<sup>63</sup> While they established the Museum in 1848, one of the earliest municipal enterprises of its kind, there was little else, apart from two small recreation grounds, that could be regarded as a positive improvement to life in the town. Joseph Whetstone, the Corporation Treasurer, and leader of the 'Economists', while anxious to improve sanitation and provide a better water supply, bitterly opposed Biggs, in the latter's campaign for the building of a new Town Hall, the widening of High Street and the provision of recreation grounds. In doing so Whetstone reflected the Nonconformist, which in June 1846 condemned the demand for

museums and parks as a distraction from the more important matter of 'civil rights'.<sup>64</sup> Education tended to be regarded in the same light. There were in any case many places where school attendance was much worse than in Leicester. Average attendance in Sheffield schools in 1857 was only six months per child, while Nancy Ball has noted that: 'Of 94 boys who left Derby British school.... between January and June, 1848, only 4 had attended for more than four years and 33 for over a year'. The rest had been in the school for less than a year, sixteen of them for less than three months.<sup>65</sup>

Several factors had served to heighten the Dissenters' suspicion of any national plan for education. One of them was the existing system of government grants. When financial grants were first made available in 1833 it was hoped that distribution would continue to be equally to the National and British societies. The Lords of the Treasury decided, however, to distribute the monies in accordance with the principle of giving priority 'to those applications where, by a small expenditure, they can forward the education of the largest number of scholars'.<sup>66</sup> This gave an obvious advantage to the National Society, which from its inception had been in possession of Royal Letters permitting parochial collections. This privilege, together with aristocratic patronage, had enabled it to collect £60,000 in its first four years of existence, while the British Society had only been able to collect £9,000 in a similar period. So that the National Society soon found itself receiving considerably larger grants



then its rival. During the first five years of government grants the Anglicans received £70,000, while the British Society received only £30,000.<sup>67</sup> Between 1839 and 1850 the National Society received £405,000 out of a total of £500,000 awarded in grants.<sup>68</sup>

To the inequalities produced by the national political scene, wherein Dissenters were reduced to attacking Russell's proposal to increase the education grant in 1846, were added the exacerbations of the situation in Leicester. The assistance to Church schools of a Church-Tory controlled Council up to 1836 has already been described. The Church Rate question must also be noted.

Opposition to the payment of rates had grown steadily during the 1830s. Having failed to secure legislation exempting them from payment, Dissenters sought to gain election to the vestries which levied the rates. While successful in some parishes, they failed to gain control in St. Martin's and St. Margaret's, where, after the dissolution of the old Council, the Tories sought to entrench themselves in the only areas of political control still available to them.<sup>69</sup> Dissenters thereafter formed themselves into the

Leicester Voluntary Church Society, under the leadership of Edward Miall, the minister of Bond Street Congregational Chapel.<sup>70</sup> In 1840 formal refusal to pay rates was made by twenty-seven parishioners in St. Martin's, one of them, William Baines, being singled out for prosecution, and subsequently, on conviction, imprisoned at Leicester county gaol. The Voluntary Church Society held a public meeting, expressing sympathy, and appealing, not without effect, to Dissenters 'to arouse themselves from their inactivity

and supineness'.<sup>71</sup> On Baines' release in July 1841 the occasion was celebrated with a public breakfast at the Bell Hotel.<sup>72</sup>

The importance of the Church Rate issue was that it enabled the more extreme elements among the Dissenters to come to the forefront, so that the already divisive religious scene began to impinge more and more upon the political scene. The cause of disestablishment also had its birth in Leicester, ostensibly in the furore occasioned by Sir James Graham's Factory Bill, the education clauses of which provided for religious instruction according to the formularies of the Church of England of the children employed.<sup>73</sup> Opposition to the Factory Bill seemed to confirm the extremists in their determination to have no education if it meant schools administered by the State. William Biggs, while supporting the idea of education for the working-classes, to save them from 'the deplorable ignorance and depravity which prevailed among them', and 'to prepare them for being invested with higher privileges' mildly criticised Graham's Bill 'inasmuch as it added to the taxes of a whole district for the benefit of one sect only'. But his milder approach was swept aside by others. One Dissenting teacher stated that he doubted 'whether the Government had any right to have control over, or at any rate to interfere with, education. They had no right....to take his money to educate another person's child'.<sup>74</sup> The Reverend J. P. Mursell, a Baptist minister with a remarkable flair for oratory, summed up the dominant mood, by denying<sup>75</sup> that the Civil Government had anything to do with the education of the people'.<sup>75</sup>

Dissenting feeling regarding government intervention in education, which had caused the withdrawal of Graham's Bill, was maintained at its high level by the Maynooth grant of 1845.<sup>76</sup> This assistance to a Roman Catholic seminary in Ireland was much resented by many Anglicans as well as by Baptists and Congregationalists in the Leicester area. The second (and last) volume of the Baptist Examiner contained the substance of a letter, signed by F. A. Cox, E. T. Miall and J. M. Hare, on behalf of the inelegantly styled Anti-State Church Association, in which an appeal was made for the repudiation of parliamentary grants on principle.<sup>77</sup> With some, the repudiation had already taken place.

Dissenters were also still smarting from an adverse report on British schools made by H. S. Tremenhere, the first Inspector of Schools, in 1842. Although, as a result of this, a promise was made by Lord Wharncliffe that future Inspectors of British schools would be persons appointed with the concurrence of the British and Foreign Schools Society the damage was already done. Both Congregationalists and Baptists had been alienated.<sup>78</sup> The Congregational Board of Education was established in December 1843, and aimed to found schools that were religious though undenominational. So as to remain entirely outside government control no money was to be accepted from the Treasury.<sup>79</sup> £17,000 was collected for schools during the Conference at which the Board was created. Within six months £50,000 had been donated. Between 1843 and 1859 the Congregation Board of Education was able to raise £173,667.<sup>80</sup> The Baptists, who were not as

cohesively organised as the Congregationalists, had no central educational body. This was much to the regret of the editor of the Baptist Examiner, who commented:

'Among the Baptists the question is taken up by individual churches, who are either devising a routine of instruction peculiar to themselves, or adopting the system of the British and Foreign School Society. The committee of the Baptist Union recommend the latter plan and do not seem disposed to proceed further, in their collective capacity than the simple issuing of this recommendation. This we cannot but regret, because we think that the present exigency requires some sustained and systematic effort to carry out the design'. <sup>81</sup>

On the local, as on the national scene, Congregationalists were slightly more effective than Baptists in developing schools, though neither could be said to have earned any distinction in the matter. The Baptist Examiner drew attention to day schools in process of establishment in the town 'in connexion with one of the dissenting congregations', and noted that others were making arrangements to follow their example.<sup>82</sup> Mrs. Fielding Johnson noted that a day school for girls was opened by the congregation of the Gallowtree Gate Chapel in 1849, and that the same congregation also supported a similar school for boys in Osborn Street.<sup>83</sup> These had succeeded an earlier school at the chapel. The 1851 Census listed only one such school, attended by 95 pupils (of whom 85 were girls). There were six Congregational schools, with a total of 230 pupils, in Leicestershire during 1861,<sup>84</sup> but in Leicester only the London Road Chapel school is likely to have been in existence at the time.

The Baptist record in school development is even sketchier

than that of the Congregationalists. There is one reference in 1844 to sermons preached at Harvey Lane Chapel by J. P. Mursell 'in aid of these schools', which suggests that a day school may have existed in addition to the Sunday school.<sup>85</sup> But if such a school existed it must have been very short-lived, for it was not listed in the 1851 Census Report. The Report of the Commissioners on the State of Popular Education in 1861 enumerated four Baptist schools in Leicestershire.<sup>86</sup> One is known to have been at Barton-in-the-Beans, where the General Baptist Church, having already organised a school in 1844, 'resolved to send up a teacher to the model school of the British and Foreign School Society, to become duly qualified for the efficient management of a day school'.<sup>87</sup> One of the other three can definitely be traced to the village of Thurlaston.<sup>88</sup> At least one of the other two is known to have been in Leicester. A reminiscence states that Baptists 'for a time maintained Day Schools which were afterwards discontinued'.<sup>89</sup> The one certainty was in Thorpe Street; it was included in the School Board's initial list of efficient schools in 1871, when it had 134 pupils.<sup>90</sup> It is possible that the Archdeacon Lane School was included in the Census calculations. It was situated very close to a large Baptist Church, whence it derived much of its support. But it was never a Baptist enterprise, the Infant School Society being at this time still the owner of the building and the administrator of the school.<sup>91</sup> Later the school was referred to as a British school, because it acted as a feeder to the Mill Street British Schools.<sup>92</sup>

The Methodists were no more successful in school development than Baptists and Congregationalists. Though they did not stress the independence of each congregation, they were divided into doctrinally separate groups. Only the Wesleyans, who were Anglican in theology and politically Conservative, had the kind of hierarchical organisation that favoured the growth of a system of schools. Moreover, whereas the others had little interest in denominational education as such, the Wesleyans had, through the Conference of 1837, committed themselves to establishing schools 'which shall embrace a purely scriptural and Wesleyan system of education'.<sup>93</sup> Impetus to the movement was given by <sup>f</sup>opposition to the establishment of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education; a Centenary Fund initiated in 1839 was followed by a resolution in 1843 calling for funds with which to establish 700 new schools within seven years. Yet funds came in more slowly than expected. By 1870 there were 743 efficient schools, but the achievement was partially the result of a rapid reversal of policy.<sup>94</sup> Not all Wesleyans had been ~~opposed~~ to the use of government funds, and it was not long before it was being realised that the schools were not a very good investment for the denomination. The Reverend W. M. Holland, arguing for a national system of education, stated that: 'Religiously the schools have been a failure.... For Methodism they have been of very little positive religious service. Where are the souls they have saved?'<sup>95</sup> They had, therefore, as a compromise, while still opposing a secular system, accepted grant aid from 1847.<sup>96</sup>

In Leicester the Wesleyans were not as strong as other Non-conformist groups. On 30 March 1851 attendances at Wesleyan places of worship totalled 3,962, while the corresponding figure for Baptists was 8,857.<sup>97</sup> With most of their resources spent on the maintenance of five Sunday schools, and slow growth at the national level, only one group of Wesleyan day schools was possible, and it did not come into existence until 1867, long after the availability of government funds.

Other Methodist groups also opened schools. A free infant school was opened in Lee Street.<sup>98</sup> St. Paul's Primitive Methodist Chapel, situated close to the Midland railway station, had a school in early 1871. With 282 children in attendance it was a substantial enterprise.<sup>99</sup>

The attempts by Congregationalists, Baptists and Methodists to provide voluntary schools outside the aegis of the British and Foreign Schools Society withdrew funds from the latter, and thus hindered its efforts. British schools made slow progress in Leicester. In the face of increasing financial difficulties the aim was not to proliferate, but to build upon and strengthen the existing foundations. By 1857 Mill Street consisted of separate boys' and girls' schools, building grants of £750 and £120 in 1834 and 1855 making expansion possible. The Archdeacon Lane School, as has been mentioned, became a feeder to Mill Street. The Great Meeting School became officially affiliated with the Society, a factor that helped it to expand.<sup>100</sup> It now restricted its intake to boys; its total enrolment rose steadily from 312

in 1858<sup>101</sup> to 631 in 1870.<sup>102</sup>

The Mill Street British Schools were among the best of the schools supported by Dissenters, and the largest of sixty schools and groups of schools inspected by Joseph Fletcher. Between them there were 650 pupils enrolled (though only 320 were present at the time of inspection), as compared with the average of the other schools inspected, which was 184. They were also financially superior not only to other British schools, but also to most of the Church schools in Leicester. Of the income of £273 in 1846 some £15 was in the form of endowment income, while £76 consisted of subscriptions and donations. This allowed for the payment of a master's salary of £122 and a mistress's salary of £71. Such salaries were unusually high. The average salaries for the schools that Fletcher inspected in the same year were £58 for masters and £34 for mistresses. Both master and mistress at Mill Street, however, paid an assistant master (partly) and an assistant mistress (wholly) from their own salaries. The master also supplemented the school fees of some pupils with payments out of his own salary; these poorer children paid one penny per week instead of the usual twopence.<sup>103</sup>

In Fletcher's report on British schools inspected the schools at Cambridge and Leicester were singled out for the worth of their geography teaching, as related to 'the acquisition of some important facts relating to the produce, physical features, and social character of the several countries'.<sup>104</sup> There was also praise for the work in general at Mill Street:



'The boys' school under a practised master, of industry, energy and invention, is a good study of what can be accomplished on the monitorial plan by one teacher in the instruction of 300 children ....each monitor has his appropriate manuscript manual of arithmetic and geography, and his school-made map, to help him in these departments....and the discipline of the whole is perfect ....; the girls' school is a true companion school to the boys'.<sup>105</sup>

Excellent as was Fletcher's report, however, the schools were not without their problems. The Inspector himself gently pinpointed one of them, stating, after commenting on the good use to which the monitorial system was being put, that 'this is one of the best schools of the old style that I have seen'.<sup>106</sup> Kay-Shuttleworth, as secretary of the Committee of Council on Education, had already envisaged a system in which pupil teachers would replace monitors, while each school would be in the care of 'one superior trained teacher'.<sup>107</sup> The Anglicans in Leicester were already regarded by Joseph Dare as being more efficient than the Dissenters in the running of their schools,<sup>108</sup> because they had begun to move away from the inefficient system of monitorial teaching.<sup>109</sup> By 1870 the British schools in Leicester were able to claim that they had trained eighty pupil teachers, but they could not really compare in this field with the Anglicans.<sup>110</sup>

As early as 1815 the Central School could claim that 'upwards of twenty masters and mistresses have already received instruction in the Madras system' within its walls.<sup>111</sup> By 1834 the Central School system was well established throughout the country; the Leicester one accepted candidates, some of whom were 'from very respectable situations in life, in which they have not been successful', for five months of training. While some portion of every

day was spent studying apart from the children, the main part of the training was practical. Speaking about central schools generally to the Select Committee on the State of Education the Reverend W. Johnson stated that 'a division of each school is set apart for the exclusive use and practical instruction of the masters and mistresses in training....and they are as responsible for the instruction, discipline and improvement of the children under their care as if they actually constituted a school of their own'.<sup>112</sup> By the 1840s the Central School in the town had been superseded by St. Margaret's Schools, which were reported in 1842 to have eight masters in process of training, and to have already trained seven male and three female teachers.<sup>113</sup> They were supervised by the Reverend William Fry, the local National Society secretary. Speaking appreciatively of his work, A. Irvine, the vicar of St. Margaret's stated that 'after they had attended those schools during the day, they were expected to spend the evening in receiving instruction from him at his own house.... Day after day I have found him in St. Margaret's New Schools, sedulously and successfully occupied in their improvement'.<sup>114</sup> The inspector's report on St. Margaret's schools, though, contained what may have been oblique adverse criticism of Fry's training scheme: 'The master and mistress are assisted by teachers from Mr. Fry's training school; notwithstanding this assistance, both schools, with the exception of a few boys in the first class, passed a very indifferent examination'.<sup>115</sup>

There were also many untrained teachers, whom Fry made his

concern. In a letter to Kay-Shuttleworth he described the poor state of knowledge of some teachers, and requested funds with which to form a class during harvest-time, when schools were either closed or practically deserted while the majority of children gleaned in the fields.<sup>116</sup> At a meeting of the Archidiaconal Board the Reverend J. H. Hamilton underlined the need for teacher training:

'It has too generally been thought that a youth who could do little more than read and write, was qualified, without further trouble, to teach a school. Nay, we all know that nothing has been more common than to find a young man made a school master, merely because he has proved unfit for any other employment'.<sup>117</sup>

The editor of the Leicester Journal, also noting the inadequacies of many teachers because of lack of training, advised those of his readers who were working in schools to attend the lecture of a Mr. Gregory, who, armed with clerical testimonials (including one from the Bishop of Exeter), 'exhibited the working of his system, by the examination of a class from St. Mary's School'.<sup>118</sup>

Fry tried to develop a more ambitious training college in 1842. Plans were made for combining the development of such a college with the Collegiate School, an Anglican proprietary day school, which at the time was suffering severe competition from a non-sectarian competitor.<sup>119</sup> The attempt failed, however, because the upper middle-class pupils at the school were not interested in teaching in elementary schools.<sup>120</sup> This duplicated experience elsewhere, for a letter from the Reverend Derwent Coleridge, Principal of the National Society's Training College for Schoolmasters in Chelsea, to the secretary of the parent Society, indicated his opinion that student teachers:

'should not be taken from the upper ranks of society. Boys bred up in refinement....would with difficulty be made to accommodate themselves to the discipline of the Institution and still less to its objects.... The sons of small, or indeed, middling farmers and shop-keepers, of schoolmasters and office clerks, and of the better class of artisans, are perhaps to be preferred. They ought to have had a home with some domestic advantages, and to leave it not without a home-bred feeling of self-respect'. 121

It was obvious that many teachers would have to be recruited from the elementary schools, whose pupils included persons of these classes. At Mill Street British Schools, for instance, out of a total enrolment of 1,175 in 1858 there were 120 children 'of employers having hands under them', while 200 were children 'of trades-persons who work for themselves, but employ no assistants'. Similarly, at the Great Meeting School, out of a total of 312 boys, 46 were the children of employers, and 72 had parents who were self-employed, but without employees.<sup>122</sup> Anglican schools were not dissimilar. So that Fry's attention was necessarily directed to the further development of the pupil-teacher system. By 1857-8 five National schools (Central, Curzon Street, Knighton Street, St. John's and St. Margaret's) and the old parochial school of St. Mary's were in receipt of grants for pupil teachers.<sup>123</sup>

One of the most remarkable developments in mid-nineteenth century England was the Anglican revival. At one extreme the Church experienced the rise of the Oxford Movement, and its ritualistic practices; at the other there were the energetic Evangelicals, who had much in common with the Wesleyans. Yet there was no new schism, despite the defection of a few notable individuals, like John Henry Newman. Between the extremes, forging a link

with each of them, developed the tolerant Latitudinarianism. So that it became possible to claim that, with as wide a range of beliefs as English society itself held, the Church was in some sense a truly national institution.<sup>124</sup> Its long tradition, the beauty and grace of many of its buildings, and the new comprehensiveness of outlook, enabled Church extension work to thrive, and to compete adequately with Non-conformity, even in the strongholds of Dissent. Leicester was no exception.

By 1870 there were five new Anglican Churches, of substantial proportions, that had been erected since the beginning of the century. Four of these had been built after 1850. Five more were to be completed by 1880. St. Martin's was also remodelled in neo-gothic fashion.<sup>125</sup> Even in 1851 the dominance of Non-conformity was not by any means overwhelming. There were only nine Anglican Churches, but they recorded 16,944 attendances on 30 March, while 24 Dissenting places of worship between them had 19,060.<sup>126</sup> Simmons, drawing attention to Baptist and Wesleyan chapels that fell into disuse after 1850, and the rise of the Secular movement, states that: 'If the town's religious tone was predominantly Non-conformist, the hold of Dissent was already beginning to weaken'.<sup>127</sup> It is significant that when Victoria Road Non-conformist Church was founded in 1866, and housed within a stone building, capped by a slender neo-gothic spire, the articles of faith declared that 'Godly Anglicans' would be accepted into membership without having to undergo the Baptism of Believers that the majority of its (Particular Baptist) founding members preferred for themselves.

Anglican educational policy, both nationally and locally, once it was conceded that education for the masses was generally desirable, aimed to cover as much territory with Church schools as possible, even to the point of building some very small schools that were never very practicable. Within the boundaries of Leicester this policy must have appeared to be very foolish when viewed from the windows of the Mill Street British Schools, for whereas the latter paid their way, a number of the Church schools were in serious financial difficulties. Christ Church School, for instance, was opened in 1841, with accommodation for 270 pupils. In 1847-8 its income of £116 14s. 6d. was exceeded by an expenditure of £150 2s. 4d. The financial situation was reflected in the running of the school, where the inspection revealed a marked decrease of efficiency. The same was true of St. Margaret's, where new accommodation had been provided in 1835 for two schools, which together were capable of taking 500 pupils, but whose normal attendances were 132 boys and 90 girls. In this case the income of £125 was far exceeded by an expenditure of £179 13s 5d.<sup>128</sup> Yet the policy was not as foolish as it may have seemed to be. Churchmen, aware of the intensity of societal divisions, of the cohesiveness and exclusiveness of quite small areas within the town, knew that many parents would not send their children to school in an adjoining district. In 1857-8 the Reverend J. J. Blandford, after mentioning in his inspection report the work of Fry in building the Laxton Street School and effecting extensions to St. Mary's, noted that:

'within ten minutes of the foregoing schools are those in Knighton Street, which are well attended, but by a different class of children from those who flocked into the Laxton Street school. The parents of the latter children, though so near, would not send them to the Knighton Street school, but as soon as one was opened in their immediate neighbourhood they availed themselves of it. Nothing shows more plainly the necessity for promoters of schools to bear in mind how important an element in the success of a school as to numbers is its situation'. 129

Such tactics may have been less satisfactory from the purely educational viewpoint or the economic viewpoint, but from that of an Established Church seeking to maintain its supremacy, they could not be said to be wrong. As the Congregationalist opponent Dr. R. W. Dale stated: 'Those Churches which cared most about teaching their own definite creed....had a motive....which was not felt by Churches which had no desire to make that day school an instrument for the propagation of a denominational creed'. 130

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Table 4                      Public Elementary Schools in Leicester in 1870<sup>131</sup>

	<u>No. of schools</u>	<u>School places</u>
Church of England	23	6,500
Dissenters	5	2,900
Roman Catholics	3	475
Ragged School	1	300
Union School	1	180
	<hr/>	<hr/>
	33	10,355
	<hr/>	<hr/>

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By 1870 there were 23 Church schools out of a total of 33 public elementary schools, with 6,500 places out of a total of 10,355. Since 1833 the Church of England had built, rebuilt or remodelled fourteen schools or groups of schools. Remodelling

was generally for the purpose of providing extra rooms for teaching in. At St. Martin's, for instance, an infants' school had been separately built in Union Street, while the older building in Friar Lane was much enlarged by including what had been the master's house as part of the teaching space. So that, where there had been only two large rooms, there were, after renovation, three additional 'commodious and well ventilated rooms'. The total cost of the alterations was £1,250.<sup>132</sup> When J. R. Blakiston inspected St. Margaret's in 1870 he commented favourably on two new classrooms that he saw in use.<sup>132</sup>

As the threat of school boards loomed larger the Anglicans redoubled their efforts to provide voluntary schools. The Reverend David James Vaughan, in a sermon preached at St. Martin's, stated that, with ecclesiastical privileges ever diminishing, 'the time must come....when, in education as in all else, each denomination of Christians must stand on its own efforts and its own sacrifices, if it would secure any place at all in the education of the children of its people'.<sup>134</sup> The Dissenters had virtually given up the struggle, looking to legislation to put right what they considered to be the wrongs of preceding decades. Increasingly dependent upon the support of the Secularists (i.e. agnostics and atheists) most of them accepted that the school of the future would be the board school, in which the Bible would be read without note or comment.



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113. Leicester Journal, 29 April 1842. Vide also Ibid., 23 September 1842 and Committee of Council on Education: Minutes, 1847-8, 186. The Central School (known from the 1840s as the County School) faced financial difficulties. In 1842 it was noted that 'fearful inroads' had been made in the numbers of subscribers. Depression had hit the town hard. A bank had failed. The subscription list was considerably reduced in length. A fee of one penny had to be imposed for the first time. After the depression the subscription list improved again, and, by 1847-8, out of a total income of £230, some £193 came from subscribers.
114. Leicester Journal, 29 April 1842.
115. Committee of Council on Education: Minutes, 1847-8. Report on schools inspected in the East Midland District by the Reverend J. J. Blandford.
116. Ibid., 1841-2.
117. Leicester Journal, 29 April 1842.
118. Ibid., 11 November 1842.
119. Ibid., 29 April 1842; vide also C. J. Billson, Leicester Memoirs (Leicester, 1924), 82-95.
120. Leicester Journal, 29 April 1842.
121. Ibid., 2 December 1842.
122. Committee of Council on Education: Minutes, 1858-9. H. C. Alderson's Report on British, Wesleyan and Other Schools.

123. Ibid., 1857-8, 366.
124. D. Thomson, England in the Nineteenth Century (London, Pelican, 1950), 108.
125. C. D. B. Ellis, op. cit., 115-6.
126. Census Report, 1851.
127. J. Simmons, 'Mid-Victorian Leicester', Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, XLI (1965-6), 52.
128. Committee of Council on Education: Minutes, 1847-8. Report on schools inspected in the East Midland District by the Reverend J. J. Blandford.
129. Ibid., 1857-8, 366-7.
130. R. W. Dale, op. cit., 664.
131. Leicester Journal, 14 October 1870. Figures exclude 42 dame schools with a total of 1,250 places, and a number of schools not under certified teachers with 720 places.
132. Ibid., 7 October 1870.
133. Ibid., 23 December 1870.
134. Ibid., 7 October 1870.

The social and economic conditions of Leicester were quite different in 1870 from those that were evident when educational grants were first awarded in 1833. The first Britannia bicycle, locally-made of 'forged iron, and fitted with best quality hickory wheels and gun metal bearings',<sup>1</sup> a visible sign of greater prosperity and a symbol of the increasing rapidity of change that was to mark the last three decades of the century, bumped its way through a maze of newly developed streets. Dr. John Barclay, who lectured to the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society in 1864, noted that the cricket ground had been 'entirely laid out in streets', and that beyond where it had provided a pleasant open space close to the centre of the town there were 'miles of streets....running away into what only a few years ago, were green fields and pastures'.<sup>2</sup> These developments were, like Dyos's Camberwell, 'the product of the unconcerted labour of many men',<sup>3</sup> but in contrast with Nottingham, which was hedged about by private estates, whose owners would not sell them, there had been space in which to grow. So that the streets were wide; the number of houses, unpleasant and jerry-built as many of them were, was sufficient to put roofs over the heads of a population that had grown from 18,000 in 1801 to an estimated 93,000 in 1870.

The industrial structure of the town had also been changing. During the two decades before 1870 boot and shoe manufacturing had become an important second industry to hosiery.<sup>4</sup> Side by side with



the two main industries elastic webbing manufacturing also developed, for a time seeming to some observers that it was the principal industry.<sup>5</sup> Hosiery had been in process of transformation from a domestic craft to a factory industry. Technical difficulties had prevented the early development of powered machinery; not until 1845 was it in use in Leicester, and then only for the manufacture of poor quality 'straight-downs' rather than fully-fashioned stockings. As each improvement raised the quality of the factory produce thereafter, the framework-knitters began to fight a losing battle, the stubbornest of them determined to maintain their independent way of life, but becoming poorer and poorer. Most people opted to work in the factories. The fifty-nine chimneys of which Barclay had been aware in 1847 had grown to more than 250 in 1864.<sup>6</sup>

Late Victorians could afford to be optimistic. Industrial production was growing, and markets were developing overseas. The Great Exhibition of 1851 had led to a belief in technology and science as a way of salvation. This was further heightened by the combined impact of Samuel Smiles's philosophy of self-help, Darwin's evolutionary theory and Marx's dialectical materialism. The improvements already evident could, it seemed, only continue (amid occasional vicissitudes) to the benefit of the whole nation. There were, it had to be admitted, those who sought to dam the stream of progress, but to no avail in the end. Palmerston staunchly resisted reform until his death in 1865, but thereafter came Disraeli's Representation of the People Act (1867) and

Forster's Education Act (1870). Although neither measure was passed without a struggle, the contest was not really over whether suffrage or education should be extended, but how far and in what manner. As far as education was concerned there was little argument about the desirability of education for the working-classes. Whereas few people could have envisaged the provision of a school place for every child in 1833, the considerable increase in voluntary school places during the 1860s encouraged many to accept the idea as feasible. In the larger urban centres, like Manchester, Liverpool, Leeds and Birmingham, about three-quarters of the children between five and thirteen years of age were either at school or had attended school at some time.<sup>7</sup> Even Robert Lowe, the architect of the Revised Code of 1862, accepted, after the passing of the Representation of the People Act, that the new 'masters' would have to be educated.<sup>8</sup>

Not many people, however, either nationally or locally, shared the views of men like Thomas Henry Huxley, who looked forward to the development of an educational system in which there would be 'a ladder from the gutter to the university along which any child may climb'.<sup>9</sup> Many still shared the opinion of one of the witnesses before the Newcastle Commission, who maintained that 'it is quite possible to teach a child soundly and thoroughly.... all that is necessary for him to possess in the shape of intellectual attainment, by the time he is ten years old'.<sup>10</sup> So that what was envisaged was a system in which the rudiments of literacy and enumeracy were taught to large numbers of working-class

pupils, who would thereby be unfitted for the modest role in life that had been 'predestined' for them. Dissenters, looking back over the failure of their attempts to compete with the Church of England's school building programme, gave up their opposition to the use of public funds for the establishment and support of schools, though they continued to oppose denominationalism. They were influenced, in some notable cases, by the extension of the suffrage. Edward Miall, M.P., the former minister of Bond Street Congregational Chapel, had to admit in 1867 that:

'I have not been favourable to what is called Government education; but Government is passing away....from one class chiefly into the hands of another class. As it is the work-people's children that will be educated in the public elementary schools, so it will be generally, I should think, at the expense of the workpeople, as well as of the middle-classes, that these schools will be maintained upon principles of justice'. 11

With rate-aid for non-denominational schools agreed upon by most people in the Dissenting camp, the real point at issue was whether public education should have a religious basis. Anglicans considered that education should be permeated throughout with Christian teaching. The Dissenters, who could not agree on a formula for religious teaching, and who were dependent upon the support of Secularists with no Christian sympathies, tended to accept the idea of a non-sectarian education, with the Bible read in school daily 'without note or comment'.

The Representation of the People Act had encouraged the Conservatives to foster the development of working-men's groups within the party. These became increasingly important weapons in the armoury of the Church as the battle for the Education Bill in

1870 began. A month before the first reading of the Bill in the House of Commons, the Leicester Working Men's Conservative Association held a meeting in opposition to the proposed legislation. The chairman, a renegade Dissenter, denounced Non-conformist ministers in Leicester for their support of 'such a Godless scheme as that recently advocated by Mr. Mundella'. Unfortunately he was under the impression that the Bible was to be excluded altogether from the schools.<sup>12</sup> During the same month another conference of working-men, also convened for the purpose of discussing the elementary education question, was held at the Working Men's College. David Vaughan, as chairman, spoke in defence of positive religious teaching, declaring that he 'did not think that a child taken into school at the age at which they were likely to be there, would be likely to learn anything thereby that would make them into Baptists, Wesleyans, or the adherents of any sect....therefore what seemed to be such a bugbear to Dissenters....was simply nothing'.<sup>13</sup>

More important still in the Church campaign was the National Education Union, formed to counter the National Education League (or the 'Birmingham' League as it was disparagingly called by its opponents outside the West Midlands). The League, under its Unitarian leader, Joseph Chamberlain, who claimed that his organisation held the balance between the Union and the protagonists of a wholly secular school system, campaigned for rate-aided, non-sectarian, free and compulsory education.<sup>14</sup> The Union campaigned for the primary education of all children, with the inculcation of religious and moral truth, subject to the assent of par-

ents, as an integral part of it. Believing in a voluntary system, the members of the latter realised that a free rate-aided system alongside it could mean the ending of Church schools. The Bishop of Peterborough, within whose diocese Leicester lay, campaigning in the town for the continuance of government aid to voluntary schools, stated that:

'It is not a question of supplementing the present system with another system....if you place side by side in any district two schools, one of which is free and compulsory, one of which is supported mainly by voluntary contributions, and the other by the rates, it is perfectly clear that the rate paid and compulsory school must in the end swamp the voluntary and free school'.<sup>15</sup>

An argument that found favour with the National Education Union was that it was judged by them to be virtually impossible to teach without either a religious or an anti-religious bias. The former was considered to be desirable for reasons other than personal salvation. There was still so much fear of insurrection that Bertrand Russell's grandfather, lying near death in 1869, had interpreted a commotion in the street outside his London home as the beginning of the revolution that Marx predicted in the first volume of Das Kapital, published two years earlier.<sup>16</sup> This kind of fear, coupled with concern about law-breaking in general, emphasised the need for a religiously based education that would tend to counter such problems. There was also some genuine concern that where education was without such an emphasis learning was meaningless. As the Conservative Leicester Journal stated, in an article on 'Unsectarianism', 'religion is not an accomplishment like dancing....which can be dispensed with without any loss

to the nature of the child'.<sup>17</sup> To support such arguments Anglicans often stressed the difficulties of teaching the Bible without a bias of some kind. The Bishop of Peterborough, for instance, noted that there were different Bible translations, representing particular theological interpretations, that prevented even simple Bible reading from being entirely unsectarian.<sup>18</sup> Since, however, both Establishment and Dissent used the Authorized Version, his comment was not particularly apt.

Two other arguments found favour in Church of England circles. They did so increasingly as 1870 progressed, and it was clear that the Bill, providing for school boards where necessary, 'to fill up gaps, sparing the public money where it could be done without', would be passed.<sup>19</sup> With government assistance still assured for voluntary schools, it was felt by some, that the Church, by a massive effort, could fill the deficiencies, and obviate the need for a school board. During the period of grace (six months, later extended to twelve months) allowed for applications for the improvement of voluntary school provision, the Church throughout the country succeeded in doing what, at the previous rate of development, would have taken twenty years. Out of 3,342 claims for building grants, some 2,885 were for Anglican schools. Three million pounds were also raised voluntarily for the improvement of existing schools, as well as the building of some new schools.<sup>20</sup> The argument, and its practical expressions, had its echoes in Leicester. In September 1870 one Churchman expressed the fear that nothing was being done to bring the Church schools up to

standard, and that consequently rate-supported schools would be forced upon the town.<sup>21</sup> He was not as observant as he might have been, for a recent spate of building had improved accommodation considerably. As we have observed above, St. Martin's had just undergone renovation,<sup>22</sup> as also had St. Margaret's.<sup>23</sup> The congregation of St. Luke's Church had begun to contribute to a school building fund in January,<sup>24</sup> and had, with the aid of a bazaar, collected £687 by July, when it was reported that: 'The school buildings will be commenced forthwith, although there remains a considerable deficiency on the Building Fund!'.<sup>25</sup> It is possible too that the building of schools by the Holy Trinity Church had also commenced, for the doors were opened to 370 children on 17 July 1871,<sup>26</sup> at which time there was a deficiency of more than a thousand pounds. The buildings had cost more than £2,500.<sup>27</sup> At the archidiaconal level there was an 'influential meeting of Churchmen' in Leicester, at which the Bishop said that 'they could not take upon themselves the responsibility of assisting to have their existing voluntary schools immediately superseded by those rate paid schools'. An Education Fund was, therefore, established to help with the provision of voluntary schools.<sup>28</sup>

The other argument used by Churchmen was that an education rate would be so unpopular that the councils would refuse to apply to the Department of Education for the establishment of a school board. In this connection the editor of the Leicester Journal carried on his own campaign, echoing The Times, which had expressed concern about the increasing rate burden on 'struggling

shopkeepers and rising artisans'.<sup>29</sup> He hoped that there would be a 'disinclination on the part of ratepayers to be rated for education'.<sup>30</sup> This argument was sometimes successful in rural areas, and in towns dominated by the Church. In Lincoln, for instance, where the Anglican revival had resulted in fourteen Churches being newly built, rebuilt or enlarged during the century, and where Non-conformity was represented by thirteen small chapels, no less than seven of which were Methodist, the Town Council decided not to apply for the instituting of a school board, and maintained this position until boards throughout the country were abolished.<sup>31</sup>

Once the Education Bill was enacted in August 1870 there was little real doubt about the outcome in Leicester, any more than there was in Birmingham, where the Council resolved, on 16 August, only a week after the Royal Assent had been given, to apply for the formation of a school board, and was able to hold an election before the end of November.<sup>32</sup> Following hard on the heels of the Birmingham Council, the Leicester Council met on 30 August, with the Liberal-Radical majority determined that there should be a school board. The Town Clerk, Samuel Stone, stated that he had received a circular from the Education Department requesting returns of schools in the borough. Alderman Alfred Burgess moved the appointment of a committee 'to procure all the information required, with a view to an application....for the establishment of an Educational board here'. The Conservatives expressed no opposition.<sup>33</sup> By the following month, when the report was presented, it was clear that Liberals did not regard the role of board



schools as being that of merely supplementing the voluntary schools. Even in his own constituency of Bradford the Liberals expressed disapproval of Forster for this aspect of the Act.<sup>34</sup> So it was no surprise when Stone (who had been a Liberal nominee to the Town Clerk's position) stated bluntly, in his preamble, 'that the schools provided by school boards....will to some extent, come into competition with schools supported by private subscriptions or voluntary efforts, and in some cases seriously affect them.... can scarcely be doubted'.<sup>35</sup> The Clerk's report indicated that his initial enquiries showed about 3,000 children for whom neither existing nor projected schools made provision.<sup>36</sup>

At the end of the first meeting of the Town Council following the October elections the members, having listened to the new Mayor say that he assumed there would be agreement to the idea of applying for a school board, proceeded to appoint an elementary education committee. They also listened to a petition from the National Education League, and decided, as a result, to hold a special meeting to discuss public elementary education in the town. The special meeting was held on 22 November, when the Town Clerk presented a revised report, showing a total of 7,153 children in Church schools, and 4,554 children in all other schools for working-class children. Using the Education Department's formula of eight square feet per child for a school to be regarded as efficient, he had calculated a deficiency of 3,018 places. Subsequently Burgess moved a successful resolution 'to make application to the Educational Department of Her Majesty's Privy Council request-

ing that a School Board may be forthwith formed in and for the Borough of Leicester'.<sup>37</sup>

The tactics of the Church-Tories were now forced to change. It became important to seek representation on the Leicester School Board, to try to ensure that it would carry out the intentions of the Education Act in preserving the interests of voluntary schhols. The Bishop of Peterborough, even before the Council's application, declared that it would be a mistake for the clergy to hold aloof from membership of the School Board, and encouraged them to seek election so that board schools would not lack the encouragement of those who wished to see them develop religious instruction that was more than mere Bible reading.<sup>38</sup> There was also the possibility that a Church-Tory majority could avert the building of board schools.

Both Anglicans and Dissenters were stung into action when it was reported that the application by the Council had been successful, that an election was therefore imminent, and that 'no overt action had been taken save by the working men members of a small Radical organization, who are understood to desire special representation on the Board'.<sup>39</sup> The election date was set for 11 January 1871, and within a few weeks the Church Party had selected eight candidates, though there were thirteen seats to be filled. There were two reasons for this decision. In the first place, there was an attempt, as in other towns, to avoid a poll, by effecting an agreement between the parties to nominate an agreed

number each.<sup>40</sup> David Vaughan only accepted nomination when it was clear that there was to be a contest, having stated earlier that:

'Much has been said....about some compromise or arrangement between the different parties by which a contested election might be avoided.... I have expressed myself....against any such arrangement.... But as long as it finds advocates amongst men of weight and character....I am resolved that no step shall be taken by me which shall have the effect of making such a thing impossible'.<sup>41</sup>

The emergence of informal but determined new political parties, like the working-class Republican League, who would not be bound by a gentlemen's agreement, and the short time available for campaigning, resulted in a contested election for which the major contenders were not really ready. In the second place, however, it is to be doubted that the limitation to eight candidates was purely accidental. Only a short time before, in Birmingham, the Liberals had nominated fifteen candidates, one for each place, while the Conservatives had offered only eight candidates. The spreading of the votes for the Liberals had resulted in only six of them being elected, while eight Conservatives, whose total votes were less than the Liberal total, had been returned.<sup>42</sup> The system of cumulative voting or 'plumping' (i.e. the placing of all of an elector's votes, thirteen in Leicester's case, on a few candidates) ensured that no party could win every seat.<sup>43</sup>

When the voting was completed on 11 January 1871, the count showed that the Church Party had won more seats on the Leicester School Board than any other group. The Reverends A. A. Isaacs, D. J. Vaughan, J. N. Bennie and Canon W. Fry took first, second, fourth and fifth places. J. Hollingworth and J. Barrs, both Anglican laymen, were also elected. Since a place was also won

by Captain R. W. Worswick, a Roman Catholic, there was a majority in favour of religious teaching and the protection of voluntary schools. The remaining six places were taken by four Liberal-Dissenting representatives, the Reverends Dr. Nathaniel Maycroft (Baptist) and Robert Marley (Congregationalist), and Alderman Alfred Burgess and James Roscoe, and two framework-knitters, T. P. Bailey and Daniel Merrick, who represented a group of working-men.<sup>44</sup>

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Table 5                      Leicester School Board Election Results, 1871

Elected:

A. A. Isaacs, clergyman (Church Party)	14,191
D. J. Vaughan, clergyman (Church Party)	10,669
T. P. Bailey, framework-knitter (Working Man)	9,593
J. N. Bennie, clergyman (Church Party)	8,367
Canon W. Fry, clergyman (Church Party)	8,363
James Roscoe, engineer (Dissenter)	8,075
Daniel Merrick, framework-knitter (Working Man)	7,787
R. Marley, dissenting minister (Dissenter)	7,404
R. W. Worswick, Esq., Retired Captain (Roman Catholic)	6,241
Dr. Nathaniel Maycroft, dissenting minister (Dissenter)	5,216
J. Hollingworth, wine merchant (Church Party)	5,074
John Barrs, tea dealer (Church Party)	4,507
Alderman Alfred Burgess, gentleman (Dissenter)	3,773

Not elected:

W. Stanyon, shoe manufacturer	3,480
W. Hunt, ironmonger	3,441
J. Coy, draper	3,393
A. Ellis, merchant	3,223
Windley, newspaper proprietor	3,204
J. Thompson, newspaper proprietor	2,894
J. Harrap, agent	2,774
W. Kempson, manufacturer	2,577

Source: Leicester Journal, 20 January 1871.

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The opposition, therefore, was not as cohesive as the Church Party, though there was general agreement on the religious question. By

the next election, three years later, they had cohered as a Liberal group.<sup>45</sup>

Adams has stated that the cumulative voting system was responsible for the fact that 'in most Liberal boroughs in England the Tories and the Church secured the control of the School Boards for the first three years'.<sup>46</sup> But 'plumping' was only partially responsible in Leicester. There is some evidence to show that working-men did not automatically take the Dissenting point of view on religious teaching. One of several who wrote to the Leicester Journal soon after the election adversely criticised Dr. Haycroft: 'What sort of teaching would the Dr. give to the class of children who are likely to benefit by the Act? Would he simply turn them adrift upon the world....without teaching them those higher and holier principles which are taught us in God's Holy Word?'<sup>47</sup> Also to be noted is the fact that much of Vaughan's support was gained from the working-classes. One working-class supporter stated at an election meeting that:

'When he [i.e. Vaughan] first came to St. Martin's, there were not more than about 300 children attending their Day and Sunday schools, and no Evening schools at all. Now they had two schools, and there were between 1,500 and 2,000 persons under instruction'.<sup>48</sup>

He concluded by commending Vaughan to the working-class voter.

Also to be noted is that John Barrs was the nominee of the Leicester Working Men's Conservative Association.<sup>49</sup>

Perhaps the factor that aided the Church Party the most was the question of compulsory education. The Education Act had em-

powered school boards to make education compulsory for children between the ages of five and thirteen inclusive. At the Town Council meeting of 22 November 1870 Stone, the Town Clerk, had said that the amount of school accommodation needed would depend upon 'the adoption or otherwise of the principle of compulsion' and on 'the strict enforcement of any bye-law which may be made on the subject of compulsory attendance'. In the debate that followed, Burgess, secretary of the management committee of the Mill Street British Schools since 1832, said that he 'could speak with some authority as to the difficulty....found in getting the lowest class to send their children to school', and advocated compulsion. He was supported by Councillor M. T. Chambers, who stressed the ineffectiveness of education in countering crime if it was not to be made compulsory.

Church-Tory attitudes on the question of compulsion varied according to local circumstances. In Birmingham they proposed compulsion (with the use of rates in lieu of fees for the very poor) with the aim of filling up the voluntary schools before the building of board schools was considered, in the vain hope that the latter would not be necessary.<sup>50</sup> In Leicester, however, the Liberal stance in favour of compulsion was used to give a certain tactical advantage to the Church Party, whose candidates were now able to adopt the role of champions of the oppressed. Councillor John Barrs, soon to be elected to the new School Board, declared his fear that it would not be possible to get the children of the poor into school without some kind of force,<sup>51</sup> but he would only

approve of the application of 'moral force', as legal compulsion would be a severe hardship to families whose income from child labour was needed to supplement low adult wages.<sup>52</sup> Vaughan also supported the use of moral force. Henry Newton, one of his supporters, stated at the adoption meeting held for Vaughan that: 'The Education Board would have to solve the problem....whether if children were withdrawn from labour the wages of adults would be enhanced to the same amount. Mr. Vaughan was the only gentleman.... ever heard mention the matter'.<sup>53</sup> There was evidently considerable strength of feeling among some members of the working classes on this issue. Four years later, after a compulsion by-law had been adopted, J. R. Blakiston, M.M.I., was to observe 'that the law is habitually broken or evaded both as to age and as to hours, not so much in the large factories as in the small workshops which everywhere abound, and in the employment of children at home'.<sup>54</sup>

Whereas in most Boards compulsion and fee payment were considered together, in Leicester the latter was raised separately. T. P. Bailey, one of the working-class representatives, raised the question of school pence payment for those who could not afford them. He had, he said, noted the plight of a stocking-maker who could not afford school fees, although he would like his children to attend school. Bailey had also observed that the Education Act allowed boards to remit from the rates the fees of children whose parents could not afford them.<sup>55</sup> Between the meeting at which the question was raised, and the next, at which a decision was to be made, Board members became aware of the bitter argument on a

similar proposal in Birmingham.<sup>56</sup> Seeing the advantage for the Church schools of this proposal some members of the Church Party decided to support Bailey, who found he had strayed into an issue that was more contentious than he had suspected. In speaking on the issue Isaacs noted that school attendance was below the capacity of existing schools, and agreed with Bailey 'that the Board [should] carry out the provisions of the....Elementary Education Act for the payment of the fees of any child where the parent satisfies the School Board that he is unable to pay the same'. The Liberal group did not agree with Bailey, however, and they reacted quickly and negatively to a proposal that would strengthen the Church schools. Harley commented that it would not be appropriate to consider fees before the Board had provided sufficient accommodation for the whole child population. Merrick did not agree that poor enrolment and poor attendance were functions of poverty alone. 'There were in the working classes', he said, 'a feeling of objection to the Church of England schools.... The working classes had a strong conviction that no public money ought to go to support religious principles'. Vaughan, as the Church Party chairman, was anxious to avoid a vote on the matter, and stated that he agreed with Harley that the question should not be decided upon until there were enough school places available for all the children in the town. He suggested that the motion be deferred until the compulsion issue was decided, as ultimately it would have to be when there were enough schools. No further action was taken.



The school pence issue serves to highlight the importance of the chairmanship and the casting vote on a Board in which the Church Party had only a slender majority. So that when the Leicester School Board had met for the first time almost the whole time had been taken up by wrangling over who should hold the position. The Dissenters' nomination of Burgess was opposed by Vaughan on the grounds of the Alderman's known support 'of the mere reading of the Bible in schools'. The counter nomination of Canon Fry, the octogenarian secretary of the Archidiaconal Board of Education, was as vigorously opposed by the Dissenters.<sup>58</sup> Only Vaughan, as a liberal Churchman, was able to gain sufficient support from the Liberal side, so that although he was reluctant, he had little choice but to assume the office.<sup>59</sup>

In a sense, the Church Party's capture of the chairmanship in the shape of David Vaughan was a Pyrrhic victory, for he was reputed to be a person 'whose sympathies have been known to be on the other side'.<sup>60</sup> A broad Churchman, he was sympathetic toward those 'whose doctrine and discipline are not patterned on our own'. Since becoming incumbent of St. Martin's in 1860 he had read and agreed with H. B. Wilson's 'multitudinist principle' (expressed in Essays and Reviews, published in 1860). Wilson had argued that in early Christian history the Church permitted a considerable diversity of belief and practice, combining elements of both congregationalism and episcopacy. Vaughan was emphatic in agreeing that 'the freedom of opinion which belongs to the English citizen should be conceded to the English Churchman'. He agreed also with Frederick Temple on the harmony of religion and science.

Agreement with members of his own denomination on religious teaching was based on his belief that: 'The foundation of our faith is not in an infallible book, but in the living Christ himself'. Simple Bible reading, he argued, would tend to encourage fundamentalism and to discourage what he believed to be the essence of Christianity.<sup>62</sup>

Once the chairmanship was settled, the main problem that faced the new School Board was the inadequacy of statistics on which to base the planning of elementary education for all children. There can be little doubt that the Church Party used the inadequacy as an excuse for not formulating early plans for the building of schools that might compete with Church schools. The existing schools were not being used to their full capacity, so that there was no great hurry. However, even had they wanted to act quickly there was little opportunity for them to do so. As the Leicester Journal indicated, somewhat gleefully, even before the election, the Education Department had 'issued an important circular which restrains the impulses of local School Boards by confining their action in the first instance to inquiry, reserving to the central department the determination as to the question of school sufficiency and rating'.<sup>63</sup> At the second meeting of the Board, in February 1871, the chairman read a communication from the Education Department, requesting a report, indicating the number of children in Leicester between 3 and 5, and 5 and 13, 'efficient' school provision as it existed or would soon exist, the deficiency established by comparing the two sets of figures, and the precise

localities where schools were needed.<sup>64</sup> For a Board which had as yet no professional assistance this was an enormous task. A committee was appointed which, by April, was only in a position to propose 'that all schools which made returns to the Town Clerk, excepting those under Government inspection....be visited by a committee from the Board, who shall report generally upon the character of each school'.<sup>65</sup>

Among the uncertainties that presented themselves in the compiling of the report there was the question of the Alderman Newton's Charity. In 1869 Parliament had created the Endowed School Commission, whose concern was that of middle-class education. To the Commission was given the task of examining charities, with the idea of redirecting those that were obsolete. Although many of the existing charities had been set up with the object of providing free education for the poor, it was judged that, with the growth of voluntary schools (and the impending creation of board schools) there would be little need for such a service to the poor. There was, in any case, by this time, little sympathy with education that was wholly free, except when related to outstanding ability. The charities, therefore, were to be used mainly for scholarships, so that a few children from poorer homes might be educated alongside middle-class fee-paying pupils.<sup>66</sup> Obviously this would fundamentally alter the character of schools like Alderman Newton's, which had been founded in the eighteenth century 'for the promotion of elementary education amongst the poor'.<sup>67</sup> For the Commissioners were proposing that admission be subject to competition for a min-

ority of working-class boys, and the ability to pay fees for the rest.<sup>68</sup>

During early March 1871 there was a considerable amount of newspaper correspondence on the subject of the Alderman Newton's Charity, most of it from former pupils and members of the governing body, objecting to proposed changes. Vaughan, as one of the Trustees, was necessarily involved. Whereas the other Trustees took up the position that any change in the terms of the Charity as provided for in the will of Gabriel Newton was wrong, Vaughan agreed with the proposed change, recognising that conditions had changed. 'If Ald. Newton was alive now', he reasoned, 'he would not found such a school as he founded then'. What the other Trustees particularly resented, however, was Vaughan's insistence on submitting a separate proposal to the Commissioners. The contents of this were outlined in a published letter, in which he stated that he wanted to have the school enlarged to cater for 500 boys, 'who should receive a sound English education, with the addition of drawing, vocal music, one branch of physical science....and the elements of one modern language'. He agreed that about 100 to 120 places should be for free scholars above the age of ten 'elected by open competition....out of the elementary schools of the town', but he wanted the other places for fee-paying sons of artisans and small tradesmen. The school would remain a Church establishment, subject to a conscience clause, as required by legislation.<sup>69</sup> Its role was purposely cast in the mould of an advanced elementary school, however, rather than a grammar school, only partly as a response

to the anticipated demand.

Vaughan had good reason to want the Alderman Newton's School to remain, at least partially, within the realm of working-class education. If the school was re-organised, and could be regarded as remaining within the framework of elementary education, it would provide one more elementary school under the aegis of the Church, thus reducing the number of school places that the School Board would have to provide. Accordingly Vaughan raised the matter at a meeting of the Board, declaring that, had Newton been alive: 'There would be a great encouragement of the school, and it would be in the direction of elementary education'. Moreover, he maintained, quite correctly, that 'the course of instruction....proposed for the higher part of the school did not go beyond the provisions of the revised code of the present year'. The Board were advised that it was their duty to take 'any means for the elementary education of the poor' into consideration before calling upon the ratepayers to pay for new board schools. As this was in line with Church Party policy, Bennie moved successfully that a committee 'be appointed to report to the Board on the existing charitable bequests for the furtherance of elementary education among the poor, with a recommendation of the best time and mode of taking action with regard to them'.<sup>70</sup> The idea was not that the School Board should take over the Alderman Newton's Charity, but that the interests of the Church of England should be aided, by ensuring one less educational gap for the Board to fill.<sup>71</sup>

The Trustees, however, regarded the Board's invitation to enter into discussions on the future of the school as a preliminary to a take-over attempt, and the Board was left where it had started, with the Alderman Newton's School excluded from further discussion. The Board nevertheless contrived to include the school in its return of 'efficient' elementary schools.<sup>72</sup>

By the end of July 1871 the School Board had submitted the statistical information required by the Department of Education. This time there was an estimated deficiency of 5,000 places. Nothing else had been achieved in six months. There were no precise plans for the opening of any board schools, although it had become obvious that the Church could not hope to provide all the accommodation needed. Public criticism began to grow, so much so that a sense of urgency began to grip even those who did not wish to provide board schools.

The sense of urgency increased perceptibly after a public meeting was held in the Town Hall during September by the Republican League and other working-class groups 'for the purpose of asking what the Leicester School Board are doing, and whether the public money is to be expended in sectarian or denominational teaching'. The meeting was attended by about a hundred working-men, whose rough clothing and manners contrasted sharply with the clerical garb of Bennie. The latter rose from his seat, and, with good articulation, defended the School Board, pointing out that it had been powerless to act until the Department gave perm-

ission. Bailey and Merrick, the men's own representatives on the Board, were also present, the former pouring scorn upon Bennie for daring to attend a working-class meeting. Merrick, however, raised the level of debate again by courageously supporting Bennie, stating that: 'Last Monday there was a site ~~purchased~~ for the erection of a school, but they had not yet obtained the sanction of the Education Department for it.... When they had the permission.... to erect schools they would do it as quick as possible'. Despite Merrick's plea, a resolution was adopted, urging the Board to provide immediate accommodation for 5,000 children.<sup>73</sup>

As Bennie and Merrick had stated, the Department of Education had still not given permission to proceed by September. There was still some uncertainty about the number of places deficient. The Board's own estimate of 5,000 was regarded as being too low. The figure was revised in early October by Inspector J. R. Blakiston, who stated: 'I find 17,059 to be the number for which school accommodation ought to be provided. For 9,790 of these accommodation is supplied by 29 efficient schools already existing or in course of being provided.... Sufficient Dame Schools were visited to satisfy me that no account ought to be taken of them in estimating the existing provision of school accommodation. Further accommodation is, therefore, required for 7,269 children'.<sup>74</sup> Even this was not the final figure to be accepted; one month later secretary Francis Sandford wrote to say that there had been an error, and that 8,500 places were actually needed.<sup>75</sup>

By November, when the Sandford estimate arrived, it was obvious to even the most obdurate Church Party members that the building of board schools could not be avoided. Their tactics were now limited to delaying such building and ensuring that the new schools would not compete with parish schools. The series of decisions leading to the building of the Elbow Lane School provides an interesting insight into these tactics.

At the May 1871 meeting of the Board it had been observed that there was an area in All Saints' Ward where there was a very high population density, but very few schools. It was suggested that there was a school-room 'in which no day school is held', adjoining an infants' school in Charlotte Street, where, if the Trustee would agree, a girls' school might be established. A boys' school was also projected for similar premises in Soar Lane. No decision was made, however, and the matter had to be raised again by the Liberals at the next meeting, when a decision was made to approach the Education Department for permission to proceed with the establishing of a school.<sup>76</sup> Two weeks later the Board's request had been acknowledged. Anglicans might have been happy to await the answer, but Burgess, like the other Dissenters, was anxious to proceed with the opening of board schools, and he suggested that the Board widen the scope of its plans by taking immediate steps to provide school accommodation for 2,000 children, and to appoint a committee 'to make recommendations....as to the localities in which school accommodation should be provided'.<sup>77</sup> By the middle of September the sites committee appointed as a result of Burg-



ess's plea recommended the building of schools in All Saints' Ward, rather than attempting to adapt existing premises. The Board then proceeded to purchase two sites, one in Elbow Lane, where accommodation was projected for 500 girls and infants, and the other in Slater Street for a boys' school.<sup>78</sup> For another two months the Board argued with Patrick Cumin at the Education Department about the suitability of the Elbow Lane site,<sup>79</sup> so that it was not until December that the members made a definite decision to erect a school there.<sup>80</sup>

While arguing with Cumin the Board members were also arguing among themselves. They quarrelled about the size of school to be built. When the Church Party proposed that the building at Elbow Lane should contain a girls' school for about 300 and an infants' school to accommodate 200, the Liberals disagreed, feeling that the ratepayer would gain from the economies that greater size brought. Action had already been taken by the London Board to provide larger units.<sup>81</sup> In pressing for larger units the Liberals probably hoped that some members of the Church Party might give support. Barrs, for instance, in an election address, had agreed with 'the building of substantial and airy schools.... built to accommodate 400 to 500 children'.<sup>82</sup> Vaughan had proposed an Alderman Newton's School that was to be enlarged to accommodate 500 pupils. Moreover the Board members were not unaware of Inspector Blakiston's recommendation regarding the erection of 'seven large schools capable of accommodating about 1,150 children each, and to let each group consist of four departments, viz.,

infants, mixed junior, girls, and boys'.<sup>83</sup> Haycroft, therefore, must have felt secure in proposing, at the November meeting, that all board schools be built to accommodate 250 infants or 500 children above that level. In support Harley stated that: 'The uniform testimony of the Government inspectors was that the large schools were more efficient.... The large schools in Leicester received nearly 1s. per head more than the smaller ones'. Party lines were, however, strictly observed, for Barrs remained strangely silent, and Vaughan, somewhat unconvincingly, now effected to dislike 'big school barracks'. Isaacs, the main Church spokesman, felt that moral supervision would be less effective in large than in small schools. Because of the need to make administrative subdivisions they were not necessarily cheaper to maintain. Behind all the ostensible objections, however, was the fear that large well-equipped board schools would compete too well with small Church schools. Isaacs indeed had stressed the legal role of board schools as being that of supplementing the voluntary schools, thus indicating that this was at the back of his mind. As a chairman with a casting vote faced by an issue on which there was likely to be a voting tie, Vaughan felt that he should introduce a compromise amendment, committing the Board to the giving of careful attention in each individual case 'to the convenience and requirements of the surrounding population, and also to the nature and proximity of existing schools'.<sup>84</sup> Its passing was interpreted as a victory for the Church Party engineered by the chairman, especially when it was coupled in the minds of the public with an interesting fact about the Elbow Lane site.

At the December 1871 meeting of the School Board, when the decision to erect the Elbow Lane building was made, Daniel Merrick suddenly and unexpectedly objected on the grounds that the particular location chosen was not really in the area that had been described earlier as 'educationally destitute', and that it would compete with the Great Meeting Schools.<sup>85</sup> His protest found echoes in the schools themselves, where William Rowlett, the chairman of the Great Meeting schools management committee, complained bitterly that: 'If that school [i.e. Elbow Lane] succeeded to any great extent it would destroy their school'.<sup>86</sup> It was widely assumed that this was the outcome of a cunning plot by the Church Party members; there was some suspicion that it had been engineered by Vaughan. The suspicion seemed to be confirmed later by Vaughan's stubborn resistance to the suggestion that a board school be built within the parish of St. Martin's. It was believed that he opposed a plan to build a school in Oxford Street in order to protect the Friar Lane School.<sup>87</sup> It is unlikely that Vaughan was in fact as guilty as many people judged him to be. It is more likely that he had been acutely aware of the extent of educational deficiency in the various wards. School Board and Inspector's reports, available in December, showed that, while All Saints' as a whole had a deficiency of schools, St. Martin's had a surplus of school places of as many as 600.<sup>88</sup> In such circumstances Vaughan's attitude was understandable and reasonable.

The first year of the Leicester School Board's existence ended ingloriously. With the help of the Education Department's inefficiency, and the slow job of collecting statistical inform-

ation, as well as the quarrels and arguments, the Church Party had achieved one of its objectives, the delay of the day when board schools opened their doors, while Church schools improved their capacity to compete. The question of compulsory attendance had been delayed for a time, but was to be fought over again before the end of the first Board's term early in 1874.

# REFERENCES

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2. C. D. B. Ellis, op. cit., 24.
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4. J. Simmons, op. cit., 44.
5. G. T. Rimmington, op. cit. (1958), 75; Committee of Council on Education: Report, 1873-4. J. R. Blakiston's General Report.
6. C. D. B. Ellis, op. cit., 123.
7. C. Birchenough, History of Elementary Education in England and Wales (London, 1925), 124. Birchenough's comment on the numbers of children attending school has to be modified by further details in Joshua Fitch's report on the extent and value of primary education in the four big cities. Fitch and his associate noted that Birmingham, with 83,000 children between 3 and 13 years of age, had only 26,000 attending at one time. Similarly, in Leeds only 19,000 children out of 58,000 attended schools of all kinds. In Manchester and Liverpool the figures were, respectively, 25,000 out of 60,000, and 30,000 out of 90,000, counting inspected schools only. That few remained in school for long is illustrated by the fact that only 256 had been presented for the Standard VI examination in Birmingham. Vide The Times, 15 March 1870.
8. C. Birchenough, op. cit., 121.
9. Ibid., 131.
10. J. W. Adamson, op. cit., 209.
11. A. Miall, op. cit., 273.
12. Leicester Journal, 7 January 1870.
13. Ibid., 21 January 1870.
14. B. Simon, op. cit. (1960), 363; The Times, 1 January 1870.
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16. N. St. John-Stevs, 'The Victorian Conscience', Journal of the Royal Society of Arts, January 1972, 100.

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21. Leicester Journal, 16 September 1870.
22. Ibid., 7 October 1870.
23. Ibid., 23 December 1870.
24. Ibid., 7 January 1870.
25. Ibid., 15 July 1870.
26. Ibid., 13 October 1871.
27. Ibid., 6 October 1871.
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33. Leicester Journal, 2 September 1870.
34. F. J. Adams et al., Education in Bradford since 1870 (Bradford, 1970), xiv.
35. Leicester Journal, 23 September 1870.
36. Ibid., 14 October 1870. Stone indicated that an estimated 13,175 children were in voluntary, ragged, workhouse and dame schools. By subtracting this number from one-sixth of the estimated population of 93,000, and making allowance for absenteeism, it was estimated that about 3,025 children were not provided for by existing facilities.
37. Ibid., 25 November 1870.

38. Ibid., 21 October 1870.
39. Ibid., 9 December 1870.
40. J. H. Bingham, The Period of the Sheffield School Board 1870-1903 (Sheffield, 1949), 1; F. J. Adams et al., op. cit., 1-2; D. Wardle, op. cit. (1971), 84. Bradford avoided an election, but in Sheffield and Nottingham the attempt to avoid the poll failed.
41. Leicester Journal, 30 December 1870.
42. F. Adams, History of the Elementary School Contest in England (London, 1882), 248.
43. B. Simon (Ed.), op. cit. (1968), 157-160.
44. Leicester Journal, 20 January 1871.
45. Ibid., 22 September 1871.
46. F. Adams, op. cit., 250.
47. Leicester Journal, 20 January 1871.
48. Ibid., 6 January 1871.
49. Ibid.
50. A. F. Taylor, op. cit., 48-9.
51. Leicester Journal, 25 November 1870.
52. Ibid., 6 January 1871.
53. Ibid., 30 December 1870.
54. Committee of Council on Education: Report, 1873-4.  
J. R. Blakiston's General Report.
55. Leicester Journal, 23 June 1871.
56. A. F. Taylor, op. cit., 48-50. In Birmingham one of the Church Party members, the Reverend F. S. Dale, had moved the adoption, on 1 February 1871, of bye-laws enforcing attendance and providing for the payment of fees from the rates for the children of indigent parents, which would have had the effect of filling the voluntary schools, and reducing the number of places the School Board would have to provide. Subsequent to the Board's assent there was violent opposition from the Liberal-Dissenters. By November, at the annual meeting of the National Education League, the opposition had assumed national proportions. R. W. Dale spoke

vehemently, asking that Liberal candidates for Parliament be asked whether they would support the repeal of the offending clause in the Education Act permitting payment of fees for pupils in denominational schools. Subsequently there was an attack by Chamberlain on Gladstone's administration, which was to result in the Liberal debacle of 1874.

57. Leicester Journal, 8 September 1871.
58. Committee of Council on Education: Report, 1874-5. J. R. Blakiston mentioned Fry's work over some forty years for elementary education in Leicester, and noted that he 'still continues, in spite of the increasing infirmities of age, to bestow his whole time and thought on the subject'.
59. Leicester Journal, 27 January 1871.
60. Ibid., 15 December 1871.
61. A. J. Allaway, 'David James Vaughan: Liberal Churchman and Educationist', Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, XXXIII (1957), 46-9.
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63. Leicester Journal, 30 December 1870.
64. Ibid., 17 February 1871.
65. Ibid., 21 April 1871.
66. B. Simon, op. cit. (1960), 325ff.
67. I. A. W. Place, 'The History of Alderman Newton's Boys' School, Leicester, 1836-1914', Transactions of the Leicestershire Archaeological and Historical Society, XXXVI (1960), 33.
68. Leicester Journal, 5 May 1871.
69. Ibid., 3 March 1871.
70. Ibid., 5 May 1871.
71. This statement disagrees with at least one other assessment of the situation. Vide I. A. W. Place, op. cit., 33.
72. L.S.B. Minutes, 24 July 1871.
73. Leicester Journal, 22 September 1871.
74. Ibid., 6 October 1871.
75. Ibid., 23 November 1871.



76. Ibid., 9 June 1871.
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78. Ibid., 22 September 1871.
79. Ibid., 10 November 1871.
80. Ibid., 8 December 1871.
81. J. S. Maclure, One Hundred Years of London Education (London, 1970), 41.
82. Leicester Journal, 6 January 1871.
83. Committee of Council on Education: Report, 1874-5.  
J. R. Blakiston's General Report.
84. Leicester Journal, 23 November 1871.
85. Ibid., 8 December 1871.
86. Ibid., 22 December 1871. The Great Meeting Schools did in fact close when the Elbow Lane Schools were opened early in 1874.
87. A. J. Allaway, op. cit. (1957), 53.
88. Leicester Journal, 22 December 1871.

With the development of school boards the raison d'être of Dissenting schools may be thought to have disappeared. Yet many of them lingered on. About 1,300 British schools remained in existence in 1897; some of these had actually come into being after 1871, though they were mainly in areas where there were no school boards.<sup>1</sup> Wesleyans, who were committed to the maintenance of a denominational school system, also retained many of their schools. In some cases maintenance was a matter of local pride, similar to that which in the 1970s seeks to maintain the familiar grammar schools rather than see them absorbed into the comprehensive system that is so clearly in process of superseding the tripartite system. One suspects that in a town like Leicester the function of the non-Church voluntary schools that remained alongside the early board schools was to cater for the children of people in the upper ranks of the working-class and lower middle-class, who preferred that which was tried and trusted for their own children, whatever their own personal ideals. The British Schools in Mill Street were certainly among the voluntary schools which managed throughout the period to compete successfully with the board schools. The annual report of 1875, when there were 611 boys and 630 girls enrolled, mentions that the opening of five large board schools had not permanently affected the numbers.<sup>2</sup>

It was inevitable, however, that voluntary schools supported by Dissenters would ultimately disappear. The smaller, badly accommodated establishments with financial problems and a low

standard of teaching, were the first to disappear. They often placed the boards in difficult situations, for while boards had no wish to be saddled with inferior schools they had to recognise that if a number of schools were closed suddenly, before board schools could be built to replace them, hardship would be exacted upon the children of Dissenters. Neither Church-controlled nor Liberal-Dissent-controlled boards wished to be accused of neglecting such children, for obvious electoral reasons. Dissenters, moreover, realised that if boards could be persuaded to take over schools, there was then a committal of those boards to the administration of schools, a step that Church-controlled boards tried initially to avoid. Thus in some cases the procedure was for the managers to threaten the closure of their schools, sometimes in concert, and usually in precipitate fashion. The board would go through the motions, if it were Church-controlled, of refusing, then, after an interval during which Liberal pressures mounted, there would be a reluctant acquiescence. The Chesterfield Board, for instance, decided in 1871 not to accept responsibility for the British Schools and the School of Industry in the town, but changed its decision under pressure in the following year.<sup>3</sup> In Birmingham, however, the simultaneous offering during 1871 of eight Dissenting schools (including Carr's Lane, for which R. W. Dale was responsible as minister of the supporting congregation) with accommodation for 2,659 children to the Church-controlled Board, on condition that religious teaching in them would be confined to Bible reading without note or comment, was such an

obvious political ploy that there was an outright refusal.<sup>4</sup> In Bradford, where there was a Liberal majority, no ploys were necessary, and the Board gradually took over the schools.<sup>5</sup>

In Leicester the Board soon found itself in the situation where a decision had to be made. Though it had a Church Party majority, and there was a good deal of rancour between them and the minority Liberals, as we have seen, the conflict was not as bitter as in Birmingham. Leicester had no Joseph Chamberlain, eager to capitalise upon circumstances for the sake of political advancement. There was no Non-conformist minister as dominant as R. W. Dale. For the Church Party chairman, Vaughan, was of a liberal disposition. Also, unlike the situation in Birmingham, there was no concerted effort to embarrass the Board by making demands that it was politically unable to accept. It was more of a 'cap in hand' approach by ministers whose congregations were eager to rid themselves of the impossible burden of continuing schools when there was a school board in existence for the purpose of providing accommodation for working-class pupils.

In November 1871 the Reverend S. T. Williams had written to the Board to say that he had been instructed by the managers of the London Road Congregational Chapel School to enquire about the possibility of the school's transfer to the Board. Since the school was not among those that had been judged to be efficient when returns of school accommodation had been made to the Education Department by the Town Clerk and by the Board itself this

was used as an excuse for a reluctance to accept responsibility.<sup>6</sup> Two months later, however, there was a further letter from Williams, stating that 'our School Mistress having obtained the Appointment of Teacher at the Union Workhouse, we do not intend to reassemble our Day School after the holidays'.<sup>7</sup> As the school at the nearby St. Paul's Methodist Chapel, which had been rated as an efficient school with accommodation for 282 children,<sup>8</sup> had also indicated imminent closure, and there were no voluntary schools of a Non-conformist type able to provide places for the displaced pupils, the Board reluctantly committed itself to maintaining schools on these premises. A resolution at the February 1872 meeting of the Board stated that the St. Paul's school room would be used for a 'Girls' School under a mistress but admitting boys from 7 to 10' and the other premises in Glebe Street at the rear of the London Road Chapel for an infants' school.<sup>9</sup>

The re-opening of these two schools under School Board auspices encouraged the managers of the Great Meeting School to intimate to the Board that they had resolved to close the school at the end of the financial year in April. The Board immediately passed a resolution to the effect that it regretted the intention to close, and 'would be glad to know if any arrangement could be made....which might avert the calamity of closing so large and valuable a school'.<sup>10</sup> In May it was reported that an arrangement had been made to continue the school through to the end of 1873, when it would be closed to make way for the school in Elbow Lane.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps this disappointed the managers, who had hoped

to see the Board agree to maintain the school in perpetuity (and were already disgruntled over the decision to build a board school in Elbow Lane), for, although asked to remain as managers, they declined. As a result the Board had to appoint a new body of managers.<sup>12</sup>

The School Board's acceptance of responsibility for three schools made it imperative for consideration to be given to two vital questions, the role of religion in education and compulsory attendance. With the use of Vaughan's casting vote it was possible for the Church Party to insist that the Bible should not simply be read without note or comment as the Dissenters wished, but to provide, as the London School Board had done, for daily Bible readings with 'such explanations and instructions in the principles of religion and morality as are suitable to the capacities of children; provided that....no attempt be made to attach children to, nor detach them from, any particular sect'.<sup>13</sup> By following closely the wording of a similar resolution in London, where the Board, controlled by 'Progressives', agreed with T. H. Huxley's recommendation to teach 'the Bible and the Principles of Religion and Morality',<sup>14</sup> Vaughan probably hoped to gain the support of the minority group. The minority in fact gave no support.

An attempt was made to reverse this decision when the Liberals gained power in 1874, but due to a disagreement within the party, succeeded only in making a change in wording without significantly affecting actual practice in the schools. In February

1874, the new chairman, the Reverend Joseph Wood, a Congregationalist, persuaded the Board to modify its wish to get rid of religious teaching. Bible reading only was to be allowed though, to be conducted by the head teacher in infants' and junior schools, and by senior children in the other schools, at the opening of morning sessions.<sup>15</sup> A Bible Selection Committee appointed by the Board recommended that head teachers be allowed, at their discretion, 'to elect passages of a simple nature, having direct reference to practical life and common morality' from the Gospels, Prophets, Acts of the Apostles, the Epistle to the Romans (chapters XII to the end) and the other Epistles.<sup>16</sup>

The March meeting of the Board brought an opportunity, eagerly seized upon by the Church representatives, to consider religious education further. In considering the proposed regulations for teachers, members wondered whether the daily Bible reading should be accompanied by the singing of a hymn. Teachers were much in favour of the idea. Isaacs, citing the London School Board as an example of a board that not only allowed the singing of a hymn, but provided also for the saying of prayers, suggested that the Lord's Prayer and Benediction be allowed. Merrick's support was won over, and he agreed to support the use of the Lord's Prayer, feeling that 'it was one of the glories of the poor people that their children should be taught the Lord's Prayer from infancy'. Isaacs' proposal might indeed have been approved if Barrs had not stated sarcastically that if the Board agreed: 'It would deceive the poor people grievously, as it would lead them

to imagine that the schools gave them a religious education, which they did not'. Wood, obviously annoyed, hastily adjourned the meeting, leaving the vote to be taken on the resumption two weeks later.<sup>17</sup> By the time that the Board met again it was obvious that the Liberals had made efforts to close their ranks. Merrick, who, as a trade union leader, had attended and spoken at a meeting in support of the National Labourers' Union in the meantime,<sup>18</sup> said that he personally would have liked to have had the Lord's Prayer recited each day, but that he 'had seen many of the working classes, and they thought introducing it in schools would be introducing religious dogma, and give an opening for teaching it on a larger scale'. Accordingly he withdrew his support. W. H. Walker, the Liberal vice-chairman, also spoke strongly against the proposal, stating that he 'did not think a reverence for prayer would be produced by the repetition of this prayer, but rather the reverse', so that the Liberal majority voted against it.<sup>19</sup>

The role of Wood, who voted against the Lord's Prayer recitation, is interesting, for unlike most of the Liberals, he was not against the use of prayer as such. He stated that his preference would have been for extempore prayers rather than formalised prayers. He represented, in fact, a body of opinion within Non-conformity that was less extreme than that represented on the Board by W. H. Walker, and which appears to have been stronger within Congregationalism than among Baptists. That this viewpoint had been evident (though not dominant) in 1870 is clear from the text of a memorial addressed to the government on the



'Religious Difficulty'. Prepared by a group of ministers and laymen in Leicester, it stated:

'Experience, we are convinced, will show that it is quite possible to give such undenominational religious instruction....out of the historical books of the Old Testament and out of the Gospels of the New; and that it is, in fact, just the kind of religious instruction which parents among the educated classes are in the habit of giving to their children'. 20

The Reverend Dr. John B. Paton of Nottingham, on receiving a copy, had replied: 'To prevent a teacher from explaining the meaning of a Bible word, or from giving a lesson even on its history, geography, or morality, would, I conceive, stultify the teacher and degrade his office'.<sup>21</sup> On the other hand R. W. Dale of Birmingham, also a Congregationalist, was influenced by the Unitarians among whom he worked. After the Liberal victory in the Birmingham School Board election of 1873 he was among those who insisted on the complete abolition of religious teaching in board schools.<sup>22</sup> Liberals on the Leicester School Board tended initially to agree with Dale rather than Paton.

Joseph Wood's election to the Board was significant in that he was a supporter of the Paton approach. At first he did not intrude his views, for the Liberal group, still mindful of its defeat in 1871, was anxious to maintain unanimity on matters of principle. By 1879, however, the situation had changed significantly. The shift away from Evangelicalism, with its fundamentalist approach to religious belief, had by this time brought the liberal wings of Anglicanism and Dissent closer together. Methodists (particularly Wesleyans) had in any case often voted with the Church in favour of religious education. At Chesterfield,

for instance, where the seven member board consisted of four Dissenters (one Congregationalist and three Methodists, representing the United Free Methodist, Primitive Methodist and Wesleyan congregations), two Anglicans and one Roman Catholic, the Congregationalist was isolated in his dissent when all the others voted for the reading and explaining of the Bible in board schools.<sup>23</sup> Even at Birmingham hard-line Non-conformity was modified when, faced by a rejuvenated Conservatism, and an election they wanted to avoid, the Liberals agreed to restore Bible reading (though without note or comment) provided the election was not contested.<sup>24</sup> In Leicester itself Wood had found himself, as one of the governors of the new Wyggeston Secondary Schools, agreeing, as other Dissenting governors also did, to non-denominational religious teaching. Moreover, with the development of class-teaching, head teachers were tending to delegate their Bible reading duties to assistant teachers. So that Wood was able to persuade the Board to rescind the earlier limitations as being unworkable. The teachers were also supplied, for their guidance, with a new syllabus of suitable readings. More far reaching than these provisions, however, were the new regulations for infants' departments, which allowed the head teacher, at his or her discretion, to introduce 'simple Bible stories told in his own way, or repetition of suitable texts or hymns from the hymn book sanctioned by the Board, instead of a Bible reading'.<sup>25</sup>

Religious education was not, however, the dominant theme of the period. The provision of schools and the question of compulsory attendance were more important. During Vaughan's period as

Board chairman compulsion bye-laws were submitted to the Education Department. Approved in 1872, they provided for the full-time attendance of children between five and ten years of age, and half-time attendance for children between ten and thirteen. Since, however, the number of school-age children exceeded the number of available places, the bye-laws could not be put into operation effectively. Even after the appointment of school visitors and the distribution (in September 1874) of 18,000 copies of a handbill warning parents about legal sanctions, there were still severe problems.<sup>26</sup>

A serious handicap in enforcing compulsory attendance was the fact that population was increasing so rapidly that it was difficult for school building to keep pace with it. In 1874 a house-to-house census carried out by the Board indicated a deficiency of 20,000 places for children between five and thirteen. By the end of 1876 the Board had itself provided six schools with 5,392 places, while voluntary schools had also increased their places by another 1,590. Even after adding to these some 1,740 places at two unfinished schools in Christow Street and Charnwood Street there were still 1,225 children for whom provision had not been made.<sup>27</sup> In the meantime the population of Leicester was continuing to increase at the rate of about 3,000 per annum, so that the real deficiency was greater than the Board's figures suggested.

The expanding size and prosperity of the town were responsible for increasing building problems. During this decade a new Town Hall was erected. One contributor to the Leicester Journal noted

with pleasure a number of 'marked improvements in architectural development, and in the introduction of ornamental structures within the streets and squares'.<sup>28</sup> The street map of Leicester in 1879 shows the development of new streets in the Highfields, Humberstone Road, Belgrave Road, and Aylestone Road areas.<sup>29</sup> Beyond the town boundary the parishes of Aylestone, Humberstone and Belgrave were also growing rapidly. The latter, which increased from 2,000 to a population of 9,000 in a decade, had become contiguous with the borough, and its School Board employed a visitor jointly with the Leicester School Board for a time, in an effort to solve attendance problems.<sup>30</sup> Builders tended to accept contracts that they had no hope of completing in a reasonable time, in case a competitor was given the award. The contractor would submit the tender, gain the contract, begin work on the site, and then at a certain stage move his labourers for awhile to other sites where there were contracts on hand. When the Catherine Street School was opened in 1880, after accommodation had been provided by the Board for 21,840 children, it was commented that for the first time a school building had been completed on time.<sup>31</sup>

The first School Board had been more unfortunate than it deserved in the matter of school building. At its final meeting on 5 January 1874 the reports on school buildings made dismal reading. Five schools should have been ready for use, but only two were approaching completion. The Building Committee reported the King Richard's Road School and Syston Street School could be ready for 19 January. Both had been contracted for early in

1872. Slater Street, Elbow Lane and Oxford Street schools were not completed; none would be ready before June. Despite accusations to the contrary the schools were inexpensively built. Burgess, replying to charges of extravagance, noted that whereas Leicester was building at £8 per head, Bradford and Leeds had figures of £26 and £10 15s. 8d.<sup>32</sup> Throughout the whole of the decade, in fact, the maximum cost did not exceed £10 per head.

After Wood became chairman, with a Liberal majority behind him, and with the advantage of being able to build upon the experience of his predecessor, the situation began to improve. The lowest tenders were not always accepted. When the tender of £8,064 for Catherine Street was accepted one board member objected on the grounds that it could have been built at a lower cost.<sup>33</sup> But the Board decided that reliability was worth paying a little extra for.

A number of building delays were caused, at least partially, by the objections of voluntary school managers to the building of board schools near to their own schools. Belgrave Road and Christow Street schools are good examples of this. Early in June 1873 the Board agreed to purchase land on the Belgrave Road.<sup>34</sup> Only two weeks later, however, when it was proposed to build a school of four departments to accommodate 1,026 children on part of the site, it transpired that St. Mark's Church was building a school less than half a mile away. The Board, therefore, decided not to proceed with their plans.<sup>35</sup> The rapidly increasing popul-

ation though, must have caused doubts about the wisdom of the decision, for on 4 August it was clear that the Board had decided to build, but on a smaller scale.<sup>36</sup> Since a smaller school was intended, there were arguments about the possibility of selling part of the site for commercial purposes, but no agreement could be reached.<sup>37</sup> By December 1873 architects' plans had been submitted, approved, and tenders invited for erecting a two-department school.<sup>38</sup> Two months later the tenders were opened, and found to be as follows:

John Flude	£2910 0s. Od.
Osborne Bros.	£2760 0s. Od.
J. Hewitt & Sons	£2690 0s. Od.
Geo. Brown	£2676 2s. Od.
T. & H. Herbert	£2650 0s. Od.
T. Duxbury	£151513s. Od.

In this instance the lowest tender by Duxbury was accepted.<sup>39</sup> During the same month the plans were approved by the Education Department, and a recommendation made to the Public Works Loan Commission for a loan repayable over fifty years.<sup>40</sup> In December 1874 the Board meeting was attended by the architect, who, apologising for the delay in completion, stated that he had repeatedly remonstrated with the contractor, but without success. It was agreed that the latter be told to work more swiftly, or the contract would be terminated, and another builder employed to complete the work.<sup>41</sup> Not until April 1875 were the advertisements for teachers inserted in newspapers.<sup>42</sup>

The building of the Christow Street School was a direct result of the Board's decision to close the Metcalf Street Infants' School, which was taken over in 1875, when the Infant School Society was disbanded.<sup>43</sup> The building was unsuitable for permanency, and on a

very small site that there was no possibility of expanding. A new site was purchased for £1,300 in Christow Street.<sup>44</sup> As the site was large enough the Board decided to build a school of two departments rather than one, so as to effect economy of scale. Some time previously Wood had noted:

'The cost of a staff for a block of four schools of 220 children each would be £640; and if the schools were full they would receive back in fees £333 6s. 8d., leaving a deficiency of £306 13s. 4d. to be made up by the government grant and the rates. If they had a school of four departments for 280 children each, the total expense of the staff would be about £800; they would receive £466 13s 4d. in fees, leaving a deficiency of £333 6s. 8d. to be paid out of the rates and grant, and in this case they would educate 240 more children at the extra cost of £26 13s. 4d'.<sup>45</sup>

He therefore reasoned that, as there was a deficiency of 1,047 places in the Middle St. Margaret's Ward, it would be advisable to erect a two-storey building for 440 rather than a single-storey building to accommodate half that number.<sup>46</sup>

As far as the Church was concerned the Christow Street proposal ran counter to the intentions of the 1870 Act, for it was contended that it would interfere with voluntary schools already in existence in the area. At its meeting on 7 February 1876 a communication was received from the Education Department requesting the Board's comments on the contents of a letter received from George A. Stephenson, who complained about the Christow Street plans on behalf of the Church schools in the area. Hollingworth and Harcott, as Church Party members on the Board, spoke forcefully on Stephenson's behalf, noting that the new school would be 120 yards from Curzon Street, 350 yards from Brunswick Street, 400 yards from Chester Street and 418 yards from Christ Church School, and that they would

therefore be 'exposed to undue competition'.<sup>47</sup> It would not have escaped their notice that the school that was to be replaced had actually been closed during the preceding month, as the government auditor had surcharged the Board for the payment of the salary of Mrs. Wisdish, the elderly unqualified teacher, who had survived the School Board's take-over, but whose increasing feebleness had resulted in the rapid reduction of the school from about 200 children to less than 20.<sup>48</sup> Since these children had already been dispersed to surrounding schools the new school could only be opened at the expense of those schools. The Board members decided to debate the issue again at an extraordinary meeting a week later. Before they did so they had the opportunity of reading a letter written by 'A Working Man' to the editor of the Leicester Journal, complaining about the building of a board school in 'a neighbourhood where there is good school accommodation', because 'landlords have raised their rents at various times, and have told their tenants it is through the School Board rate'.<sup>49</sup>

When the Board met again it was to study and approve the draft of a reply to the secretary of the Education Department. Prepared by A. H. Burgess, a local solicitor who served as the Board's clerk, it referred to the proposed school's replacement of Metcalfe Street, and stated that it was cheaper to add a storey than to build a single-storey school. There had also been a survey of the area:

'In the autumn of 1874....there were then in that ward 4608 children between the ages of five and thirteen, and 1488 between the ages of three and five, making a total of 6096. Since that time the population of the town has very much increased....and a considerable proportion of that increase may be considered to have taken place in this neighbourhood. ....there is now effic-



ient accommodation for 4177 provided at the following schools:- British School, Hill Street, 828; Christ Church School, Bow Street, 252; ditto, 251; Wesleyan School, Clyde Street, 299; St. Matthew's School, Chester Street, 350; ditto, Brunswick Street, 299; ditto, Curzon Street, 397; St. Luke's School, Gladstone Street, 540; Syston Street Board School, 961; total, 4177.... The deficiency ....thus shown amounts to 1919, and even if St. Mark's School is included it amounts to 1434, so that when the new school in Christow Street is built to accommodate 450 children there will still be a deficiency of 984 places'. 50

With continuing opposition from the minority Church Party group, the draft was approved, and duly sent to London.

The reply from the Department of Education noted:

'that the neighbourhood of the proposed new school in Christow Street is one of the most thickly populated Districts in the Town, in which therefore no increase of population can be expected...'

and advised that, since the Syston Street School was not full, a one-storey school for infants should be built. It was also suggested that plans be made for a second-storey to be added when the need for accommodation for older children was more urgent.<sup>51</sup>

This reply was, however, unrealistic, as the neighbouring Belgrave area was building up so rapidly that the Syston Street School would soon be needed for the overflow from Belgrave Road School, which, only a year after its opening, already needed additional accommodation.<sup>52</sup> It was decided though, that the Christow Street School should be built as the Department suggested, but it was not completed until mid-1877. Within a year of its opening plans were being prepared for the second-storey.<sup>53</sup>

The overcoming of building problems did not alone ensure attendance, for board schools were by no means popular at first. W. H. Walker visited Slater Street on its first morning, 19 Jan-

uary 1874, and found only thirteen small children there with one master. Downstairs, in the infants' department, there had been nothing happening at all; even the mistress did not seem to have arrived.<sup>54</sup> By August there was still room for 111 boys and 130 girls. Soon one of its departments was closed, as there were less than 80 girls in it.<sup>55</sup> King Richard's Road School also, a few months after its opening, had only 110 girls in accommodation intended for 280, and 152 boys in similar circumstances.<sup>56</sup>

There were several reasons why the board schools took some time to attract pupils. In the first instance they were drawing on a population which hitherto had managed without formal education. In many cases there was little discipline in the home; drunkenness was not uncommon. Dostoevsky's impression of Saturday nights in London during 1863 was little different from some parts of Leicester in the 1870s.<sup>57</sup> In one case brought before the magistrates' court, the visitor, J. Preston, stated that he had visited a house, and found there three small children, a girl aged 12 and two boys aged 8 and 6, who 'were very dirty, and in a half state of nudity. In consequence of what he saw he examined the children's heads, and found that they were all matted and badly scabbed, besides being covered with vermin. The house was devoid of furniture and in a dirty condition. There was very little fire, and no appearance of food in the house.... The mother of the children was living [elsewhere] in adultery...., and the father was addicted to drink'.<sup>58</sup> Those who did arrive at school were often sullen and resentful, frequently of 'an advanced age', and without any

previous experience of school attendance.<sup>59</sup>

The condition of the children before them made it necessary for the first board school teachers to adopt a harsher manner than was necessary in some of the voluntary and private adventure schools. Throughout the country discipline was necessarily strict, the cane being much in evidence, while the bulk of the learning was drilled into the pupils, so that many of them longed for the day when release from the enforced drudgery was possible.<sup>60</sup> Infants who were drilled by inadequate pupil teachers all day long, while seated on benches so high that their feet could not touch the floor,<sup>61</sup> could not be expected to bubble over with the excitement of learning. John Willson, a board school headmaster in Leicester, noted in his log book, on 20 January 1881, that 'the whole of the Fifth Standard, with one exception, applied for total exemption, and with them all those over 13 years of age who passed the Fourth on Monday and Tuesday'. It was not surprising when, only a few months earlier, he had made a note of the inattention among his part-timers caused 'through fatigue and weariness on the part of the children who work from 6 a.m. till 1 p.m. and then come to school in the afternoon'.<sup>62</sup> In such circumstances the teachers too became drudges, relying heavily on the use of sanctions. Even when a pupil teacher, William Abbott, was accused of being unnecessarily severe in the use of the cane, the Board made no move to condemn him out of hand, though they were not much in favour of corporal punishment.<sup>63</sup>

The early board schools could not be expected to impress the

'better sort' of working-class parent, who tended to look elsewhere for the education of his children. There was a period during which the voluntary schools and, briefly, the private adventure schools, experienced a boom. Returns for the first quarter of 1876 show that there were more children enrolled in voluntary schools than there was accommodation, some 11,461 children where there should have been only 10,152. Fortunately not all of them were present at any one time. The board schools, on the other hand, had accommodation for 5,227, of which places some 179 remained unfilled.<sup>64</sup>

Wood remarked, on comparing the relatively poor achievements of the board schools with well-established voluntary schools, that: 'Voluntary schools can and do pick their scholars, refusing admittance to those who cannot pay the fee, or to half-timers, or those whose attendance is irregular' while board schools accepted all-comers.<sup>65</sup> One entry in a board

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Table 6 Return of Attendance in Leicester Schools: First Quarter of 1876

<u>Schools</u>	<u>Accomm.</u>	<u>Enrolment</u>	<u>Average weekly attendance</u>	<u>Highest in one week</u>
Voluntary	10,152	11,461	7,099	9,450
Board	5,227	5,048	3,375	4,211
Private adventure	1,200	1,192	945	1,073
	16,579	17,701	12,019	14,734

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school log book suggests that there was some truth in Wood's state-

ment: 'On Thursday morning Mrs. Hudson brought her son Frank for admission. He had previously been at St. Mark's School and was taken away because his parents could not pay the fee 4d. per week'.<sup>66</sup> On the other hand Wood was not entirely fair either, for there were other voluntary schools in which there was no selectivity. Chester Street School took in many half-timers, to the detriment of its inspection record. F. Bell, the Diocesan Inspector, noted that: 'The Upper children passed a satisfactory examination considering the number of half-timers'.<sup>67</sup> St. Andrew's Victoria School, where constant staffing problems made it necessary for Canon Fry, in his dotage, to teach there for many hours of each week, was always a popular and crowded school in the 1870s, and there is no evidence of children being turned away.<sup>68</sup>

In suggesting that Church schools often refused admittance to irregular attenders, Wood was very wide of the mark, for voluntary schools often harboured those who for various reasons sought to evade the attentions of the school visitors. Visitors were usually army pensioners, whose gruff, apparently unbending nature made many parents and children afraid of them.<sup>69</sup>

Some children, as Table 6 indicates, preferred to attend private schools, known as private adventure schools,\* which included

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\* Private adventure schools were defined as private elementary schools not in receipt of grants and in which fees did not exceed ninepence per week.

the remnants of the 42 dame schools that had been in existence just before the School Board came into being.<sup>70</sup> There were also included among them a few mission-type schools. Often such schools were newly established in developing areas not yet served by either a voluntary or board school. In stressing the urgency of building the Charnwood Street School in 1875 Wood stated that he had toured the whole area, and that: 'Owing to there being no schools there, small private schools had arisen, which were crammed with children'. At one such school he had observed about one hundred children in a room that would have been overcrowded with half that number.<sup>71</sup>

Some private adventure schools were reasonably efficient. Of the thirty in existence in 1876 H. M. M. Hanford, the headmaster of Alderman Newton's School, inspected twenty on the board's behalf, so that a report requested by the Education Department could be compiled. Five were in rooms specially adapted for school use, and were regarded as being reasonably efficient.<sup>72</sup> They included a school established in the Numberstone Road Mission Hall by the Reverend S. T. Williams of London Road Congregational Chapel. When the Board took over the school later in the year there were 280 children under the instruction of Miss Tebbutt, an uncertificated teacher, assisted by two pupil teachers. It had six classrooms (without desks), playgrounds and toilet facilities.<sup>73</sup> The Ragged School in Gladstone Street, soon to close, and a thirty year old infants' school at St. Leonard's Church, were also included. The premises of the latter, with an enrolment of 83, were inadequate, but were due for rebuilding. During 1877, after dis-

puting the rebuilding plans of this school, because of likely competition with Slater Street Board School, the Board agreed 'to offer no objection to the recognition of St. Leonard's School as supplying efficient education for 90 children under seven years of age'.<sup>74</sup>

Most of the private adventure schools, however, were by no means satisfactory. Fourteen of those inspected were in ground floor rooms of ordinary houses; one was in a very unsuitable attic room. Usually there was insufficient desk room, so that children had to do their written work on slates held on their knees, which hindered their development of the ability to write fluently.

Rarely did the teachers have any kind of training. Ranging in age from nineteen to seventy-eight, they seemed unable even to arrange a timetable. The subjects taught, according to Hanford's report:

'seldom go beyond the elements of reading, writing and arithmetic. When grammar, history and geography are attempted the information is so meagre and unsatisfactory that it can scarcely be called teaching. The intelligence of the children is not called into action at all and the result is that the children get a few vague indefinite ideas about places and persons of no practical value whatever.'

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Despite his findings though, Hanford did not recommend the closure of more than three of them, feeling that most of the others could, with advice, be improved. He stressed the good intentions of most of the teachers.

For several reasons the School Board agreed with Hanford's recommendations. To some extent they were forced into agreement because, for many of the children involved, alternative accommod-

ation did not yet exist. There was also a certain amount of sympathy with some of the teachers concerned, whose support in the case of the larger schools straddled the denominational fence, and who had supplied minimal instruction where none would otherwise have been available. Walker, as vice-chairman of the Board, in support of the effort to treat them sympathetically, stated that they 'did not seek a monopoly of education, and that its object was not so much themselves to educate all the children of Leicester, as to see that they were sufficiently educated'.<sup>76</sup> The Liberals must have known, of course, that such schools offered no threat to the board schools. As the latter developed most of the private adventure schools would either become elevated to catering for middle-class demand, as occurred in the case of Miss Woodward's establishment in Gower Street, later described as a 'ladies' day school',<sup>77</sup> or be taken over by the Board, or just disappear, as Miss Hardy's did. Only two months after Hanford's report had been considered, a public appeal was made on behalf of 77 year old Miss Hardy, who, it was stated, 'has carried on the work of teaching in Leicester for over fifty years, and, lately, owing to her increasing years, and the competition of public elementary schools, and other causes, with much difficulty to herself, and naturally with a considerably diminishing number of scholars'.<sup>78</sup>

Since most private adventure schools were not technically efficient, and the Act of 1876 made parents responsible for ensuring that their children were in receipt of 'efficient elementary education', the school visitors were responsible for closing



down a number of them as school board accommodation became available. The proprietor of the Carley Street Schools, one of those affected, complained to the Education Department:

'My schools were examined on March 25, 1875 and pronounced efficient. Since then my School has not been examined: so it has not been pronounced inefficient; yet the School Board of this town are acting as though it were by threatening to summons the parents of my scholars if they do not remove them'. 79

The complaint brought no sympathy, and the visitors continued with their harassment until the schools were forced to close.

The task of the visitors was not a pleasant one, for the voluntary schools were not particularly co-operative in helping to ensure the attendance of pupils. While trying to enforce the attendance of pupils who had removed to schools 'where the regular attendance is less rigidly enforced', they frequently found obstruction on the part of the managers.<sup>80</sup> Because of this the Board decided to require voluntary schools to submit attendance returns, only to be rebuffed by Canon H. J. Burfield, the manager of St. Mark's School, who stated that school managers were:

'of opinion that the claims made on school teachers with respect to registers and returns and statistics are already much greater than is desirable, and if such claims are to be still further multiplied, but little time will be left to the head teachers for the more important work of instructing.... They decline to authorize the filling up of the forms sent by you, but they are prepared to submit once a month to the inspection by your appointed officer of the attendance registers of St. Mark's and Caroline Street schools'.

The School Board appealed to the Education Department to give support, and were surprised to learn from Cumin that there were no rules to supply the Board's wishes.<sup>81</sup> The visitors were also handicapped by the tactics adopted by some families of moving rapidly

from area to area. Some even took refuge in the parishes of Belgrave, Humberstone and Aylestone.<sup>82</sup>

The industrial structure of the town was a serious problem faced by the school visitors. The regulations of the School Board required the full-time attendance of all children between five and ten, and the half-time attendance of children between 10 and 13 who had reached a minimum level of standard two. Leaving at the age of thirteen was allowed to those who had completed standard four, or had a good attendance record of at least 250 per year over five years. Others were supposed to remain in school for another year.<sup>83</sup> The half-time regulations were not difficult to administer in towns where businesses were fairly large, and where all domestic aspects had disappeared. In Leicester, where the boot and shoe industry was developing rapidly, there were many very small workshops. Inspector J. R. Blakiston noted that:

'In these shops....children of tender years toil in vitiated air on some days from 6 or 7 in the morning till 8 or even later in the evening.... Much of the injurious irregularity of children's employment arises from their parents or other employers endeavouring by working long hours at a stretch to make up for time lost in drinking bouts. It is not uncommon to see parents waiting about schools with bundles of unfinished shoes and hosiery in order to hurry children off to work as soon as they quit the schools to which they have been grudgingly assigned for the two hours required by law'.<sup>84</sup>

The Factory Act of 1874 was supposed to ensure that employers only employed children between ten and thirteen in possession of a certificate from the school,<sup>85</sup> but the number of factory inspectors was never sufficient to curb the employers. At the beginning of 1874 John Hollingworth wrote, on the Bgard's behalf, to the Home Secret-

ary, requesting the appointment of more factory inspectors. He stated that the Board's newly appointed visitor had found half-timers 'extremely irregular in their attendance'. Many children, even below the age of ten, were at work on a full-time basis. He noted that there was only one inspector to cover the whole of Leicestershire and part of Derbyshire, and ventured the opinion that the law was better enforced 'when the inspection of Workshops was under the charge of the borough authorities'.<sup>86</sup> In the meantime it was the visitors who often had to visit workshops in search of under-age workers. By April 1875 there were four visitors, whose efforts resulted in the Bye-Laws Committee meeting twelve times during one month, to interview 321 people summoned for the inattendance of their children.<sup>87</sup> At the end of that year, Wood, in moving the appointment of two additional visitors, stated that, in little over a year, the existing visitors 'had sent into school 1500 children. They had summoned before the Board 1300 parents, and taken out 170 summonses before the magistrates, of which 130 cases were fined.... In addition they had served 5000 notices for irregular attendance'.<sup>88</sup>

In 1879 the Committee of Council on Education Report published important changes in the grant regulations affecting school attendance. The allowance of grants for pupils up to the age of 18, which had been inserted into the Code of 1871 to meet the case of young persons whose elementary education had been entirely neglected, was withdrawn. The new upper limit became 14. This measure, produced in the later stages of Disraeli's ministry, angered the

Liberals on the School Board. They tried petitioning the government, pointing out that, while most children had left school by the age of 14, 'a small proportion desire to continue....and your petitioners have always endeavoured to encourage this desire, especially on the part of children who gave promise of making useful teachers'.<sup>89</sup>

Left with having to make the best of what they regarded as a bad situation, they decided to raise the standard necessary for part-timers and school-leavers. Wood proposed that 'during the year 1881, the standard for partial exemption....shall be the fourth instead of the third, and that from the 1st January 1882, the standard for total exemption shall be the sixth instead of the fifth....., excepting in such cases as the Board shall, for special reasons, grant certificates of exemption'. R. S. Rice, an Independent member, who objected to almost every new idea, was true to form. He considered the Liberal proposal evidence of tyranny. It would, he objected, put Leicester out of line with other towns, such as Leeds, Bradford, Manchester and Sheffield. The Reverend Lewis Clayton, the vicar of St. Margaret's, noting that the Education Department refused to pay grants for children who were in fact half-timers, but who had not passed the standard provided in the bye-laws, and recognising that the Board would receive many requests for partial exemption 'for special reasons', countered with a proposal that the change be less rather than more restrictive. The Liberals carried the day.<sup>90</sup>

After the next meeting of the School Board, on 5 July 1880, the members sat in on a public meeting, arranged by irate working-

men, who complained bitterly about the Board's action, described as harsh and unwise. The mayor, John Bennett, indicated, in support of the Board, that the resolution was not to be put into effect immediately. He appreciated that there would be hardship in some cases, but asked the men to consider the best interests of the next generation. The meeting was badly conducted; it broke up in uproar at intervals. For Wood it was the final straw when he was restricted to five minutes in answer to various accusations that had been made. Declaring that the time was not long enough, he left the meeting, which ended in a final wave of disorder.<sup>91</sup>

It was the school visitors who had to meet the working-men and their wives on the doorstep though, in the course of their enquiries. They were neither as tactless nor as heartless as many people accused them of being. As in Chesterfield, where the visitor, a sympathetic man, complained that he was 'frequently abused in the streets, besides getting the bad opinion of everyone I call upon',<sup>92</sup> anyone trying to enforce attendance had to put up with a good deal of unpleasantness. It was their custom, before making any threats or serving any notices, to visit the house where an absentee child lived, in order to explain to the parents the requirements of the law. Only when reasoning and persuasion had failed was a notice served, formally summoning the parent to appear before the Board within fourteen days, unless in the interval the child had begun to attend. Up to November 1876 2,527 notices of this kind had been served, as compared with 12,521 warnings given. In two years only 335 persons had appeared before the mag-

istrates, though of these 59 appeared twice, 15 three times 5 four times, and there were a few cases where people had appeared five, six, eight and ten times. One prosecution for every 650 absentees compared very favourably with the record of Birmingham, where the proportion had been one in 200. Noting that 'it pays a parent in Birmingham to wait for the summons and pay the fine, rather than lose whatever money he would obtain from the earnings of his children', Joseph Chamberlain complained about the small fines (usually one shilling rather than the five shillings maximum) levied by the magistrates.<sup>93</sup> The London School Board had also found that the stipendiary magistrates, preoccupied with police cases, were so often impatient with school attendance cases that many complaints had to be made to the Home Office and to the Lord Chancellor.<sup>94</sup> But in Leicester the magistrates were often sympathetic to the Board. They were not averse to treating the attendance cases seriously, and levying the maximum fine. Nevertheless it was realised that the threat of prosecution was not the real answer to the problem. As in London, it was found that sympathy with the social condition of the families concerned was important.

As a result of the visitors' efforts the Board was able to note that 14,130 children (nearly 75%) were attending school regularly. This was apparently five per cent. below the average for London, but a similar percentage above the average for all other large towns.<sup>95</sup>

During the late 1870s attendance in board and voluntary schools

continued to improve, though board schools always had a higher average. In 1878 and 1879 the average attendances in board schools were 76.2% and 77.8%, while in voluntary schools the corresponding averages were 73% in both years.<sup>96</sup> The visitors, whose numbers were swelled to seven by the end of the decade, were clearly a force to be reckoned with, especially after the Board began to send some of the worst offenders to industrial schools. In 1879 Wood noted that, during the preceding three years, in 69 cases 'where fines and warnings and persuasion had no effect, we have deemed it prudent to remove the children from the contamination of the streets, and the miserable consequences of parental neglect, by placing them in industrial schools'.<sup>97</sup> The Board's efforts must have seemed worthwhile when A. J. Mundella, at the opening of the Board's own Industrial School for boys in the village of Desford, observed that juvenile delinquency throughout the country had diminished during the 1870s from 15,000 to 7,000 per annum.<sup>98</sup> Mundella himself attributed this to the opening of industrial schools and reformatories, but, though these played their part, it must have seemed obvious that the gathering of the mass of children off the streets and into the day schools was at least as important.

The rise in attendance figures was not, of course, merely a function of persuasion, threats and sanctions, or even of informal social work on the part of school visitors. Changes in the schools themselves began to take place. At Syston Street School, for instance, the first inspection report, though noting poor attain-

ments in the various subjects, was appreciative of efforts made to produce good order. The girls' department was commended for its tone and discipline; in the boys' department, while it was thought that the master's demeanour could have produced a 'better tone' if he had had 'a more genial and kindly bearing', it was accepted that:

'The boys are in good order and have been carefully taught'.<sup>99</sup>

Two years later the results were only slightly improved, and it was realised by the Board that drastic action would have to be taken if substantial improvement was to be effected.<sup>100</sup>

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Table 7    Extract from Inspection Report for Year Ending 31 October  
1874: Syston Street Board School

	<u>Mixed</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
Average attendance	190	129	59
Results of examination:			
Qualified for examination	101	87	47
Presented for examination	46	71	42
Passes in reading	37	68	23
Passes in writing	40	68	21
Passes in arithmetic	35	63	9
Passes in history	-	4	2
Passes in physical geography	-	4	-
Passes in geography	-	-	-

Source: Leicester School Board Minutes, 5 April 1875.

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It was clear that mixing half-timers with full-time pupils was one adverse factor. At the Oxford Street School this had produced a serious disciplinary problem, as well as an instructional problem. Wood noted that, since most employers preferred to have the half-timers during the mornings, there was only a small morning attend-



ance, but a very large attendance in the afternoons. It was suggested that, as Inspector Blakiston advised, half-time schools should be formed, so as to leave the other schools free to conduct more satisfactory work for the full-timers. The junior mixed department at Oxford Street was discontinued, and a half-time department under a master formed.<sup>101</sup> Other half-time departments were formed later at Slater Street and Willow Street.

Half-timers, however, were only part of the problem. The poor quality of pupil teachers also prevented changes in methods of teaching. Soon after Joseph Wood became the School Board chairman, it was clear that he was knowledgeable about educational method. At the official opening of King Richard's Road School on 16 March 1974 he stated some of his ideas. The Board would endeavour, he said, 'to bring the children into a good moral atmosphere.... Besides the ordinary matters, they would try to give the children some knowledge of music, to cultivate their artistic faculties,....to develop the physique of the children, by making drill an important item'. He also argued that: 'As that man who reads only one book will never learn to read even that book well, so the child who is only taught the "three R's" will never learn them thoroughly. Grammar, geography, history, a little physiology, music, drawing, sewing, drill, domestic economy, are subjects that develop the children's faculties, make their knowledge of the "three R's" an intelligent instead of a mechanical thing'.<sup>102</sup> A few teachers also reflected this point of view. When Miss E. R. Newby left Oxford Street School to become a member of staff at the British and For-

eign School Society's Training College in Darlington, it was acknowledged that she had made considerable improvements in the school by 'the simple exercise of moral suasion and force of character', and by her concern for 'the development of individual character'.<sup>103</sup> The first headmaster at Slater Street boys' department, Thomas Adcock, handled rough boys sympathetically, and achieved good results from teaching them.<sup>104</sup> Yet one has to realise that these early board schools, like the voluntary schools, were staffed largely by very inadequate pupil teachers. As late as 1880 some 260 half-timers were taught by a staff consisting of a head teacher, an assistant teacher, and six pupil teachers.<sup>105</sup> Both in log books and inspection reports the inadequacies of pupil teachers were frequently remarked upon. A number were unreliable in attendance, one disappeared quite suddenly and was not seen again, and at least one other seems to have been practically illiterate.<sup>106</sup> The inspection reports for 1876 contain adverse criticisms relating to pupil teachers. That for King Richard's Road states: 'The pupil teachers should be more carefully practised and criticized in teaching'. At Syston Street it was observed that: 'The pupil teachers should be more carefully instructed in the art of making lessons interesting and of making things clear by the use of simple language'.<sup>107</sup>

The voluntary schools fared as badly. One of their problem cases in 1877 was a pupil teacher named F. J. Richardson. On 8 February his headmaster commented, in the school log book, that he had spoken to Richardson:

'of the slovenly way in which he looks after his class. In a reading lesson I frequently find that half of the boys have lost their place and are not paying the least attention. Writing and sums are often set down most untidily, the letters and figures being wretchedly made - yet he never notices it, nor tries in any way to get them done better. He seems to take no interest whatever in the work of his class, but goes through every lesson in a dull mechanical manner'.

Other comments related to his continuing inattentiveness in succeeding months. Yet, during this time he obtained the First Prize awarded to a third year pupil teacher.<sup>108</sup>

The pupil teacher problem was partly national, partly local, in cause. The system as a whole had suffered a major set-back with the introduction of the Revised Code in 1862. Whereas previously the apprenticeship had been attractive because through it a pupil could obtain a reasonable secondary education, the revision restricted the subjects of study to those offered in public elementary schools. Moreover the nature of the apprenticeship had been changed so that the legal master was the school managing body rather than the headmaster, who hitherto had gained a small stipend from the government in respect of his instruction. So that there had been less incentive on the part of the head teacher to seek out suitable pupil teachers, and also less incentive on the part of pupils to remain at school to become apprenticed.<sup>109</sup> By the end of the 1860s, therefore, the supply of pupil teachers had seriously declined. The Leicester School Board found that there were no difficulties about attracting candidates, but most of them were not very suitable, for more talented individuals continued to enter industry, where jobs were offered at wages far in advance

of the £10 stipend of the pupil teacher. John Hollingworth commented that the difficulty was not to get pupil teachers but to retain them, while W. Adams, another member of the School Board, stated that at the Oxford Street School there had been some twelve or fifteen candidates, whom the master took in hand, only to have them disappear, having taken jobs in which they could earn three times the amount offered by the Board.<sup>110</sup>

If the School Board was to make the schools as attractive as Wood had envisaged there were two possible answers to the pupil teacher problem. One was to reduce the dependence on pupil teachers; the other was to improve their training. The Board decided to attempt both. Joseph Wood was himself strongly of the opinion that to improve elementary education markedly it was necessary to adopt a different style of school organisation. Like other School Board leaders he was aware that schools in some European countries, particularly Prussia, were more advanced than England's, and this was reputed to be a factor in Germany's rapid industrial development. Matthew Arnold's report was common knowledge, as also was a more recent report by John F. Moss, the journalist secretary of the Sheffield School Board. Moss had admired the Volks-Kinder-garten, and the 'happy, contented appearance of the children' in them, so different from the rows of children in the galleries of English infants' schools. He had also noticed the system of classrooms housing from 50 to 80 pupils, with children assigned to classes according to age and attainment, and taught by qualified teachers without the aid of monitors or pupil teachers. Moss

had also been particularly impressed 'with the order maintained, and the manifest interest of the scholars in the lessons being given'.<sup>111</sup>

On 3 June 1872 Vaughan's Board had made initial plans for building the Charnwood Street School, but had ignored the advice of Inspector Blakiston, who had written to the Board to say, inter alia, that he 'would much like to see at least one School erected on the German or American model, and consisting entirely of classrooms', and others in which the main room had been much reduced in favour of 'four smaller classrooms, or three larger rooms attached to each'.<sup>112</sup>

Wood asked the Board to rescind these plans on 6 July 1874, as they were not in line with future plans for reorganising teaching.<sup>113</sup> By October he had visited a new school built by the London School Board on the classroom system that Moss had described and Blakiston had advocated, and was in a position to propose on his return that the new plans for Charnwood Street be on the same lines.

The new school, if Wood's colleagues would agree with him, would cost about five per cent. more than the usual type of school. Wood admitted that the staff would cost about three shillings per head more, but that an extra penny per week could be added to the fees. He had noted that at the London school there were seventeen classrooms, each with a qualified teacher in charge of 60 to 80 children. At Charnwood Street he proposed that they should build twelve classrooms. The staff would consist of a headmaster, five certificated teachers, five ex-pupil teachers, and twelve pupil teachers. The advantages of the system were 'increased order and discipline in the school, a more thorough classification of the

children, a more accurate estimate of the progress made by each child, that each child came under the direct control of a qualified teacher, that the teaching was more thorough and systematic, and that the parents greatly preferred it'. The only significant Church Party opposition came from Hollingworth, who had noted the additional expense of a head teacher not assigned to a class, to whom a salary of not less than £300 would have to be paid. He also declared that in London the results 'were said to be a little in advance, but very little', and certainly not enough to justify the additional expense. Isaacs, on the other hand, was not opposed, for there was no Church school in the area with which it would compete. Merrick declared his support, because if it would bring 'the personal influence of the teachers to bear on all the scholars, the result must be good'. Wood's proposal was accepted.<sup>114</sup>

When the plans for Charnwood Street School had been drawn up by the architect, and were presented to the Board for approval on 7 December 1874, Isaacs observed that the school would be neither German nor American in design. Provision had been made for a hall, whereas German schools did not have halls. Moss, in his pamphlet, had stated: 'No special provision is made for the assembling of the children in one body; in fact, there is no room at all suitable for such a purpose'.<sup>115</sup> On the other hand, Isaacs said, if the school was intended to be like an American school, the hall was not big enough for the assembling of all pupils. He suggested that, since the Board's policy was to experiment with class-teaching, the hall would serve no useful purpose, and could, therefore,

be deleted. Wood explained that the hall was to be used for the teaching of drawing, but omitted to say that there may have been pressure from the Education Department.<sup>116</sup> Later, when the Hazel Street School was built on the same plan, it had to be explained that the Department had refused to sanction plans in which the main school-room was more than twenty-two feet wide, probably to discourage a possible return to the older style of teaching. In this instance, Wood explained that 'having a school on the class-room system they wanted a larger room, into which these class-rooms were to open....where the whole of the children could assemble for any purpose', and had circumvented the problem by adding an open corridor on each side of the hall, onto which the class-rooms would open.<sup>117</sup> Clearly the corridors became part of the hall whenever the children were assembled there. Wood failed to mention also the value of the hall as a vantage point from which the head could control the discipline of the school. Since each of the classrooms had glass-panelled walls abutting on to the hall the trouble spots could be picked out quickly.<sup>118</sup> It is significant that for the first time, when the school was opened, a headmaster was appointed without a class of his own.<sup>119</sup> Viewed from the perspective of time, of course, the Charnwood Street School, and others in Leicester and elsewhere modelled upon it, formed a transitional stage from the monitorial school to the dispersed 'egg crate' school of the early twentieth century.

Leicester was one of the earlier provincial boards to adopt the central plan. In Birmingham, where this type of school had

been considered from the beginning, its adoption, as at Leicester, had been rejected at first. Instead there had been a compromise. The Jenkins Street School opened in 1873, with two floors, on each of which there was a hall, with three classrooms opening off one side of it. Taylor suggests that the Birmingham Board was daunted by the prospect of having to employ a larger staff of teachers.<sup>120</sup> It is probable also, as at Leicester, that there were Church fears of severe competition with the voluntary schools. Central hall plan schools were not adopted, however, until 1880, six years after the Liberals gained a majority, following a visit by the clerk, G. B. Davis, to schools in Germany and Switzerland. Davis had been impressed by schools that he likened to hotels, with classrooms leading off long wide corridors, and the high quality of teaching. He advocated the central hall plan as a compromise between the earlier board schools in Birmingham and the European schools that he had visited, for inadequately trained English teachers could then have the supervision that they needed, while at the same time the children gained the advantage of the classroom system.<sup>121</sup> In Bradford central hall plan schools were adopted also in 1880, after a member of the Board and the Superintendent of Schools had visited London schools.<sup>122</sup>

There was also another aspect to the building of central hall plan schools. Liberals, aiming to win over the working-class children from the voluntary schools, and at the same time anxious to impress ratepayers with their stewardship, liked them because they were more impressive in appearance than their predecessors. The



strength of prestige as a motive can be judged from Chamberlain's comment that 'there are still some people who think that the education of the poor can be most fitly conducted in a sordid and forbidding looking dwelling. Our principle has been the very reverse of this'.<sup>123</sup> The Bradford schools were built in an expensive ornamented gothic style that gave them distinction amid the rows of back-to-back houses.<sup>124</sup> In Chesterfield a contract was given to a Leicester firm of builders, despite several local tenders that were lower, because the Board had been impressed by schools the firm had built in Leicester, and wanted schools of similar distinction in their own town.<sup>125</sup> In Leicester itself one member of the School Board confessed that the central hall plan schools were, as far as he could see, incapable of further improvement, and were models for the whole country.<sup>126</sup>

With the opening of Charnwood Street, Hazel Street and Catherine Street Schools, all three of them designed for classroom teaching, several improvements became possible. Pupil teachers were no longer assigned to classes, but helped the teachers. An attempt was made to introduce kindergarten methods, but although, according to Wood, 'it laid the foundation of intelligence and manly character', it probably consisted of little more than exercises that were additional to the deskwork, for it was admitted that there was a failure 'under Government inspection....to produce so much in results as the ordinary method of teaching infants'.<sup>127</sup> The Education Department, in any case, gave only grudging approval to the more mechanical aspects of kindergarten work, which were

regarded as not indispensable.<sup>128</sup>

Other improvements were made possible by the appointment of an Inspector of Schools and Superintendent of Visitors. The politically astute Wood proposed, on 5 February 1877, that such a post be created, indicating that, while the salary would amount to £275, an officer of this kind could have gained £150 to £200 in the grants earned during the preceding year.<sup>129</sup> Six weeks later, after the post had been advertised, there were 172 applications. These were successively reduced in committee to 42, and then 12.<sup>130</sup> The names of the twelve were then presented in order of merit, as a result of which the first six were invited for interview.<sup>131</sup> At a special meeting of the Board on 9 April 1877 Henry Major, B.A., B.Sc., of Nottingham, was appointed by a unanimous vote.<sup>132</sup>

It was probably the energetic Major who arranged a meeting of elementary teachers in Leicester, and invited J. R. Blakiston, H.M.I., to speak. In 1878 Blakiston had made some cutting remarks about the teaching of geography and history in Leicester. He had discouraged the teaching of history altogether, because teachers were usually preoccupied with 'little more than a string of dates, pedigrees, and battles'. Though he had admitted some improvement in geography, he was by no means satisfied with most of what he saw, and had suggested ways in which improvement could be effected:

'In early lessons on England a teacher usually begins with the boundaries, coast-line, and so on, instead of starting with the neighbourhood of the school, thence going on to the river basin in which it lies, showing the natural causes which originally brought people together in certain spots, and so gave rise to manufacturing towns, marts, and seaports. Children thus taught in a conversational way, with continual use of the map, references to local history, and occasional map-drawing, pick up

incidentally by sheer familiarity all that is useful in the petty details with which alone many teachers think it needful to cram their pupils'. 133

Speaking to the Leicester teachers in 1881 he suggested that the practice of 'burdening scholars with a multitude of names' might cease, and instead that:

'first the room....should serve as a subject for consideration, that its dimensions should be taken, that the points of the compass in regard to it should be taught, and from thence that the relative position of the surrounding streets should be ascertained; that pursuing this knowledge, that application should be made to the town generally, then to the district, and so on until the scholars had got a clear and distinct idea of the nature of a map'. 134

Blakiston also deplored the practice of coaching for examinations after school, which the Board had been trying to discourage.

Other improvements also resulted from Major's appointment.

A Miss Major had worked at Archdeacon Lane School for some months during 1879, and had effected marked improvements in the reading levels there. Major had her appointed to a new post as a peripatetic phonics teacher, so that she could help to improve the teaching of reading in all the schools.<sup>135</sup> Efforts were also made to teach subjects that would improve the quality of life in working-class homes, where needlework and cookery were at a very low level. In the late 1870s the Education Department began to lay greater stress on needlework, but the syllabus contained much fancy stitchery that was of no practical use in the average working-class home. The Board requested a change, so that the making of plain day shirts for men was permitted.<sup>136</sup> In 1879 a woman of considerable skill and experience, Miss Sempill, was appointed for a one

year period as a needlework instructor and examiner; her main task was to be the instruction of teachers and pupil teachers. Her salary of £180 was regarded as phenomenal, and caused a rift between some working-men and their representatives on the Board, but it included provision for the employment of an assistant, who was paid £50.<sup>137</sup> In the following year, after much argument, reflecting male prejudices rather than party affiliations, Miss Sæmpill was appointed Inspector of Infant Schools and Needlework Examiner. Canner (Church) and Merrick (Liberal) were much opposed, on the ground of expense, the former citing Nottingham as a similar town that saw no need of a 'sewing mistress'.<sup>138</sup> Only a few months later, the lady, perhaps tired of the controversy, resigned and took up an appointment with the London School Board.<sup>139</sup> Her post was advertised at the reduced salary of £160,<sup>140</sup> but no suitable person could be found to replace her, and an arrangement had to be made with the Institute for the Advancement of Needlework, whereby a Miss Jones, described as a 'thoroughly qualified lady', was sent four times a year to examine the needlework in the schools, at a charge of two guineas per day and expenses.<sup>141</sup>

Cooking made an appearance in many board schools in large towns during the 1870s, following the recommendations of T. H. Huxley's curriculum committee in 1871 on the introduction of domestic economy as a discretionary subject in London Board Schools,<sup>142</sup> and the founding of the National Training School of Cookery in South Kensington in 1874, for the training of cookery teachers.<sup>143</sup> The speed with which the subject was introduced was to a great

extent a function of the availability of teachers, who tended to be attracted to the larger towns, which offered scope to the best of them for the advancement of their professional interests, and provided a social milieu that was more attractive than that of the country areas. Thus Leicester (1877), Sheffield (1877), Nottingham (1878) and Bradford (1879) had all developed facilities before 1880,<sup>144</sup> while Chesterfield, a smaller town, only introduced cooking after changes in the Code recognised it as a subject approved by the Education Department. The Board there had discussed its introduction in 1886, but was unable to give effect to the demand until the services of a teacher were obtained in 1891.<sup>145</sup>

In most cases boards proceeded to establish cookery centres at the more accessible schools, but Leicester initiated its cooking lessons at the new School of Cookery, a private venture. Writing to <sup>the</sup> Board on behalf of the School committee, Dr. W. E. Buck (whose wife was mainly responsible for the founding of the new establishment), urged that girls over ten 'should be thoroughly trained in economical and wholesome cookery'. He offered, on the payment of £50 to pay the instructor, to provide a course of lessons over six months to any pupils and teachers the Board wished to nominate. After debating the matter, with the Church Party members pressing for the inclusion of voluntary school pupils on the same terms at Board expense, the proposal was passed. Dr. Buck agreed that voluntary school pupils could attend, but as the

Board was not prepared to finance them, it would be necessary for them to pay a penny each time.<sup>146</sup> By January 1880 it was recorded that about 350 girls from board schools and 425 from voluntary schools had attended.<sup>147</sup>

Libraries were also introduced into the schools. Laurence Staines, the headmaster at Slater Street introduced a simple lending library into his school in 1877. As it appeared to be a factor in improving attendance it aroused the interest of the Board. Alderman John Bennett was persuaded to present £200 for a children's library; the donation was sufficient to supply each board school with 'a well-appointed library suitable for children'.<sup>148</sup> This was reflected in the borrowers' statistics at the Free Library, which had become town property on the dissolution of the Mechanics' Institute. Of some 2,028 borrowers in 1879 more than half were under 21 years of age. 632 were between 11 and 15 inclusive.<sup>149</sup>

By the time that Catherine Street School was opened in 1880 it had been found more advantageous to differentiate on the basis of ability rather than sex, for it began as a mixed school throughout, where 'the clever and industrious will have opportunity of showing their abilities, and will not be kept in the background by the stupid or idle scholars.... The child, too, of but moderate powers....will not be discouraged by being outdistanced in the race'.<sup>150</sup> The competitive spirit had been encouraged by the opening of the Wyggeston Schools, secondary establishments offering some scholarships to children from elementary schools.<sup>151</sup>

A great many improvements, reflecting the national spirit

in the late 1870s and early 1880s, came about, like the change to ability grouping rather than sex grouping at Catherine Street, as a result of or concomitant with, the development of class-teaching, which released the schools from their earlier over-dependence on pupil teachers. It also provided the opportunity to improve the training of the latter, whose numbers within Leicester board schools had grown to 98 by the end of 1876.<sup>152</sup> In 1877 the School Board agreed to open a class at the new Charnwood Street School, 'where Miss Gale would give practical exercises to the pupil teachers' in kindergarten work. Miss Gale was to be paid £10 for a course of 25 lessons.<sup>153</sup> Early in 1879 quarterly examinations for pupil teachers were initiated.<sup>154</sup> Centralised training classes, however, were not instituted until 1881 (five years after Liverpool had pioneered them),<sup>155</sup> after a year of experimenting with classes for ex-pupil teachers. Wood had stated, on 2 February 1880, that the Board was the employer of 60 to 70 ex-pupil teachers, who, because there were not enough colleges, had no way of improving their qualifications. It had been arranged, therefore, for the Board Inspector, Henry Major, and three teachers from the Wyggeston Boys' School to give instruction. Each would instruct in his own subjects for two hours per week, and would receive £30 for 40 lessons. It was stressed that the arrangement would not continue beyond the one course arranged. Since then a change in the Code had dispensed with the requirement for instruction to pupil teachers to be given by head teachers, and the Board agreed:

'That an instructor be appointed who shall devote the whole of his mornings and evenings to the service of the Board, and be engaged

in instructing the pupil teachers and others in the subjects which may be assigned to him'.

Provision was made for candidates (who were given a one month trial) and first-year pupil teachers to receive six hours of instruction per week in school time, and for second-year pupil teachers to receive three hours. All four year groups were expected to attend classes for three evenings each week, when instruction would be given, either at Charnwood Street or Oxford Street, by the full-time instructor in conjunction with one or more of the head teachers. On being informed that the scheme would cost no more than existing arrangements with the head teachers there was no dissent in the Board.<sup>156</sup>

In 1882, anticipating the new Code's requirements, the third and fourth year pupil teachers were also withdrawn from the schools for one afternoon each week, a scheme that Nottingham, Norwich and Birmingham were already using. Apparently though, there had also been 'several inconveniences arising from the mixing of the sexes in the classes', so that arrangements were made for male and female pupil teacher classes to be held separately and at different times.<sup>157</sup>

Even with properly organised classes and a day release scheme, however, it was difficult to turn elementary pupils into satisfactory teachers without a reasonable secondary education. It was also becoming more difficult to attract boys. The type of boy who had taken an apprenticeship in order to obtain some semblance of a secondary education was now, if he was more gifted than the average,



in a position to go to the Wyggeston School on a scholarship. This he generally preferred to do, since the programme was not specifically for teachers, and so offered a wider range of employment possibilities. Because of this, the number of boys entering the ranks of pupil teachers was declining, both locally and nationally.<sup>158</sup>

The problem was tackled elsewhere by adding London University matriculation studies to the work of pupil teacher centres.<sup>159</sup> In Leic-

ester, where, as usual, the Board was worried by accusations of extravagance, the services of the Wyggeston Boys' School were enlisted.<sup>160</sup> On 7 February 1881 the Board decided that three young

men, John R. Frears, Alfred C. Draycott and John B. Brodie, should be appointed 'to serve for one month on trial so that that their fitness for the post of teacher in an elementary school may be ascertained'. It was explained that candidates of this type would be over seventeen years of age, would be expected to matriculate at the University of London within six months of appointment, and would attend pupil teacher classes, starting at the second year level. These advanced pupil teachers were working-class boys who had previously attended elementary schools in the town before gaining exhibitions at the Wyggeston School. There was no opposition within the Board itself, for both Church and Liberal groups were appreciative of the need. The editor of the Leicester Journal though, probably represented a substantial minority opinion at both ends of the social scale, when he commented that 'it is certainly difficult to understand what need there can be in the elementary

schools for teachers of such a class. The elementary schools have their own work to do, and they are best managed in the interests of the great mass of their pupils, without attempting to go beyond it'.<sup>161</sup>

By 1882 much had been achieved in elementary education in Leicester. As Joseph Wood said, on the eve of an election that gave his party a massive vote of confidence by electing all nine Liberal candidates to a Board now consisting of 15 members,<sup>162</sup> the Board had now supplied 11,527 out of 23,010 places in public elementary schools. Over the years 1876-8 the number of passes in the standards increased quite dramatically, especially in the upper ranges, as table 8 indicates. Moreover these standards, by 1882, had risen

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**Table 8    Percentage of Passes at Inspections of Leicester Board**  
**Schools. 1876-8**

Standard	1	2	3	4	5	6
1876	74.8	82.6	75.2	87.4	67.6	57.5
1877	80.0	86.1	83.6	82.7	86.5	70.0
1878	84.8	88.5	84.0	81.4	84.7	80.4

Source: Leicester Journal, 19 December 1879.

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to the point at which they were perceptibly higher than the average for all schools in England and Wales, and also for the board schools in London.<sup>163</sup>

The great efforts expended by the Church were by now almost exhausted. By 1877 the Leicester Archidiaconal Board of Education,

while acknowledging the death of Canon Fry, the great builder of Church schools in Leicester, also recognised that the question now was not that of building new schools, for 'the efficiency of Voluntary Schools is the only real justification for their existence'.

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**Table 9    Inspection Results of Leicester Board Schools Compared with Other Schools (all children presented)**

	In all schools of England and Wales, year end- ed Aug. 31, 1882	In London Board Schools, year ended March 24, 1882	In Leicester Board Schools, year ended March 31, 1882
Reading	89.09	90.7	92.2
Writing	80.78	87.3	93.5
Arithmetic	75.66	84.8	91.5

Source: Leicester Journal, 8 December 1882.

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So downcast were the members by the success of the board schools and the increasing financial problems of their own schools, that they envisaged schools being surrendered to the Leicester School Board, and plans were made to face that eventuality.<sup>164</sup> Inspector Blakiston also acknowledged that: 'Voluntary effort....will, probably, henceforth be confined to the maintenance of existing schools'.<sup>165</sup> Among some Churchmen, at least, the strength of feeling against board schools under Liberalism was beginning to ameliorate in the local situation. Even Canon Vaughan, who had not even been invited to the opening of a school that his Board had planned,<sup>166</sup> agreed that 'there were now evidences that in future the teaching in School Board schools should not be of a non-relig-

ious character'.<sup>167</sup>

There was one battle, however, that was to continue for a few years longer. Church Party and Liberals were still opposed on anything involving finance that might change the relationship between board and voluntary schools, including the question of fees. The Church Party, conscious that the voluntary schools depended for a substantial proportion of their income on fees, and that any attempt to lower or abolish fees in board schools would take away pupils from the former, always supported any measure to increase fees in the latter. The Liberals, on the other hand, soon came to the conclusion, especially when the combined effects of compulsion and a downturn in the trade cycle in 1879,<sup>168</sup> which persisted over the next two years, made it difficult to collect the fees,<sup>169</sup> that the only reasonable course was to abolish them altogether.

Arguments arose when, exhausted by its efforts to raise funds, and the difficulty of finding new premises, the Ragged School committee decided to close its day school in Gladstone Street at the end of 1879.<sup>170</sup> The building of Catherine Street School had already been projected, but would not be ready for at least another eighteen months, so that the Board decided on the necessity of erecting a temporary school for 200 children.<sup>171</sup> The school that was to be replaced had been a free school, so that a problem arose because Education Department regulations did not permit free schools to be operated by boards. It was noted, however,

that penny schools were in operation in London, Manchester, Liverpool, Norwich and other large towns and cities. Wood, in support of a penny fee, though he made it clear that his ultimate objective was to have free board schools, stated that he had examined the circumstances of seven children selected at random at the school, and discovered that many pupils had had no dinner, 'and in no case had any of them had more than bread and butter'. At this stage it was agreed, there being no immediate opposition from Church Party members, that a penny school should be run on a six months trial basis.<sup>172</sup> Two weeks after this decision, though, the Reverend Samuel Flood, vicar of St. Luke's, whose school was in the same street, wrote to the Education Department, complaining about the competition that a penny school in the same street would offer to the St. Luke's School. Since the penny school replaced a free school, Flood's complaint was somewhat ungracious. Nevertheless Patrick Cumin replied, suggesting that a higher fee would be more appropriate, but that it should be remitted in whole or in part in deserving cases.<sup>173</sup> Cumin's argument was not simply national policy. It made better sense than Wood's argument for a penny school. The Board had made many remittances to board school pupils up to 1876, and the Board of Guardians had done so since then for pupils at board and voluntary schools. If the parents of the children were genuinely poor it was not reasonable to expect even a penny from them, when previously they had paid nothing.

During the six months trial period as a penny school the

Church Party members of the Board took stock of the various arguments. When the matter was debated again Clayton, on their behalf, expressed their viewpoint. He stated that he had been impressed by the fact that, though all the children in attendance were poor, the school itself was in a 'very respectable street'. Moreover the pupils 'were drawn from a wide area....so that the school could not be said to supply the wants of that particular neighbourhood'. It was suggested, therefore, that if the Gladstone Street School was put on the same footing as other schools, the children would be dispersed, in many cases, to other schools. The school under discussion would then draw pupils from its immediate area, and avoid the stigma of being a 'poor school'. Poor children would enjoy fee remissions wherever they attended. The logic was inescapably good, and several Liberals were sufficiently impressed to support Clayton's suggestion, so that henceforth, it was decided, the fee would be fixed at twopence.<sup>174</sup>

With the Gladstone Street decision amicably made the threat of a storm subsided. There was, however, a similar decision to make some seventeen months later. This time the issue was debated much more heatedly. Clayton, as the chairman of the school management committee, suggested that the fee at Hazel Street School be set at threepence for pupils older than infants. Since the school appeared to be in an area where houses were better, and rents higher, than in most other working-class areas, and since

also the school was built on the same plan as Charnwood Street, where fees were set at the threepence that Wood himself had originally proposed,\* Clayton's proposal was by no means unreasonable. Merrick, however, wished to have the fee reduced to twopence, stating that he 'did not think it was right that because the people who resided in this neighbourhood were among the thrifty of the working class, that they should therefore have to pay an additional amount of fees'. Another Liberal, W. Collier, opposed Merrick, but the other Liberals agreed with Merrick, whose amendment was adopted.<sup>175</sup>

The trouble with Merrick's amendment was that, though it was well-intentioned, and in line with feeling among the majority of Liberals, it had left the threepenny fee at Charnwood Street as an anomaly. In a society organised on a class basis, which saw nothing wrong with educational divisions, not only between classes, but within classes, the view of many was that to have people paying what they could afford was just common sense. Government officials were particularly susceptible to this point of view. Inspector

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\* Wood had supported a threepenny fee, as we have noted, when it was thought that the cost of schools on the classroom system would be higher than the older style schools. In fact Charnwood Street had turned out to be no more expensive than its predecessors.

J. R. Blakiston reported that he felt Hazel Street and King Richard's Road Schools, both in 'good' working-class areas, should have threepenny fees. The Education Department agreed, and the Board was informed accordingly.<sup>176</sup> A further debate was held on 3 July 1882, with W. H. Walker in the chair. Two key Liberals, the Reverends Joseph Wood and William Evans, were absent. Merrick defended the earlier decision that he had been instrumental in bringing about. The fee now proposed, he said, was 'contrary to general custom in towns of the size of Leicester'. He declared that he knew there were at least fifteen penny schools in Birmingham, and that there were many towns where fees were lower than in Leicester. But Merrick was again opposed by his Liberal colleague, Collier, a Wesleyan, who, in contradiction, stated that 'while the average of fees per year on the average attendance of seven towns amounted to 11s. 2½d., the fees in Leicester only reached 9s. 3d. per year, showing that Leicester charged 2s. less than the average of those towns'. Noting also that the British, Wesleyan and some of the local Church schools charged higher fees and yet were filled, he argued that most people could afford threepence. When Collier's vote was the vital one in helping to rescind the earlier decision, Merrick was so infuriated that he blurted out that 'it was a pity this was not known when the Liberal candidates were selected'.<sup>177</sup>

Subsequently Merrick had a special meeting convened in order to try and reverse the decision yet again. In the meantime Wood, now in the chair again, had approached employers in the district



around Hazel Street. Both G. H. Baines and S. Lennard, known influential supporters of the Liberal cause, had stated that 'it was a working man's district'. It was noted also that many children were from large families, and that the higher fee would be a hardship to them. But, despite Wood's contention that the fee question was a party matter, and should be settled according to Liberal policy, an obvious attempt to bring Collier into line, the Board, no doubt tired of wrangling, and perhaps questioning the propriety of overturning decisions made in an immediately preceding meeting, would not agree to the re-opening of the controversy. They did, however, resolve, as an addendum, that 'where there are more than two children from the same family in attendance at the Hazel Street Mixed School, the fee for the third and each succeeding child would be one penny per week'. In concluding the meeting, Wood envisaged further struggles in the future, noting that the fee problem 'had given fresh impetus in the town to that which some gentlemen objected, namely, free schools [and] would give an impetus to the movement which many of them believed must be the eventual result of compulsion and State education'.<sup>178</sup>

The 1872-1882 decade as a whole marks one of solid achievement. The Leicester School Board, like other boards in large towns, coped with an ever increasing child population, in ensuring that each of those children between five and thirteen years of age had a place in a school. Schools themselves, though still tied to modifications of the Revised Code, were much <sup>more</sup> exciting and interesting places of learning in 1882 than they had been in 1872.

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158. D. Wardle, op. cit. (1971), 98. Dr Wardle noted that by 1895 the Nottingham Pupil Teacher Centre was able to enter only six male pupils for the Queen's Scholarship Examination. Throughout the country as a whole there were only 2,087 men presented, against 7,542 women.
159. Ibid., 98-9; also J. H. Bingham, op. cit., 97.
160. Following the example of Leicester the Birmingham School Board provided in 1885 a shorter apprenticeship of only 2 years to boys of at least seventeen, provided that they were already in possession of an Oxford or Cambridge senior certificate, or had passed a similar examination set by the College of Preceptors, or had passed the Board's own examination. Vide A. F. Taylor, op. cit., 238-9.
161. Leicester Journal, 11 February 1881.
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164. Ibid., 27 July 1877.
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169. Log Book: Willow Street Half-Time (Mixed) School, 1881. In January the headmaster complained: 'Since we opened after the holidays I have had greater difficulty in getting the fees than I have ever experienced before. Many of the parents were out of work before Xmas and have not yet begun since'.
170. Leicester Journal, 13 June 1879.
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In 1922 William Brockington, the Director of Education for Leicestershire, wrote: 'It is a commonplace of history that the earliest indications of change are generally to be found along the circumference and not at the centre of the system. When the outer rings become agitated, the centre is touched into activity'.<sup>1</sup> Applied to school boards this dictum is not altogether inapt. For although boards were executive rather than policy making bodies, having to work within the framework of the Elementary Code, as defined by the Education Department, and provided for in legislation, they were not entirely without innovative powers. London and Sheffield Boards had, for instance, appointed inspectors within a few months of their foundation.<sup>2</sup> London, prompted by T. H. Huxley, introduced systematised object lessons, designed as an introduction to science, and viewed as a preparation for Science and Art Department examinations, in 1871.<sup>3</sup> It had also reacted swiftly to Dr. Crichton Browne's alarmist report on the 'over-pressure' of children in schools in 1885 by encouraging its teachers to pay less attention to the percentage of passes and more to the tone of the school, less to spelling, parsing and formal grammar, and more to clay-modelling, drawing, cooking and reading for interest.<sup>4</sup>

Leicester often followed the trend in London, as did most other school boards, but it had a modest share in initiating new practices. The introduction of kindergarten exercises at Charn-

wood Street School, for instance, owed more to the presence in Leicester of Miss A. C. Beale, formerly of Cheltenham Ladies' College, and a sister of its famous headmistress, than to the Education Department. Miss Beale's Belmont House School had started classes in 1876, 'with a view of giving a sound and liberal education at moderate cost'.<sup>5</sup> The Froebelian aspects were noted by the Reverend and Mrs. William Evans, who were prominent in the Liberal cause, and who both became members of the School Board in 1879; their own small daughter was a pupil at Belmont House. Mrs Evans is credited with being the driving force. As a daughter of Joseph Dare, she shared the family concern for education, and by 1861 had established herself as one of the more highly regarded proprietors of private schools in the town.<sup>6</sup> It was probably she who persuaded Joseph Wood of the feasibility of kindergarten work in elementary schools.

In the education of mentally defective children also, the Board anticipated legislation. By the 1880s, with compulsory attendance effectively attained, there were many defective children in schools throughout the country. In many areas such children were allocated to a Standard 0, a class formed specially for the purpose,<sup>7</sup> but in Leicester they were usually retained in the infants' departments. The headmistress of Thorpe Street School, a temporary board school using the premises of the former Baptist school, noted on 1 February 1886 that she had received back an eight year old boy from the temporary mixed junior school at West Cotes, on the advice of Miss Warren, the local inspectress.<sup>8</sup>

The voluntary schools tended to exclude such children, or to accept them only grudgingly. The headmaster of Chester Street School admitted a defective boy on the doctor's advice that he was fit to attend school, but noted that he would probably never be able to learn. In another case a child had been sent from school to school. He could not, it seemed, do the work of the lowest infants' class, though he was over seven years old.<sup>9</sup> The Board had, indeed, recognised the problem already, and had expressed its concern for the dull and backward children in 1881, but the Education Department had been unheeding.<sup>10</sup> With payment by results continuing until the 1890s there was little chance of special provision being made, but once the form of assessment for grant purposes was changed action was taken. In 1892 twenty backward children were admitted to a special class at Milton Street School, where each lesson lasted not more than fifteen minutes, 'and the education of the hand and eye was made an instrument to lead up to a small amount of book-learning'.<sup>11</sup> Exercises included brickbuilding, ball drill, paper cutting, table laying and modelling in clay.<sup>12</sup> In 1895 the Reverend C. D. du Port, the senior H.M.I. for the East Central Region, noted that: 'I had thought the School Board for London stood almost alone in providing special schools for defective children; I rejoice to learn....that the Leicester School Board has made provision for one class of such weakly and defective cases at the Willow Street School'.<sup>13</sup> By 1900, just after the passing of the Education (Defective and Epileptic Children) Act

of 1899, the Board had developed five centres (with 106 children) for work of this kind.<sup>14</sup>

Another field in which the Leicester School Board was ahead of the Education Department was drawing. During the 1870s both board and voluntary schools took advantage of the examining facilities of the Science and Art Department, to such an extent that there must have been few older boys who were not taught the rudiments of the subject. The quiet development of this work, aided by the proximity of the Leicester School of Art, which not only encouraged it, but also assisted many teachers to gain a relevant qualification, continued throughout the 1870s and 1880s. So that, when the Cross Commission's recommendation to make drawing compulsory was accepted by the Department in 1890,<sup>15</sup> it was not difficult for the Board to declare, during the triennium ending in December 1894, that drawing had been 'taught to every boy in the Leicester Board Schools, and the result has been most satisfactory'.<sup>16</sup> In Derby, by contrast, no decision about the subject was made until 1885.<sup>17</sup>

Before the close of the school board era there was another development in drawing, foreshadowing the future freedom of teachers to prepare their own curricula. The Leicester School Board requested A. Spencer, the head of the School of Art, to devise a new syllabus for their schools. This syllabus was published before approval from the Education Department was sought. There was evidently a good deal of red tape and obstruction on the part of officials,

which was only swept aside by the personal intervention of Sir George Kekewich, who 'insisted that we should have a free hand in drawing for a year or two, and we are making the most of our opportunity'.<sup>18</sup>

Table 10

Instruction in Drawing in Leicester Elementary Day  
Schools, 1873-4

	No. taught	No. exam- ined	No. satis- factorily taught in 1st grade	No. show- ing prof- iciency in 1st grade	No. exc- elling in 1st grade	No. pass- ing in 2nd grade
<u>Voluntary</u>						
County sch.	58	42	23	6	6	-
St. John's	115	73	47	14	1	-
St. Margaret's	200	99	63	6	-	-
St. Martin's	350	151	87	32	11	2
St. Mary's	130	124	67	22	5	-
Trinity	342	235	128	34	14	1
Wesleyan	160	156	82	35	13	-
	1,355	880	497	149	50	3
<u>Board</u>						
Great Meeting	240	224	60	15	11	-
Syston Street	70	38	21	2	1	-
	310	262	81	17	12	-
<u>Total</u>	1,665	1,142	578	166	62	3

Source: 22nd Report of Science and Art Department (1875).

Examples of local initiative suggest that national policy was, in part, determined by such action. A bright idea was explored within a local context, noted by one or more of Her Majesty's Inspectors, reported upon, and sometimes made general by its inclusion within new legislation or a revision of the Code. It was a frequent occurrence in the field of curriculum. It happened less frequently, however, in areas that were politically more contentious. To take an example, the Code of 1882 was ostensibly the product of a Liberal administration, wherein A. J. Mundella, the energetic and genuinely compassionate Vice-President of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education, after consultation with school boards, had made decisions to alleviate the worst effects of payment by results. Mundella had indeed consulted the boards. The draft of the new Code was circulated, and considered by the Leicester School Board on 21 November 1881, when Clayton presented the suggestions of the school management committee. The committee had been enthusiastic, and Clayton, on their behalf, said that the proposals were 'a great improvement on the old code, because there seemed to be in them a prospect of a diminution of the mechanical kind of education that had prevailed'.<sup>19</sup> Yet it was clear that it was not the general policy that was discussed, but some of the details. The Board was able to suggest that Milton was an unsuitable author for study in Standard one, that an arithmetical notation up to 99 was more appropriate than 999 at the same level, that there should be a special grant for infants' school needlework, that pupil teacher indentures should all start from the same date



in the year, that there should be some aid for the training of ex-pupil teachers unable to go to training colleges, and so on. But it was not asked to express opinions on whether payment by results should continue or not.

The reason was clear enough. In Parliament the Liberals commanded majorities between 1880 and 1885, for a few months during 1886, and between 1892 and 1895. Not until 1895 was A. J. Balfour's Conservative government able to command sufficient support to remain in power for a decade. The sea-saw of political swings is an excellent thing for increasing electoral awareness, but it tends to put ministries in the charge of politicians with little or no administrative experience. In such a situation it is the civil service heads who tend to dominate. Patrick Cumin, George Kekewich and Robert Morant were all formidable figures, well able to handle their political heads to gain ends that they themselves regarded as desirable. Mundella, for all the political support he had acquired, with all the backing of the school boards and the National Union of Elementary Teachers, was no match for the power of Cumin, who made sure that payment by results did not entirely disappear in his time.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to their relationship with the Department of Education school boards in large boroughs were necessarily involved with town councils. Since the Leicester School Board, like other boards, was not a rating authority, it had to rely upon the facilities of the borough council. The relations between the two were, therefore,

of some importance. The Council retained its powerful Liberal majority throughout the period. The Board, throughout the 1880s, when election contests were the exception rather than the rule, generally had a Liberal majority also. An awakening of interest in education, coupled with the impact of the abolition of the worst aspects of payment by results, and the disappearance of school pence, changed the atmosphere of the nineties. Working-class movements were gathering electoral strength. In 1894 there was an interesting election in which both right and left wings showed significant splits. The Church Party disowned one of its candidates, T. Canner, who, standing as an Independent Conservative, came top of the poll. W. Keites, a candidate promoted by the Licensed Victuallers' Association, as part of a national campaign to counteract the pressures by temperance organisations, who requested facilities for the teaching of temperance in schools, was also successful. On the left, the Trades Council representative was unsuccessful, but Mrs. M. A. Saunderson, the Independent Labour Party candidate came second in the poll. An editorial column in the Liberal Leicester Chronicle savagely criticised the lady because, since she had been a member of the School Board in Hull, where she had previously lived, she was 'ignorant of the condition of Leicester'. She was also lambasted because: 'Her idea seems to be to go to the Board to preach Socialism, and to raise the religious question by abolishing Bible teaching altogether'.<sup>21</sup> Nevertheless Mrs. Saunderson won a seat, thus reducing Liberal representation from nine to eight.<sup>22</sup> Three years later the editor of the Conservative Leicester Journal be-

moaned the fact that only the I.L.P. candidature was forcing an election to be held,<sup>23</sup> and comforted his readers with the news of Church victories in board elections in Liverpool, Sheffield and Stockton, and of 'a splendid rally of the Church vote in Birmingham'.<sup>24</sup> The Church Party in Leicester did in fact win back the seat previously lost to the Licensed Victuallers. The I.L.P. candidate, H. Payne, came top of the poll, with 24,618 votes, more than twice the total of the second in the list, J. Potter (Liberal), so that again only eight out of nine Liberals were elected.<sup>25</sup> By 1900 the national resurgence of Conservatism was being reflected in local elections, and the Liberals had two candidates defeated, while Labour had no candidates returned. The Liberals, with seven members, and thus without a majority for the first time since 1874, had to rely on the support of F. J. Gould, elected as an Independent, but with unofficial Labour backing, against the six Church Party members and Father Hawkins of the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>26</sup>

With a majority of Liberals on the School Board for most of its existence, it was natural that an alliance should have developed with Liberals on the Town Council. A succession of mayors attended the formal openings of board schools, and paid the usual tributes to the majority group on the Board. Some people were members of both bodies, like Daniel Merrick, who died in 1886.<sup>27</sup> Alderman John Bennett was the father of Dr. F. W. Bennett, who won Board elections in 1894, 1897 and 1900. Two members of the Baines family served on the Board; several Baines' were Council members.

Members of the powerful Ellis family also served both bodies. Despite this, however, there was a certain amount of friction between Council and Board, usually initiated by a small number of Conservative and Liberal 'Economist' Councillors, who were concerned by the fact that the Board's demands were resulting in the profits from the town's gas undertaking being eroded away. On the other hand, if the rates were increased because of the Board's demands, it was the Council that had to accept the blame, at least as far as the public were concerned. In March 1882 W. Colton urged the Council to 'enter a protest against the lavish expenditure of the School Board', which 'required more than half the borough rate, and appeared to be under no control'.<sup>28</sup> The Board defended itself vigorously. W. Collier indicated that the average fees received in Sheffield, Hull, Birmingham, Bradford, Leeds, Manchester and Liverpool were 11s. 2½d., considerably higher than the 9s. 7½d. received in Leicester. Despite this, the rates per child (calculated on an average attendance) were only 1½d. higher in Leicester than the 12s. 8½d. received in the other towns. Joseph Wood, highly incensed by the criticism, retorted that the Board was not in any sense responsible to the Council, but to the rate-payers directly, to the Education Department, and, for audit purposes, to the Local Government Board.<sup>29</sup>

Other misunderstandings also arose between Council and Board. The Board noted in 1882 that a precept presented two months earlier for £1,500 had not been honoured, and the treasurer had accordingly

been placed in difficulty. By this time another £5,000 was needed, and another precept, for this amount, was approved by the Board and presented to the Town Clerk. A month later the latter precept had not been acted upon, and the Board was forced to borrow at five per cent. interest to meet its obligations.<sup>30</sup> The Board assumed that the delay was obstructive in intent, and demanded an explanation. Four months later an explanation was given. The Town Clerk, John Storey, advised the Board Secretary, A. H. Burgess, that the Council was sorry about the inconvenience, but wished to indicate 'the impossibility of their levying a rate, and getting together £5,000 without reasonable time for collection. The borough rates are levied quarterly and in equal amounts'. The rate was normally prepared on the basis of estimates presented well in advance of demands, and changes at short notice were, therefore, difficult. The increasing size of demands made it difficult to continue the practice. The Council's suggestion for the early presentation of estimates was thereafter acted upon.<sup>31</sup> Though the incident was trivial enough, it showed that tension existed between the two bodies. This tension continued to exist, for ten years later it was necessary again to remind the Council that it had no legal right to interfere in the Board's operations.<sup>32</sup>

Despite the innovations with which the Leicester Board and other boards were associated, Frank Smith was to write, about elementary education in the 1880s, that:

'The requirements of the Code were as rigid as the general reports of the Education Department were dull and unchanging. There is

no period in the history of education when the official publications were so uninviting and unimaginative as the 'eighties of the last century'. 33

In part this may be attributed to the reluctance of Cumin to institute radical changes in the system. From another viewpoint the decade may be regarded as one of consolidation, before another burst of activity in the next decade.

In Leicester the number of elementary school places increased from 23,010 in 1882 to 25,170 in 1891.<sup>34</sup> Because of uncertainty arising from the impending extension of the borough boundary, building had lagged behind the demand, for there were 26,130 pupils enrolled in the latter year. Among the voluntary schools two new Anglican schools had been built. Infants' and Mixed Departments had appeared in the new parish of St. Saviour's, where no board school had yet been built. These provided accommodation for 500 children. A school for 571 pupils had also been built in the rapidly developing Clarendon Park area in 1890.<sup>35</sup> On the other hand, the British Schools in Hill Street were on the verge of closure. The management, faced with an increasingly obsolete building, a steadily declining enrolment, and the impending abolition of fees in board schools, agreed to close in 1891, when it was apparent that there was ample board school accommodation in the area to absorb the displaced pupils.<sup>36</sup> The Wesleyans had also sought to disinvest themselves of the Clyde Street School, 'a burden which', according to their spokesman, 'has grown heavier year by year'. In their case, however, the Board did not agree to take it over,

and, rather than see it closed, the Wesleyans reluctantly agreed to continue to maintain it.<sup>37</sup> All but a small part of the net increase of 2,160 in school accommodation had, therefore, been provided by the Board. Milton Street (619 places) and Medway Street (1,384) had both been opened before 1890, while an additional department had been provided at Hazel Street.<sup>38</sup>

The succession of Kekewich to Cumin's post at the Education Department in 1890, and the extension of the boundaries of Leicester in 1891, produced a dramatic change in the situation. The latter extension incorporated the suburban villages of Belgrave, Aylestone and Knighton, the district of Newfoundpool, West Humbershire, and northern sections of the parish of Evington. Except for Knighton and Evington, each of these had school boards, whose functions were taken over by the Leicester School Board. There was little resistance where it was school boards that were being taken over. Knighton, however, was different. There the 'hovels, made of mud and straw; bits of glass, or of old off-cast windows, without frames or hinges,....merely stuck in the mud wall', that William Cobbett had complained about sixty years earlier,<sup>39</sup> had given way to the serried ranks of working-class houses built in red-brick, fringed by a substantial ring of expensive upper middle-class dwellings. The inhabitants of the latter were concerned about the likelihood of higher rates, but the working-class people, many of whom (together with their children) found employment in the new Wheatsheaf works, a large manufacturing enterprise in which

the Co-operative Wholesale Society made boots and shoes, were afraid of the Board. Both groups combined in a noisy protest meeting, when W. Vincent was loudly cheered as he stated: 'That School Board's inspector would have authority here, and the standard, which here was now the fourth, on reaching which boys could leave school and go to work, would be raised to the sixth, so that a number of their boys would have to go back to school'. He further reasoned that this eventuality would make the existing voluntary school accommodation insufficient, so that a board school would inevitably be built, thus increasing the rates. A poll on the boundary extension issue was demanded.<sup>40</sup>

Before the Knighton poll was conducted the Leicester School Board discussed the matter. It is clear that some pressure was being exerted by the Town Clerk, who wished the Board 'to agree to the insertion of a clause in the Borough Extension Bill which would ensure that children who were exempted from school attendance, should not be bound to re-enter school'. Unanimous agreement by the Board to this suggestion had the desired effect. The poll resulted in 833 votes in favour of the extension, and 382 against.<sup>41</sup>

With the passing of the Borough Extension Act school accommodation increased from 25,170 to 33,239; the number enrolled increased from 26,130 to 33,793.<sup>42</sup> The Board's share of the increased accommodation was 4,926, the voluntary share being 3,243.<sup>43</sup>



Further increases came rapidly in the board schools, for a number of reasons. In the first place, the population was still increasing rapidly. The combination of continued influx, natural increase and boundary extension raised the number of people in the town from 154,000 in 1891 to 219,000 in 1901. Average attendances increased by a greater proportion than the total population. The

**Table 11**      Accommodation, Enrolment and Attendance in Leicester Board Schools, 1894-1900

		Accommodation	No. enrolled	Average attendance	%age of attendance
Infants' Schools	1894	7,354	7,142	5,802	81.2
	1897	8,003	7,622	6,061	79.5
	1900	9,412	8,376	7,011	83.7
Upper Schools	1894	13,431	15,012	13,074	90.0
	1897	15,162	16,422	14,664	90.8
	1900	18,673	17,652	16,293	92.3
All Schools	1894	20,785	22,154	18,876	87.1
	1897	23,165	24,044	20,725	87.2
	1900	28,085	26,028	23,304	89.5

Source: Leicester School Board Minutes.

Factory and Workshops Act of 1891 was a factor, since by its terms the age of children permitted to be employed as half-timers was raised to eleven. Following up this legislation the School Board changed its bye-laws in 1892, so that full-time attendance at school was required for children between five and eleven years of

age.<sup>44</sup> This had the agreement of F. D. Acland, who became Vice-President of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education in 1892, and piloted through Parliament in the following year the Elementary Education (School Attendance) Act that made Leicester's action the law for the whole country. By 1899 this Act was amended to raise the minimum age for partial exemption to twelve.<sup>45</sup> The School Board meeting of 4 November 1901 confirmed the Board's recognition of the 1899 legislation, and provided for full-time exemption at fourteen years, as the Act allowed.

One suspects that the measures of 1892 and 1899-1901 were, in fact, little more than 'mopping-up' operations, and that in Leicester the majority of children in the age brackets concerned were already in full-time attendance. The structure of British industry was changing. The scale of operational units was increasing, thus making factory inspection simpler. Mechanisation was reducing the need for unskilled workers, who needed a longer education. The Leicester boot and shoe industry changed rapidly in line with national trends during the 1890s, after it was realised that American labour costs in the same industry had been halved by the greater use of machinery. The introduction of the Blake machine for making welted boots in 1893, with a consequent reduction in cheap outwork, made it easy to dispense with child labour.<sup>46</sup> A significant comment on 'the continued reduction' in the number of half-timers in the Leicester schools was made at a Board meeting in 1899.<sup>47</sup> By 1897 there were only 511 half-timers; only eight of them remained in 1900.<sup>48</sup>

There were also other factors. An obvious deterrent to school attendance had been the necessity to pay school fees. It has been noted that, during Joseph Wood's tenure of the chairmanship (which ended in 1884), the Liberals looked forward to the abolition of school fees. Though the Education Act of 1891 has been attributed by Kekewich to (unsuccessful) Conservative electioneering, it was eagerly seized upon by Liberal-controlled boards, including Leicester's, for it offered an annual grant of ten shillings for each elementary school child below the age of fourteen where fees were discontinued, and, therefore, made it not only legal but feasible for the reduction or abolition of fees to take place.<sup>49</sup> At the earliest possible moment a resolution was adopted, accepting the fee grant, and abolishing fees from 28 August 1891.<sup>50</sup>

There were two other inter-acting factors that were also important. Kekewich's New Code and the continued improvement of the board schools made education more attractive both to children and their parents. The Code abolished the grants for the 3R's, so that examinations controlled only the work in specific subjects and the Science and Art Department offerings. A stream of circulars from the Department to its Inspectors encouraged a type of education that was very far removed from the Revised Code of 1862. One of them, in 1893, urged: 'The recognition of the child's spontaneous activity, and the stimulation of this activity in certain well-defined directions by the teachers'.<sup>51</sup>

Even if the Code had not done more than discourage the petty

deceits that teachers often attempted to practice during inspections, it would have been useful. Leicester had had its share of such problems, which payment by results tended to encourage. In one case a Miss Maggie Morgan at Christow Street had overheard the Inspector 'state the passage in the Reader which would be taken as Dictation, and subsequently instructed her class, who were in the playground, in the spelling of one or more words'.<sup>52</sup> But the Code did more. Responding to the 'over-pressure' controversy, it encouraged the continuance and extension of developments already initiated, and also introduced other practices that were an improvement.

Swedish drill was one of the more interesting developments. Introduced by the London School Board in 1879 to replace the military drill recognised by the 1871 Code, it spread gradually to other towns. Leeds adopted it in 1880.<sup>53</sup> In 1884 the Leicester Board appointed Miss J. W. Warren, headmistress of a large London infants' school, as inspectress, with the tasks of examining needlework, inspecting infants' schools, and instructing teachers in kindergarten work.<sup>54</sup> As well as effecting improvements in each of these areas, she introduced Swedish drill into the infants' schools. A note in a school log book records that in 1886 some children 'performed the earlier movements of the Swedish drill very nicely indeed'.<sup>55</sup> Two years later it was evident that Miss Warren had been instructing pupil teachers in the drill, and there was a discussion on one of the Board's committees on the desirab-

ility of its general introduction throughout the schools.<sup>56</sup> No formal action was taken by the Board though, until the encouragement given by the New Code, in which provision was made for a general change-over to Swedish drill. The rules enacted by the Board specified 30 minute lessons for boys and 20 minute lessons for girls every day. Additionally it was ruled that 'every boy and girl in Full-time Departments....shall have three minutes extension services three times a day during change of classes'. It was also specified that there would be compulsory training in the subject for all teachers employed by the Board.<sup>57</sup>

Science teaching also was given an additional boost by the New Code. Robert Locke, the headmaster, had already experimented with the teaching of chemistry at Charnwood Street to a class of 60 children during 1886-7 and 1887-8. 38 Pupils were presented for Science and Art Department examinations in 1887, eighteen of them being awarded first class passes, and the other twenty gaining second class. In the next year 48 pupils were presented; ten were awarded first class passes, thirty-five second class, while three failed.<sup>58</sup> This more advanced work, not mentioned again, is likely to have been discontinued after the re-opening of Alderman Newton's School in 1888 as an organised science school, but there was a continued interest in the teaching of science at more elementary levels. This resulted, in 1890, in the replacement of object lessons with methods closer to Armstrong's Heuristic Method. The School Board is noted as having taken advantage 'of the permission

now given to introduce into the curriculum of the Schools the subjects of Elementary Science for boys and Domestic Economy for girls'.<sup>59</sup> But neither was an absolutely new departure.<sup>60</sup>

The interest in science teaching was so much in the minds of School Board members that even the question of temperance teaching was considered more from the point of view of its scientific value than its effect upon morality. At one meeting in 1891 R. S. Mantle asked that 'permission be given to duly qualified lecturers to visit each of the schools of the Board quarterly....without cost to the Board....for the purpose of giving object lessons on alcohol, its chemical properties, and physiological effects'. The scheme had been started in 1889 by the Band of Hope Union, which in 1890 had given 2,336 lectures throughout the country, 1,306 of them in board schools. After running through the usual arguments regarding the controversial nature of the topic, the desirability or otherwise of giving the same facilities to trade unions, Socialists, and the Vegetarian Society to propagate their various causes, and the effects upon daily life, it was left to James Ellis, M.P., the chairman, to sum up. He stated that he was 'absolutely in favour of temperance lectures, but they should be free, and if scientific they should be equal to the best of the day, and free for children to come or not'. In the particular case he opposed the motion because: 'The lessons that were given in school on alcohol were....not reliable, or at any rate they did not contain the whole truth'. The majority of Board members agreed with him.<sup>61</sup>

The atmosphere created by the changes of 1890 was reflected also in the 1893 regulations, which, acting on the Cross Commission's recommendations regarding evening schools, removed the limitation of studies to the 3R's, and made grants available for pupils over 21. This helped to revivify the evening schools in Leicester, as elsewhere. The Board had committed itself in 1874 to the opening of night schools 'for carrying on the education of the working classes, and especially half-timers'.<sup>62</sup> By 1880, however, the classes had faded out, as they had in many other places. Throughout the country night school pupils diminished from 74,000 in 1870 to 52,900 in 1879, according to Mundella, who attributed their loss of popularity to a more intensive concentration on the 3R's after 1876. The editor of the Leicester Journal observed that more people were attending day school and achieving literacy before going to work, so obviating the need to attend night school.<sup>63</sup> Another reason in the local situation was that classes had been competing in a diminishing market for instruction in the 3R's with a Church evening school at St. Mary's, which it was noted had been carried on 'with great success for many years past'.<sup>64</sup> Another attempt was made by the Board in 1885 to run evening schools for men and youths at Milton Street and Medway Street Schools. In both instances they were staffed by a headmaster and one assistant on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8.00 to 9.30. Pupils paid a penny fee for each attendance.<sup>65</sup> Success was modest. By 1889-1890 both sexes were catered for in eight evening schools, with an average attendance between them of 443 per night. Three years later, in 1893-4,

average attendance had almost doubled (831), while grants increased from £224 4s. to £576 8s.<sup>66</sup> By 1898-9 there were thirteen evening schools with an average attendance of 1,353.<sup>67</sup>

During the last four years of the Leicester School Board's existence the evening schools were affected by the political machinations in London that produced the Cockerton Judgment, and, ultimately, the total re-organisation of the educational structure. In 1899 it was decided that classes should not be eligible for Science and Art Department grants, which would be replaced by other forms of funding. In 1900 a block grant was substituted for the separate grants awarded from 1893 for specific subjects.<sup>68</sup> As the Leicester evening schools had developed a wide range of subjects this seriously threatened progress. In 1902 it was noted that: 'Last winter the attendance for all the schools during the session was 1,029, as compared with 1,148 the previous winter. This shrinkage is explained by the omission of certain attractive subjects, for which the Board of Education refused to pay grants'. These subjects included art, physical exercises, cooking and dressmaking.<sup>69</sup>

The School Board fought back with its limited means. A petition was sent to Parliament in favour of Sir John Brunner's Education (Continuation Schools) Bill to enable school boards to continue evening and higher grade schools. The Hill Street British Schools Exhibition Fund, derived from the proceeds of the sale of the Hill Street premises, was used to provide scholarships to the value of £10 each during 1901 and 1902, to enable evening school pupils to



study at the School of Art, instead of in the Board's own schools.<sup>70</sup> By September 1901 the Board had decided that there were three courses open to it. The evening work could be abandoned, an option the Board refused to take. A second possibility was that evening classes could be limited, as the Cockerton Judgment indicated, to children under fifteen years of age. The third option, which the Board agreed to adopt, was to apply to the Technical Education Committee of the Town Council 'for authority to conduct during session 1901-2 Evening Continuation Schools at the same centres and upon the same lines as last year, and to apply <sup>1/6</sup> the maintenance of such Evening Continuation Schools a sum of sixteen shillings, or thereabouts, per scholar in average attendance'.<sup>71</sup>

One very important factor in the changes of the 1880s and 1890s was the teaching profession, which increased in numbers, quality and the contribution that its members made to educational ideas, organisation and practice. With a work-force of 600 to 800 people, and with qualified teachers numbering 275 to 413 between 1897 and 1902, it was clear that the Board was the employer of a considerable number of increasingly sophisticated and articulate workers. It would have been surprising if they had not found opportunities to combine for professional purposes. When steps were taken to found the National Union of Elementary Teachers in 1870 there was already in existence a 'Leicestershire Scholastic Association', whose membership consisted of certificated teachers.<sup>72</sup> At the first conference of the N.U.E.T. the vociferous represent-

ative from Nottingham was Henry Major, soon to become the Leicester School Board's first inspector.<sup>73</sup> In 1874 the North Midland District Union of Elementary Teachers was formed. Its second president, Laurence Staines, the headmaster of Syston Street Board School, urged, in his inaugural address, before some 70 members, 'the desirability of teachers having a share in the consideration of educational changes of the day, and the absolute necessity of a responsible Minister of Education'. He also voiced the concern of members for the restoration of pensions, lost by the terms of the Revised Code.<sup>74</sup> One achievement of this body was the inception of the annual summer holiday. Like most of the voluntary schools organisations the Board had initially kept open its schools throughout the summer, mainly so that fees would not be lost. Teachers were awarded a fortnight's holiday, taken in rotation. The first time the teachers' petition was presented the Board was unsympathetic. Daniel Merrick indeed was incensed, and referred to the proposal as an 'inconvenience to the parents, an injury to the children, morally and intellectually, and to the ratepayers pecuniarily'. He was supported by W. Adams, who pointed out that, except for Elbow Lane, the schools were not full, so that 'teachers could not complain of exhaustion from overwork'. He also observed that the Board's arrangements followed the normal practice in Leicester, though he had to admit that the Church schools of St. Martin's, St. John's and Trinity were already in the habit of closing down.<sup>75</sup> The teachers petitioned again two years later. This time, though

there was still some reluctance to close the schools, because of the loss of fee income, the Board acceded to the request.<sup>76</sup>

During the 1880s teachers in the town formed themselves into the Leicester Scholastic Association. In 1885, when their chairman was Robert Locke, membership consisted of 149 certificated teachers. At the annual general meeting in that year the subscription was raised from two shillings to six shillings, to provide legal coverage. Concern was expressed at the difficulties of pressuring children who were half-starved, and a 'penny dinner scheme', later taken up by Labour politicians, was advocated.<sup>77</sup> The association later held a meeting to honour Philip Worley, the assistant inspector, on his promotion to H.M.I., after fifteen years in the Leicester area. Locke stated, at the same meeting, that, together with many other teachers, he hoped to see 'cram' replaced by education that would be 'a refining and benevolent influence'.<sup>78</sup>

By the 1890s there was a Leicester Certificated Teachers' Association, whose petitions on salaries and corporal punishment were received by the Board with sympathy. Like its predecessor, the Association was a true professional body in that it was not merely concerned with the well-being of its own members. For a number of winters it was granted the use of the board schools for the purpose of giving free lantern lectures on Saturday evenings.<sup>79</sup>

Since the teachers' organisations had memberships consisting of teachers at board and voluntary schools they provided a forum for

the discussion of common problems, and helped in the development of a sense of belonging to one profession. They were less concerned about the religious question than their employers, and tended to blur the distinctions between the two types of schools. School log books do not suggest a zealous catechetical type of teaching in Church schools, or an overly Biblical approach in the board schools of Leicester. Some would have agreed with W. Blake Odgers, Q.C., LL.D., the president of the Seventh Triennial Conference of the Unitarians, who in his address said:

'Let the education given in our Board schools be unsectarian, let it be independent of all ecclesiastical control, but, surely, it need not be secular! What harm can there be in our children being taught the Lord's Prayer or the Twenty-Third Psalm? If it is right that the children in our Board schools should study the lives of Socrates, Milton and Washington, and learn from them lessons of self-sacrifice and patriotism and devotion to duty, then, surely it is right and proper that they should study the life of One who was greater than all these'. 80

Others observed the rules of Board and Church in perfunctory fashion. When F. J. Gould inspected religious teaching in the board schools of Leicester in 1901 he was concerned about the general lack of method and purpose in moral instruction.<sup>81</sup>

The erosion of religious teaching had in fact begun with the Revised Code, before the school boards and their schools existed. Payment by results increased the concern for improvement in the 3R's, but at the cost of casting religious exercises to one side. So that most of a teacher's energies were spent on making sure that their pupils were sufficiently well versed in the secular aspects of education to pass the scrutiny of Her Majesty's Insp-

ectors. This residue of payment of results remained after the system that encouraged it had been superseded.

Teachers in Leicester co-operated with their employers in raising the level of teaching examinable subjects in the schools to the point at which maximum grants were available. During the triennium 1885-8 the inspection reports indicated a very high level of achievement. Passes in reading increased from a percentage of 97.3 to 98.4, in writing from 95.8 to 97.4, and in arithmetic from 90.0 to 93.6. The average grant earned in 1887 was £1 1s. 7½d., significantly higher than for England as a whole (18s. 1d.), or any other large town. Nottingham earned £1 0s. 4½d., Liverpool 19s. 7½d., Leeds 19s. 6d., London 19s. 0½d., Birmingham 18s. 8½d., Sheffield 18s. 5½d., Manchester 18s. 4½d., and Bradford 18s. 0½d.<sup>82</sup> By 1893 it was reported that all 51 departments under the Board's administration had been awarded, for the first time, the highest grants attainable.<sup>83</sup> The Board's triennial statement for the period 1891-4 contained an exultant paragraph:

'Drawing is now taught to every boy in the Leicester Board schools, and the result has been most satisfactory. The success of teaching elementary science to boys and domestic economy to girls has been uninterrupted and progressive during the past three years. Every school has gained the highest award in these subjects from the Education Department, and the children have found them interesting and educative as well as instructive instruments of thought. Observation and experiment have replaced the slavish clogging of memory with mere names of terms, of parts of speech and analysis, to the real benefit of the children'.<sup>84</sup>

In statistical terms, as table 12 indicates, the grant was slightly lower per child than in Bradford, slightly higher than in Nottingham, but considerably higher than for England and Wales as a

whole. In a town where a major proportion of the Board's income was contributed by rates (though the actual figure was lower per child than for the country as a whole) great importance was attached to the efficiency of teaching, not merely for its own sake, but for the extent of the grant. More conservative elements still complained bitterly about the ever increasing rates; during

Table 12                      Income and Expenditure of Schools, 1892-3

Board Schools

	<u>Income per pupil</u>			<u>Expenditure per pupil</u>		
	<u>Pence</u>	<u>Rates</u>	<u>Grant</u>	<u>Salaries</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Leicester	4	18 2	1 0 8	1 14 11½	2 7	9½
Nottingham	1 11½	15 2½	1 0 4½	1 16 6½	2 7	4½
Bradford	2 10½	15 3	1 0 10	1 18 6½	2 8	11½
England & Wales	8½	19 9½	18 11½	1 17 0½	2 8	1½

Voluntary Schools

	<u>Income per pupil</u>			<u>Expenditure per pupil</u>		
	<u>Pence</u>	<u>Voluntary contribs.</u>	<u>Grant</u>	<u>Salaries</u>	<u>Total</u>	
Leicester	2 1	5 8½	18 4½	1 3 2	1 14	4½
Nottingham	2 8½	3 10½	18 9½	1 7 5½	1 16	9½
Bradford	2 3½	4 3	18 3½	1 6 3	1 15	9½
England & Wales	2 4½	6 8½	18 1½	1 8 8½	1 17	6½

Source: Committee of Council on Education: Report, 1893-4, 13.  
All figures are based on average attendance.

the 1890s the Tory revival gave them a new lease of life. That it was an important element in elections is indicated in an I.L.P.

candidate's adoption speech. J. Peacock, in advocating the development of higher grade schools, but recognising the rate burden that this would impose, for he had had experience as a member of the Nottingham School Board, suggested a tax reform at the local level, so that, like income tax, it would become 'an accumulative tax on large incomes'.<sup>85</sup>

Efficiency was not always an advantage. When the last vestiges of payment by results were replaced by block grants it brought an outburst from the Board chairman, Alexander Baines, who supported the idea, but not the way in which it operated. 'Under the old system', he said, 'a good school could earn a maximum of about 27s. Under the block grant 22s. is the maximum, and no grant as a rule is paid for scholars over 14 years of age. Under the old system the minimum grant was 15s. Under the block grant the minimum is raised to 21s. What does this mean? It means that the inefficient schools are to be rewarded, and the money is to be taken from the efficient schools'.<sup>86</sup>

To enable efficiency to be achieved by the teachers the Board provided support of various kinds. Though it was never generous in its salary awards, which usually lagged behind the national average for board school teachers, it provided excellent advisory services and training facilities. Henry Major, as inspector, was a frequent visitor to schools. Whenever any new programme was introduced into the schools the Board made training compulsory. When provision was made for the introduction of the new curricula

for elementary science, domestic economy and manual instruction in 1890, it was also decided that a course of lectures for certificated and uncertificated teachers would be established, 'in order that the subjects may be properly and efficiently taught in the Schools'.<sup>87</sup> It was Major who organised the training. Within the Board system he was respected, but outside its aegis he had at least one critic, Miss A. C. Beale, who advocated 'awakening the taste for what was admirable and interesting in history, and literature and science before they [the pupils] could read, and then the faculty of reading would be turned to good account', and stated that she had arranged a method which 'would facilitate the introduction of the Phonic System for large classes'. This, she made it clear, was better than the Robinson Method advocated by Major.<sup>88</sup>

For nine years Major was assisted by Miss J. W. Warren. When she resigned, on her impending marriage, in 1895, it was noted that she had 'effected a great improvement in the Infant Schools, where the Kindergarten has been so well established as to make the education of the infants a pleasure to themselves and to the teachers'.<sup>89</sup> Her efforts had been commended by Her Majesty's Inspectorate, who referred to the 'spirit of hearty co-operation' engendered in teachers, the skill and experience that she brought to the task, and her concern that each school should maintain 'its distinctive characteristics and a healthy individuality'.<sup>90</sup> Miss Warren was succeeded by Miss Annie Augusta Tarbuck, from the Home and Colonial Society's Secondary and Kindergarten Training College.<sup>91</sup> But Miss Tarbuck was a sickly person. Her needlework examining had to be



taken over by Ann Mullens, who had been an itinerant needlework mistress for some years,<sup>92</sup> while the inspectorship had to be relinquished within a year. Her successor was her sister, Clara Emily Regina Tarbuck, who remained with the Board until its demise, when, like the rest of the Board's staff, she became the employee of the Town Council.<sup>93</sup>

The School Board's training facilities developed into a highly organised system, which ensured that no-one achieved any position of importance within the structure of the schools without a thorough knowledge of the methods currently in use. As well as becoming certificated teachers, it was necessary to attend the local classes. In 1885 the Board announced that it would not recognise teachers as certificated assistants unless, in addition to at least a second class certificate they had attended courses and passed examinations in: 'Intermediate' Tonic Sol-fa; Second Grade Freehand; Second Grade Geometry (Males); Needlework (Females).<sup>94</sup> Baines announced, on the Board's behalf, that 'after Jan. 1st 1897, the Board's new Certificates only will be accepted. Teachers who do not possess these Certificates will not in future be eligible for appointment as First Assistants, as Assistants in charge of Needlework, or as Head Teachers'.<sup>95</sup>

Training for ex-pupil teachers and pupil teachers also continued to develop, aided by changing Departmental regulations. There was a quickening of activity in 1885, after the Department had issued instructions that pupil teachers were to teach for only half of their

working time, the remainder to be spent in study at pupil teacher centres, where these existed.<sup>96</sup> A. Watkins, the first full-time instructor of pupil teachers, had already resigned in 1883, to take up an appointment as an assistant inspector. He had been succeeded by Thomas Richard Ryder, B.A.<sup>97</sup> In 1885 the new pupil teacher candidates were withdrawn from the schools half-time, and a former pupil teacher, Miss Edith Kerr, who had been an assistant teacher at Milton Street Mixed School, and who had passed in the First Division of the Teachers' Certificate examinations during the previous year, was appointed to assist Ryder.<sup>98</sup> During the same year head teachers were released from the obligation to instruct the pupil teachers during evening classes, except where specifically appointed to do so.<sup>99</sup> Some thirteen experienced board school teachers were then engaged to provide instruction in subjects taken for Science and Art Department examinations on Saturday mornings. Drawing, singing, mathematics, history, geography, arithmetic and animal physiology were included.<sup>100</sup> Within two years the Education Department was commenting that:

'The Leicester School Board's pupil teachers have done remarkably well under Mr. Ryder.... The proportion of those who have passed their examinations well has rapidly increased, and last year it was as high as 55 per cent., with 33 per cent. doing fairly... The day classes are attended by the pupil teachers and candidates only, the younger ones attending more frequently than the older. All uncertified teachers are required to attend evening and Saturday morning classes'. 101

During the 1890s the development of the centre was affected by the Report of the Cross Commission (1888). The majority report, while recommending improvement in the training of pupil teachers, consid-

ered the system a basically good one. The minority report regarded the system as 'the weakest part of our educational machinery', but recommended that, so long as it continued, the first year or two should be spent not in teaching but in continued study.<sup>102</sup>

The Cross Commission's concern for improvement was reflected in the Code of 1890, when the Education Department refused any longer to recognise as ex-pupil teachers those who had not passed the Queen's Scholarship Examination. The difficulty was that it took nine months for the examination to reach the point of publication. So that a special intermediate class was established, with the teachers concerned receiving a considerably smaller salary during this time.<sup>103</sup>

Following up the Cross Report the Education Department conducted its own inquiry into the pupil teacher system in 1896-8. The ensuing recommendation, that the minimum age should be raised to fifteen,<sup>104</sup> was acted upon, as a result of which the Leicester School Board noted 'that the Day School Code now requires that Pupil Teachers shall be out of School, for instruction, an increased number of times, which reduces their value as teaching instruments'.<sup>105</sup>

The various changes were attended with examination successes. Before the centre was started only nine per cent. of pupil teachers passed well, some sixty per cent. fairly well, and 31 per cent. only fairly.<sup>106</sup> Out of 36 pupil teachers (10 men and 26 Women) presented for the Scholarship Examination in December 1898, 32 were

placed in the First Division. The list of 2,659 examinees was headed by Dennis E Yarnold, who had been both pupil and pupil teacher at King Richard's Road School. Together with W. H. Bentley, who was thirty-ninth, he proceeded to college in Oxford. The Board also noted that: 'The percentage of "Firsts" from 1887 (when the Board first decided that all its apprentices should sit for this examination) to 1897 was 83. During the last five years it has risen to 97'.<sup>107</sup> Three years later the Board learned that, since then, 25 men and 68 women had sat for the Scholarship. Ninety per cent. of them had been placed in the First Division, the remainder being in the Second Division. Of the 25 men 22 had proceeded to college, but only five of the women were in college. Great efforts were being made by this time to raise the apprentices to matriculation level. Full-time instructors were increased to five, then to seven, in order to cope. Among the men ambition levels were significantly raised. Of eight men entering colleges in September 1900, six were London matriculants. Five out of six who sat for Oxford scholarships were in residence at that university.<sup>108</sup>

The pupil teacher centre engendered a certain pride in the Leicester School Board members. None of the political parties represented expressed any opposition to it. As the centre continued to expand, and outgrow its premises, there was unanimity in agreeing to purchase 1971 square yards of land in the Newarke for a new centre.<sup>109</sup>

As the board schools went on from success to success the

Church of England voluntary schools limped alongside them. Among the Liberals there was less animosity toward them. When the Reverend T. W. Owen resigned from the Board to become the rector of Empingham in Rutland, he stated his pleasure 'in recording the friendliness and courtesy which you have shown, as a Board, to the Voluntary Schools of the Borough. No friction, to my knowledge, has ever arisen in this direction'.<sup>110</sup> The acceptance of evolution and higher criticism of the Bible by the more intelligent professional type of Dissenter, as well as the Churchmen by this time, drew them together, not merely because of their common dislike of Secularism, but in revulsion from the fundamentalist attitudes of Evangelicals, whose increasingly defensive posture was tending to produce in them a greater and even less appealing fanaticism.<sup>111</sup> Men like Alexander Baines and Dr. F. W. Bennett, though Non-conformists, had broad Christian sympathies, and undoubtedly felt that there was more in common between themselves and the Churchmen than either felt toward members of the I.L.P. or the Secular Society.<sup>112</sup> That other Liberals would have agreed with this is indicated by the stance taken by the Leicester Chronicle, when F. J. Gould was elected to the Board in 1900. Attacking Gould's ideas on non-religious moral education, its editor declared: 'if the majority of the people are not distinctly religiously-minded, they have an affection for the Bible as the book from which our ideas on "morality" are taken'.<sup>113</sup> Churchmen would not have disagreed.

As table 13 indicates, accommodation in voluntary schools began to decline in the 1890s. During the 1894-7 triennium there was a loss of 396 places. There was an increase of 298 places in the next triennium, mainly because the Church managed to open a new school in the recently formed parish of St. Barnabas, but between 1894 and 1900 there was a net loss of 98 places. One of the reasons may be found in the alterations made in some schools in order to comply with changing Education Department regulations. The demand for cloakroom space meant that teaching space was lost.<sup>114</sup> Some teaching accommodation was lost when, as in the case of St. George's, 'a wood and glass screen in the L-shaped 'Mixed' School-room for the purpose of dividing it into two rooms' was constructed.<sup>115</sup>

Another factor in the decline of Church school accommodation was that there was less need of it, for enrolments were also falling. Table 13 shows a net loss of 360 pupils in six years. To

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Table 13 Accommodation, Enrolment and Attendance in Leicester  
Voluntary Schools, 1894-1900

	<u>1894</u>	<u>1897</u>	<u>1900</u>
Accommodation	13,325	12,929	13,227
Number enrolled	11,870	11,026	10,510
Average attendance	10,120	9,055	9,117
Percentage of attendance	85.4	82.3	86.7

Source: Leicester School Board Minutes.

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some extent this is a reflection of the failure of Church schools to raise enough money to compete adequately with the board schools.

In 1885 the annual report of the National Education Union began appealing for fair treatment for all schools. It pointed out, quoting official returns, that the cost of educating a child in the voluntary schools was £1 15s. 1½d., while in the board schools it was £3 4s. 5½d.<sup>116</sup> When in 1888 a public meeting was held in aid of the National Society, and addressed by the Reverend E. Hobson, principal of St. Katherine's Training College, Tottenham, the chairman, W. U. Heygate, referred to the depression of trade, and its effect upon local subscriptions. Those who maintained voluntary schools, he said, complained 'that it was as much as they could do if they supported their own schools, and they could not afford to do anything for a society which lived in London, and which they know very little about'.<sup>117</sup>

The Church situation in Leicester was worsened by the decision of the Board to abolish fees in its own schools. In order to compete for enrolments most of the Church schools had had to discontinue receiving fees, thus putting themselves into an appalling financial situation. The 1902 returns show that St. Margaret's, St. Mary's and Trinity Schools were the only ones still charging fees. Despite this income the Trinity Schools were in a very serious financial situation. The old schoolrooms in both the boys' and the girls' departments could not be divided up into modern classrooms, while in the infants' department it was observed that: 'Defects previously noticed in the lighting and ventilation of the main room have not yet received any special attention'. Staffing

was also made difficult. In most schools there were still very few qualified teachers, and too high a proportion of pupil teachers. With lower salaries than in the board schools the best teachers tended to drift to the latter. At Chester Street, for instance, the headmistress of the mixed department bemoaned the fact that 'good teachers have been hard to find to succeed the good ones who have left'. When the best teacher on the staff left to become a first assistant in a Birmingham board school it was commented that: 'She is leaving because a less expensive Assistant will answer our purposes this year'.<sup>118</sup>

It would be unfair to say that falling enrolments were entirely related to the difficulties of competing with school boards, significant as these were. Some schools were in areas that were becoming depopulated as the centre of the town was redeveloped. The 1902 returns for the St. Martin's Schools indicated that 'during the last few years a rapidly increasing change has come over the neighbourhood. Municipal improvements in widening streets, etc., have displaced the population and withdrawn children from the neighbourhood so that now the number in attendance is scarcely more than half it was a few years ago'. The population of the parish fell from 1898 in 1891 to 1344 in 1901, so that the Friar Lane building, with accommodation for 556 pupils, had only 260, while the Union Street building, with accommodation for 426, had only 131 children. Plans had already been made for the closure of the latter, so that it could be turned over entirely to the use of the Working Men's College. Generally, it was in the developing suburbs,



where newer, more up-to-date schools had been erected, that there was no significant loss of pupils. Belgrave National School, for instance, which had been built to serve a substantial village, actually served a large suburb that had recently been included within the boundaries of Leicester. With 456 children crammed into accommodation intended for 419 it was overflowing. St. Barnabas, the Church's last effort, had, in a mixed department, intended to accommodate 203, an enrolment of 194 pupils.

The fact was that Church extension as a whole had slowed down. At a time when maximum effort was needed to maintain the schools, the Church was beginning to experience the inroads of agnosticism. The Leicester Secular Society celebrated the opening of its purpose-built premises in 1881.<sup>119</sup> It was nearing the zenith of its development when F. J. Gould became its secretary in 1899. The Society's permanent establishment in 1869 had gained strength from the Church crisis of 1859-71, when the combined impact of Darwin's Origin of Species (1859), the questioning of orthodoxy in Essays and Reviews (1860), Bishop Colenso's doubts about the Pentateuch (1862), Lyell's evidence on the antiquity of homo sapiens (1863), the two humanising accounts of Jesus in Renan's Vie de Jesus (1863) and Seeley's Ecce Homo (1865), the general acceptance of evolution at the British Association meetings in 1870, when Huxley's defence was notably more successful than Bishop Wilberforce's attempt at ridicule, and Darwin's Descent of Man (1871), expressed with greater articulacy and clarity of thought, some of their own

doubts.<sup>120</sup> It was aided further by the scorn of Holyoake, Bradlaugh and Annie Besant, each of whom were frequent visitors to the town. For a time Secularism was eclipsed by the revivalism of the 1860s and 1870s, when Anglicanism in particular made considerable gains in Leicester, but by the 1880s it was the Secular Society that was gaining more ground. An intelligent and observant Churchman asked in 1885: 'Is the Church really making the progress in Leicester that it should be making? Our churches certainly are much better attended now than they were 25 years ago. So far, so good. But from the recent confirmation statistics, it seems to me doubtful whether the Church really is keeping pace with the population'.<sup>121</sup>

The Leicester Archidiaconal Board of Education worked hard to cope with <sup>the</sup> Church school problem. Whenever the managers of a school threatened to give up the struggle to maintain it, the Board's officers intervened. Sometimes the organising visitor was able to make suggestions that resulted in greater efficiency, thus enabling the school to earn larger grants. Financial help was also given to enable alterations and repairs to be done. So that no schools were actually surrendered to the Leicester School Board.<sup>122</sup> Central classes for pupils teachers, similar to the Board's own facilities for training, were also developed at the Alderman Newton's School in 1895.<sup>123</sup>

The question that has to be asked is why the Archidiaconal Board strove so valiantly to maintain a position that in retrospect

may be regarded as hopeless. In some areas Church schools had been taken over by school boards, with religious instruction rights retained by clergymen. Even in Birmingham this had occurred in one instance.<sup>124</sup> A compromise of this kind would have released Anglicans from an enormous financial burden, while preserving their own type of religious instruction. Part of the reason lies in the Archidiaconal Board's organisation, which was responsible for schools in rural areas, where the Church's role in education was still dominant, as well as schools in Leicester and other large towns in the county. This enabled the Board to raise subscriptions from the aristocracy, who were notably absent from urban life by this time. But the main spur to the continued determination of the Anglicans to hold on at all costs was the promise of a turn of political events that would place voluntary schools in a more favourable position. Nationally Liberalism was in decline. By the 1890s it had been split by Irish Home Rule, and the secession of Chamberlain's Unionists. Grass roots support was also beginning to drift away to Labour. The chapels that had so often succoured Liberalism had themselves begun to decline.<sup>125</sup> Conservatives had gained, and were in the ascendent. By 1895 they were strong enough to win a general election. In a speech to the National School Society, Lord Salisbury told the members: 'It is your business to capture the Board schools, to capture them, in the first instance, under the existing law, and then to capture them under a better law which shall place you under no religious disabilities'.<sup>126</sup>

Of the three denominations maintaining schools at the end of the period, it was only the Roman Catholics who really made headway. In 1870 there were two schools, neither of them recognised for grant purposes, supported by the congregations of Holy Cross and St. Patrick's. Holy Cross extended to two departments in separately constructed buildings on opposite sides of New Walk by 1887. Both had been built recently. St. Patrick's was also rebuilt in 1896. The new Sacred Heart Church, on the fringes of the rapidly developing North Evington area, where there were many Irish immigrants, also built a school in 1895.<sup>127</sup> For the first time also, during the 1890s, the denomination had in Father Hawkins a fearlessly outspoken representative on the School Board. Ever ready to take up the cudgels on behalf of his co-religionists, he complained at one point that he had 'received complaints from Catholic parents, whose children attend the King Richard's Road School, that Mr. Keay, a class teacher, when giving lessons upon the Geography of Ireland, had made observations concerning the religious beliefs of Catholics, which are not in accordance with the facts'.<sup>128</sup> The complaint was investigated, and seemed to have no foundation in fact, so that Hawkins had to withdraw it.<sup>129</sup>

Hawkins' complaint perhaps illustrates an attitude of mind among some members of a sensitive element within the community, for whom emancipation was a relatively recent memory. This attitude of mind, together with the rise of the Ultramontane Party within Catholicism, which had resulted in the strengthening of the hierarchy by the pronouncement of Papal Infallibility in

1869, and the Encyclical of 1864 condemning non-Catholic education, the interference of the State in education, and the developing system of 'mixed' (i.e. inter-denominational or non-denominational) schools in various countries, encouraged the Roman Catholics to maintain and continue to develop their own schools, in Leicester, as elsewhere.<sup>130</sup>

As the 1882-1903 period progressed, and Balfour's Conservatives achieved electoral success in 1895, that was to keep them in power for a little over a decade, it was evident that some educational re-organisation was likely. While in large towns and cities the school boards were both dominant and efficient, the same was not true of the country areas, where boards were either weak or non-existent. There the Church still had the majority of schools under its wing. In 1895 there were 14,479 voluntary schools with an average attendance of 2,445,812, compared with 5,260 board schools with an average attendance of 1,879,218.<sup>131</sup> A government sympathetic to the Church could hardly fail to take account of its anguished cries for help as the voluntary schools became more impoverished. By 1900 there was an estimated total deficit of £450,000.<sup>132</sup> Inevitably, therefore, changes were to come, which resulted in the disappearance of the Leicester School Board and others of its kind.

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59. L.S.B. Minutes, 21 July 1890.
60. Leicester Journal, 9 January 1885. Cookery classes had already extended beyond the School of Cookery premises. It was noted that 'in consequence of the number of girls now in attendance at the School of Cookery, it is not possible to instruct them all at the two centres already provided [in board schools].... a cookery classroom could be erected at the Hazel Street School'. The Board agreed to do this.
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73. Ibid., 12.
74. Leicester Journal, 26 February 1875.
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76. Ibid., 11 May 1872.
77. Ibid., 23 January 1885.
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98. Ibid., 20 July and 5 October 1885.
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103. L.S.B. Minutes, 4 April 1892. This policy raised a further difficulty. The lower salaries prevented some pupil teachers proceeding to training college, since they could no longer save up the amount of the fees. The Board decided to award grants of £10 to those going on to a college.
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108. Leicester Chronicle, 24 November 1900; also L.S.B. Minutes, 2 April 1900 and 4 May 1903.
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110. Ibid., 19 December 1894.
111. G. S. R. Kitson Clark, An Expanding Society: Britain 1830-1900 (Cambridge, 1967), 119-120.
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124. A. F. Taylor, op. cit., 135. A local example existed at Oadby, only a 'stone's throw' from the southern boundary of the town, where: 'In February, 1878, the school was transferred to the School Board, its use on Sundays being reserved for the Church of England Sunday School, and several evenings each week for Parish Meetings, etc.' Vide Leicestershire Education Committee: Report on Public Elementary School Accommodation, 11 June 1904.
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Before 1870 developments in Leicester outside the realm of the elementary school and the various agencies of adult education were relatively sparse. The Free Grammar School of Elizabethan foundation, though still existing in name, had effectively disappeared in 1840, on the retirement through ill-health of Richard Davies, the master. Up to 1836 it had been championed by the Church-Tory Borough Council as the bastion of classical education. It had been attacked by the Dissenters in 1802 as an institution that taught only subjects no longer of relevance, but legal opinion, supported subsequently by the Eldon Judgment of 1805,<sup>1</sup> indicated that the wishes of the charity's founders had to be respected.<sup>2</sup> Even without Dissenting support, however, the school might have remained successful, had it been able to retain the confidence of the majority of the Church-Tories. But it suffered disadvantages in this respect also. Aristocrats like the Duke of Rutland, and the Earls of Stamford, Huntingdon and Harborough, sallied forth to attend political and Church banquets and meetings in the town, but retired thereafter to their country seats. So also did the squirearchy. The richer businessmen of the town tended to emulate them by purchasing country residences. The upward mobility of the latter determined that they were the most likely people to be interested in a classical education for their sons, yet they lived at a distance from the town. Leicestershire was surrounded by public schools. Rugby, Uppingham and Oakham were all within twenty miles of the town, while Stamford and Oundle were not much

further away. Rugby admitted 92 boys from Leicestershire between 1800 and 1860.<sup>3</sup> It was not just an accident that the decline of the Free Grammar School coincided with the reform of Rugby under Arnold, and its demise with the opening of the Midland Railway that made the small country towns housing the public schools, with their boarding facilities, much more accessible than hitherto.

The remaining middle-class inhabitants of Leicester were generally less wealthy or less ambitious, or else, like the Radical John Biggs, who ostentatiously built a house in the Stonegate outskirts of the town, they had political ambitions that made it advisable to remain closely identified with Leicester. For them secondary education was conceived in terms of the proprietary schools, which tended to steer a middle course between classical and modern curricula, offering the former to gain academic respectability, and the latter for the sake of the majority of their clients, destined for commerce and industry. Unashamedly they advertised, as did John Highton's middle school, that they catered for the children of 'manufacturers, tradesmen and the higher class of mechanics in Leicester and of the yeomanry and others in the vicinity'.<sup>4</sup> Mr. Gordon, an Edinburgh graduate, who conducted a school in Evington Lane, had a course of instruction that included 'the usual branches of a thorough English education, Greek, Latin, and Mathematics'.<sup>5</sup>

There are no reliable indications of the size of most of the proprietary schools, though one suspects that many of them were

small and transitory. As Zena Crook notes, some 57 schoolmasters advertised in Leicester newspapers during 1836-1860, but only a dozen of them could be regarded as established.<sup>6</sup> Between them the population censuses of 1841 and 1851 listed 26 proprietary schools in Leicestershire which admitted boarders. Seven of them were in Leicester itself. Of these the schools of T. Newbolt (5 in 1841), H. Holloway (3 in 1841; 8 in 1851), J. Mitchell (2 in 1841; 4 in 1851), W. Horry (16 in 1841) and W. J. Drury (16 in 1851) were not conspicuously large, though, of course, the number of boarders gives no indication of the total number of pupils.<sup>7</sup>

The most conspicuous proprietary schools before 1870 were the 'Proprietary School' and the 'Collegiate School', each of which represented, to some extent, the main religious-political divisions in early nineteenth century society. The year 1836 was significant, in that during it the Liberals and Radicals gained control of the Borough Council. They immediately cut off all payments to the Free Grammar School. As a Council nothing more was done, but privately the leading middle-class citizens of the town, concerned by the decline of the grammar school, had already generated the idea of a new proprietary school. Ironically the project, aiming at a reconciliation of opposing forces, was bedevilled from the beginning by undertones of sectarian strife. At an early stage the Church gained control. The Bishop of Lincoln was appointed as Visitor and the Earl of Stamford and Warrington as President. The style chosen for the building was gothic. It was ruled that the headmaster and second master

should be graduates of Oxford or Cambridge, and members of the Church of England. After making their protests the Dissenters withdrew their support, and the school was thereafter an Anglican-style proprietary school known as the 'Leicester and Leicestershire Collegiate School'.<sup>8</sup>

Dissenters were left with their ideal of a non-sectarian institution shattered, in a situation where sectarian feeling was already embittered, hardly an auspicious climate in which to found a school. Yet they did establish a school, using University College School (founded in 1828) in London as their model. When the new 'Proprietary School for the Town and County of Leicester', housed in a gracious building of Graeco-Roman style designed by Joseph Hansom, was opened in 1837, it was significant that Henry Brougham (who was unable to attend) had been invited to perform the task of cutting the tape.<sup>9</sup> Turning their backs upon the classics, the founders of the school concentrated upon English, modern Languages, mathematics, history, geography and natural science. Some Latin was taught, but it was not a central feature of the teaching.<sup>10</sup>

The Proprietary School lasted for only a decade. Some Dissenters withdrew their support at the beginning over the appointment of a Liberal Churchmen, the Reverend Cyrus Edmonds, as headmaster, even though his nomination had been strongly supported by the Baptist minister J. P. Mursell. The result was that the school was not able to pay its way. Edmonds, who was expected to defray deficits from his own earnings, gave up the struggle and

resigned in 1846. A failure to raise £400 by subscription to pay off the deficit in the following year resulted in permanent closure.<sup>11</sup>

The Collegiate School was more successful financially, but it too disappeared in 1866, when the Reverend Abraham Hill, who had been the headmaster for 23 years before resigning to re-enter the ministry, foreclosed on the £4,000 mortgage that he owned.

Both schools were successful educationally. Though more conservative in its curriculum the Collegiate School, headed initially by William Thompson, a young scholar, who went on, before he was thirty years old, to become Master of Trinity College, and Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge University, set a high standard.<sup>12</sup> Like Brinsley, who had taught at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, only 14 miles away, more than two centuries earlier,<sup>13</sup> he used the classics as a means to the understanding of English.<sup>14</sup> The more daring nature of the Proprietary School's curriculum, which followed the lines of the humanist academies of the eighteenth century, in breaking away altogether from the classical core, gave a distinctive place to science, which, with the use of apparatus, was taught imaginatively by James Francis Hollings.<sup>15</sup> It also led to adverse criticism. At one point some of the shareholders complained about the lack of religious teaching, which was entirely absent. So that Edmonds gave a course of lectures on 'The Evidences of the Christian Religion'. A related criticism was that, since the school was not teaching Greek either, it was not fitting



Dissenting boys for a future in the ministry. On the whole, however, it performed well its major task of providing an education in modern subjects for boys destined, in most cases, for leading positions in the commerce and industry of the town.<sup>16</sup>

The failure of the two major proprietary schools, though reflecting in part the religious and political dichotomy of Leicester, cannot be attributed entirely to this, or any other local peculiarity. The same railways that carried off to the public schools the class of pupils who might have attended the defunct grammar school also denuded the proprietary schools. Increasingly there were boys, like David Vaughan (who attended the Collegiate School before going on to Rugby),<sup>17</sup> who used them as preparatory schools only. That the failure was not merely a local feature may be judged from the comment of the Schools Inquiry Commission of 1868 that: 'Commercially they have not succeeded; educationally they have very largely succeeded'.<sup>18</sup>

Another reason for the failure of the major proprietary schools, and the subsequent inability to resurrect the grammar school after the closure of the Collegiate School (which left the town without any major institution offering a secondary education for boys for a whole decade), has been suggested by the comment of Sir Francis Sandford, in a letter to the Leicester School Board, that there was 'an unusually small proportion of non working classes in Leicester'.<sup>19</sup> Unfortunately Sandford did not supply any evidence for his interesting assertion. Census figures, how-

ever, give some supporting evidence. In 1871 7.6% of the labour force (males and females over 20) in Leicester consisted of those who were in Class I (Professional) and Class III (Commercial), where the highest concentrations of middle-class people may be assumed. Nottingham (8.6%) and Derby (9.2%) show higher percentages, while Coventry (6.0%) was lower. The 1891 Census tabulates the occupations of males and females over ten in Urban Sanitary Districts. This time the Professional and Commercial Classes amounted to 4.1% of the total labour force in Leicester. Comparing Leicester with Nottingham alone the latter had 302 more than the former in the Professional and Commercial Classes in 1871, and 1,936 more in 1891. Some justification for Sandford's contention may, therefore, be found.

Yet arguments about size, though not irrelevant, are less convincing than an examination of the nature of the middle-class inhabitants of Leicester. The hosiery industry, for so long in a state of stagnation, with little in the way of innovation over a long period, had not attracted many individuals of ability. Many employers had been satisfied with a rather scanty education at the Alderman Newton's School (before 1884), the British School, or one of the lesser proprietary schools. Not until technical changes revolutionised hosiery and encouraged other industries to develop in Leicester was education at the secondary level regarded as more desirable, and then it was conceived mainly in terms of technical and commercial education. This predilection was resp-

onsible for much of the development that took place before the passing of the Education Act of 1902.

The St. Martin's evening science school owed its beginnings in 1859 to the availability of the Science and Art Department's examination facilities, the genius of Edward Atkins, and the ambitions of a group of artisans. There were already 38 science classes with 1,300 pupils in existence in 1851. The Prince Consort's Industrial Exhibition stimulated the development of others by providing the profit that resulted in the establishment of the Departments of Science and Art (soon to coalesce into one department), and the impetus engendered by Lyon Playfair that resulted in the establishment of a system of regular grants by Parliament. The St. Martin's school, taking advantage of the latter, was one of 70 science schools with 2,543 pupils enumerated in 1861.<sup>20</sup>

Edward Atkins was self-taught. While working as a clerk in a Leicester store, he had begun to teach science classes at the same time as he was studying for the external B.Sc. degree of the University of London.<sup>21</sup> He acquired the degree in 1865, and a science teaching certificate two years later.<sup>22</sup> By 1868 he had some 39 young men under instruction, in mathematics (30), magnetism and electricity (12) and inorganic chemistry (11).<sup>23</sup>

Artisan demand for science teaching was related to significant changes in industrial organisation. The scale of industry was changing, partly as a response to the introduction of limited

liability between 1855 and 1862,<sup>24</sup> which made it possible to attract investment for expansion, and partly because of the invention and increasing use of powered machinery. In Leicester the hosiery and boot and shoe industries had not been among the early users of powered machinery. The wool spinners of the West Riding of Yorkshire and the cotton spinners around Manchester were much earlier. Yet, as has been observed, hosiery at mid-century was in process of rapid change, and some processes in boot and shoe manufacture had become amenable to the use of powered machinery, while engineering was beginning to develop beyond the small workshop stage. The increasing scale of operations made necessary the break-down of the work into a series of stages, in each of which there was a team of workers supervised by a foreman. The latter, like the proprietor or manager of the works, needed to be experienced and flexible, combining practice with some understanding of theory. Yet few of them actually knew any theory. As late as 1868 a Leeds ironmaster was able to state, before the Taunton Commission, that he knew of no ironworks manager who understood the principles of elementary chemistry.<sup>25</sup> The foremen, similarly, though they might be conversant with the 3R's, and had had plenty of practical experience on the job, knew nothing of the scientific principles on which the processes of their work were based.<sup>26</sup>

After 1870 the continuing growth of science classes was stimulated, firstly by an increasing supply of pupils from the elementary schools, and secondly by the effects of the Royal Commiss-

ions on Technical Instruction, under the chairmanship of the Duke of Devonshire (1871-5) and Sir Bernhard Samuelson (1881-4), and thirdly by the re-organisation of science schools as a branch of general education by T. H. Huxley in 1872. By 1874 there were five well-established evening science schools and two others at the beginning stage in Leicester. The early ascendancy of the Church evident in table 14, attributable to the lead given by Atkins, continued until near the end of the 1870s, by which time the classes at the Town Museum had outstripped even St. Martin's, and a new star had appeared in the firmament in the shape of the Wyggeston Boys' School,<sup>27</sup> to which Edward Atkins, ordained in 1877, had been transferred.<sup>28</sup>

Table 14

Evening Science Schools in Leicester 1873-4

	No. of persons under instruction		No. of prizes and medals obtained	
	1873	1874	1873	1874
<u>Church</u>				
St. John's	-	17	-	3
St. Martin's	160	140	26	31
St. Matthew's	11	18	-	-
Trinity	48	64	3	5
St. George's	-	20	-	-
<u>Others</u>				
Syston St. Board School	-	50	-	-
Town Museum	40	33	3	12
	259	342	32	51

Source: 22nd Report of the Science and Art Department (1875), 31, 66.

Rapid as the growth of science schools was, it was not as rapid as it might have been. There were several factors that, indeed, had the effect of preventing a much more widespread dissemination of scientific knowledge. There was, of course, the usual parsimony of the ~~the~~ 'Economist' Liberals and Conservatives in Leicester, who not only prevented the development of a higher grade school in the 1870s, but failed also to give any encouragement to the evening schools. Another factor was the lack of qualified science teachers. For instance, after S. Padmore qualified as a science teacher in 1867 an existing evening school at St. Margaret's was converted into a science school, but when Padmore left the town in 1871 to work in Manchester, no replacement could be found, so that the school collapsed.<sup>29</sup> There was also the attitude to science teaching among the middle-classes, some of whom tended to feel that the workshops and factories were already providing apprentices with as much practical learning as was needed. So that theory only was provided. It was even possible to pass the London matriculation examination in chemistry without having been inside a laboratory.<sup>30</sup> The result was that many workers of a practical disposition were alienated from the schools. The Working Men's Club and Institute Union conference in Birmingham during May 1868 on 'Technical Education' was clear in its denunciation of science courses too biased in favour of theory.<sup>31</sup>

Alongside the evening science schools, though separately organised, developed the art schools. The teaching of art actually

preceded science instruction in many areas, but the two were linked in the 1850s by the inception of the Science and Art Department. They were also linked in popular thinking, which tended to regard art in utilitarian terms, not merely as a beautifier, but as a means of improving design. The urgency of the latter increased perceptibly after the Paris Exhibition of 1867, when the competition of Germany in particular had been seen to be serious, and to a great extent attributable to poor design.<sup>32</sup>

There had been schools of design in England earlier than 1867. The energies of William Dyce, who became Director of the newly founded School of Design in London in 1838, resulted in the establishment of a system of grants in 1840 that produced 21 provincial schools before 1852, including the ones in Birmingham (1843), Nottingham (1844) and Coventry (1844). In each case the initiative came from local sponsoring groups petitioning the government for grant facilities, to which they added their own contributions.<sup>33</sup> In Leicester the state of the hosiery industry, and the lack of other industries before mid-century determined that there would be no similar school at that time.

The impetus for the ultimate founding of the Leicester School of Art came mainly from the personal sense of mission of T. G. Buckmaster. Buckmaster, a distinguished chemist and physicist, with interests in art, was appointed organising master at the Department of Science and Art in 1859. He spent much of his time travelling throughout the country, encouraging the formation of

schools and classes in both sciences and arts.<sup>34</sup> On 14 October 1869 he addressed a public meeting in Leicester Town Hall on the possibility and the advantages of forming a School of Art. The meeting was attended also by E. S. Ellis, chairman of the Midland Railway, and W. H. Walker of the boot and shoe industry. Both were prominent Liberals. Walker was later to serve as vice-chairman of the School Board. Ellis was a member of an energetic family, noted for its interest in philanthropy, and was himself interested in technical education.<sup>35</sup>

The School of Art opened in 1870 in a disused warehouse in Pocklington's Walk, close to the centre of the town. Its headmaster, Wilmot Pilsbury, noted, at the end of the first year of operation, that it was one of 113 art schools in the country with a total of 20,290 pupils. Already the Leicester School had 269 pupils, much higher than the average of 179 per school, and ranked eighteenth in size.<sup>36</sup> Later in the decade, during the depression of 1875 onwards, numbers fluctuated only slightly. There were 304 in 1875-6, 301 in 1876-7, 317 in 1877-8, 292 in 1878-9, 296 in 1879-80 and 292 in 1880-1.<sup>37</sup> By 1876 the warehouse had been replaced by an extension on the south side of the Museum. The Reverend A. Mackennal, president of the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society, in his inaugural lecture on 2 October 1876, noted that the Museum was now used for both art and science classes, and asked the question: 'Is it a vain dream which some of us are cherishing, that long before another forty years are over, the



Museum shall be flanked by a School of Art on one side, and a School of Science on the other?<sup>38</sup> Since the two were in fact combined ultimately, though in another place, the question was a self-fulfilling prophecy rather than a mere piece of rhetoric.

Mackennal's question also had another significance. Expressed another way, it might have asked a pertinent question about the relationship between the kind of art taught in the school and the industries of the town. For although the intentions of the founders had been to help industry, the inclination of the pupils was to move as far as possible from the industrial scene. In 1881 there were only two students of architecture, but that was two more than there had been the year before. The Life class, on the other hand, was so overflowing that it spilled over into the Museum lecture room.<sup>39</sup> That this alienated would-be subscribers is indicated by the fact that A. J. Mundella, who delighted in using such occasions for the making of political statements, was asked to attend the prize-giving in 1882. In his speech he contrasted the government's spending on art schools, which had increased steadily from £12,000 in 1862 to £70,000 in 1881, with the pathetic £85 deficit that local subscribers had allowed the Leicester School of Art to accumulate.<sup>40</sup>

Had the School of Art continued to ignore the industrial scene, it is unlikely that it would have survived, especially as its greatest benefactor, E. S. Ellis, had died in 1880.<sup>41</sup> It was saved by a conscious and well-advertised change of direction. Pilsbury resign-

ed in 1881, 'to devote the whole of his time to his profession', and was replaced by Joseph Harrison, a designer, who had been second master at the Nottingham School of Art.<sup>42</sup> It was soon announced, as part of an appeal campaign, that the Leicester School of Art was 'conferring immense benefits upon the artizan and other classes, by developing a taste for Art Studies, and encouraging a higher degree of culture in the application of Design to decorative and other artistic purposes'.<sup>43</sup> During 1882 two out of six 'Owen Jones' Prizes for Design were awarded to Leicester pupils, while one silver medal, out of seven awards to the school, was for architectural design.<sup>44</sup> A few years later one student, Agnes E. Farnham, received four prizes for Irish lace designs. A building construction class, which, more than anything else, helped to blur the distinction between technical and art studies, was also starting. Of the eleven pupils in the first group six were advanced students, five of whom gained Queen's Prizes for first-class passes.<sup>45</sup>

While the School of Art was struggling to develop there were important developments in secondary education, which were ultimately to affect the future of technical and art education in the town. People assembled to witness the formal opening of the King Richard's Road Board School on 16 March 1874 were also treated to a 'preview' of some proposed secondary schools by E. S. Ellis, who stated:

'Two eligible sites for schools were to be set apart in the town; one of them was the site between Peacock Lane and Town Hall Lane.... Upon that site were to be erected schools for the education of 300 to 400 boys. Plans had been got out, and they were

about to proceed to obtain contracts for these buildings.... A site for a girls' school would also be provided. A sum of £15,000 was voted by the trustees to erect these schools'.

Speaking on behalf of the Wyggeston Charity, Ellis went on to advocate the speedy erection of Huxley's 'ladder from the gutter', anticipating that many pupils would pass from the new board schools to the proposed secondary schools.<sup>46</sup>

Ellis's speech was representative of the opinions of businessmen and politicians. There was a recognition of the needs of the lower middle-class and the artisans, who could not afford to send their children to the public schools, and who were beginning to demand a more advanced form of education for their children.

The old Wyggeston Charity, founded in the early sixteenth century, and endowed with land, some of which was in the coal-bearing areas to the west of Leicester, was intended to provide for the establishment and maintenance of a hospital. When a new board of trustees was appointed by the Court of Chancery in 1857 William Biggs and E. S. Ellis had been included among the thirteen appointments. The Liberals set about the task of revising the charity, so that there would be provision for schools for 200 boys and 100 girls, as well as the hospital. It was agreed that, though there would be readings from the Church of England prayer book, no religious tests would be applied, and the children of Dissenters could be excused from this exercise. All children living in the borough, who were over the age of seven and could read already, were to be eligible for selection, but the fees of ten shillings (boys) and

five shillings (girls) per quarter would obviously exclude the children of parents below the artisan level. For boys the studies were to be inclusive of English, French, German, mathematics, ancient and modern history, geography, writing, book-keeping and accounts; for girls there was to be English grammar, composition and literature, French, German, history, geography, music, plain and ornamental needlework and housewifery.<sup>47</sup>

The Wyggeston plans of 1857 were not realised. The building of the schools, though approved by the Court of Chancery, was dependant upon the removal of the hospital to another site. This did not occur until 1862, when William Biggs, J. S. Winstanley and T. Nunneley, none of whom had attended trustees' meetings for more than two years, were removed from the board, and replaced by Churchmen.<sup>48</sup> The Churchmen, by now forming a majority, and strengthened by the appointment of David Vaughan as Master of the hospital, probably did not wish at this stage to compete with the Collegiate School. The Proprietary School had already disappeared, and it is unlikely that Vaughan would have wished to take any action that would endanger the existence of the Collegiate School.

By 1869 the situation had changed again. The Collegiate School had disappeared anyway, to be replaced by a private girls' school of the same name in its former premises. The Endowed Schools Act had authorised the appointment of Commissioners to re-apply obsolete charities for the purpose of middle-class educ-

ation.<sup>49</sup> The Education Act of 1870 was about to make school boards possible, and so obviate the need for charities to be applied to the elementary education of working-class children. The first made it more necessary to establish secondary schools. The second provided the machinery to make it possible. The third was to provide for the upward mobility of a small but growing contingent of working-class children.

On 24 March 1873 the Wyggeston Charity was divided into two distinct branches, with a separate body of governors to develop the schools. There were to be eighteen members of the latter, arranged so as to represent the political character of Leicester. They consisted of the Mayor, the Master of the Wyggeston Hospital, and the chairman of the School Board ex officio, six members elected by the Corporation, two by the School Board, and six by the Trustees, the elected members to serve for five year terms.<sup>50</sup> Great care was taken to ensure that the Liberals would have a majority, so that there would no longer be any danger of the school becoming an Anglican institution. At the same time, the Church and Conservative representation was strong enough to withstand the kinds of pressures that produced the exciting but less practicable curriculum of the defunct Proprietary School.

The beginnings of the Wyggeston Boys' School in 1877 illustrate the political and social pressures represented within the governing body. The subjects to be taught in the school were decided upon before the appointment of a headmaster. Stress was laid upon the

acquisition of a 'good English education', with particular care for 'the formation of the handwriting'. Modern languages and science were stated to be of special importance.<sup>51</sup> But Latin was not forgotten, and Greek was available for an additional fee of £3 per annum.<sup>52</sup> When the Reverend James Went was appointed as headmaster, he was, significantly, a Liberal Churchman, and, although the divinity prizeman at Trinity College, Dublin, in 1865, had had experience within the industrial environment of the West Riding of Yorkshire, as second master at Bradford Grammar School, and in the East Midlands, as classics master at Nottingham High School.<sup>53</sup> His sympathy with the needs of local industry caused Went in turn to appoint Edward Atkins, who looked forward to preparing young men for London matriculation, as science master.<sup>54</sup>

Some substance was given to Huxley's ladder concept by the provision of ten places for exhibitioners from the board schools, though, of course, it resembled Turner's 'sponsored' mobility in an extreme form, in that small numbers of working-class boys were to be thoroughly indoctrinated with middle-class values. The first list, extended to eleven because there was a tie for the tenth place, allocated four places to boys from St. Martin's (including Edward James Atkins, the son of the Wyggeston science master), and one each to boys from St. Margaret's, St. Luke's and Trinity Church schools. Four places went to boys from board schools, one from each of King Richard's Road, Belgrave Road, Elbow Lane and Syston Street.<sup>55</sup> Nevertheless it was a beginning, and was to en-

able some working-class boys to become university graduates during the next two decades.

The Education Act of 1902 was the end product of a revolt against the incursion of politics into education. As has been noted in preceding chapters, the School Board, since it was a body directly elected by the ratepayers, was the arena in which many political battles were fought. Though tempered by the necessity to sink differences in order to achieve the main purposes of the Board (i.e. the provision of elementary education for working-class children who would otherwise be denied it), the very fact of election brought reminders of a duty to the electorate. Candidates sought office on political platforms, and viewed education as a means to various political and social ends. Gould used it as a debating chamber in which to advance the cause of the Leicester Secular Society and his own views on moral education. The I.L.P. members were accused of wishing to use education as a means to the creation of the form of society that they favoured. The Licensed Victuallers served the financial interests of their own industry by opposing temperance teaching. Most board members felt the need to impress the segment of the electorate that elected them. The revolt against the school boards was able to gain positive strength from the development of schools like the Wyggeston Boys', where the governors, though composed of the same class as most members of the School Board, and with some of the same personnel, conducted the business much more amicably than when dealing with the administration of elementary schools. The different posture was, of course, encouraged by

the public school tradition, for Wyggeston was seen as a quasi-public school, though without boarders. At least one member, Vaughan, had been at Rugby, and had experienced the last year of Arnold's headmastership. Edward Thring, appointed in 1853, was still at Uppingham, impressing pupils with his ideal of duty before all things else. So that, in looking for a headmaster, the tendency was to look for a strong personality, a factor that would necessarily place limitations upon their own power. They were anxious not to allow sectarian strife or political polarity to affect the success of the school.

The headmaster, therefore, was given considerable power. Though he was suitably polite, and stressed his position as the servant of the governors, there was more than a hint of a likeness to the senior civil servant bending the wishes of his political masters to suit his own administrative convenience. A clear indication of this is illustrated by a follow-up to an inspection report. In 1868 Inspector D. R. Fearon had drawn attention, in the preparation of material for the Schools Inquiry Commission, to the existence of five methods of inspection in current use in secondary schools. They were: informal inspection by a neighbouring scholar invited for the purpose; inspection by the head of another school; inspection by the College of Preceptors; inspection by Oxford and Cambridge tutors; and examinational inspection by the Cambridge University Syndicate. All had points against them. The fourth method, for instance, was open to the objection that the Oxford and Cam-



bridge tutors did not know the boys, and were expected to report on examinations they had not witnessed. Moreover, the visitors tended to offer only muted adverse criticism, lest there be no invitation to return in subsequent years. The most efficient method was the fifth, inspection by the Cambridge University Syndicate, though its charge of £10 for a two day inspection was regarded as exorbitant, and Fearon noted that only one school in his Eastern Region was using it. The method involved a two day visit by two external examiners, who saw every teacher in the classroom, and inspected the pupils by oral and written work.<sup>56</sup> A well-known schoolmaster like Edward Thring, whose school was popular, and recognised as a model for others, could afford to ignore outside inspection altogether, as a quasi-governmental threat to the independence of Uppingham School,<sup>57</sup> but Went, as the headmaster of a new school anxious to prove itself within the locality of Leicester, needed the support of reputable authorities outside the town itself. So after a brief period of inviting other headmasters to inspect the school, he elected to use the Cambridge University Syndicate facilities, which were beginning to become more popular. During the course of one of these inspections it was noted that book-keeping was one of the subjects taught. The examiners stated in their report that 'we think it doubtful whether the time now given to this might not be more usefully devoted to the ordinary mathematical subjects'. The governors very pointedly had it recorded in the minutes that, while they agreed with other comments in the report, they did not agree with the stricture on book-keeping.

Nevertheless the headmaster took the Syndicate's advice, and arranged for more time to be spent on mathematics in place of book-keeping.<sup>59</sup>

On the question of religious teaching also it was Went who insisted that instruction should take place at the beginning of each morning session, to make allowances for boys whose parents wished them to be exempt. The instruction itself was to consist of readings from the Bible, and the use of prayers from a book compiled by Went himself. Allowance was to be made for 'explanations and instruction in the fundamental principles of the Christian religion', but with the avoidance of 'all questions involving sectarian differences'.<sup>60</sup> The governors accepted Went's proposals with unanimity, perhaps recognising that he was reflecting the situation at his previous school in Bradford. That Went's adoption of this form of religious instruction was not especially daring by this time is obvious, for in the following year, when the Wyggeston Girls' School was about to open, the headmistress-designate, Miss Ellen Leicester, proposed to use the Cambridge syllabus, as she had done at Keighley Grammar School. Writing from Keighley, she stated her intention of using Whateley's Christian Evidences and Paley's Horae Paulinae in the upper forms. Describing morning assembly, she wrote: 'We open school with prayer, the pupils repeating after me a short simple prayer I drew up for their special use as I found that Church prayers were strongly objected to by the majority of parents here. Then follows the Lord's Prayer, and afterwards we sing a hymn'. This too the governors accepted without demur.<sup>61</sup> Yet it has to be realised that Miss Leicester had the advantage of following Went, who

could not easily anticipate his own relationship with the governors, or the extent to which leading Anglicans and Dissenters in Leicester were beginning to sink some of their differences in compromise.

The governors also agreed to allow Went the entire responsibility for the employment of staff and school organisation. It is likely that he was as conscious of the failure of the major proprietary schools as the governors. His organisation of the school suggests that he was concerned to serve various segments of the community contributing pupils, so that his own predilection for university preparation was to some extent sacrificed. In his first annual report he stated: 'I am of opinion that in schools of this kind it is often forgotten that a considerable number of boys will leave school at a comparatively early age and that it is consequently undesirable to shape the education of every boy on the assumption that he will remain at school until 18 or 19 and will then go to one of the Universities'. He proposed to develop a 'carefully watched system of bifurcation'.<sup>62</sup> Already he had established, under the supervision of Atkins, evening classes for the purpose of preparing pupils for Science and Art Department examinations.<sup>63</sup> By 1880 his bifurcation had been achieved. The Charity Commissioners had agreed to permit boys to remain at the school up to the age of 19, instead of 17 as originally allowed. This encouraged study up to university entrance level. At the same time a separate department developed for the study of technical and commercial subjects.<sup>64</sup>

It is likely that Went's bifurcation was also a response to the financial situation. Earnings from the successes at Science and Art Department examinations were needed to subsidize the rest of the school's operations, which were entirely dependent upon fee income. Fees of between £4 and £8, together with an entrance fee of £1, were high enough to keep out most children from working-class families, but too low to account for all the recurrent expenses of a school with just over three hundred pupils.<sup>65</sup> Little wonder that the headmaster expressed interest in the development of technical education.

Went's interest in technical education was a response to the financial situation, but it was not only that. It was also a reflection of changing attitudes throughout the country. When Mundella became Vice-President of Committee of the Privy Council on Education he was already convinced that the public schools were providing a kind of education that was not adequate to the needs. The theory that a classical education made the recipients mentally agile enough to cope with all the problems of life, though still accepted by many, was already eschewed by the M.P. for Sheffield, and not merely because of any predisposition. Mundella's associate in the House of Commons during the 1870s, Thomas Hughes, had tried to found a colony in Tennessee, using the energies and mental equipment of ex-public schoolboys, but had met with little success.<sup>66</sup> Meanwhile the Departmental Committee on Intermediate and Higher Education in Wales, under the chairmanship of Lord Aberdare, reported that the intermediate schools were in a much healthier state than the endowed

grammar schools, and proposed that the former should be expanded and entrusted with education within a broader framework, as the Welsh people appeared to want.<sup>67</sup> More influential than anything else, however, was the manuscript of H. M. Felkin's Technical Education in a Saxon Town, which came into Mundella's hands during 1881. Felkin, a business associate from Nottingham (where Mundella himself was in business), had studied the relationship between the chamber of commerce and technical education in Chemnitz, and shown how it had enabled the hosiery industry there to compete very successfully with its British counterpart. When, through the intercession of Philip Magnus, the head of the new City and Guilds Institute, Felkin's report was published, its effect was immediate and far reaching. Within two months the Samuelson Commission had been appointed.<sup>68</sup>

The Samuelson Commission met from 1881 to 1884, when it reported. Its recommendations were, inter alia:

- '(a) that steps be taken to accelerate the application of ancient endowments, under amended schemes, to secondary and technical instruction.
- (b) that provision be made by the Charity Commissioners for the establishment, in suitable localities, of schools or departments of schools, in which the study of natural science, drawing, mathematics and modern languages shall take the place of Latin and Greek.
- (c) that local authorities be empowered, if they think fit, to establish, maintain, and contribute to the establishment and maintenance of secondary and technical (including agricultural) schools and colleges'.<sup>69</sup>

Before the end of the decade a series of legislative actions were to give effect to its main recommendations. Between them the Local Government Act (1888), the Technical Instruction Act (1889) and the Act of 1890 making the 'Whiskey Money' grants possible were to provide the administrative framework and the financial basis for a national system of technical education.

New developments in Leicester did not wait for legislation, nor even for the final report of the Samuelson Commission. Felkin's book and its attendant publicity alarmed the hosiers. Publicity given to evidence taken by the Commission also acted as a spur. An alliance quickly developed between W. T. Rowlett, a Liberal Non-conformist hosier who was also a member of the Town Council, and James Went. Both men were appointed as a deputation by the Leicester Chamber of Commerce, which had been founded in 1867. The deputation visited technical schools in Yorkshire, as a result of which it was reported by Rowlett on 21 December 1881 that:

'Your deputation consider themselves exceptionally fortunate in having secured the valuable co-operation of the Rev. J. Went.... and are highly gratified to find that in the schools under his charge technical education has already made considerable progress. The day and evening classes in engineering, building, and mechanical drawing, have been very successful, and the majority of candidates from them, some of them artisans, have passed the examinations of the Science and Art Department.... Your deputation venture to recommend that the directors of the Wyggeston Schools should be waited upon, and invited to work with the Chamber of Commerce in the establishment of technical schools for the large industries of the town'. 70

By the following year Went, with his eye on the Free Grammar School Charity, which still existed, and the Alderman Newton's Charity, which was in process of revision, envisaged a 'Judicious

amalgamation of existing educational endowments' to produce one or more technical schools 'corresponding to the higher German technical institutions'. These, he reasoned, would supply a steady stream of students 'to fill the classes in some higher college....which I hope ultimately may be established in Leicester'.<sup>71</sup>

The alliance of Rowlett and Went soon bore fruit, so that, although the former was disappointed in not being able to amalgamate the Alderman Newton's Charity with the Wyggeston and Free Grammar School Charities, which were already combined in the person of Went himself, who was officially appointed headmaster of the latter so that Free Grammar School exhibitioners could attend classes at the Wyggeston School, an appeal was launched by the Chamber of Commerce. The appeal, made on behalf of a joint scheme with the Wyggeston School governors, was for the purpose of providing a new block of buildings, consisting of laboratories, lecture rooms and machine rooms, to be attached to the existing school building. Clearly addressed to the businessmen of Leicester, the appeal noted that:

'In Germany, and indeed on the Continent generally, systematic instruction in the technology of the various industries has for some time been receiving the most careful attention. The large towns of the north of England are also taking the question up with great energy. The importance of this instruction, as tending to obtain both superior workmanship, and also economy of time and labour, must be obvious to everyone. It is becoming recognized too that, as the result of superior artistic and technical skill, Foreign Manufactures are actually taking from us, in some cases entirely, many important branches of trade. The glove trade, for instance, which thirty years since, was a flourishing industry in Leicester and Nottingham, is now, with few exceptions, carried on exclusively in Saxony'.

Accordingly stress was put upon the intention to have (as at the

Yorkshire College of Science in Leeds and the Bradford Technical School) 'classes for the instruction of the sons of manufacturers and others who may be able to attend in the day time', most of whom would in fact already be senior pupils at the Wyggeston School, as well as artisans' classes in the evenings.<sup>72</sup>

When, in 1884, the results of the appeal appeared in the form of the 'Ellis Wing'\* the total of £4,300 included only £2,100 from public subscriptions. The Town Council, as a body, was notably absent from the list of substantial contributors; there was £1,000 from the Wyggeston Charity's own resources, £500 from the Science and Art Department, and £700 from the City and Guilds Institute of London. The Ellis family contributed £500 to supply furniture.<sup>73</sup> The opening of the Wing by Professor Sir Henry Roscoe was certainly a great occasion in Leicester, but questions have to be asked as to why the plans were not more ambitious in the first place, and why the manufacturers were not particularly interested in contributing to it.

In spite of Felkin's report and Roscoe's stress at the opening on the improvement of the operatives' culture and taste as a factor likely to result in the setting rather than the following of fashions in the textile industries,<sup>74</sup> there were many hosiers who did not see things this way. Many were struggling to survive, and could not afford to contribute. As Millwood indicates, of 105

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\* Named after Edward Shipley Ellis, who had died in 1880.



firms in existence in 1872 only 17 are known to have remained in business until 1890. Many employers pinned their hopes on raising the proportion of female labour in order to reduce the wage bill. The percentage of women employed in hosiery in Leicester increased from 52.4% in 1861 to 57.3% in 1881. The already high proportion of women was in itself a deterrent to technical education.<sup>75</sup> With a few exceptions, it was not the employers who encouraged technical education. After the opening of the Ellis Wing it was David Vaughan who addressed a meeting of hosiery and boot and shoe operatives, encouraging them to attend the new evening classes for technical instruction.<sup>76</sup>

Another possible answer may be found in the rapid growth of the Wyggeston School. While Went and his governors had planned originally for a bifurcated school with a total of 300 boys, by the time the Ellis Wing was opened numbers had risen to 507, with a staff of eighteen masters. During 1884 six boys had passed London matriculation, while in the preceding year some 24 pupils passed the Cambridge Local Examination. Went's preference was to avoid 'cramming' for external examinations, which he did not consider to be a true education, but the increasing size of the school, which had disturbed him, had caused him to share the feelings of those who pressed for a standardised examination system under government supervision.<sup>77</sup> He gave as much attention to the Ellis Wing as he could, but it was no longer the priority that it was originally, except in terms of the income that accrued from Science and Art

### Department examination successes.

There was also a demand that the Ellis Wing was not designed to meet. Since it functioned as a technical school only during the evenings, and provided additional accommodation for the commercial side of the school's functions during the day, there was no room for working-class boys completing a full elementary education unless they could pay the fees or gain one of the few exhibitions. Yet demand at this level was increasing rapidly. Despite the problems of the hosiery industry, the worker himself was enjoying unprecedented prosperity. Throughout the country as a whole relatively lowly paid agricultural workers had been decreasing in numbers, mainly after the 'Golden Age' of agriculture came to an abrupt end in 1875. Engineers, a relatively highly paid group of workers, were on the increase during the same period. From 504,968 in 1851 they had increased to 1,435,835 by 1901.<sup>78</sup> This movement was reflected in Leicester. So also were mechanised processes in boot and shoe manufacture, which released the half-timer from his bondage to two masters, as the need for child labour disappeared. Leicester was even more fortunate in hosiery, despite gloomy predictions and the failure of many small businesses, for, while there were serious fluctuations in the export of cotton hosiery, woollen hosiery, the main production of the town, experienced great prosperity in the 1880s.<sup>79</sup> Both Porter<sup>80</sup> and Wood<sup>81</sup> have shown that there was a general tendency for wages to rise and for prices to fall rapidly after 1880. While consumption of goods increased

considerably, so also did savings deposits in friendly societies, and in post offices and savings banks.<sup>82</sup>

It is significant that, in spite of the lack of a higher grade school in Leicester, the numbers of male pupil teachers declined rather than increased. There were enough opportunities in industry and commerce to absorb most of the boys leaving school, but there was still the lack of education in science, which many of them needed. The re-organisation of the Alderman Newton's School, long overdue, was destined to serve this need. This school was beginning to experience severe competition from the board schools, and the income from the Charity was not sufficient to ensure the continued improvement necessary if that competition was to be resisted. The opposition from influential old boys and the trustees that had prevented the scheme proposed by the Endowed Schools Commissioners from being carried out, began to weaken, but it was not only changed circumstances that caused the weakening. Opposition had been based upon the premise that the changes envisaged would alienate the school from its original purpose. They were not unaware that the reform of the public schools, though it had breathed new life into those institutions, had done so at the expense of the poor scholars, who were gradually ousted. Robert Read, junior, who, like his father, had been a pupil at the Alderman Newton's School, stated, as part of his election campaign as an Independent candidate in the Town Council elections of 1879, that he was 'in favour of a searching inquiry into the management of our Charities and Schools, in order

that they may not be alienated from the use of the poor and their children, for whom they were designed by their benevolent founders'.<sup>83</sup> Any new scheme had to take into account this very strong feeling in the town.

Whereas it had been possible for the trustees to rebuff the Leicester School Board's approaches in 1871, it was impossible to do it in the early 1880s. Not only was the Board's prestige high under Joseph Wood's chairmanship, but there was also the possibility that, if a scheme did not meet with the Board's approval, a rival higher grade school might be set up. Bradford, encouraged by Mundella and a suggestion by Her Majesty's Inspector for the area, had established the Belle Vue Higher Grade Schools in 1879.<sup>84</sup> In 1880 the People's College in Nottingham had been handed to the school board there to serve as a higher grade school.<sup>85</sup> Both these and others that developed elsewhere were encouraged by the Education Department, providing 'the contribution of the ratepayers for the education of the well-to-do children may be less than for the children of the poor'.<sup>86</sup>

Yet Wood preferred the threat of a higher grade school to the reality. On 23 October 1882 he moved, at a School Board meeting, an approach to the Charity Commissioners to limit the Alderman Newton's School to boys beyond the Standard 3 level. While agreeing with the trustees, who were also discussing the matter,<sup>87</sup> that the school would be mainly for lower middle-class pupils, he wished to ensure that it would be also 'a place to which exceptionally

clever and industrious children from the ordinary elementary schools should be sent'. The sting was in the tail of the motion, which intimated that, if the Board's demands were not met, it would have no option but 'to tackle the question of higher grade schools'.<sup>88</sup>

Why did the Board prefer the re-organisation of the Alderman Newton's Charity to the development of their own higher grade school? The local situation demanded some caution on the part of the Board. There had just been some friction with the Town Council about rate demands,<sup>89</sup> and, though the Board's right to demand a higher rate to cover such costs could not have been refused, the 'Economists' had gained a psychological advantage. Some caution was also demanded by the national situation. In 1880 the House of Lords had discussed the desirability of placing some restriction on higher grade schools, to prevent them from leaving the field of elementary education and becoming secondary schools. The Sheffield School Board had also been warned about the likelihood of future restrictions on higher grade schools.<sup>90</sup> There was also the possibility that private schools would offer considerable resistance to incursions by the School Board into the secondary field. They had done so in Bradford.<sup>91</sup> Reminiscing at a Wyggeston Debating Society dinner in 1891, F. Hewitt stated that: 'Before this school [Wyggeston] was started the masters of private schools were occasionally at loggerheads with one another, but no sooner was this one mooted than they suddenly found out what jolly good fellows they were, and began to say what they could

against the new public school'.<sup>92</sup>

There were a number of obstacles to the re-organisation of the Alderman Newton's School. One of them was the person of H. M. M. Hanford, the headmaster. Had he been incompetent there would have been no problem. In 1882 he was 56 years old, and in good health. Trained at St. Mark's College, Chelsea, he had commenced at the school in 1856. A good Churchman, he had been choirmaster at St. Mark's Church for many years.<sup>93</sup> Highly respected as a citizen, and as a teacher, he could not simply be dismissed. Yet he was at best a good elementary school teacher, with no scientific background, and too old to be expected to change. So, in 1884, he was retired on an annuity of £90.<sup>94</sup>

Hanford's pension highlighted the other main problem, for the income then was insufficient to maintain the school, which remained closed for four years. When it did re-open, the School Board's influence was evident, though not as strong as it had wished it to be, for a public meeting, intended to provide evidence of a demand for a non-denominational school, ended disastrously for the Liberals. Packed with former pupils of the schools, the meeting decided in favour of retaining the Anglican character of the institution.<sup>95</sup> The Charity Commissioners achieved a compromise in terms of membership on the governing body, which provided for a maximum of fourteen persons, three of whom, the vicars of St. Martin's, St. Margaret's and St. Mary's, were ex officio, and five of whom represented the Bishop (1), the Wyggeston governors (1), the Leicester

School Board (1), and the incumbents and churchwardens of the town's parishes (2). The other six were co-opted for life, subject to the approval of the Commissioners. Anglican doctrines were to be taught, but with exemption granted to Dissenters. The School Board was content with this arrangement, because the school was to be recognised as a public elementary school under the terms of the Education Act of 1870. Accordingly the fees were to be set at between sixpence and one shilling, the average of which would enable the school to receive grants from the Education Department. Moreover scholarships were to be awarded to forty boys from other elementary schools in the town. The curriculum was to include, as provided for in the Elementary Code, the 3R's, English grammar and composition, history, geography, natural science, drawing, vocal music and drill.<sup>96</sup>

Although the school availed itself of the facilities offered by the Science and Art Department, and had its senior classes constituted as an 'organised science school', it was not particularly successful. During the first year there were only 130 boys in space for 300. The school suffered the loss of J. W. Jarvis, the new headmaster, after only two years. Assistant masters were never more than two in number, and were obviously grossly overworked, as the school grew to 295 pupils by 1892.<sup>97</sup> The only really bright spot had been the appointment of James W. Muston as headmaster in 1891. Muston had been headmaster of the higher grade school in Jarrow-on-Tyne, but was a Leicester native. He had previously been pupil teacher, assistant master, the first holder of the post of first assistant at Charnwood Street School, and headmaster of Elbow

Lane School. He had recently achieved M.A. status at the University of Dublin.<sup>98</sup>

The Alderman Newton's School, to add to its problems, had to contend with severe competition from private schools, like that run by J. C. Vary. Opening in 1890, and described as the 'Leicester Commercial High School', it advertised itself as a 'new departure in Education'. Admitting 170 boys during the first few months, it almost filled its capacity of 206 places before the end of the first year of operation.<sup>99</sup> Its subject range included natural and physical science, book-keeping, mercantile correspondence, penmanship, mental, decimal, and tradesmen's calculations, shorthand, technical drawing, commercial geography and French.<sup>100</sup> With fees of between £3 and £5, it was more expensive than Alderman Newton's, but the education offered was so practicable for future businessmen that those who could afford it went there in preference. So that Alderman Newton's was left with a higher working-class element than was originally intended, forcing the school to rely more heavily upon income from Science and Art Department examinations. Because of this the junior department was reduced so that a larger senior department could be developed, resulting in censure by the new Board of Education in 1901.<sup>101</sup>

Indirectly the Alderman Newton's School's heavy reliance upon Science and Art Department grants was one of the factors that assisted in the development of the Schools of Art and Technology in the



Newarke. In 1895, at Muston's insistence, a new physical laboratory and manual instruction room were built at a cost of £2,300, the exhibition fund being 'raided' for payment. Without the additional facilities some £880 in grants from the Science and Art Department would have been lost. Various complaints were made to the effect that the original purposes of the re-organisation were being ignored, and that the education of girls, supposed to have been provided for as income increased, had been neglected. A board of inquiry was held by two officials of the Board of Education in the Town Hall on 19 November 1901. Not only did it uphold the complaints, but it brought others to light, among them the fact that the Wyggeston School had been losing income because of the transference of about one hundred boys to Alderman Newton's. So serious had this competition become that Wyggeston had incurred a deficit that could not be allowed to continue. Though Alderman Newton's underwent much public criticism no alteration was made in the arrangements under which it functioned. The only effect thereafter was that it was officially referred to as a higher grade school.<sup>102</sup> Wyggeston was more seriously affected, for its headmaster made a presumption that he had no right to make. The Ellis Wing had become, in his mind, by 1891, the Technical School, obviously so that, as Customs and Excise revenues became available to the town, prior claim could be made for it. He was supported by Liberal newspaper proprietor F. Hewitt, who spoke of the need for a good technical school in Leicester, preferably connected with the Wyggeston School.<sup>103</sup>

Opposition to the Wyggeston claim did not come only from the Alderman Newton's School's progress as a science school. There were still those who resented the diversion of the charities from their original purposes. Was it, one wonders, Old Newtonian Robert Read, junior, who wrote under the pseudonym 'Justitia': 'By all means let Leicester have a Technical School, but let it be perfectly free from any other institution, and not be made an adjunct to the Wyggeston charity schools'.<sup>104</sup> There were also those who wished to see the Art School combined with a new Technical School, but who did not want to see it swallowed up within the Wyggeston complex. The difficulty was that the Town Council, though prepared to allocate 'whiskey money', was not yet prepared to levy a rate on behalf of such a project. All it had been prepared to do in 1891 was to disburse government funds to the Museum, to the School of Art, and to accept David Vaughan's offer of 'a piece of land measuring about 1162 yards, in Peacock Lane, from which he derived a revenue of £42 a year', to be used for an addition to the Ellis Wing.<sup>105</sup> The Council decision was opposed by some of its members, on the grounds that it was evading its responsibilities. S. J. Viccars complained that 'the [art] school had been rather ignored by the Corporation.... It was an institution second to none, both as regards its work, and the staff of teachers, in the kingdom; and yet it did not receive as much aid from the Corporation as many schools in towns of half the size of Leicester'.<sup>106</sup> To hammer home his point, Viccars, who combined membership of the Chamber of Commerce and the chairmanship of the

Art School Committee with his membership of the Council, invited W. Kenrick, M.P., of Birmingham, to speak at the annual prizegiving of the School of Art in 1892. Kenrick outlined the steps by which the Birmingham School of Art had been taken over by the Council, and managed to convey the impression that Birmingham's success, in terms of Science and Art Department awards, was to some extent attributable to the municipal status achieved in 1883, and that the maintenance of Leicester's position in the table of awards, where it was surpassed only by the much larger enterprises at Birmingham and Manchester during 1890 and 1891, was dependent upon achieving the same status.<sup>107</sup>

The hard-pressed Council, faced by the need to make some effort to satisfy the pressures put upon it, but divided as to whether the Wyggeston School should be the recipient of all its favours, or whether there should be a separate development directly under the Council itself, did what many Councils in similar circumstances do. It attempted to satisfy both sides. £7,000 was spent on 'a model site in the Newarke', but the question of Corporation involvement in administration was delayed for more than two years, while the Ellis Wing continued to establish itself.<sup>108</sup> But, of course, the decision did not satisfy anyone, least of all the School of Art, which was in a serious financial situation, as well as being in need of new premises for its further development.

By 1894 the School of Art had outgrown its accommodation at the Museum. There were 541 students. To accommodate the overflow

an annexe had been opened in the Newarke, adjacent to the site purchased by the Corporation. There was also a branch, accommodating 60 students, at Wigston, a large village on the southern outskirts of Leicester. Even James Went had to admit that: 'The problem now was to house that School of Art and its sister Technical School in a building that would be sufficiently commodious'.<sup>109</sup> The Ellis Wing was hopelessly overcrowded. The 'Leicester Technical School' housed within it during the evenings had 1,186 students in technological, scientific and commercial sections. During 1894 143 new students had been enrolled.<sup>110</sup> Went seems to have envisaged that the new buildings in the Newarke would accommodate the technological and art departments of a complex that would remain under the Wyggeston 'umbrella'.

Went's dream was not realised; nor could it ever have been. The School of Art, as we have noted, had no wish to be absorbed, except by a Corporation enterprise. The demands of industry for practical courses very different from the scientific theory of the original Ellis Wing required expertise and ideas that were dissimilar from Went's. But he was let down gently. When the Technical and Art Schools were opened on 5 October 1897 the Anglican presence was much in evidence, the Bishop of London being asked to perform the ceremony. Tribute was paid by Alderman Sir Thomas Wright to the continuing need for the use of the Wyggeston laboratories, 'which for years past served the purpose in connection with technical education in this town, and....would so continue and form part of the machinery for the provision of technical education here until

the time came when the Corporation was prepared to build supplementary structures'.<sup>111</sup> Further deference to Went was made in the matter of the headship. For a few years the headship of the two schools was combined under A. Spencer, the last head of an entirely separate School of Art, with Went as Honorary Director. When, however, Spencer was appointed to the principalship of the Royal College of Art in 1900,<sup>112</sup> his successor was Hawthorne of the Wyggeston School. It was explained that, though the latter had not previously worked in a technical school or an art school, he had 'been trained to that under Mr. Went'. To make Hawthorne more acceptable to the business community, it was also stated that, though he was the possessor of an M.A. degree, he was 'thoroughly well up in ordinary or scientific education, and he was also rapidly becoming the master of all technical subjects which were peculiar to the town of Leicester'.<sup>113</sup>

The tide was turning against Went's interests in technical education in other respects also. The Conservative ascendancy at the national level from 1895 onward ensured a revival of the grammar schools. A. J. Balfour, the prime minister, was typical of those who viewed the incursions of scientific instruction with alarm. Examining the Darwinian controversy from the fundamentalist standpoint, he came to the conclusion that: 'At every point the results arrived at have been unfavourable to science. It fails in its premises, in its inferences and its conclusions.... Nor am I acquainted with any kind of defect to which systems of belief are

liable, under which the scientific system may not properly be said to suffer'.<sup>114</sup> Balfour was supported not only by politicians and members of the public, but by men like R. L. Morant and M. E. Sadler in the Education Department itself. Though science education obviously could not be halted, it could be curbed by placing it within a different curricular framework. A re-organisation in 1895 introduced literary subjects into science day schools, and reduced the minimum of scientific instruction from fifteen to thirteen hours per week. To replace the dependence upon Science and Art Department examinations, the department itself was merged into the Board of Education, and grants were offered to secondary schools running an approved three or four year course.<sup>115</sup> Moreover the Bryce Commission had recommended the co-ordination of secondary education by making county or county borough authorities responsible for it, a provision that the government soon made clear was to be extended to elementary education too. It is not, therefore, surprising that, faced with competition from the Alderman Newton's science school, and the new arrangements for technical and art education, and the way in which the political winds were blowing, James Went took the line of least resistance and allowed the Wyggeston School to become an academic secondary school offering a balanced education in arts and science subjects to university entrance level. Then, with the wisdom of hindsight, he would have been able, had he wished, to congratulate himself on the wisdom of retaining a separate department for this work.

The development of secondary education for girls by the Wygg-

eston Charity was less contentious than the parallel development for boys. The work of the Misses Beale, Buss and Davies were already well known and applauded. The Schools Inquiry Commission, having taken evidence from these ladies, drew attention to the lack of middle-class girls' education, an omission the Endowed Schools Act was intended to change. In the same year that the Endowed Schools Commission was created there appeared the remarkable essay of Miss Welstenholme on 'The Education of Girls, its present and future', which advocated the setting up of a 'High School' under municipal or government control in each town, to serve as a model for private schools.<sup>116</sup> Subsequently the King Edward's Foundation at Birmingham used surplus funds to set up four girls' schools, all of which were immediately filled, while Maria Grey's National Union for the Education of Women established the Girls' Public Day School Company, which had founded fourteen schools by 1877.<sup>117</sup>

In Leicester itself, which could hardly fail to be influenced by these occurrences, the idea of instruction beyond the 'polite education' that had previously been considered suitable for young ladies was becoming established before the Wyggeston Girls' School was founded in 1878. In 1874 a Miss Mitchell opened a 'Ladies' Seminary' in Guthlaxton Street. Her advertisement stated that she had had 'eleven years experience in one of the largest and most successful Schools in the Midland Counties, and her pupils have taken high positions after severe competitive examinations'.<sup>118</sup> By 1876 Miss A. C. Beale, after having previously worked with her

sister in Cheltenham, had moved to Leicester, and purchased Belmont House School, 'with a view of giving a sound and liberal education at moderate cost'. She offered kindergarten and intermediate education.<sup>119</sup> The Collegiate Girls' School, moreover, was showing distinct signs of success, at least in the financial sense, for in 1870 it had been able to announce a dividend of £1 7s. 6d. to its shareholders.<sup>120</sup>

When the Wyggeston Girls' School appeared it fulfilled Miss Wolstenholme's hopes almost immediately. The demand was such that there was room not only for it, but for other new private schools, for which it was a reference point, if not always a model. The new schools illustrated, between them, the central conflict within girls' education, whether girls should compete with boys or have an equal but complementary education stressing the female role in Victorian society. Miss Beale, like her sister Dorothea, probably accepted the idea of an education that would enhance feminine virtues. So also did Miss A. Stephenson, the pupils of whose Ladies' School in Princess Street, had music and French 'taught by Professors'.<sup>121</sup> Mrs. J. C. Vary, whose 'Leicester Middle-Class High School for Girls', in the same premises as her husband's boys' school, aimed at providing 'the daughters of the middle-classes with intellectual culture and thorough instruction in the various branches of a sound and liberal English Education'. Mrs. Vary, who had attended a training college in London for two years, and gained a first-class certificate, was described as being 'specially devoted to the natural development of her pupils' faculties, to



the formation of their character, and to the cultivation of their intelligence, which alone is true education'. In similar vein, Mrs. S. E. Plant's 'High School for Girls' was described as being 'intended to combine the modern methods and systematic teaching of a Public school, with the greater opportunity for individual attention of a high-class private school'.<sup>122</sup> There was still room, however, for schools like the 'Day School for Young Ladies' opened by a Dominican convent in Millstone Lane to provide 'a Polite Education'.<sup>123</sup>

The same conflict was continued within the walls of the Wyggeston Girls' School, but the headmistress, Ellen Leicester, was not a theorist, and resolved it in eclectic and pragmatic fashion. That she was concerned for the school to be more than a copy of the boys' school is evident in the arrangements for cookery lessons to be taken at the School of Cookery, for instrumental music, and, 'in accordance with Froebel's system of teaching, voice exercises.... introduced in the drill, as tending to promote the vigorous action of every part of the system, and add fourfold to the enjoyment of every pupil'.<sup>124</sup> She rationalised her dislike of external examinations for girls by stating that they were unsuitable for most pupils as they usually left before reaching the point of taking them. Nevertheless it was not possible to ignore the demand for external examinations, in which there was competition in examinations designed for boys. By 1885 two pupils had passed London matriculation, six Cambridge Local examinations, two College of Preceptors examinations, one Royal Academy of Music, four Trinity College of Music, while 89 had gained Science and Art Department certificates

in physiology, botany, mathematics, mechanics and drawing.<sup>125</sup>

Internal examiners, as well as demand from pupils, also tended to favour an education more like that in the boys' school. One such report, while encouraging singing as 'a healthy convenient and very suitable change of employment for the children', deprecated the time spent on individual piano lessons, which tended to upset timetable arrangements.<sup>126</sup>

Higher education, except in connection with the Technical and Art Schools, lay outside the province of governmental or civic assistance. Owens College in Manchester and Mason College in Birmingham were the result of substantial benefactions. The former, founded in 1851, had been incorporated within the Victoria University, which linked colleges in Manchester, Liverpool and Leeds in 1880. The latter, established in 1880, became the University of Birmingham in 1900.<sup>127</sup> But these colleges were in substantial cities. Towns of the size of Leicester were at a disadvantage. Until the late 1870s there were few substantial secondary schools, able to supply a stream of pupils to university-based institutions. Even then the stream was only a very small trickle. With more than 500 boys in the Wyggeston School during 1889 only 28 were entered for the Cambridge Local examinations. At that time it was noted that 'one Wyggestonian had become a B.A., eleven had matriculated at London, two diplomas had been obtained from the Royal Agricultural Society of England'.<sup>128</sup> So that, in spite of Joseph Wood's presidential address to the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society in 1880, when he urged the members 'to take up the diffic-

ult and distinct work of higher education',<sup>129</sup> the most that could be hoped for was the further development of established institutions of adult education like Vaughan's Working Men's College, and the systematic instruction offered by the University Extension Scheme, as well as the beginnings of the workers' educational movement. Indeed, Wood's motivation, the feeling of rivalry engendered by the opening of a university college in Nottingham, was countered by the opposite contention, that Nottingham could now serve Leicester's needs. For the more northerly town, with its surrounding semi-urban satellites, its proximity to the substantial town of Derby, and its command over the north Leicestershire marketing distribution hinterland, was a better, though not undisputed, claimant to the title of 'regional capital' in the East Midlands. Moreover its similar industrial structure meant that, since it was only an hour's journey away by rail, it could serve Leicester's small university potential quite well.<sup>130</sup>

The progress of extension lectures in Leicester served only to strengthen Nottingham's claim as the most suitable location for university work. From 1873 Cambridge extension lectures were held in Leicester. Usually, to attract members of the public, there was an initial free lecture. Thereafter, for the twelve lectures offered in any one term, it was possible to gain admittance to all of them for a single payment of 10s. 6d. or to individual lectures for one shilling payable at the door.<sup>131</sup> After a brief flourish attendance figures soon declined. The operations of 1873-4 show-

ed that, while Nottingham had 2,000 students, Leicester had difficulty in mustering 200. Contributions from subscribers and guarantors in the town amounted to £255 11s., while total fees were no more than £47 13s. 2d. This left a deficit of £10 16s. 8d. By contrast it was noted that:

'At Nottingham contributions flowed in so readily, and the lectures of the last session were attended by such large numbers of all classes, that the committee, after paying all expenses, and without drawing at all upon their guarantee fund, had a surplus of £100 in hand'.

The Leicester supporters, reconciled to the smaller numbers of students, and the lack of substantial subscribers, like those at Derby, who 'contributed £50 a piece to the guarantee fund, thus taking all the burden of pecuniary responsibility off the shoulders of the committee', but conscious of 'a number of working men who had taken the thing up', proposed co-operation with Nottingham and Derby in sharing the services and expenses of the lecturers. But the basic question, asked by the Leicester committee's secretary, J. H. Williams, as to why the town should have lagged so far behind its neighbours, was not answered.

It is reasonable to suggest that for many working-men the lectures were too advanced, that the starting time of 8.00 p.m. was too early, and that the fees were too expensive. The advantages of Nottingham already mentioned are relevant, as also are the higher proportion of people employed in commerce and the professions in both Nottingham and Derby. The perceptive Miss Beale, in a letter to the editor of the Leicester Journal, ident-

ified other factors.<sup>133</sup> In advocating the employment of local lecturers rather than travelling lecturers from the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, she was not concerned primarily with cutting down costs. Perhaps coloured by the intransigent attitude of the older universities over the admission of women to degrees, she was scornful of the quality and range of subjects offered by the lecturers. 'Oxford and Cambridge men can hardly be expected to know anything of geography and grammar', she declared. Miss Beale also concerned herself with the problem of ensuring a minimum entrance level to extension lectures. Most of all, though, she wished to connect the extension system with undergraduate work, so that the end result of a combination of extension studies and a short period of residence at Cambridge would be a degree. Suggesting the formation of a Student Association, like one in Scarborough, Miss Beale claimed that by making examinations available to such an association the university 'would afford a cheap method of carrying on education for those who wish to become teachers, or take up definite literary or religious work later, and are obliged in the meantime to earn their own livelihood. In two, three or four years they could pass probably in a number of subjects to secure the certificate, which alone would give them a position, but if they could in addition by some short term of residence at the University be allowed to pass a further examination, and take a degree of some kind, the University would gain many who now go to Dublin'. But Cambridge, though willing to make some concessions in favour of full-time students attending university colleges, was not prep-

ared to do so for those attending extension lectures in the evenings and on Saturdays.

The extension classes continued to develop slowly. In a letter to James Went, written on 28 January 1888, T. J. Lawrence stated that:

'The afternoon class of 1887, as compared with the corresponding class of 1882, shows an increase of 8 per cent. in the number of those who have done papers at any time during the course, an increase of 81 per cent. in the number of those who have worked papers regularly every week, and an increase of 29 per cent. in the number of marks given for each paper. In the evening class there is an increase of 29 per cent. in the number of those who have done papers, an increase of 14 per cent. in the average marks obtained by each paper'. 134

Yet it is significant that Lawrence, the secretary for the classes, writes in terms of percentages rather than actual student totals, and in doing so probably makes the increases seem to be greater than they really were.

The Working Men's College, which did not only cater to the needs of a small elite, grew much more rapidly than the extension lectures. By 1879 its main emphasis was already on preparation for Science and Art Department, and Society of Arts examinations. Arithmetic, algebra, book-keeping, botany, drawing, English grammar, language and literature, English history, French, geology, geography, Greek, Latin, physiography, physiology, shorthand, theory of music, and vocal music were all offered during that year. Starting with 266 students in the advanced department, numbers had increased to 438.<sup>135</sup> By 1882 the total enrolment was 1,574. 340 were in a separate women's department housed in the County School.

There was also a junior department of 131 youths.<sup>136</sup>

Though Vaughan's College had tried to be all things to all men, it had become increasingly taken up with examination work, thus alienating those working-men who were not interested in such specific attainments. Among the latter would be men who did not, in any case, like the Church connection. Developing alongside, upon the existing base of the quasi-religious adult schools, were working-men's groups who formed themselves into the Leicester and County Working Men's Educational Union in 1890. With 21 schools and an average attendance of 1,208 the Union covered a wide range of activities. There were benevolent funds, coal clubs, blanket clubs, sick clubs and savings banks, as well as libraries and classes.<sup>137</sup>

One other aspect of higher education deserves mention. The School of Cookery came into existence in 1877, mainly because of the efforts of Dr. and Mrs. W. E. Buck. To Dr. Buck it was another means of improving health. Although sanitation had been considerably improved there were still serious epidemics of scarlet fever, measles and other infectious diseases, as well as deficiency diseases like rickets. The editor of the Leicester Journal blamed the building of board schools, commenting that 'no better means could be devised for the spread of infectious diseases than the wholesale herding together of children in Board schools'.<sup>138</sup> The Board had indeed to take steps to prevent the attendance of children from houses where there were cases of in-

fectious diseases. But the problem really, as the 'overpressure' controversy was soon to reveal, was that of poor sanitary habits and malnutrition, which provided ideal conditions for the spread of diseases. Buck was also aware of the improvements to family life that might be effected, noting that: 'If a man came home from work and knew that he was coming to a comfortable house and a good meal he was not likely to step into the public house'.<sup>139</sup>

With a supply of cookery teachers gradually becoming available after the opening of the National Training School of Cookery in 1874, and with a continuing rise in real wages and the standard of comfort, the time was ripe for the development of the Leicester School of Cookery in 1877. The availability of the recently vacated Guildhall (after the opening of the new Town Hall) was an additional spur.

Unlike technical education, where the accent at this time was upon theory and principles, to the detriment of practice, it was the practical aspects that were stressed. At the official opening, when Drs. Buck and Franklin spoke on 'Food', and Miss Smithard of the National Training School of Cookery demonstrated the making of 'sea pie, sweet macaroni, vegetable soup, and cow heel', it was noted that: 'In practice lessons the pupils will cook, assisted and superintended by the teacher.... An ordinary cottage cooking grate and two gas stoves, together with a large number of cooking utensils, have been arranged in the hall'.

In typical Victorian style classes were socially stratified



into four divisions. 'Teaching ladies how to cook' was clearly differentiated from 'Instructing the artizan class', while both were separated from 'Training cooks' and 'Teaching children, by arrangement with schools'.<sup>140</sup> The novelty of learning how to cook attracted many women. At the end of the first session it was recorded that 'the Ladies High Class Lectures were well attended.... The tickets for the Ladies' Practice Class and Cooks' Practice Class were all sold.... As regards the artizan class, hundreds had to be turned away'. By the second session, however, not only had the novelty worn off, but the effects of a particularly hard winter and trade depression were also felt; the artisan classes were poorly attended. Thereafter the School had to rely on its children's classes and its 'Ladies' Practice Classes' to maintain itself.<sup>141</sup>

While gaining in one sense from non-recognition as part of technical education, the School of Cookery lost in another sense. It had no share in the 'whiskey money', nor were any rates levied on its behalf. So that it had to rely on private subscriptions and fees. Had the School Board and the Wyggeston Girls' School not used its facilities for the teaching of cookery to senior girls it is unlikely to have remained in existence. Even then, in order to attract students from elsewhere, it had been necessary to change its title to 'North Midlands School of Cookery'.

Secondary, technical and higher education, much as they had advanced before 1902, were hampered up to then by lack of funds and by social divisions. Between them these factors ensured that

those who passed beyond the elementary stage of education were either fairly wealthy or intelligent enough to win one of the small numbers of exhibitions available or ambitious enough to study after a long day's work in office or factory. In 1900 the Wyggest-on Charity awarded only 17 exhibitions; the number of applicants was 283.<sup>142</sup> One of the supreme ironies was that just as the point was reached when the need for a higher grade school was recognised the Cockerton Judgment denied its possibility. The editor of the Leicester Chronicle noted that 'the Government, and apparently the law, stand in the way of the establishment of higher grade schools, which they [the School Board] are ready to provide'.<sup>143</sup>

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It was to be expected that Leicester, with its Liberal and Radical reputation, and its claim to be one of the major centres of Non-conformity, would be one of the boroughs in which there was an intense campaign against an Education Bill introduced by a Conservative government dedicated to protecting the interests of the Church. In 1902, of the Town Council's sixty-four members, forty-seven were reputed to be, according to a Conservative source, 'Radical and Labour',<sup>1</sup> but were in fact mostly Liberals. In the elected School Board the balance of power was weighted in favour of the 'Progressives', for Liberal and Church Party members were represented in equal numbers, with the casting vote being held by F. J. Gould, an Independent with Labour sympathies.<sup>2</sup> The strength of Non-conformity, though declining, was still significant, and may be recognised in the fact that between Baptists, Congregationalists, and the various branches of Methodism, there were some forty-five places of worship, measured against twenty-seven Anglican churches.<sup>3</sup> It was, therefore, principally in political meetings, arranged by Opposition organisations and by Non-conformist associations that elements against the Bill, became organised.

It is important to realise that Liberals were not opposed to all aspects of the Bill. They opposed rate-aid to voluntary schools, but recognised the need for secondary education developments to be co-ordinated, and for the administrative articulation

of elementary and secondary aspects of education. But it was by an extension of the school board system, which had already operated higher grade schools in many large towns, that they hoped to achieve it. As the editor of the Leicester Chronicle expressed it: 'we hope that sooner or later there will be established in every part of the Kingdom popular representative school authorities who will have charge generally of the whole education system, primary and secondary'.<sup>4</sup>

Opponents of the Bill gained considerable assistance early in 1902 from a series of articles on 'National Education', published in the Leicester Chronicle, and written by the locally born and highly respected A. J. Mundella just before his death in 1897. In them Mundella had championed the Forster Act of 1870 (with which he was personally identified), and the school boards that had been set up as a result of it. He had complained of the impending legislation that would sweep aside 'the principles which have stood the test of thirty years' daily application'.<sup>5</sup> He had also condemned 'clerical control' and the 'voluntary school model'.<sup>6</sup> Mundella considered that to replace the ad hoc authority by county or county borough councils would be detrimental to education. He thought councillors were generally too busy to serve as members of an education authority also. Moreover, with remarkable prescience, he asserted that 'each unit must be able to join forces with one or more other units for any purpose which is too large for one singly', rightly anticipating that committees subservient to councils would be less likely to combine for common purposes than

school boards had been.<sup>7</sup>

It is difficult to gauge the effects of these posthumously published articles. They were informative. They probably aroused interest in the controversy. They also, however, drew attention to dissention within the Liberal ranks, for by an unfortunate coincidence, a speech in Leicester by J. H. Yoxall, M.P., who had been a member of the Bryce Commission, and was currently General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers, in which he said that he 'would apply local option, and let each area decide for itself' on the question of whether the new authority would be ad hoc or appointed by county or county borough council, was followed by the article in which that very suggestion was described as mischievous.<sup>8</sup>

Liberal opposition to the Bill tended to emphasise the issues of public management of all schools, and 'direct and popular control', for while in Leicester itself there was a considerable overlap of Liberal and Non-conformist membership, it was well-known that the great majority of Liberal Members of Parliament were not of the Dissenting persuasion.<sup>9</sup> Hence, at a meeting of the General Committee of the National Liberal Federation in February of 1902, a resolution was passed containing the declaration 'that no measure will be satisfactory which does not include provision for public management in the case of all schools receiving public money, or which tends to limit or reduce the powers of bodies popularly elected for purposes of education'.<sup>10</sup>

Not all Liberals were as scathing as David Lloyd-George in denunciation of the government's intentions; nor could it be said that Leicester Non-conformists in general adopted the shrill uncompromising tone of John Clifford. Alexander Baines, the quiet and distinguished chairman of the Leicester School Board, for example, when speaking at a meeting of the Leicester Liberal Association, agreed that a good provision of the Bill was its intention to 'set up one authority for all kinds of education', though he preferred an ad hoc authority directly elected by the public.<sup>11</sup>

The Leicester Liberal Women's Association was dignified but denunciatory. At a meeting in the Co-operative Hall, the members listened to a rousing speech by Joseph Wood, the former chairman of the School Board, who was brought back from Birmingham for the occasion. Subsequently a resolution, moved by Isabella Evans, was adopted, opposing the Bill, because: '(1) the proposed education authority is not to be directly responsible to the ratepayers; (2) the ratepayers are to support schools over which they have no effective control; (3) the permissive clauses are contrary to the object of the Bill. Viz., the unification of the educational system, elementary and secondary; (4) the Bill makes no provision for securing the efficiency and adequacy of either secondary or elementary education; (5) it does not provide for the co-optation of women on Education Committees'.<sup>12</sup> This resolution was similar in content and style to others passed at meetings in

Leicester, and it is likely that they all had a common source. Its mention of the co-opting of women on to education committees is perhaps not very remarkable, for some women of ability had served on the School Board and on the managing bodies of schools, but none had yet been elected to the Town Council. Mrs. Evans herself had been the first woman member of the Board in 1879.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless the resolution drew attention to the role that women had played, and hoped to play in the future.

In June of 1902 the Liberals held three open-air meetings to protest against the Bill. Each was addressed by Henry Broadhurst, M.P., who represented Leicester Liberal interests in the House of Commons.<sup>14</sup> They were last ditch efforts, probably designed more with an eye to a future election, than with any real hope of gaining more than a few minor clausal amendments, for the first clause of the Bill, setting up the new education authorities, had already passed the committee stage. Thereafter Liberal energies were divided between Non-conformists, who favoured 'passive resistance' to the extent of refusing to pay the education rate, and trying to persuade borough councils to refuse to implement the Bill when it became statutory, and those who were prepared to observe the law, but to use their objections to it as an issue for the next general election.

In the organisation of their campaign, when it was outside the auspices of Liberal associations, the Non-conformists were at a disadvantage, as compared with the Established Church. They

were still divided into doctrinally different denominations, most of which lacked the cohesive hierarchical structure of the Church of England. Moreover, in Leicester, as in many other towns, the Methodists were represented by Wesleyans, Primitives, the New Connexion, and by one congregation of United Methodists, while the Baptists were still divided into distinct General and Particular groups, with the latter further sub-divided into 'open' and 'strict' churches.<sup>15</sup> Even the Free Church Council was matched by a competing Evangelical Free Church Council. Not surprisingly, Non-conformist protest meetings made a later appearance than Liberal meetings. When they did appear, they owed much to the ability and drive of Samuel Birch Carnley, a successful coal merchant and keen Congregationalist.<sup>16</sup>

Early in April 1902 Carnley called a meeting of the Leicestershire Congregational Lay Preachers' Association, to discuss 'Free Church Principles'. As chairman, he guided the discussion toward the Education Bill. No resolution appears to have been adopted, but a report in the Liberal Leicester Chronicle stated:

'The more they examined that Bill the more convinced were they that it was a deadly attack upon the Free Church principles.... The Bill told them that the voluntary schools were to be supported out of the rates of the people, and then there was a pretence....that these schools were to be under popular control'.<sup>17</sup>

One week later Carnley addressed the annual meeting of the Leicestershire and Rutland Federation of Evangelical Free Churches at Melton Mowbray. At his bidding a resolution condemning the

Education Bill was adopted unanimously:

'(1) because it proposes an education authority which is in no wise representative, is not responsible to the public, and will be largely controlled by sectarian interests....; (2) because it provides for the maintenance of voluntary schools out of the rates, unaccompanied by any real and effective public control; (3) because while it confirms the ecclesiastical ascendancy in thousands of schools....the proposal as to the erection of new schools....will lead to the multiplication of sectarian schools at the public cost'. 18

Carnley and his somewhat fanatical associates organised and addressed many meetings up to and beyond the passing of the Bill. In September they joined in a general clamour among Non-conformists to urge the Leicester Town Council to refuse to co-operate with the government in enforcing the Act. The Leicester Chronicle noted that 'the officials of the Leicester Second Circuit of Primitive Methodists have agreed to ask the Free Church Council to write the Town Council [to urge it] to refuse to put the Education Bill in force if it becomes law in its present form'.<sup>19</sup> The editor expressed support, and hoped that all Non-conformists would 'make up their minds to a definite agitation'. Two weeks later Carnley presided over a meeting of the Leicester and District Free Church Council, at which he moved a resolution to continue opposition to the Bill, and to urge the National Free Church Council to 'organise resistance to that portion of the rate which will be levied....for the maintenance of sectarian schools'. The resolution, which was passed unanimously by the sixteen (out of seventeen) members present, also urged Non-conformists to vote, at the next Town Council elections, for candidates who would



'support a resolution to the Town Council declining to give public money to schools which are to remain under denominational control', and committed the Free Church Council to requesting the Town Council 'to express by resolution, its strong opposition to the use of any portion of the public funds for the maintenance of schools over which they will not have full control'.<sup>20</sup> A similar resolution was also adopted at a meeting of the Leicestershire and Rutland Federation of Free Churches, soon afterwards, in the London Road Congregational Chapel.<sup>21</sup>

Carnley's resolutions, and probably his personal influence with some Non-conformist members of the Town Council, were successful, in that the Education Bill was discussed at the Council meeting in October. Alderman G. T. Coleman (Conservative) objected to the discussion, complaining that it was not within the Council's legal frame of reference. The Liberal mayor, Alderman Edward Wood, ruled that a resolution would be in order, and Coleman and four others left the Council chamber in disgust. The resolution, presented by Councillor John Mantle Hubbard, asked the Council to petition the House of Commons against the passing of the Bill, and to place on record:

'(a) its conviction that all elementary education should be national, free, unsectarian, and under direct popular control, (b) its strong opposition to the constitution of the Education Committee proposed by the Bill, and to the use of any portion of the public funds for the maintenance of schools over which they will not have full control'.

There was a particularly acrimonious debate, during which Councillor Shires attempted an amendment, intended as a compromise, to

reduce the evident polarisation. Intelligently worded, it approved 'the extension and further improvement of elementary education, the gradual passage from lower to higher grades of instruction, the prevention of the overlapping of educational efforts, and the replacing of all existing conflicting institutions under one educational authority'. The intensity of feeling, however, was such that any proposal by a Conservative stood no chance of being heeded. The original resolution was carried by twenty-eight votes to eight, and the mayor was instructed to forward it to the government,<sup>22</sup> much to the discomfiture of Alderman J. H. Marshall. The latter wrote subsequently to the mayor, stating that 'of the forty-seven Radical and Labour members only twenty-eight could be found to vote for the petition....therefore I claim that it does not represent the opinions of the majority'. He suggested the rescinding of the decision, but the mayor ruled it out of order.<sup>23</sup>

Marshall's point was an interesting one. The Council meeting had been poorly attended. Moreover the resolution, although objectionable to Conservatives, was not nearly as strong as Carnley would have liked. In no sense had it suggested that the Council would be a party to 'passive resistance'. The fact was that during the last quarter of 1902, when it was obvious that the Education Bill would become law, the majority of Liberals (and many Non-conformists) were prepared to accept the inevitability of giving effect to the duties imposed upon them by an admittedly distasteful item of legislation. As Seaborne has noted: 'once it became

law, it was obeyed with a reasonably good grace'.<sup>24</sup>

Among the Liberals prepared to accept the consequences of the new law was Dr. Frederick William Bennett, the vice-chairman of the School Board, and a Wesleyan. After an impassioned speech by J. H. Yoxall, at a meeting held under the auspices of the Education Committee of the Co-operative Society, Bennett used his authority as chairman to weigh up some of the points for and against the Bill. He stated that 'there had been much exaggerated praise and blame of the Education Bill. Looking at the matter from a purely educational point of view....there were some excellent points in the Bill. One of them was that, for the first time, an attempt was made to place elementary and secondary, or technical education, under one authority.... If the constitution [of the new education authority] were left in the hands of Town Councils the educational system might be worked with the red tape of which they had had some experience in some of the government departments. If, however, the committee co-opted experts in education they might be in a better position than they were at present. A good thing for education would be the larger sums contributed from the rates for the poor denominational schools'. He also argued that churches should have control over religious instruction in their own schools, but denied that denominational considerations should be a factor in the selection of a teacher, 'for only his moral character and his power to teach ought to be considered'.<sup>25</sup>

Among Conservatives there was little public debate, within Leicester, on the Education Bill. Chamberlain and his Unionist

colleagues having been placated, there was no doubt that the Bill would, perhaps with some amendments, pass into the statute books. The Midland Union of Conservative Associations made no mention of the Bill at its meeting in April; it was pre-occupied with the South African question. In the same month a public meeting was held in the Leicester Corn Exchange, at which the principal speaker was W. H. Long, the President of the Board of Trade. Only a small part of his speech was concerned with the Education Bill. He explained that there were three main objects, 'the co-ordination of local authorities, the improvement of education itself, and more economical administration....they concentrated local control in one body instead of frittering away their strength in two or three'. To the question of voluntary schools he adopted the standard Conservative formula of the time, that conversion of voluntary schools into local authority schools would cost at least £25,000,000 of tax money.<sup>26</sup> There was only one other public meeting during September.<sup>27</sup>

The Anglicans were no more active than their political counterparts. Archdeacon John Stocks, in a visitation held in St. Martin's, presented the Church's position locally. He agreed that 'the just rights of minorities should be respected'.<sup>28</sup> On the question of religious education, it was obvious that he could not accept the Leicester School Board's conception of it as a subject, in which there were daily Bible readings and 'such explanations and instr-

uctions in the principles of religion and morality as are suitable to the capacities of children', but which frequently became just Bible readings without any attempt to ensure understanding. Even F. J. Gould, the secretary of the Secular Society, had complained that 'any sort of literature which is just read in that perfunctory manner can have absolutely no educational value'.<sup>29</sup> Stocks stated that it would be reasonable, where the only school in a parish was voluntary, to allow 'other religious teachers....to give instruction to those children whose parents wished them to have it...., but they did wish to teach....the broad outline of the Christian faith and of Christian duty'.<sup>30</sup>

Throughout Conservative and Church ranks in Leicester there was probably a certain ambivalence of feeling toward the Education Bill. Since the Town Council was controlled by the Liberals, there was a possibility that legislation would not bring, from their point of view, any significant improvement, unless governmental control was highly efficient and the legislation itself directive rather than permissive. On the other hand abolition of the School Board would result in the disappearance of election contests, and of the posturings that went with them. They were not to know that men like Gould, one of those who it was thought would disappear from the educational scene, would seek election to the Town Council, and effect a return by that means.

It is easy to see why a man like Gould should have been regard-

ed as a threat. Able and intelligent, he had, after teaching in London board schools for twenty-five years, become the secretary of the Leicester Secular Society on a full-time basis in 1899.<sup>31</sup> In 1901 he had been elected to the School Board as an Independent, on a secular education platform.<sup>32</sup> He had recently written a pamphlet on Children's Ethical Classes, in which he advocated 'that the ethics be enforced as a practical and living subject', according to a systematic plan. Because of his unique position as an Independent holding the balance of power between Liberal and Church factions, he had been able to persuade the Board to allow him to visit schools, for the purpose of observing religious instruction. As a result, he spoke at a Board meeting on 7 October 1902 of the 'general lack of method and purpose in moral instruction'. Anxious to curry favour with Board members, particularly on the Church side (much to their embarrassment), he paid tribute to an Anglican method of teaching religious instruction he had observed in use at the Granby Road Board School in Aylestone, mainly because it was systematic. Moreover he was ready to give credit to an infant teacher, who 'took a little hymn on the cowslip', and went on to relate it to 'the importance of little things and little duties', using local illustrations.<sup>33</sup>

Gould had used his experience in visiting Leicester schools to enable him to introduce a motion into the Board, to the effect that 'a scheme be prepared with the object of (1) rendering the moral instruction more effective, and (2) strengthening the moral element in the school training generally'. It did not pass in

that form, but a measure of success was achieved by Gould in the amendment suggested by Baines, the chairman, as a compromise. It resolved that 'no alteration be made in the present scheme of Bible reading, but that the School Management Committee be instructed to consider as to the advisability of including a course of moral lessons in the curriculum of secular teaching'.<sup>34</sup> A course of moral lessons 'dealing with such matters as honesty, patience, purity, kindness, and so on' was subsequently introduced.<sup>35</sup>

Conservatives and Anglicans in Leicester, though they shared in the School Board's work, would almost certainly have shared Balfour's dislike of them, 'with their associations with scientists like Huxley, their tradition of popular education, and their traditional urge to teach too exclusively technical and scientific curricula'.<sup>36</sup> Under the sponsorship of the Science and Art Department, a network of science schools had been developing. They were represented in Leicester by developments at the Wyggeston and Alderman Newton's Schools.

What concerned Church-Tories the most, however, was that the Act of 1870 had, in effect, discriminated against the rural areas. In villages where the sole provision of facilities was made by voluntary societies, the inability to gain rate aid was a factor that resulted in many village schools, like voluntary schools in the towns also, struggling to survive against great odds. The Voluntary Schools Act of 1895, which provided some alleviation by increasing government grants to voluntary schools, was regarded as

a stop-gap measure on the way to the achievement of full equality with board schools. Even where board schools had been introduced the scale of operations was usually too small to achieve a reasonable state of efficiency. Northamptonshire, for instance, had a total of forty boards, some twenty-three of which were responsible for populations of less than 1,000. One village board served a population of less than 250.<sup>37</sup> It was difficult to find sufficiently talented people to serve on such boards. In 1899 the Keyworth School Board in Nottinghamshire, which served a population of less than 800, could not muster more than two members to any of its meetings, which, since this was insufficient to constitute a quorum, resulted in no business being transacted. Schools administered by such boards were inevitably weak.<sup>38</sup> Boards in towns were not viewed any more kindly, for although they were generally efficient, they were often in the hands of Liberal majorities, who gained much political capital from the triennial elections. In Leicester, as early as 1875, a hostile pen recorded that 'the duties of the Board had become purely perfunctory....and that such work as passed through their hands would be more efficiently carried out by a Committee of the Town Council'.<sup>39</sup> In 1901 came the Bishop of Rochester's personal appeal to Lord Salisbury for new legislation to aid the voluntary schools, so that they could continue in existence.<sup>40</sup> It was echoed by Archdeacon Stocks in Leicester, who stated that he looked forward to the passing of the Bill, as it would then bring the voluntary schools 'up to the level of the best requirements'.<sup>41</sup>



The teaching profession tended to support the Education Bill. Teachers had not yet emerged as a strong political force, but, since the General Secretary of the National Union of Teachers was a Member of Parliament, and had been a member of the Bryce Commission, they were undoubtedly gaining strength. Most teachers seemed to feel that there was much to be gained from the co-ordination of educational services. J. H. Yoxall, speaking in Leicester, stated that he agreed with the economy of administration that would result from having a single local authority for elementary and secondary education.<sup>42</sup> This was echoed by E. Davies, presiding at the annual meeting of the Leicester and District Teachers' Association, who said that he thought 'they were all agreed that such a Bill ought to bring education under one local authority to be dealt with in a thoroughly comprehensive and adequate manner'.<sup>43</sup> As it is certain that the Leicester Chronicle would have capitalised on any dissentiant voices at the meeting, it must be presumed that there were none.

At a later meeting of the Teachers' Association an address was given by Thomas Cope, chairman of the Technical Education Committee of the Leicestershire County Council, who addressed himself to problems outside the town boundaries, where he was on sure ground in condemning the rural boards and welcoming their replacement by a committee of the County Council.<sup>44</sup> One suspects that there was general agreement on the main intent of the Bill. The dissidents, if there were any, were not anxious to jeopardise their own positions by being outspokenly against the Bill that was sure to become

an Act, under whose terms they would be employed in the future.

The Education Bill, having passed through both Houses of Parliament, was given the Royal Assent on 18 December 1902. It was scheduled to take effect on 26 March 1903, when the School Boards were to hand over their authority and assets to Education Committees appointed by County and County Borough Councils. Leicestershire County Council, with its substantial Conservative majority, welcomed the opportunity to bring order out of the chaos. Its scheme, providing for a forty-five member Committee, was passed at the Council meeting of 21 February 1903, when a provisional Committee was also appointed.<sup>45</sup> Early in May the appointment of William A. Brockington as the first Director of Education was announced.<sup>46</sup>

Leicester, which had been quick to avail itself of the benefits of the Education Act of 1870, was slower to move than the County. The resentment against changes that were felt to be unnecessary was obvious, and to be expected. At the first meeting of the Council in 1903, Councillor J. Tudor Walters, a member of the Liberal group, moved the appointment of a committee 'to consider the duties and powers of the Council under the Education Act 1902, with instructions to confer with such outside bodies and persons, and to obtain such information as to them shall appear necessary, and to make their recommendations thereon'. The committee was to consist of the mayor and fifteen other members of Council.<sup>47</sup> There was no opposition; nor was there any apparent interest either. What the resolution did was to provide the Council with a reasonable

delay, while its majority group determined its future course of action. There was a committal only to exploratory discussions, which gave the appearance of having taken some action, but these discussions did not proceed with haste.

In the meantime some of the Non-conformists began to organise their passive resistance campaign. Early in February of 1903 there was a representative gathering of Free Churchmen in Leicester. It was convened by the Leicestershire and Rutland Federation of Free Churches, whose members expressed themselves 'heartily in favour of the proposal to refuse the payment of the new education rate'. Some fears were expressed concerning a possible disfranchisement of the individuals concerned, and the executive was instructed to obtain 'an authoritative legal pronouncement' on the matter.<sup>48</sup>

A few weeks after the first Non-conformist meeting a public meeting was held in the London Road Congregational Chapel. By now Dissenters had sponsored a National Citizen's League, with the intention of forming local branches in Leicester and elsewhere. The N.C.L. had arranged this particular meeting, which featured the Reverend W. Y. Fullerton as chairman, with the Reverend R. J. Campbell of Brighton as the principal speaker. Both were well-known Baptist ministers. S. B. Carnley was also in attendance, but the lay leadership had now passed to Albert Pickard, who introduced the resolution that approved of passive resistance, and pledged support for it. Unlike other meetings (perhaps it was symbolic), there was a dissentient voice, but it turned out

to be that of W. J. Thompson, the vicar of Trinity Church, who spoke about the Anglican point of view, and hoped that, now the Bill had passed, it would be possible for Establishment and Dissent to work together to ensure that the relationship between education and Christianity was maintained. Thompson was heard politely, but his vote was recorded as the only one against the resolution.<sup>49</sup>

The National Citizen's League continued its vigorous campaign through the summer months. Dr. John Clifford, the most vehement of Non-conformist ministers on this issue, travelled throughout the country, speaking against the Education Act,<sup>50</sup> visiting Leicester on the occasion of the formation of the Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Citizen's League. The latter issued a manifesto, stating that 'we cannot willingly pay that portion of the Education Rate which is to be devoted to the support of privately managed and sectarian schools.... we shall submit to the distraint of our goods without resistance, and shall discourage any attempt by others to use force on our behalf'.<sup>51</sup> Later it was agreed to refuse to pay one-quarter of the education rate, a proportion that was based on the attendance of children in provided and non-provided schools,<sup>52</sup> which were 31,600 and 13,000 respectively.<sup>53</sup>

In the autumn of 1903, after the Leicester Education Committee had come into existence, and was in process of taking over its responsibilities, and it was evident that distraint of property rather than disfranchisement would result from failure to pay the

whole of the education rate, some ninety-three people, including S. B. Carnley, were summoned before the Magistrates' Court, where they pleaded guilty to the charge of refusing to pay the full amount of the demand. They also protested the injustice of the law. Orders were made for payment by the embarrassed Magistrates, who had no option but to impose penalty of distraint (i.e. the selling of seized property to raise the amount owed) in the event of further failure to comply.<sup>54</sup>

Although passive resistance continued into 1904, it was doomed to die an earlier death in Leicester, despite the town's strong Non-conformist element, than in, for instance, some of the Welsh counties, where there were also nationalist overtones. Dramatic effect was lost initially when some people, having been told, wrongly, that the education rate would not be demanded until later in the year, actually paid it inadvertently.<sup>55</sup> The relatively small proportion of the rate to be with-held, and of course the corresponding relatively small proportion of children in voluntary schools in the town, tended to make the problem seem to be a trifling one. Moreover, as will be seen, the main political problem, that of superseding an efficient and popular School Board with an Education Committee, was resolved in Leicester with remarkably good grace, paying due regard to the continuing administration of the schools and the practical politics of the situation. That there was, even before the end of 1903, a drift from passive resistance, may be noted in the rueful comments of Albert Pickard,

as he presided at a public meeting subsequent to the court action already mentioned: 'they were sorry to miss several well-known Non-conformist leaders. They had hoped that one and all would have been with them in the fight'.<sup>56</sup> One notable absentee was the minister of Victoria Road Baptist Church, John Greenhough. Possibly he was influenced by the fact that two of the most distinguished members of his congregation were members of the Town Council. Alderman (soon to be Sir) Edward Wood had held the mayoralty for three consecutive years; Councillor Jonathan North had been appointed a member of the Education Committee alongside Wood. Both had given their support to the formation of the Committee, though they had earlier opposed the Bill.

Greenhough and others were more interested in legal means of remedying the situation than in passive resistance. The minister was present at a meeting of the National Free Church Council held in Leicester, at which it was proposed to campaign at the national level for a system of education 'with only one type of public elementary school, with no theological tests for teachers, and no distinctively denominational teaching....but simple Biblical instruction....according to a syllabus....[and attendance] subject to a conscience clause'.<sup>57</sup> Some, like Clifford, supported both passive resistance and political campaigning for the repeal of some sections of the Act, but, as the mass of Liberals supported the idea of making the best of the Act in the meantime, it was obvious to many Non-conformists that their cause was inevitably

lost, and that their protest amounted only to creating a nuisance rather than impeding the implementation of the Education Act.

In early 1903 the main Liberal position in Leicester was clarified. The Leicester Chronicle gave only faint editorial support to passive resistance, though it offered a considerable amount of space to reports on the subject. Alderman Sawday summed up opinion in the ranks, in his annual report as secretary of the General Committee of the Leicester Liberal Association. He mentioned the need for a campaign for the rescinding of the Act, but in the meantime he was concerned to 'see that the Act is used in the best and highest interests of the children....irrespective of and in spite of the religious difficulties which it necessarily creates'.<sup>58</sup>

Once the Liberal position was clear, the development of the new education authority was assured of a fair, if slow, passage. The committee that had been appointed by the Council to consider its responsibilities under the Act, consisted of ten Liberals, four Conservatives and <sup>one</sup> Labour member, the proportions by which each party was represented in the Council itself. So that the committee was dependent, if progress was to be made, on agreement within the majority group.<sup>59</sup> In its deliberations the committee had one distinct advantage in being slow to move. It was able to see the County's proposals before its own were formulated. In the very week of the committee's appointment, a joint report from the Financial and Technical Education Committees of the County Council reported to the parent body, suggesting the appointment of a forty-

two member Education Committee, of whom thirty-two would be Council members. The other ten were to be appointed by the Council 'from persons of experience in education, or acquainted with the needs of the various kinds of schools'. Taking account of the part women had played in some School Boards, two of the appointees were to be women. All were to be appointed for three year terms, normally immediately after the triennial elections for the Council itself.<sup>60</sup> Before the end of February, the Leicester committee was able to note, the County scheme, with slight modification of the original proposal, was already in operation.<sup>61</sup>

In early March the Leicester committee was almost ready to present its proposals. Firstly, however, it held a joint meeting with representatives from the Leicester School Board (whose existence had been extended by the Board of Education to the end of June), the Voluntary Schools' Association, the Roman Catholic schools, the Leicester Working Men's College, the Leicester Board School Head Teachers' Association, the Wesleyan School, the Alderman Newton's School, the Leicester Trades Council, and the Leicester Co-operative Society's Education Committee.<sup>62</sup> Presumably the purpose of the meeting was to test reactions to the proposals to be presented at the following week's meeting of the Council. Unfortunately, no further details of the joint meeting were reported, so that the degree of acceptance is not known. Nor is it known whether any alterations to the proposals were made. At the very least, however, it was a wise political move, to ensure support from the various interested parties.



The committee presented its report at a specially convened meeting of the Council. The recommendations were:

- '(1) That the Act should come into force, so far as Leicester is concerned, on the 1st July....
- (2) That the Education Committee should consist of 31 members including the Mayor of Leicester, for the time being. Exclusive of the Mayor, however, there should be 21 members of the Council on the Committee, leaving the Council free to co-opt nine members from outside that body, of whom two should be ladies.
- (3) That the Council itself, being the responsible authority, should itself appoint all the members of the Committee, these being (a) persons of experience in elementary education, of whom one must be a woman; (b) persons of experience in secondary education ~~education~~ and the training of teachers, of whom one must be a woman; (c) persons acquainted with technical, commercial and industrial education.
- (4) That the first Education Committee should be appointed one month after the approval of the scheme, and continue in office till the 9th November, 1903, all subsequent Committees to be appointed on the 9th November in every year'.<sup>63</sup>

There were no disagreements; the report was approved unanimously, eloquent testimony to the resolving of any differences there might have been earlier, between parties, or within the majority group.

In spite of its unanimity though, the Town Council was not disposed to act on its resolution any swifter than it needed to. Not until its meeting in May was the Education Committee actually appointed, and its powers defined. At the meeting, it was pointed out that the Council could, if it wished, delegate the whole of its educational responsibilities to the Committee. Since, however, the Liberals had campaigned against the abolition of the School Board, on the ground, inter alia, that a directly elected body was being replaced by one which had no direct responsibility to

to the public, the Liberals would only, at this stage, approve the reference rather than the delegation of powers, though it made no real difference to the way in which the Committee conducted its business. It was agreed that 'as far as the broad principles of the work was concerned, the Town Council....should have the opportunity of expressing its wishes, and having the policy it favoured carried out'. The appointment of teachers, renting of buildings, and other administrative details were to be left to the Committee, but 'in such important matters as acquiring new sites, entering into new contracts for new schools....the Education Committee would....have to come to the Council'. It was also decided that, in order to maintain the supremacy of the Council, the sub-committees were to have a majority of Council members appointed to them.<sup>64</sup>

It was not long before the Council's effective control, as distinct from nominal control, was minimal, resolving itself into the presentation of a quarterly report, adopted as a matter of course. Indeed the administration of a growing department was so complex that even the Committee was forced at an early stage, as the School Board had done before it, to refer much of its responsibilities to sub-committees, and they, in turn, to paid officials. As Seaborne correctly noted: 'The criticism which appears again and again in Leicester newspapers....is that the members of the Education Committee did not have time to take a personal interest....with the result that more and more matters were being

decided by the committee's officials'.<sup>65</sup>

The appointment of Leicester's first Education Committee sensibly, and with considerable political acumen, forged links with the outgoing School Board. As well as taking on to its staff all the officials and teachers formerly employed, the Council appointed six Board members - Alexander Baines, Dr. Frederick W. Bennett, T. B. Ellis (Liberals), Miss S. A. Gimson, H. P. Rodgers and the Reverend A. M. Rendell (Church Party) - as co-opted members of the Committee.<sup>66</sup> Continuity was further increased by the appointment of an Elementary Schools Sub-committee, with Baines and Bennett as chairman and vice-chairman respectively.

It is indicative of the Committee's concern, initially at any rate, to make decisions itself, in the School Board tradition, rather than to refer them to paid officials, that when Thomas Groves, the clerk to the School Board, was appointed to a similar position in the Committee's service, his title was that of 'secretary of the Education Committee'.<sup>67</sup> Seaborne has noted that boroughs tended almost always in the initial stages of re-organisation, to appoint 'secretaries', 'the implication being, that the official was mainly concerned with recording and carrying out the decisions of the committee, rather than directing education or seeking to influence policy'.<sup>68</sup> In the County, where it was not merely a matter of continuing in an established tradition, but making a fresh beginning, and where the cohesiveness of town political organisation was lacking, it was necessary for the executive

officer of the Education Committee to assume a more directive role. In the town, however, where there was close business contact between the men who became members of the Committee, and where it was possible to summon the members to meetings with very little notice in cases of emergency, it was the chairman who tended to assume directive control.

Teachers who, it has been stated, tended to support the Education Act, had hoped to be able to gain Committee representation. The co-option rules appeared to them to open a door that had been closed to them during the existence of the School Board. Accordingly the Teachers' Association had called a meeting of head and assistant teachers, at which a petition was prepared. The petition was presented by Councillor Mann, on their behalf, to the Committee, at the time when lists of nominees to the sub-committees were being considered. When the lists were made the subject of a motion, Mann moved an amendment, to the effect that the name of Robert Locke, the headmaster of Melbourne Road School, be substituted for one of the others named. A procedural wrangle followed, during which several members expressed sympathy with the intent of the amendment. Unfortunately, however, Mann had phrased his amendment ineptly. By wishing to 'substitute' rather than 'add' the name of Locke, he had, as the chairman indicated, made it necessary for him to name the person whom the headmaster was to replace. Not unnaturally Mann was unwilling to do so,

feeling that it should have been possible for a vote on the total list to have been taken. No teacher representation were, therefore, able to be effected at this stage.<sup>69</sup> One suspects that the procedural wrangling was a convenient strategem for putting off the question of teacher representation.

Some Council members had expressed the opinion that representation of teachers on sub-committees was more appropriate than membership of the Education Committee itself. The Leicester Head Teachers' Association, bearing this in mind, subsequently approached the Education Committee with a mild request for 'a committee of teachers to act as an advisory committee'. They indicated in their submission that such committees had been formed in other towns. Unfortunately, for it prevented rational consideration of the request, the Association, with incredible lack of tact, incorporated in the petition a demand 'that the Committee should make arrangements for the payment of teachers' salaries on the last working day of the month instead of a few days later'. Alderman Marshall immediately retorted that he did not like 'these people to begin at this early stage to tell the Committee what they ought to do'. He opposed both requests. Others followed this lead. Even Alexander Baines, who might, in normal circumstances, have been sympathetic, was somewhat incensed, to the extent that he 'held strongly, as a matter of principle, that they ought not to ask the head-teachers to serve on any committee to which the work of the schools was referred'. Yet the resolution that he moved

in the heat of the moment, which would have denied representation of any kind to teachers, was withdrawn before being put to the vote.<sup>70</sup> The cooling of tempers was of little immediate avail to teachers. They had to pay the penalty for their ineptitude. The eventual result of their submission was negative. The matter of teacher representation was referred to the sub-committees, which, freed from the gaze of the public, simply 'forgot' about it. One of the ironies, therefore of the change from the old system to the new one, was that for the teachers (and pupils too) there was no perceptible change, until, with Morant's new regulations, and the impetus of the Liberal victory at the general election of 1906, new developments in secondary education began to have their repercussions in the schools bequeathed by the Leicester School Board.

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70. Ibid., 4 July 1903.

The period from 1903 to 1940 was punctuated by the first world war, a traumatic experience that left post-war Britain very different from what it had been in the Edwardian era. The markets overseas, once secure, had begun to dwindle as the outermost parts of the Empire, cut off during the war, developed their own industrial capacity to replace the shortages. So that the economic cycles, by no means insignificant in Edwardian times, were enormously exaggerated, the boom of war and its aftermath of reconstruction replaced by gigantic downturn, relieved only in spasmodic bursts, until, towards the end of the 1930s, the upswing became firmly established.

No area within the country could escape the effects of such cataclysms. Leicester, like other towns and cities, was affected in various ways. It experienced economic, social and political changes that were reflected in the educational system. Economically it was relatively fortunate. The hosiery industry had diversified, so that it was producing many different kinds of knitwear. Its production was boosted in wartime by the need to clothe the army. In peacetime its lost overseas markets were replaced by a heavier dependence on the British market, for which the geographical location of Leicester gave it definite advantages. The shoe industry began to decline after 1911. Temporarily resuscitated by the demand for army boots during the war, it continued to decline during the 1920s. But the decline was slow, and was matched

by developments in engineering. The policy of dispersing the manufacture of armaments brought the making of guns and shells to the town. New engineering firms, attracted by the opportunities, did not disappear when peacetime came. They made use of the developed industrial capacity to manufacture a wide variety of engineering products, whose markets remained reasonably stable even in the worst years of depression.<sup>1</sup>

Social attitudes were already changing rapidly at the beginning of the century. The age of the 'gentleman' was already fading in Edwardian times. The working-man, better fed and housed than at any time since the beginning of industrialisation, looked forward to equality of opportunity. The suffragette sought the equality of the sexes in terms of employment, property rights and the use of the ballot box. The great war hastened these developments, for the army officer of 'gentleman' status was not notably better than his counterpart from a working-class background, and women were not specially deficient in the ability to acquire the skills of men whose jobs they temporarily undertook.

Political allegiances were also in process of rapid change. The 'Lib-Lab' alliance, though it continued for a few years, was beginning to break down as the new Labour Party, though at first a curious alliance between the Marxist Social Democratic Federation and the Independent Labour Party, together with the trade unions as well as various other socialist groups, began from 1900, when the Labour Representation Committee appeared, to flex its political

muscles with greater certainty. The Liberals, forced into an uneasy pact with Labour, delayed an inevitable decline for a while, but were soon forced to concede that the party's power was on the wane. By 1909 the Liberals in Leicester had lost the absolute majority that they had held unbroken since 1836.<sup>2</sup> At the outbreak of war in 1914 the party standings in the Town Council were: Liberals 18, Conservatives 16 and Labour 14.<sup>3</sup> By 1922 Labour representation had crept up to 16 out of 64 Council members, on what was by then a City Council.<sup>4</sup>

The Liberal decline tended to push the party into a tacit coalition with the Conservatives on some issues. Not until 1928 did Labour have an overall majority, which did not last long. For most of the time it was a strong contender. Its members took their places in committees, handled a fair share of the work load of meetings and became identified with Council policies and decisions. To some extent this weakened its role as the champion of the working-class, but strengthened it in terms of respectability. No longer closely identified with Marxist doctrine, especially after a change of constitution in 1920 brought about the existence of constituency parties (thus making party membership possible without membership of the previously existing socialist groups or of a trade union), it was recognised as a party of democracy seeking change through the ballot box. After the Soviet Revolution it was particularly important for the party to dissociate itself from Communism. This stance brought Labour the support of middle-class

people who previously would have pledged their loyalty to the Liberals. When Charles E. Keene was adopted as a candidate for the municipal elections of 1922, it was noted that: 'He had been twitted about being a capitalist and an employer of labour, and he had been told that it was incomprehensible that he should be a Socialist'.<sup>6</sup> Defending himself in a letter to the editor of the Leicester Mercury, he declared that: 'We, the Socialists, have long contended that we are doing God's work by helping men and women to realize their position in life, in urging them to demand a fair share of this world's goods which they create'.<sup>7</sup> He saw no contradiction, nor did many other capitalists who also joined the party.

It is important to realise also that many men who belonged to Non-conformity, and particularly to Primitive Methodism, were attracted to the movement as it ceased to be so closely identified with Secularism. Some, with the zeal of the reformers, broke away from all existing churches, and formed their own. Simon had depicted the Labour Church movement as a Secularist attempt to use the customs of their time for Socialist ends, to use the habits of Church attendance and Sunday school attendance to teach ethics in an alternative context to that of Christian revelation. F. J. Gould and his fellow members of the Leicester Secular Society would have subscribed to the idea that 'Socialism is a religion teaching morality and brotherhood of men as taught by Christ and others'.<sup>8</sup> Other Labour Churches, however, like that in the Castle Ward of Leicester, led by W. E. Wilford during 1905, were more Christian in outlook.<sup>9</sup> Charles R. Keene (later Sir Charles R. Keene), who

attended a Labour Church has recalled that meetings were styled on those of the adult schools, which flourished during the same period. They consisted mainly of inspirational addresses interspersed with the singing of hymns.<sup>10</sup> After lecturing at one of the four in existence between 1905 and 1910, the future Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple, not yet ordained, perceived that: 'They are not all Christians (in metaphysics) at that Labour Church, but I seldom felt so near the presence of pure religion'.<sup>11</sup> In at least one case the sympathy of a Non-conformist minister, F. Seaward Beddow, resulted in the Wycliffe Congregational Church becoming closely identified with the Labour movement, though without organic links.

Ultimately, since all forms of religious or quasi-religious observance suffered substantial decline, particularly after the first world war,<sup>12</sup> Labour Churches were soon to fade and disappear. Pelling has described them as a 'short-lived protest against the link which the Non-conformist Churches had established with the Middle-class and in particular against the alliance with the Liberal Party'.<sup>13</sup> The Secularist 'religion' which flourished while Gould was in Leicester, and which may be regarded as part of the same movement, also faded. There was a general sympathy with the Christian situation, but less sympathy with institutional churches outside the socialist milieu. This movement had its reflections within the Leicester Education Committee.

By the time that Gould returned to the educational scene, as

a Labour councillor appointed to serve on the Education Committee, opinion was already against anything he had to propose that was related to the aims of the Secular Society and the Moral Instruction League. In June 1905 he introduced a motion that asked the Committee to recognise 'the desirability of confining the education under the control of Local Authorities to secular instruction only'. But a frontal assault of this kind, though it picked up a few Liberal votes, had no hope of success; it failed by fourteen votes to five.<sup>14</sup> The same motion was re-introduced two years later, with the same result.<sup>15</sup> In October 1906, another defeated motion introduced by Gould probably had as its target the difficulty of teaching religion without any kind of sectarian bias. It had demanded that the head teachers 'be asked by circular to reply to the following enquiry: Do you, in carrying out the Committee's regulations as to religious instruction, include or imply the teaching of (1) the conception of God as Creator and Father; (2) the historical veracity of the Bible narratives; (3) the duty of prayer; (4) the Christian doctrine of the future life?'<sup>16</sup> It too gained little support.

Only in one respect was Gould successful in gaining Committee recognition for one of his ideas. Linked with his conception of moral education was the development of a sense of civic responsibility. In his speech to the Leicester School Board, on 7 October

1901, he had said that he hoped for history lessons that 'will lay more stress upon the social life of the people, their moral progress, and their industrial development.... The children should be taken in small parties to visit the old and new Town Halls, the Gas Works, Water Works, Fire Brigade Station, the Infirmary, and the different Churches of the town....with a view of impressing the children with the complex nature of the life of which they form a part and of their duty towards that general life as citizens'.<sup>17</sup>

In a Committee of a Town Council it is always possible to achieve a ready response to any proposal to teach civic duty and knowledge, as Gould was well aware. So that when he suggested that 'the Elementary Schools Sub-committee be requested to enquire how far it would be possible to prepare....a scheme of systematic school visits to places of educational value and interest', there was unanimous agreement.<sup>18</sup> By December 1905 one school had made an educational visit to Holwell Iron Works, but no scheme had materialised.<sup>19</sup>

Six months later a special committee, reporting to the Elementary Schools Sub-committee, stated that, while it recommended the approval of visits, some of which had already been carried out, it had taken advice from the head teachers, who preferred to integrate school visits within the normal curriculum, rather than regard them as a special category. The Sub-committee agreed. But Gould had at least achieved the acceptance of the idea of school visits.<sup>20</sup>

By 1910 Gould had resigned from the Town Council to take up employment in London with the Moral Instruction League. The overt



Secularist outlook seemed to disappear with him. His successors on the Council benches either sympathised with religious education, or were apathetic, or were content to play down their predispositions. They had also to contend with the teaching profession, which, better trained and well-organised, was tending to become more conservative in its outlook. It was also demanding, as a right pertaining to the acquirement of professional status, a certain amount of self-determination in areas which it considered to be the prerogative of the trained teacher. At the 1909 annual conference between the Elementary Schools Sub-committee and representative head teachers, itself an indication of growing recognition of professional status, the head teachers were 'of opinion that the daily moral training in school, based as far as possible on the incidents of school life, is productive of more benefit than the weekly formal lessons at present required to be given'. They asked also for teachers to be allowed to treat the subject in their own way.<sup>21</sup>

No other change in religious and moral education was made until 1924, when a brief from the teachers stated that they regarded Bible study as more important than any other lesson, and wished to have 45 minute periods devoted to it on three days each week rather than a very short assembly period each day. Anticipating one of the provisions of the Education Act of 1944 they wished to have religious teaching as a taught lesson like other lessons rather than as a formal exercise. The Committee agreed.<sup>22</sup>

Quite apart from the growth of a new relationship between teachers and the Education Committee, which will be mentioned again in greater detail, the climate of opinion in which both operated ensured that, though the Labour Party was generally among the more progressive elements, it had no monopoly in the realm of elementary education, nor was it alone in its frustration over the recurring crises that prevented developments from being as far reaching or as consistent as were intended. To the chagrin of some of the Labour representatives they found themselves at times identifying with their Committee colleagues more than with some of those they sought to represent, and losing at least one Council seat because of it.<sup>23</sup>

The legal framework within which elementary education developed was determined by the Education Act of 1902, by the new Code of 1904 (and its subsequent modifications), and by the Fisher Act of 1918. 1902 provided the administrative structure that enabled the provided and non-provided schools to grow into a single system. The Code devised by Morant and his colleagues set the schools free from constricting curricula by placing the onus upon the head teachers, whose task it was to ensure that the teacher was no mere purveyor of information. Curricula prepared in the individual school were 'to train the children carefully in habits of observation and clear reasoning', 'to arouse in them a living interest in the ideals and achievements of mankind', 'to give them some power over language as an instrument of thought and expression', and to develop a taste

for reading that would enable them to continue learning after leaving school.<sup>24</sup> Curricula were still prepared by the Board of Education, but they were to serve as guides rather than as blueprints for the whole of English education. The Fisher Act, by raising the school-leaving age to fourteen, provided the basis for the re-organisation of the elementary schools so as to differentiate more between pupils of varying abilities.

When the Leicester Education Committee took over responsibility for elementary education from its predecessor it was natural that the attitudes adopted would be similar. Since it had a Liberal majority, with some of its membership taken over from the defunct body, and since it looked forward to the day when a Liberal government would repeal the 1902 Act, it started out with an attitude of near-hostility toward the Church schools. Though it had little option but to pay the salaries of teachers, to provide for heating and lighting, for teaching equipment, and for caretaking staff, there was no regulation which forced it to assist with building or rebuilding or repairs. The premises of non-provided schools belonged to the Churches which sponsored them, and as such were their responsibility.

The Committee knew, however, that most of the schools were in very poor condition. The returns demanded by the Board of Education in 1902 indicated that almost all of the Leicester voluntary schools were either seriously in debt or inadequately staffed and equipped. Some of them suffered from both deficiencies. The return for

Knighton National School stated that: 'There is no endowment properly so called.. The so called endowment - £6 10s. per annum - is the interest on Balance of Building Funds'. The vicar of St. George's mentioned a serious lack of teaching space in both departments of his school. For Trinity Schools it was obvious that there was a large deficit in the bank account, while at the mixed department of Christ Church School it was noted that: 'The school is virtually full.... The accommodation is at present insufficient for the average attendance'. At St. Patrick's Roman Catholic School F. B. Lott noted in his inspection report that: 'The accommodation comes far short of being good.... Each department has only two rooms, consequently the work is carried on under the difficulties which are inseparable from teaching a large number of children of varying attainments in a few crowded rooms'. Lott also reported the inadequacy of heating and ventilation, that the lighting was poor, that there was a lack of adequate cloakroom and lavatory accommodation, and that playground space for the boys was inadequate.<sup>25</sup> So that the Committee saw a possible end to the voluntary school problem in a take-over.

Without waiting for Committee approval, the chairman, Councillor J. Tudor Walters, had approached, by letter dated 29 July 1903, the largest of the denominational bodies with schools, and proposed to them that 'the non-provided schools should be leased to the Corporation of Leicester.... The tenancy would be for a certain number of hours per day, during which secular instruction

would be imparted, and for certain evenings in the week for a like purpose. The proprietors of the schools would then be at liberty to impart religious instruction outside those hours'. He had also proposed that 'the appointment of teachers and the general internal management of the schools would be carried on in the same way as for provided schools....you may take it that the Education Committee, in appointing teachers....would be guided only by educational efficiency and good moral character, without regard to membership of any particular Church or denomination'. It was not an unreasonable proposal, in that it followed the lines of the Archidiaconal Board's own contingency plans. Where it failed was in being somewhat premature and too blunt. In replying on behalf of the Church, Edward Atkins, the former science teacher, and by this time the vicar of St. Nicholas', took note of the unofficial nature of Walters' letter, and, without calling his committee together, stated that he thought the practical and legal difficulties were too great for the proposal to be a practicable one.<sup>26</sup>

When the Walters-Atkins correspondence was presented by Walters to the Education Committee, its members endorsed the chairman's initiative, and directed that the proposals made 'be submitted to the various denominational schools' associations as proposals of this committee'. A further reply from Atkins stated that the Leicester Church Schools Committee could not agree to any arrangement which did not include 'definite religious instruction as part of the school curriculum'. As the Committee had yet to

make a decision about religious instruction in council schools, Atkins received the support in the Committee of the Reverend J. Mandy, a co-opted member who was also correspondent for the Roman Catholic schools.<sup>27</sup>

Predictably Liberal opinion was temporarily inflamed by the Church response to Walters' proposals. Councillor S. Flint, at a Non-conformist protest meeting, said that he had been informed at a Town Council meeting 'that the overtures that had been made to the sectarian schools had been declined.... Personally he was quite prepared to propose....that no rate shall be paid for the sectarian schools in Leicester'.<sup>28</sup> The Leicester Chronicle, editorially taking the Bishop of Peterborough to task for speaking of the Education Act as a reasonable compromise, took the opportunity to say that, in the Leicester situation, 'generous terms were offered; out of school hours the school buildings were to remain absolutely at the disposal of the Church authorities, and for their use for educational purposes a generous rent was to be paid, but the school managers would have none of it'.<sup>29</sup> It seems clear from the petulant tones that Walters' initiative had been aimed at reconciling Liberal and Non-conformist differences over whether or not to pay rates. Success would have allowed a dignified withdrawal of the hard-liners from their passive resistance.

The Committee's greatest power to irritate the managers of the Church schools was in financial matters. In October 1903

it passed a resolution in respect of gas, water and coke to be supplied to non-provided or voluntary schools. There was agreement to accept responsibility for paying water rates and five-sevenths of the coke bills (six-sevenths where the building was not to be used for Church purposes on Sundays). This left the managers with the burden of paying the gas bills and one-seventh or two-sevenths of the coke bills.<sup>32</sup> Although the allocation had been made for only six months, at the end of which period a revised scale was to be agreed upon, a year later the managers were making frantic representations. Most of them, since they had ceased to charge school fees, had not been able to raise the money needed to pay their portion of the Bills.<sup>33</sup> The Committee was also slow to authorise repairs and provide badly needed equipment. For instance, almost without exception, the coke heating stoves had needed repair or replacement in 1903. Not, however, until two years later did the Committee agree to the 'repair of existing stoves....on the same basis of cost thereof....as has been mutually agreed upon in the matter of fuel'.<sup>34</sup> In another case, an Inspector's report on an infants' school had stated that the desk accommodation was 'somewhat limited'. One year later the chairman of the managers reiterated the comment. It was not until another year had passed that the headmistress was able to report the arrival of some new desks.<sup>35</sup>

It was not long before the managers of voluntary schools began to realise that the Education Committee's control over them

was more far reaching than had appeared at first sight. The Committee's inspectors paid regular visits to all of them, as log books indicate; a careful watch was kept upon curricula, school organisation, and staffing. Though they did not always influence managers, the threat of with-holding rate payments was usually sufficient to induce managers to follow the Committee's advice. The headmaster of St. Saviour's was instructed to discontinue the teaching of French, after it had been reported to be badly taught.<sup>36</sup> Several schools were re-organised in order to effect economies. Holy Cross agreed to place its infants in one building, and its older pupils, previously separated according to sex, in another building.<sup>37</sup> A recommendation to amalgamate 'the present Mixed Departments of the Deacon Street and Laxton Street Schools, and to convert one of the blocks into an Infant and Standard I School' was soon complied with.<sup>38</sup> The Committee also stopped the 'poaching' of children from Council schools. When the headmaster of Avenue Road Council School complained that children were being 'poached' by the Clarendon Park (St. John the Baptist) School, 'the reason given in one case being that the boy could not be in the Choir unless he attended the Church Day School', the managers of the voluntary school were 'asked to investigate'.<sup>39</sup>

Only in a few cases did the managers of Church schools attempt to defy the Education Committee. At St. Peter's, for instance, it was suggested that the Upper Conduit Street building should be confined to infants, while the Gopsall Street building would become a mixed department.<sup>40</sup> The managers, attempting to



circumvent the Committee, turned down the suggestions<sup>41</sup> and appealed directly to the Board of Education for the approval of new building plans, so as to obviate the re-organisation. They were, though, informed by the latter that 'before the work of extending the premises is carried out it will be necessary for plans to be submitted to the Board through the Local Education Authority, and for the plans to be approved by the Board'.<sup>42</sup> Thereafter the managers had little option but to take the advice of the Committee. Ironically their earlier stand was vindicated when, in 1919, the Committee's post-war policy reversed the previous preference for mixed schools, and Gopsall Street was reconverted to take infants' and boys' departments, while Upper Conduit Street reverted to a girls' department.<sup>43</sup>

Though the Church schools were certainly harried by the Committee, their attentions stopped short of persecution. For often members were merely following up the demands of the Board of Education, whose inspectors frequently suggested that schools should either be improved or closed. Usually the threats were used with the intention of effecting the necessary improvements. Since the Committee would have been faced with the additional expenditure of accommodating the displaced children if schools were closed there was much less keenness on closure. The latter was at times insisted upon by the Board against the Committee's wishes. In the case of the Wesleyan School in Clyde Street, the intention was to take over the secular instruction, leaving the trustees 'the

right to impart religious instruction on each or any school day, from 9 to 9:30 in the morning, or from 4 to 4:30 in the afternoon',<sup>44</sup> but the Board would not approve because of accommodation deficiencies, and the school was closed instead, after a temporary take-over to allow the headmaster to reach retirement age. In 1911 the Committee expressed 'the opinion that local conditions shew no likelihood of any further Non-provided Schools being closed at the instance of the Education Committee'.<sup>45</sup> Yet further closures occurred when the Board's demands placed impossible financial burdens on managers. St. Luke's and St. John's (Albion Street) were closed in 1930,<sup>46</sup> while St. George's was taken over, the Church Council having declared itself 'unable to guarantee the cost of repairs to St. George's school as required by the Board of Education'.<sup>47</sup> In the case of St. Patrick's, which was among four schools mentioned in a letter from the Board in 1924 as not being qualified to continue under maintenance unless alterations were carried out by 1 April 1930, permission was sought from the Committee to build a new school in Harrison Road, where it would be surrounded by modern housing developments.<sup>48</sup> Although the application was granted, since it was a school for only 200 pupils the Committee took the opportunity to limit its intake to infants and juniors.<sup>49</sup>

After the initial wave of vindictiveness the Education Committee was more concerned with the equalising of educational opportunities than in maintaining an attitude of disapproval. This was evident in the area of teacher appointments. Some Church schools

were desperately short of staff. On 20 November 1903 Edward Atkins wrote to the Elementary Schools Sub-committee on behalf of the managers of the County School, who had resolved: 'That owing to deficiency of staff, the Head Mistress be instructed to admit no more children....with the exception of children from the Parish and immediate neighbourhood - until we have been able to meet with teachers to supply the deficiency'. The Sub-committee, unable immediately to cope with a sudden influx in Council schools in the area, were not in favour of the idea, unfortunately for Atkins, who led an Anglican delegation to <sup>the</sup> a meeting at which it was considered. The delegation drew attention to the inequality in the staffing of Church schools as compared with Council schools. They suggested that the Council advertisements, which were, apparently, smaller and less conspicuous than those of other similar sized towns, be not only made more appealing in size, but should also mention the kind of teachers required. They also felt that the names of particular schools should be mentioned, together with the names of managers' correspondents, to whom they considered applications should be directed.<sup>50</sup> The Sub-committee, whose members had considered themselves generous in advertising for staff for all public elementary schools in the town, regardless of type, took the obvious step. Alexander Baines reported to the full Education Committee that they had:

'interviewed a deputation representing the Church Schools' Association, from whom they had learnt that their method of advertising had not met with the approval of all the managers. After carefully reviewing the whole question and bearing in mind that the Education Act, 1902, gives to the managers of denominational schools the privilege of appointing the teachers required in such schools, the committee decided to discontinue

any mention of denominational schools in future advertisements for teachers, and to require the managers of those schools to procure at their own cost....the staff'.

There was a protest from Canon Rendell, but the report was adopted. Rendell knew well enough that the managers of voluntary schools could not usually afford such expenses, and would soon have to appeal to the Committee to take the burden of appointments off their shoulders. The Committee as a whole, on its side, knew that the delegation had played into Liberal hands. Following up its main resolution, the Committee agreed, at its own expense, 'to secure and appoint, without reference to the managers, all the teachers required in any of the denominational schools, if the managers intimate their willingness'.<sup>51</sup> Liberal members, well satisfied, then sat back and waited, for the pleas that were bound to come. On 22 April 1907 the Elementary Schools Sub-committee reported to its parent body that it had received a request from the managers of some non-provided schools 'that your Committee will, as necessity arises, undertake the appointment of teachers on the staff of such schools'.<sup>52</sup> The request was accepted without demur, and the Committee then set about the equalising of staffing between the two types of schools.

Within a few years there was virtually no difference in staffing between council and voluntary schools, so that when, in 1911, there was a request from the National Federation of Church School Teachers for the automatic transference of teachers from non-provided schools to provided schools, wherever one of the former

was closed down or taken over, there was no hesitation in the giving of an affirmative reply. It was also made clear that it was already the normal practice to do this.<sup>53</sup> At least one of the schools taken over had teachers of exceptional quality appointed to it. Before St. George's was taken over in 1930 the staff consisted of four qualified teachers. The headmistress, Miss M. V. Howard, who was to continue in the same post until 1948, was noted for her interest in the individual care of each child. Miss H. E. Wix, H.M.I., who inspected the school in 1927 noted that: 'The schemes show much thought and care; they ensure systematic progress from class to class and a uniformity of method. The head mistress keeps interesting monthly records of each child's progress'. Of the other three teachers, two of them, Miss J. Lowe and Miss M. A. Walton, are known to have been young women of considerable ability. Miss Lowe was notable for devising 'a very successful scheme....to combine speech training with rhythmic work throughout the three classes', which Miss K. M. Thomas, H.M.I., described in 1932 as 'of sufficiently outstanding quality to make it a model of what can be done'. Both Miss Lowe and Miss Walton were later selected for the staff at Haddenham Road Special School.<sup>54</sup>

Another aspect of the equalising of educational opportunity, which Churchmen saw as a minor form of persecution, lay in the Education Committee's insistence on the cessation of occasional religious holidays that had been customary in Church schools. On the advice of head teachers a uniform school year was adopted from

1 August 1905, and rigidly enforced.<sup>55</sup> Even the application of St. Mary's for permission for its pupils to attend a special service in the Church on the first day of each term between 9:00 and 9:35 a.m. was refused.<sup>56</sup> Only on two occasions did the Committee relent. St. George's (with other Anglican schools) was allowed to close on the afternoon of 21 February 1827 'to commemorate the Hall-owing of the Diocese and Cathedral of Leicester'.<sup>57</sup> Though applications were regularly made for the closing of schools on Ascension Day they were normally refused up to 1925. The famous Bell versus Graham case of 1907, wherein judgment had been given, on appeal, against the West Riding Local Authority, does not seem to have had any influence.<sup>58</sup> In 1925, however, St. Matthew's applied for permission to allow its pupils to attend the Church for a half-hour on Fridays once a month, but were informed that it would only be allowed on Ascension Day.<sup>59</sup>

When Morant and his colleagues in the Board of Education framed the Elementary Code of 1904 their main concern, as has been mentioned, was that the elementary school should be liberalised. Aware of the constricting effects of centralised curricula, of the cramping conditions under which teachers and pupils had worked during the era of 'payment by results', and of the inadequacies of teachers whose total experience, as pupil, pupil teacher and teacher, was within the elementary schools, their aim was gradually, through the training of a different type of teacher, who had attended secondary school and training college, and through changes in attit-

ude toward the teacher, to achieve the kind of professional status that already existed in the public schools. The teacher needed training, guidance and advice, and he would still be subject to inspection, but he would gain a new dignity in his responsibility for forming the character and developing the intelligence of pupils.

The 1904 Code had far-reaching effects. It supported the efforts of teachers themselves to achieve professional status, and in doing so subtly changed the relationship between the Board, the local education authorities, and the teachers in the schools. Often it was a case of the Board supporting teachers in their attempts to rid themselves of some of the overt features of indignity placed upon them by the officers of the local authority. For the tendency was for the Committees to impose their will in the very areas where more freedom was needed. They saw themselves as filling the vacuum left by the Board in curriculum and examinations. Only slowly, after they had suffered admonition, did they relinquish their hold on syllabuses, on methods of teaching and upon examinations, for they did not realise that what they hailed enthusiastically as the opportunity for local initiative was for teachers and pupils merely a change of taskmaster. Some of the worst authorities from this point of view were the large county boroughs, where the Committees simply took over the highly organised systems of their predecessors. The school boards had developed systems of inspection geared to the achievement of good examination results. They had measured the quality of teachers by their ability to teach

the prescribed syllabus by approved methods in order to gain measurable results, by which the grants had been determined. The more efficient a school board had been the more likely was its successor to find itself in difficulties in applying the new Code.

In Leicester, as we have observed, the School Board was highly efficient toward the end of the era of payment by results. There was a remarkable system by which teachers were trained or retrained whenever new curricula or methods appeared. The inspectors were frequently in the schools to see that whatever had been decided upon was carried out in the prescribed manner. The Education Committee was, therefore, as unprepared as its inspection staff for the changes that had to come. In 1906 a special meeting was convened with Kenney Herbert and F. B. Lott, His Majesty's Inspectors in the area, 'on the subject of the Syllabuses of Work used in the Elementary Schools of Leicester, and to the alleged divergence from the present policy of the Board of Education in regard to the preparation of such syllabuses and Schemes of Work and examination of children which characterizes the work of the Leicester Education Committee as carried out by the Committee's Inspectors'.<sup>60</sup> Apparently the meeting was not a great success, for two years later a letter was received from the Board, enquiring 'whether any modifications have been made in the system of an uniform syllabus and periodical examinations on that syllabus conducted by persons other than the teachers, which was the subject of the Board's criticism'.<sup>61</sup> The Board's main objections were to the habit of



the Committee's inspectors as well as of the managers of schools of conducting examinations in the schools, but it had had occasion to disapprove of specific syllabuses that were much more constricting than any prepared by head teachers. The Board also had to write to the Committee on 12 October 1908, disapproving of a temperance syllabus, which 'deals too exclusively with temperance ....and does not include reference to the other hygienic evils of social life'. Moreover, in several details it was 'beyond the knowledge and teaching power of the average teachers'. Significantly, approval was given to the teachers to use the syllabus with due regard to local needs'.<sup>62</sup> During 1909 the Board issued its own syllabus 'to which all instruction in Temperance should conform in general character and to some extent in detail'.<sup>63</sup>

It is impossible not to feel sympathy for the Education Committee. Not only was it having to get used to a new role, but it was also feeling the need to reflect social changes. Although not subject, as the School Board had been, to direct election, it had to face a more articulate public. There were few people who had not achieved minimum literacy in the board schools. Even the lowliest ratepayer was able to vote in municipal elections. Labour representation was forcing the Committee to recognise working-class needs and demands. Representations were made about curriculum matters as about other matters, and it was not always easy to distinguish between areas that were under the authority of the headmaster of the school, and those for which the Committee was it-

self directly responsible. The tendency, whenever a complaint was received from influential or representative sections of the public, was for the Committee to take swift action to allay the criticism. It was more important to give the impression of reasonable response to the electorate than to consider, thus giving the appearance of vacillating, in whose sphere of responsibility the complaint lay. Thus when the Trades Council passed a resolution to the effect that it 'strongly condemns the action of the Leicester Education Committee in compelling children to attend school at 8.50 and 1.50, seeing that the Education Act neither compels nor suggests any such Rule, believing that if it can be shown that ten minutes is necessary to assemble the children, that should be considered School Time', there was no attempt to pass the matter on to the headmasters, nor any apparent criticism of the limited outlook of men who equated the time at school with 'clocking in' at the local factories. The assembling time in the afternoon was changed, by way of compromise, to 1:55.<sup>64</sup>

Having command of the total scene the Committee were at times more perceptive than the average head teacher. To take an example, in a situation where the number of secondary school places was increasing, and where the proportion of entrants from elementary schools was also rising, the articulation of the two systems was bound to require some adjustments. In February 1909 F. B. Lott, H.M.I., passed to the Committee, for its information, the contents of a Board of Education minute on the generally low standard

(throughout the country) of grammar among new entrants to grammar schools.<sup>65</sup> Henry Major, as the authority's chief inspector, was instructed to discuss the matter with the secondary school heads, as a result of which it was stated that 'a little more teaching of the subject in the Elementary Schools would be serviceable to the Secondary Schools'. Nevertheless the Committee declined to make grammar a compulsory subject on the elementary school timetable, preferring instead that it be given slightly more emphasis than before within the contexts of reading and composition.<sup>66</sup>

Though by 1912 the Education Committee accepted that curriculum was mainly the province of the teachers, it was still jealous of its position within the system, as an intermediary with the right to take effective action as the representative of the local public. Since it had the responsibility of appointing and supervising teachers its views could hardly be ignored in the schools. When, without seeking formal approval, a handwork supervisor put into operation a new system of manual training, approval was given retrospectively, but it was intimated 'that in future changes of principle should before being put into practice, be approved by the Elementary Schools Sub-committee!'.<sup>67</sup> The Committee was just as insistent when it was by-passed by His Majesty's Inspectors. W. E. Wilford complained at one meeting that difficulties were being caused 'on account of the methods adopted by H.M. Inspectors in their criticism of, and endeavours to introduce changes in, the school work and methods of teaching'. Since the Inspectors were advocating, in the case of the teaching of reading the 'adopt-

ion of the old memory system....in lieu of the more modern phonic system' and 'causing a feeling of considerable unrest amongst the teachers' the complaint was taken seriously. Steps were taken to confer with the head teachers and with the inspectors; subsequently a number of inspection reports were altered.<sup>68</sup>

During the early 1900s the revelations of the 'overpressure' controversy, which had drawn attention to the problems of trying to educate children who were deficient in nutrition and health, were revived by the manpower problems of the army during the Boer War. The rejection of thousands of young men by the army recruiting staff, and the estimation of Sir Frederick Maurice, that some sixty per cent. of the male population of the appropriate age group was unfit for service, resulted in the subsequent publication of the Report of an Inter-Department Committee on Physical Deterioration in 1904.<sup>69</sup> The Report had far-reaching repercussions in elementary schools.

The question of free meals was not a new one. Dr. Crichton-Browne's Report to the Education Department upon the alleged overpressure of work in public elementary schools (1884), which drew attention to 'these half-starved children in London schools', coincided almost exactly with the formation of the Social Democratic Federation, which, in its inaugural programme, demanded free and compulsory education, 'together with the provision of at least one wholesome meal a day in each school'. Many free meals were served during the closing years of Queen Victoria's reign by the

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urgent cases, as distinct from long term cases.<sup>73</sup> In the meantime the new Liberal government of 1906 produced the Provision of School Meals Act in an effort to retain the support of Labour voters. A subsequent enquiry in Leicester elicited the information that meals were not being provided very satisfactorily throughout the town. The work had been undertaken by the Citizen's Aid Society, but only one committee, serving St. Martin's and Newton Wards, was actually functioning, while at least 695 children needed meals. It was recommended that a School Canteen Committee be appointed by the Education Committee, to use the proceeds of a farthing rate in four centres located at or near schools in Elbow Lane, Mellor Street, Milton Street and Overton Road.<sup>74</sup> Many objections were raised by Conservatives and some Liberals at subsequent meetings of the Education Committee and the Town Council,<sup>75</sup> but strong representations in favour of meals for poor children were made by groups outside the Council. The Leicester Labour Party sent a letter expressing the 'strongest condemnation' of the Committee's delay in putting the permissive legislation into effect, and urged early action.<sup>76</sup> By October 1907 the School Canteen Committee had been formed.<sup>77</sup>

Those who opposed the implementation of the Provision of School Meals Act were convinced that the need for free meals in Leicester was not very great. They were vindicated (in their own estimation) as the demand soon dwindled to the point where children could be accommodated by the supply of food direct to each home. Only when recession hit the town were feeding centres needed,

as in 1915, when two had to be opened for a twelve month period, and in 1922, when four centres were opened. Even in the latter year, however, there were only 215 children to be accommodated.<sup>78</sup> So that it was not long before these centres were reduced to two. During the 1930s even these ceased to exist, though it is to be doubted that there were no children who might have benefitted from the supply of free meals. But it was in the midst of the deepest of depressions that a new pride was born and a bitter hatred of the means test was established. Rather than face the indignity of yet another means test for the obtaining of free meals for their needy children people 'on the dole' simply did without.

Alongside developments in the provision of free meals came the provision of medical facilities. In this sphere also local action preceded legislation. During March 1905 the Education Committee discussed at length and agreed upon the appointment of a full-time medical officer, who would not only examine defective children every six months, in accordance with government regulations, but also examine each new teacher appointee before his or her appointment was confirmed. It was thought that the latter would save money by reducing the number of health breakdowns among teachers, the incidence of which was considered to be very high.<sup>79</sup> In October 1905 it was noted that many children arrived at the Overton Road School in a dirty condition. A nurse was engaged by the Committee for a few weeks 'to examine the children and to visit their parents'. It was agreed that she could, if necessary, report cases of lice infestation to the Sanitary Comm-

ittee.<sup>80</sup> The concern was not limited to Labour and Liberal members, for W. E. Hincks, a Conservative, called attention to the lack of washing facilities at the school, as a result of which it was agreed that a bath be provided as an experiment. Dr. A. Warner, who had been appointed medical officer for schools, suggested 'that the teacher after giving a lesson in cleanliness should select any children he thought suitable for the bath which should in no sense be a punishment but rather a privilege'.<sup>81</sup> Early in 1907 there were still complaints about dirty children at Overton Road, but the school was discovered to be not unique. A report by Dr. Warner indicated that there were many similar children at other schools.<sup>82</sup>

Health developments in Leicester reflected a general concern within the community, both local and national. The Labour movement in particular was stirred by the urging of Margaret McMillan and Will. Thorne. The former spoke at the I.L.P. conference of 1906 of the need for medical inspection in schools and for a greater concentration upon the teaching of physical education. The latter urged the T.U.C. to demand free meals, free medical inspection and advice, and physical education. The resulting pressure on Augustine Birrell, as President of the Board of Education, resulted in the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act, which, from the beginning of 1908, gave power to local authorities to institute the medical inspection of children.<sup>83</sup> Leicester Education Committee appointed a permanent full-time nurse on 25 November 1907, ready to



comply with the Act in the following January.<sup>84</sup>

The limitation of the Committee's activities to inspection was impracticable, for, while it was useful in the case of parents who could afford to pay for treatment where it was needed, it did little to help the poorer families. Further legislation in 1912 made it legally possible to incur expenditure by establishing medical and dental clinics where some treatment could be given.<sup>85</sup> Yet even before this some action had had to be taken. Before the end of 1911 there were two full-time medical officers, much of whose time was taken up in treating an epidemic of ringworm. A few months later there was an ear and throat specialist, an eye specialist, a dentist and an anaesthetist, whose tasks were to treat 'only those children....for whose treatment adequate provision cannot otherwise be made'.<sup>86</sup> Special educational provision was also made for 30 short-sighted children at the Short Street School (which already provided for deaf children), after Dr. Warner gave an encouraging report on a class he had seen in Camberwell. The report had noted that:

'Broadly speaking the education of these children is aural and manual. They are not allowed to read any books, to do any ordinary pen work, or sewing. Each child has a special desk, which is unusually large and capable of being reversed. The reverse side is used as a black-board upon which all writing exercises are done in very large characters. When the Medical Officer advises it, certain children are taught to read by the Brail (sic.) method'.<sup>87</sup>

The Committee drew the line, however, at least temporarily, at open-air classes for weakly children. During 1909 it had rec-

eived a joint deputation from the Leicester Health Society and the Society for the Prevention of Consumption. Drs. Sleight and Millard, together with Mrs. Isabel C. Ellis, argued that children should be sent daily to a school on the outskirts of the town, where the experience of being in the open air for long periods of the day would help to build them up, and so ward off the prevalent tuberculosis. Major, the Chief Inspector, was asked to prepare a report on the costs of such a class, and to enquire as to the way in which funds had been raised to finance similar ventures in London, Bradford and Halifax.<sup>88</sup> When Major, after investigation, reported that rate funds were used, and that the cost of setting up a class for eighty children over a period of six months would be between £1,000 and £1,500, there was a hasty decision not to act.<sup>89</sup> But this was probably not the only reason, for when, after the first world war, it was again proposed to develop open air facilities, it became clear that many people assumed the school would cater for the needs of infectious tubercular cases. Since this later development was proposed for the isolated Western Park, to which the children would have to travel by tram-car, through a select residential area, there was considerable opposition from middle-class people living in houses adjacent to the route. At a meeting held in connection with the project it was explained that there would be no tubercular cases. On the other hand, since emphasis was laid upon the proposed school being 120 yards from the nearest house, suspicions were not allayed. So that the majority attending the meeting voted against the plan.<sup>90</sup> At a subsequent meeting of

the Education Committee these pressures were particularly strong, and, despite the pleading of Liberal Alderman J. R. Frears, caused the temporary abandonment of the scheme.<sup>91</sup> When open air facilities were developed, after the uproar had died down, spare classrooms at the new Hinckley Road Infants' School were adapted. With the isolation factor removed there was no longer any fear that infectious cases were to be sent to the school.

The resurrection of some manifestations of the 'overpressure' controversy also inspired action on the nursery education of children below the age of compulsory attendance, but not before changes in the Board of Education's regulations produced certain negative responses. In 1905 the Board's women inspectors reported that the evidence was against any intellectual advantage accruing from school attendance before the age of five. Though they also stressed the need for nursery schools, it was the negative aspect that was seized upon, for, among the middle-classes at least, it was accepted that small children should be taught by their mothers within the security of the home. More important still was the matter of finance. Although the birth rate was beginning to decline, so that population was increasing at a slower rate than during the last decades of the nineteenth century, school children were not growing less in number. More children were attending a growing number of secondary schools, while others remained longer in the senior classes of the elementary schools. Before leaving office the economy conscious Conservative government, still aware of the

financial effects of the Boer War, therefore used the women inspectors' report as an excuse to insert a new clause into the Code during 1905 allowing local authorities to refuse admission to pupils under the age of five.<sup>92</sup>

In Leicester the Education Committee's reaction to the change in the Code was to oppose it. It was not merely a case of a Liberal local authority opposing a measure imposed by a Conservative government. The head teachers were also opposed. They were by this time on a salary scale related to the number of pupils in the school, and were quite aware that numbers were beginning to fall.<sup>93</sup> They were not enamoured of the idea of salary reductions. So that, as a result of a conference between the Elementary Schools Sub-committee and the head teachers, it was decided that no action should be taken to deprive children under five years of school places.<sup>94</sup>

Three years later, however, there was a change of mind. A motion to the effect: 'That no children under 5 years of age be admitted into Medway Street, Melbourne Road, Mantle Road and Narborough Road Schools during the coming [1909-10] educational year', was passed unanimously. There were a number of reasons for the change. This time there was no Conservative government; a Liberal government had withdrawn grant payments for pupils below the age of five. The steep rise in rates resulting from a general admittance of under-fives could not be countenanced. Yet it must be noticed that the withdrawal was only from certain schools. Some rise in the rates had to be accepted, presumably

because there was space in the schools, which, if unused, would soon result in public outcry. For during the days of the School Board attendance of children between three and five years of age had been popular, since many mothers were full-time hosiery workers. Taking over the School Board's role, the Education Committee noted in 1908 that, although it was ideal for children of three to five years to receive initial training in their own homes, 'present circumstances do not permit this among very large numbers of Elementary School Children'.<sup>95</sup> The particular schools chosen for the withdrawal of under-fives were those adjacent to mixed schools engaged in re-organising to cope with increased senior classes. As the Committee minutes state, the change would enable it 'to utilize some of the spare accommodation in the Infants' Departments for the instruction of children hitherto taught in [Standard I in] the Upper Departments, and will relieve the pressure on the accommodation of some of the Upper Schools'.<sup>96</sup>

Once the local authority had committed itself to such action it was virtually inevitable that there would be an extension to other schools, as re-organisation proceeded, and as improvements in accommodation reduced the available number of school places. Despite reductions in school population there were some very overcrowded schools. In terms of nineteenth century curricula the accommodation had been adequate for the numbers admitted, but with the H.M.I.s now criticising 'over-passivity' adversely, and recommending the 'stimulation of interest' and 'co-operative activity',<sup>97</sup>

they were no longer adequate. In the case of Lansdowne Road School, for instance, it was noted by F. B. Lott, H.M.I., that: 'The principal room is used by four large classes. The floor space is almost all taken up by desks.... The other large room is occupied by two large classes, the desks being ranged deeply'.<sup>98</sup> The same inspector observed also at Milton Street that the 'classification into large groups and the ranging of desks eight deep, the noise of passing traffic, and the somewhat scanty light, make it difficult to attain the best forms of Infant School teaching'.<sup>99</sup> At another school he commented that the children sat for too long in the same position because the room was 'not large enough for much free movement'.<sup>100</sup> These criticisms were reflected in the Board's recalculation of accommodation requirements, from an overall eight square feet to nine square feet for infants and ten square feet for older children. This reduced accommodation in the Leicester elementary schools by 3,000 places.<sup>101</sup> Immediately it was noted that the new regulations had made it necessary to use the hall at Mantle Road School for two classes.<sup>102</sup> Long before the outbreak of war in 1914 children under four had disappeared entirely from all of the schools, while there were decidedly fewer four year old pupils.<sup>103</sup>

Yet the under-fives never entirely disappeared from all the schools. The first world war, with its need for large numbers of women in the factories, probably saved them. In 1920 it was observed that there were still 1,368 children under five in the

schools. Though the Education Committee looked forward to their disappearance, those hopes were motivated, not now by efforts to cut the rates, but by the expectation that the children under five would be accommodated in special nursery schools.<sup>104</sup>

Like most other local authorities Leicester's role, before post-war reconstruction, was largely a negative one, as we have seen. Yet it was not entirely so. An imaginative curriculum on Froebelian lines was devised in 1908.<sup>105</sup> By 1918, when the Fisher Act included discretionary clauses relating to nursery schools, the Education Committee was ready to adopt a more positive stance. Attempting to 'kill two birds with one stone' a proposal was made for the purchase of a house in Elbow Lane area to serve as a housewifery centre and nursery centre.<sup>106</sup> Although the project was approved, however, there was some difficulty about finding suitable premises. By 1920 it was decided that three nursery schools should be established in the 'congested areas' around Sanvey Gate, Bedford Street and Chester Street. In each case it was proposed that two houses should be combined.<sup>107</sup> None of these materialised. As Nannette Whitbread summarizes the train of events:

'Two Circulars in 1921 and 1922 severely restricted expenditure and effectively prevented further action until they were withdrawn by the first Labour government in 1924. Even then there was little positive encouragement, and two years later the grant for children under five in infant schools was reduced'.

Between 1919 and 1929 only 15 new nursery schools appeared, to add to the 13 already in existence; out of the total of 28 only 12 were administered by local authorities.<sup>108</sup>

In 1926 Circular 1371 brought a further reduction in grant. Despite this, however, a Nursery Schools Committee was set up in Leicester in 1927. Reporting to the Elementary Schools Sub-committee in December it stated that a visit had been made to the Rachel McMillan School, where the visitors had been impressed by 'some 400 children drawn from the poorest parts of Deptford, acting in a self-restraining manner at their games, their dances and their meals'. Visits had also been made to schools in Manchester and Bradford. Schools in the latter were described as being 'relatively small with 25, 60, 60 and 80 respectively on the rolls' and 'placed in the more densely populated centres'. As a result a nursery school was proposed for the Park Estate, adjacent to the new Marriott Road School, which had no children under five. Strongly supported by Labour members in the Committee, it was to be regarded as part of an exercise in community development. It was recognised that the Park was one of several council housing estates in process of development, a post-war phenomenon without precedent, containing people who had been uprooted from the close-knit streets and neighbourhood communities in the town centre. There were 606 children in the under-five age group above the age of three. So that it was agreed, despite Circular 1371, to proceed with 'the erection of shelters'.<sup>109</sup>

During the 1930s the Consultative Committee (chaired by Sir W. H. Hadow), after the publication of reports on the education of adolescents and children in primary schools, proceeded to prod-



uce the report on Infant and Nursery Schools (1933), which favoured the extension of nursery facilities in industrial towns. While the McMillan type of nursery school was favoured, it was realised that an easier answer might be found in many areas by opening nursery classes in existing schools. The report, based to a great extent on H. A. Harris's research into physical development, and on research into mental and emotional development by Cyril Burt and Susan Isaacs,<sup>110</sup> had a considerable impact. It was championed by the Labour Party, which, having already experienced the problems of forming governments in 1924 and 1929, was now undoubtedly the successor to the Liberals (at least on the national scene) as one of the twin pillars of a two-party system. It also gained from the fact that the economic cycle had begun its slow but sure upward climb to relative prosperity in the few years that remained before the beginning of the second world war. This made funds easier to obtain.

In Leicester the Labour Party was stronger in the Council (by now a City Council) than it had been in pre-war days, but it did not always form a majority. Its contribution was mainly in committee work, where all parties, in the interests of the working relationship that they shared, were more ready to compromise. The compromise reached in the case of nurseries was to develop facilities within the existing schools rather than in separate establishments. The precedent of 1927 was not to be followed. The tendency was to favour a situation where the child was able

to progress from nursery class to infants' class without loss of continuity or a sense of security. It was also cheaper, because fewer administrative units (and thus fewer head teachers) were needed.<sup>111</sup> They were able to note, moreover, that Appendix IV of Infant and Nursery Schools had described one of their existing nursery classes in very favourable terms.<sup>112</sup> By 1834 all of the infants' schools in Leicester had nursery classes for children between the ages of three and five. They were attended by 27% of the age group.<sup>113</sup>

When the Education Act of 1902 provided the opportunity for some pupils to transfer from elementary to secondary schools it was not envisaged that this would make very much difference to the two different systems. The Conservatives still viewed education in terms of class distinctions. The elementary system was for the working-classes, while the secondary system was mainly for the fee-paying middle-classes. The former prepared pupils for a proletarian life at the factory bench or as a lower form of clerk; the latter prepared for the professions and for positions of leadership in industry and commerce. It was agreed that highly intelligent working-class children would move into the secondary stream by means of scholarships and exhibitions, and eventually become absorbed by the middle-classes, but that other working-class children wishing to remain at school beyond thirteen or fourteen should do so in higher elementary schools, which had been made possible by a Board of Education minute in 1900.<sup>114</sup>

In terms of social attitudes then prevailing the system was not unreasonable. The Liberals in 1907 made modifications to the system by encouraging the development of more secondary schools with 25% of free places, but made no really basic change in the system. Although Labour politicians were beginning to grope toward the ideal of secondary education for all children, there was not much enthusiasm at the 'grassroots' level. Nor was there much enthusiasm for more advanced elementary education, particularly in prosperous Leicester, where most working-class parents were keen for their children to leave school at the earliest possible moment. Most of them, however, regarded the secondary school as a middle-class institution teaching subjects of little relevance to working-class life. If they had wanted their children to remain longer, it would have been in some form of elementary education, or in technical education.

Though the action of the Liberals in increasing the number of free places had not seemed particularly revolutionary it had significant repercussions in the elementary schools, where the possibility of achieving a secondary school exhibition spurred on the competitive instincts of upper working-class children, whose teachers devised schemes to enable the brightest of them to learn at a more rapid rate. By 1908 Henry Major was able to report two different schemes in operation. In one scheme, in use at Moat Road, Medway Street and Green Lane Schools, 'the standards were divided into classes of bright, and less bright pupils, and the former did  $1\frac{1}{2}$  years work in the twelve months'. In the other scheme, in use at

Narborough Road and Harrison Road Schools, promotion was made every six months. Though Major stressed that more time was needed for realistic assessments to be made, he noted under the first scheme 'good results have been obtained with the minimum of disturbance of routine and of change of teachers'. He was less keen on the second scheme, reporting that 'though the pupils had 'shown no weakness in accuracy of Arithmetic', there was 'probably due to the lessened time allowed to the lessons, less finish in setting down the Arithmetic, and less finish in the Writing and Composition, and some weakness in Spelling'.<sup>115</sup>

The advantages of the new scheme were obvious. For some pupils there was a greater chance of obtaining a free place at a secondary school; for others there was the opportunity of obtaining the Labour Certificate at the age of thirteen, enabling them to seek employment then rather than wait until the age of fourteen. Some pupils even attained the level of the Labour examination before reaching the age of thirteen. So that by 1911 the idea of streaming had to be combined with the development of further studies to prevent 'marking time'. Significantly, since grade classes were already being developed for thirteen year old boys at the Technical School, it was proposed by a group of head teachers that a scheme be adopted in which there was 'an advanced curriculum for Standard VII with the object of fitting the children more particularly for the occupation they will take up on leaving school'.<sup>116</sup> By October the scheme was adopted.<sup>117</sup> The curric-

ulum was clearly designed for those destined for minor clerical occupations. French was taught, beginning at Standard IV, to enable the pupils to gain a reading knowledge of the language.

Although F. B. Lott, as the local H.M.I., approved the commercial bias of the course he advised that in the future there should also be instruction on 'the scientific side of industrial work'.<sup>118</sup>

By the end of the school year 1911-12 the Education Committee was in a position to review the year's work in the advanced Standard VII classes. The results varied from school to school, but a pattern emerged. Schools in lower working-class areas had great difficulty in retaining pupils. Melbourne Road reported only one advanced pupil left at the end of the year. The headmaster of Green Lane reported that 'the parents insist that the children on reaching Standard VII should go on to the Labour Examination'. Similarly at Medway Street it was recorded that 'very few are left to form Ex-VII Standard classes'. The head at Ellis Avenue reported that 73% had left since the course began. The commercial bias was less attractive where children normally went to work at factory benches. Moreover the lower were the parents' wages the more necessary was it for children to begin their working life early. Schools in upper working-class and lower middle-class areas were notably more successful. At Moat Road, for instance, it was reported that 'one-third of those selected for promotion in 1907 are still at school in the Ex-VII Standard'. At Harrison Road there were 72 advanced pupils. The number of pupils attempting

the Labour Examination there had diminished over two years from eighteen to eight. Narborough Road reported 42 advanced pupils. No doubt the commercial emphasis was suited to the ambitions of these pupils.

In order to retain working-class boys and girls the Education Committee agreed to have mechanics instead of book-keeping for boys, and to offer additional time to the girls for domestic subjects.<sup>119</sup> The irony of this decision though, was that the original decision was the right one, despite the difficulties, for boys with technical interests were already able to attend classes at the Technical School upon attaining the age of thirteen years. The growth area was, as had been perceived earlier, in the teaching of commercial subjects, especially those that could be equated with subjects taught in the secondary schools. The Leicester Socialist Society sharply reprimanded the Committee for failing to make adequate arrangements for the teaching of French, the Committee itself taking refuge in saying that it had had no encouragement from the Board.<sup>120</sup> Within a year of the beginning of the war the Committee's advanced classes were facing severe competition from private commercial schools. The Imperial Typewriter Company established a Business School at 22 London Road, where it advertised that 'Reading, Writing and Arithmetic are taught in addition to the usual commercial subjects'. The Committee had occasion to refuse the School's application to take pupils below the age of thirteen.<sup>121</sup> Mr. Bridges, the proprietor of Copley College in

Rutland Street deemed it prudent not to ask. In May 1915 it was noted that 'a difficulty has arisen in regard to certain children who have been withdrawn....from Public Elementary Schools to attend the Copley College'.<sup>122</sup> Although Bridges stated that the College was recognised by the Board of Education as an efficient secondary school this claim was untrue. On the other hand Bridges was a qualified teacher, and his assistant had passed London matriculation. Though the local inspectors described the premises as 'totally unsuitable', with one room in particular, used by about ten girls, 'small and badly ventilated', and the tone and atmosphere as 'quite unsuited to young girls below school leaving age', they had to admit that 'more individual tuition' in the '3R's, with French, Geography, History, Shorthand, etc.' made the instruction reasonably efficient. There were, in any case, no legal powers by which the school could be closed, so that Committee concentrated on 'preventing by persuasion' the attendance of pupils at this and similar schools.<sup>123</sup> The Committee were interested when the Staffordshire Education Committee obtained the conviction of a parent on the grounds that the tuition his child received at a commercial school could not be regarded as 'efficient elementary education', but decided that competition was the best answer to the problem.<sup>124</sup>

During 1917, with H. A. L. Fisher's succession to the Presidency of the Board of Education, new supplementary grants were made available to local authorities, in part to promote schemes for the development of more advanced work in the elementary schools, to

which the Leicester Education Committee responded immediately. The chairman of the Elementary Schools Sub-committee, Councillor Hubbard, suggested that they 'should establish Vocational Schools for the specialized instruction of older children - commencing with say three centres organised as Commercial, Industrial and Domestic Schools - and that this provision would be a preliminary step towards the formation of the Central Schools'.<sup>125</sup> The inspectors were authorised to visit central schools in London and Liverpool to gain information that would be useful in preparing recommendations.<sup>126</sup> Central schools had begun to develop after the disappearance of Morant from the Board of Education in 1911.<sup>127</sup> The first ones in London had absorbed the higher elementary schools, and prepared the pupils for immediate employment on leaving. By the end of 1911-12 there were 42 central schools, 19 of which had a commercial bias, 16 an industrial bias, while 7 attempted to do both aspects. From London the idea had spread to Manchester and other industrial towns in the north.<sup>128</sup>

The Leicester scheme was ambitious. It proposed that five schools (Narborough Road, Mantle Road, Ellis Avenue, Moat Road and Avenue Road) be turned into central schools, in which the Standards VI and VII were to consist of four sections:

- A. Commercial section (Commercial Arithmetic with Elements of Commerce, Elements of Book-keeping, French, Shorthand and Typing);
- B. Industrial section for Boys (Practical Drawing, Practical Mathematics, Practical Science (Mechanics and Physics), Practical Geography, Practical Woodwork and Practical Metalwork);



C. Industrial section for Girls (Advanced Domestic Science, Household Accounts, Industrial Needlework with necessary Drawing);

D. An ordinary Standard VI and VII Section.

Each section was to devote half the timetable to its specialised curriculum. The classes were to have an absolute maximum of 48 pupils, but a preferred maximum of 40. In the event of over-application for places preference was to be given to the children whose parents undertook to allow them to remain at school until they were fourteen.<sup>129</sup>

All parties supported the central schools, Liberals and Conservatives with enthusiasm, Labour with reservations. The Labour Party Annual Conference of 1917 had committed itself to universal and compulsory secondary education.<sup>130</sup> A W.E.A. summer school at East Langton (near Market Harborough), attended mainly by men from Leicester, passed a resolution urging the Leicester Education Committee to extend the new provisions beyond the five schools 'in order to meet the wishes of democracy for equal facilities for all children to pass from the Nursery School to the University'.<sup>131</sup> The schools were destined to remain within the province of elementary education, however. All that Labour in the Leicester context felt able to do was to urge an extension of the facilities that were granted to a few schools to many more schools. F. P. Armitage, appointed as the first Director of Education in 1919, agreed with this point of view. He noted that the existing experiment had been successful (partly because of the raising of the school leaving age),

and himself urged that similar classes be provided at other schools.<sup>132</sup>

Later, laboratories were constructed at Elbow Lane, King Richard's Road and Willow Street Schools, but in these cases there was no provision for commercial classes.<sup>133</sup>

Fisher's Education Act, coinciding as it did with the ending of hostilities in Europe, was viewed with much hope for the future. For not only was the statutory school leaving age raised to fourteen, but education was conceived as a process to be continued up to at least the age of eighteen years, either through full-time study in a secondary school or through part-time study at a continuation school after leaving an elementary school. All local authorities were required to prepare a plan for the future, encompassing the total educational structure of the city. The Leicester plan placed the upper elementary schools in three categories. Group I was to consist of intermediate schools, reserved 'for children and young people between 12 and 16 who have not obtained entrance to the Secondary Schools or who, though eligible, are not prepared to undertake to stay....beyond the statutory period of school life'. Six local authority schools (Avenue Road, Narborough Road, Melbourne Road, Ellis Avenue, Mantle Road and Moat Road) together with one voluntary school (St. Martin's) were chosen for this status. Group II was to consist of some 26 schools (17 local authority and 9 voluntary), which were to provide education for pupils between eight and fourteen, while group III, consisting of 20 schools (6 local authority and 14 voluntary), was to cater to the needs of the eight to twelve age range.<sup>134</sup> So that, from the viewpoint of a

child attaining the age of eleven there would be a hierarchy of schools, with secondary schools at the apex, below which were the intermediate schools with selected pupils, and the senior elementary schools (group II) with non-selected pupils. Extending the hierarchy still further were special classes to be organised within each group II and group III school. These special classes, for backward pupils, were to have not more than fifteen pupils, who would be taught as individuals. They were to do intensive work in the basic subjects together with manual work. Pupils were to remain in them for only two terms before being either returned to normal classes or, if found to be mentally deficient after examination by a school medical officer, sent to an appropriate special school.<sup>135</sup>

Before the re-organisation was put into effect an important principle had to be decided, that of whether schools should be mixed or single sex establishments. The Leicester School Board, from 1880 onwards, had favoured mixed schools. So had the Education Committee hitherto. Yet a change was decided upon. The Committee declared that 'it is the general policy....to maintain separate departments for the sexes but that they reserve the right to provide dual departments if considered desirable!'.<sup>136</sup> The reservation suggests that most members did not strongly favour one or the other. The presence of Miss Emily Fortey, B.Sc., a staunch Roman Catholic, and the most intelligent and forceful woman ever to serve on the Education Committee, may well have

contributed to the decision.<sup>137</sup> Timetable problems must have had considerable influence, however, for there had been a considerable divergence in boys' and girls' curricula since the early 1880s. The growth of crafts for boys and domestic science for girls, as well as increasingly ambitious physical training and sports programmes separated the sexes for considerable lengths of time. Moreover with the increased length of schooling, pupils were remaining until well into adolescence, a fact which led to the consideration of sex education. After a long and argumentative discussion in 1922 the Elementary Schools Sub-committee decided (by the use of the chairman's casting vote) to allow the chief medical officer to give talks on the subject 'to every scholar before finally leaving school who obtains his (or her) parents' consent in writing'.<sup>138</sup> A single sex situation would clearly be necessary for such talks. Other reasons too may be suggested, such as the predilections of Sir Jonathan North, the chairman, whose preference was for single sex schools, and of F. P. Armitage, the Director, whose own teaching experience as a master at St. Paul's School had been with boys only. The existing secondary schools in Leicester must also have influenced the decision, giving the impression that schools aspiring to secondary status ought to be of one sex only.<sup>139</sup>

An effort also had to be made to improve library facilities in the aspiring intermediate and group II schools, so that the changes would not be limited to nominal categorisation. In noting that four new school libraries had been set up the Committee

were aware that two of them, at Avenue Road and Ellis Avenue, were 'intended as models of what a Children's Reference Library should be', while the other two, at Elbow Lane and Ingle Street, were 'specially designed as aids in drawing out the intelligence of the children in districts where there is little mental training beyond what the school provides'. The Committee intended, at that point, to add four or five more, some of which would be in non-provided schools.<sup>140</sup>

Despite the Director's careful preparations the re-organisation scheme was beset by problems. Between 1921, when the Geddes economies were effected by a government embattled by deep depression, and the first Labour government in 1924, the restrictions of Circular 1190 were in force.<sup>141</sup> After a respite of a few years there came the emergency of 1931, when the Leicester Education Committee had to have a special meeting on 'National Economy and Education', as a result of which capital schemes were cut from £159,284 to £30,039.<sup>142</sup>

The frustrations of a fluctuating economy were aggravated by the protests of parents, the problems of voluntary schools, and by the criticisms of His Majesty's Inspectorate when the scheme was put into operation, as well as by the disinclination of many pupils to remain at the intermediate schools beyond the statutory school leaving age. The Committee decided to phase in the scheme area by area. In each of the five areas there were many protest-

ing parents. In the northern area, for instance, comprising the old village of Belgrave and adjoining suburbs that linked it with the city, there was a school boycott. During September 1922 more than 800 children were kept at home by a well-organised parents' group led by Maurice Ranger.<sup>143</sup> Some objected to having their children in attendance at a school in a poorer neighbourhood. One newspaper correspondent stated bluntly that: 'Without wishing to hurt anyone's feelings, my first objection to transferring children from Harrison Road School [to Mellor Street] is, well, to the class of children attending this other school'.<sup>144</sup> Basically, however, the problem was that each school, by design, had originally been located within a tightly-knit neighbourhood. Reciprocal relationships had developed between the school and the parents, many of whom would have attended the neighbourhood school, and who were reluctant to see them destroyed.

This phase of the re-organisation became an issue in the municipal elections of November 1922, when the parents' group nominated candidates to contest Labour held seats in Belgrave and St. Margaret's Wards. The Labour Party, feeling that the seats were threatened by people whom they would normally claim to represent, arranged a meeting at the Secular Hall. But there was no attempt to compromise. Labour councillors were wholly committed to the scheme. Their main spokesman, J. K. Kelly, whose seat in St. Margaret's was one of those threatened, accused some people of misrepresenting his views, by saying that he had wanted to link the scheme with compulsory attendance up to sixteen, when in fact he

had said that he supported voluntary attendance at the intermediate schools to that age. He vigorously defended the scheme, stating its positive virtues.<sup>146</sup> Kelly himself retained his seat, but only by a margin of four votes. In Belgrave Mrs. E. Swainston became the first woman member of the Council by defeating the Labour incumbent by a majority of 455.<sup>147</sup>

The electoral success of the parents' group encouraged them to continue with their campaign. Since they lived in an area that still retained something of the old village atmosphere, Belgrave having been included within the Leicester boundary only since 1891, they were able to some extent to represent their campaign as that of a minority community fighting the mighty City Council and its officials. The Belgrave Citizen's Welfare Association certainly seems to have come to their aid.<sup>148</sup> They fought a losing battle, though, for the Committee was determined not to make any substantial modification in the scheme that Armitage had persuaded them was a good one. Having failed to coax the Committee to one of the parents' meetings, the parent group was put at a disadvantage tactically by the Committee's own proposal for a joint committee, consisting of four Education Committee representatives with an equal number of parents' representatives.<sup>149</sup> By the middle of January 1923, away from the emotional fervour of their general meetings, the parents' representatives were prepared to admit defeat,<sup>150</sup> but their recommendation was turned down when they reported back.<sup>151</sup> The parents then tried an appeal to

the President of the Board of Education, whose response was to support the Committee's scheme, particularly as it was understood to effect economies.<sup>152</sup> By May, with no agreement, the Committee proposed to send a 'friendly' test case to the magistrates' court for decision, but the parents would not co-operate.<sup>153</sup> After the further threat of court action, less friendly this time, the parents decided to give in. There was a note of defiance even in this. A statement by the Belgrave Citizen's Welfare Association informed that:

'The parents have decided to send their children to the schools allotted and at the same time to strongly protest against the high-handed and autocratic methods of the Education Committee and its Director in enforcing a scheme against the strongly expressed wishes and disapproval of the parents and electors of the Belgrave district'.

To clinch the matter the Director had conceded at the last moment, in order to start off the next school year without further boycott, to the request of parents that they might be allowed to keep their children at home during inclement weather.<sup>154</sup>

The advantage had always lain with the Director and the Committee. Boycotts are generally effective only when representative of a broader concern than the complaints of people in one area of a city. By making the boycott a Belgrave affair the parents ensured the indifference of the city as a whole. The tactics of Armitage in proceeding with the re-organisation area by area rather than all at once were of course a help in this, though an unintended one, for administrative convenience was the determining factor. Moreover the longer the boycott continued, the fewer



parents there were to deal with, for week by week, the numbers involved were progressively reduced. Out of 897 children out of school in September 1922 only 72 were still absent during June 1923.<sup>155</sup>

The scheme also ran into difficulties in connection with the voluntary schools. There could be no doubt that the grouping of schools would result, ultimately, in the Church of England losing contact with older pupils and finding itself providing mainly for the early years of schooling. In the central area only St. Martin's was regarded as suitable for the conferment of intermediate status. In a vain attempt to retain older pupils the managers of St. Margaret's and All Saints' put forward an alternative scheme. St. Margaret's was, in any case, faced by the necessity of rebuilding the Canning Place premises, which it was suggested should be for boys only, while All Saints' would be redeveloped as a girls' school. The infants and Standard I pupils would become a local authority responsibility. The Education Committee did not take kindly to the idea. In the first place it was noted that there were no local authority infants' schools in the immediate vicinity, so that the smallest children would, therefore, have the longest distances to walk. Furthermore, each of the proposed schools was to be for a single stream, so that there would be 'no duplication of classes to meet the needs of the quick and the slow'.<sup>156</sup> So it was agreed alternatively that St. Mary's and St. Martin's be redeveloped as schools for senior girls and senior

boys respectively.<sup>157</sup>

Problems also arose in other cases where voluntary schools were involved. In the southern area, for instance, the Committee proposed to re-organise the St. John's (Clarendon Park) and Avenue Road Schools, so that they would function as one unit. This would have had the effect, not only of depriving the voluntary school of its senior pupils, but of cutting it off at the Standard III level. Not even all of the Standard IIIs were to be left at St. John's; the 'A' and 'B' classes were to be at Avenue Road, leaving St. John's with the 'C' class.<sup>158</sup> The bitter complaints of the managers of the latter forced a reconsideration, and the modus operandi was changed, so that Avenue Road took all the seniors and the 'C' category juniors, while St. John's took all the infants and the 'A' and 'B' category juniors.<sup>159</sup> The end result of many negotiations with the managers of voluntary schools, however, was that, faced with heavy redevelopment costs that they could not afford, and an increasing depression of their status, the schools either closed, as in the case of St. John's, St. Luke's, St. Matthew's, St. Margaret's and All Saints', or, as in the case of St. George's, became local authority schools.

As the re-organisation proceeded the inspectorate also added criticisms, much to the annoyance of Armitage, who, with characteristic fighting spirit, published them together with his comments. Neither His Majesty's Inspectors nor the Director were entirely fair, and the latter was guilty of self-contradiction on the role

of the developing 11+ examination. The inspectors referred particularly to the problems of syllabus co-ordination, and felt that head teachers ought 'to agree upon minimum syllabuses for each stage up to the top of the Junior School'. Armitage replied that the General Examination at 11 or 12 was to be regarded as 'a common aim'. Yet elsewhere in the report he stated that the proportion of pupils sitting the examination was limited in some schools to 'less than one-third of the children eligible by age'. In yet another place he stated that: 'The objective of the General Examination is to determine the interests and powers of children; the papers are designed to make working to a special examination syllabus impossible'. The inspectors were also concerned by the fact that the scheme was forcing many pupils to transfer from infants' schools to junior schools in other locations, to which Armitage replied, quite reasonably, that junior schools could not be effective unless there were enough pupils to make at least two streams possible. Some criticism was also made that teachers had not been allowed to visit similar re-organisations elsewhere, but the Director commented that: 'It is not known that a similar re-organisation to Leicester's has been carried out in any other part of the country'. London's central school system, which was known in Leicester already, was not considered comparable, since the local scheme concerned all children.<sup>160</sup>

Before the re-organisation scheme was completed there were modifications. In 1926 the Consultative Committee appointed under the terms of the Act of 1918 published its first report, on the

Education of the Adolescent. It was followed by The Primary School and Infant and Nursery Schools in the early 1930s. Known collectively as the 'Hadow Report' they sketched the outlines of primary schools in which the curriculum was to be constructed 'in terms of activity and experience rather than knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored',<sup>161</sup> and of a bilateral secondary school system encompassing the whole of schooling above the age of eleven years. The existing secondary schools were to become grammar schools, while the other forms of higher elementary education were to become modern schools.<sup>162</sup> Though the times were inauspicious, politically and economically, for expansion in secondary education, for no action was taken on the suggestion for the development of modern schools (Lord Eustace Percy at the Board being opposed), there were some repercussions in Leicester.

The most obvious change was for the organisational separation of the various stages of education, except in the case of infant and nursery stages. Though junior schools still had, of necessity, to share buildings with intermediate and senior elementary schools, they became, as they had already started to become, separate departments, with their own head teachers. One disconcerting feature, however, was that recurrent expenses were significantly increased as additional head teachers were appointed. This led the Education Committee to the normal appointment of women to fill these new posts, as women's salaries were still considerably less than those of men. There was a protest by 191 out of 224

male junior school teachers. Two months later, the Committee, after promising to discuss the protest, had still made no definite statement, and the Leicester Schoolmasters' Association commented that the lack of a definite reply 'has not lessened the dissatisfaction of the men teachers'.<sup>163</sup> The only visible effect at this point was the presentation of a memorandum on equal pay by the National Union of Women Teachers, which the Committee considered, but, despite Miss Fortey's ardent support, did not commit itself on.<sup>164</sup>

A curious dichotomy, already strongly in evidence, for a marked difference to develop between the infants' and the junior schools, was intensified by the Hadow Report. The tendency to begin the streaming of junior schools, already initiated earlier in the century, was extended throughout by the increasing competition for secondary and intermediate school places and by the organisational ability of F. P. Armitage. The Report's own adoption of the age of eleven as the normal age of transfer was also a factor. When the main stimulus had been the Labour Examination all that was needed was an efficient system of promotion which ignored the age factor. At one unre-organised junior school in 1924 there was a considerable age range in each Standard. After re-organisation children remained in the same year group and moved up with them, but were differentiated by streaming. Within each stream, but particularly in each 'A' class, there was a tendency to adopt styles of teaching that were highly competitive, sometimes result-

ing in a considerable strain on the pupils. At Bridge Road Junior School in the mid-1930s each pupil sat in a seat that corresponded with his or her overall position in class. Most teachers changed the ranking each half-term, but at least one insisted on a battery

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**Table 15**      Age Ranges in an Un-re-organised Junior School 1924

Age	14	13	12	11	10	9	8	7
Standard IV	5	8	20	22	4			
III		3	9	19	18	8	1	
II	1	1	1	5	14	24	7	
I					3	12	21	3

Source: City of Leicester Education Committee: H. M. Inspectors' Report on the Northern and Western Area Schemes and Comments thereupon by the Director of Education (1924).

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of tests each Friday morning, and a re-arrangement of seating on each Monday morning. At one school, Ingle Street, an express class was opened. Since some of the children, who hitherto had attended Mantle Road or Fosse Road Schools, were said to be of a delicate disposition, it was arranged for the Committee's motor van to transport them to and from school.<sup>165</sup> At the other end of the scale a new special school for backward and mentally defective children was built in Duxbury Road.<sup>166</sup>

One of the accidental effects of the re-organisation was to place first year junior children physically within the infants'

schools. There were exceptions to this, where infants' and junior departments, as at St. George's, remained under the same head teacher, but most had been thrust out of the former 'mixed' schools to make room available for the additional senior pupils remaining in the short-lived central schools and in the groups I and II schools after re-organisation (and the raising of the statutory leaving age). The youngest juniors occupied rooms vacated by children of pre-school age before 1914. So that by the 1930s, when nursery classes were beginning to develop again, the typical infants' school consisted of pupils from five different year groups. Though the juniors were streamed on the Director's insistence the sharpness of the break between the project work of the infants' classes and the more competitive and increasingly desk-bound junior classes was cushioned.

The infants' classes were exciting places for the children, even before the Hadow Report. Miss H. E. Wix, H.M.I., herself formerly the headmistress of Avenue Road Infants' School, noted at Christow Street that 'the Number lesson is one of the best enjoyed periods of the day, since the children play - freely as far as they know - with most attractive home-made toys and do a surprising amount of calculation during their short lesson'.<sup>167</sup> Similarly, at Belgrave Road she commented on the home-made apparatus for reading and number, which were attractive and well-graded, enabling rapid progress to be made despite large classes.<sup>168</sup> After the Hadow Report, such work was intensified, particularly in

the direction of projects. One former pupil recalls that a skillful teacher of a class at Moat Road conducted a project on Longfellow's 'Hiawatha', in which writing, reading, choral speech, drama, dancing, and arts and crafts were integrated.

The intermediate schools and senior elementary schools were less successful. They were unsure of their role, which was left to each school to discover for itself. At one school, Medway Street, one class was using a 'Dalton Plan' assignment scheme, when inspected by A. T. Kerslake, H.M.I. Kerslake observed that each teacher had been left free to examine his own class, and was not impressed.<sup>169</sup> At Ellis Avenue the same official was appalled by what he regarded as the over-ambitious nature of the course, and commented that 'the quality of the children is not at present such as to render specially advanced work possible'.<sup>170</sup> As in the grammar schools, to which the senior schools generally wished to be likened, there was a tendency for teachers to become more specialised. This was a feature that Kerslake liked, though he was usually adversely critical of the manner in which it was accomplished. At Avenue Road, for example, the specialist system was described as 'working well'. Kerslake was impressed by 'a very well devised and carefully conducted system of internal examinations', but he would have liked to have noted more correlation between subjects like literature and history, and geography and science.<sup>171</sup> At Elbow Lane Kerslake was able to report that: 'The older boys are not only encouraged....to work on independent



lines, but they are being trained in habits of co-operation and mutual criticism of a friendly kind. They show in consequence much interest in their work and a large measure of self-reliance'. He also praised the literary level of the school magazine and some attempts made with the writing of original verse.<sup>172</sup>

The main problem that the senior schools, and particularly the intermediate schools, faced, was the failure to raise the school leaving age above fourteen, for in a town that was not very badly affected by the inter-war depressions, and which still had many employment outlets for children of this age group, there was little opportunity for the ambitions of the Education Committee to bear fruit in the form of fully-developed alternatives to the existing secondary schools. The growth of the modern schools advocated by the Hadow Report, placed within the context of the tripartite system of secondary education envisaged in the Spens Report of 1938, had to await the end of another world war.

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90. Leicester Daily Post, 7 November 1919. The public response was not so unreasonable when it is realised that another scheme, not put into operation because of the outbreak of war in 1914, had proposed an open air school at the Sanatorium in old Anstey Lane for '40 tubercular children', whose normal method of transport would have been the public trams. Vide L.E.C. (Elementary Schools Sub-committee) Minutes, 20 July 1914.
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159. M. Seaborne, op. cit. (1967), 77.
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161. P. W. Musgrave, op. cit. (1968), 100.
162. Olive Banks, op. cit., 120-1.
163. L.E.C. (Elementary Schools Sub-committee) Minutes, 17 February, 3 March and 16 April 1930.

164. Ibid., 5 January 1931.
165. Ibid., 19 January 1925.
166. Ibid., 18 November 1930.
167. H.M.I.'s Report: Leicester Christow Street Council School,  
24 March 1924 (Miss H. E. Wix).
168. H.M.I.'s Report: Leicester Belgrave Road Council School,  
7 March 1923 (Miss H. E. Wix).
169. H.M.I.'s Report: Leicester Medway Street Council School,  
5 January 1925 (A. T. Kerslake).
170. H.M.I.'s Report: Leicester Ellis Avenue Council School,  
8 January 1923 (A. T. Kerslake).
171. H.M.I.'s Report: Leicester Avenue Road Council School,  
12 May 1925 (A. T. Kerslake).
172. H.M.I.'s Report: Leicester Elbow Lane Council School,  
9 November 1921 (A. T. Kerslake).

Important in any consideration of developments in secondary education in Leicester is the role of the Labour Party, and reactions to it. For it was in the ranks of the Labour movement, and particularly within the trade union element, that the concept of secondary education for all developed. A Trades Union Congress resolution of 1897 condemned the provision of secondary education for 'a very small proportion of the workers' children who can come to the top after severe competition with their school-fellows', and demanded equality of opportunity. It was suggested that the school-leaving age be raised to sixteen, and that the state should provide 'such maintenance....as shall place secondary education within the reach of every worker's child'.<sup>1</sup> The T.U.C. returned to the same theme in 1906 with a similar resolution.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime the Fifth Annual Conference of the Labour Representation Committee in 1905 agreed to formulate an educational programme based on the principle that 'primary, secondary, and technological education shall be free, and shall be placed within the reach of every child by the granting of bursaries or maintenance scholarships to all children'.<sup>3</sup> By 1907 Labour was insistent, like the T.U.C. in the previous year, 'that secondary and technical education be an essential part of every child's education'.<sup>4</sup>

The Leicester Labour Party was notable for its relatively conservative stance on secondary education. Though its class basis was questioned,<sup>5</sup> there seemed to be agreement with the Liberal Dr. T. J. Macnamara, M.P., who, in reply to a letter from F. Peaker

of Leicester in The Tribune, criticised the 'traditional Tory view' that 'Secondary education belongs exclusively to the middle, the professional and the upper classes', and commented that if Britain was to compete with the United States and Germany 'we shall have to make our provision of higher education solely for brains, wherever they may be found'.<sup>6</sup> When the Town Council discussed the taking over of the Wyggeston Schools in 1907 a Labour member, Councillor Mann, advised that 'the fees should be done away with, so that the working-people might be able to send their children to obtain the same educational advantages as the children of the middle-class'.<sup>7</sup> There was greater interest in a free secondary education than in one that was universal. Even after the first world war, when idealism could be expected to run high, and when it could be noted that the Labour Party Conference of 1917 had adopted the 'Bradford Charter', favouring the abolition of fees, the raising of the school leaving age to sixteen, and universal and compulsory secondary education,<sup>8</sup> the Leicester Labour Party continued to ignore the issue of compulsion and campaigned for 'free Secondary education, with maintenance allowance when needed'.<sup>9</sup>

Though there were elements in Leicester that favoured the resolution of 1917, they were muted by circumstances. In the first place, it has to be noted that there was considerable opposition to the raising of the school leaving age, which was one prerequisite of universal secondary education. The employment situation was an encouragement to early leaving. Even the raising

of the statutory leaving age to fourteen for all pupils in 1919 was accompanied by a great deal of protest. One newspaper correspondent commented that: 'If Mr. Fisher's scheme for continuation schools passes, the children will go to school until they are nearly married. What encouragement is there to parents to bring children up at all?'<sup>10</sup> This was not untypical of working-class feeling; nor were those protests which stressed the difficulties that would be raised in families bereft of wage-earners by the war. One vociferous woman stated with bitterness that: 'Fathers were made to go and fight for their country; now mothers must fight for their children against this "tommy-rot"'.<sup>11</sup>

Some features of the existing secondary schools also did not commend themselves to working-class parents. Uniforms and gymnastic kits were considered to be more expensive than some parents could afford. There was the question of homework too, which the average working-class parent, with no personal experience of serious study, tended to regard as an unnecessary imposition. At the Wyggeston Boys' School the homework schedule had grown progressively heavier, bringing a series of protests in 1919. One of these was from an Old Wyggestonian former exhibitor, who stated that:

'Last night my little boy, who is very nearly always high in form order, was at his lessons until 10.25 p.m..... He gives great promise of skill in music, but this he has had to give up, and as for fresh air and exercise, it is impossible for him to get any.... I owe to the old school more than I can ever repay, but now there is more cramming and more subjects than when I was at school'. 12

Such a regime, so obviously geared to the attainment of high academic honours, and an ultimate professional career, would hardly appeal to the parent whose aspirations for his children were limited to the work-benches of the nearest boot and shoe or hosiery factory. There was, perhaps, in addition, a vague fear of 'losing' children, through the tendency for them to move upward in social ranking. The outcome of all these feelings was to retain pupils in the intermediate schools rather than to send them to secondary schools, even, at times, when a scholarship was offered.

It has been observed, in the preceding chapter, that the increasing influence of the middle-classes in the Labour Party resulted in a less revolutionary outlook becoming more evident. A symbol of this may be seen in the selection of James Ramsay MacDonald as parliamentary candidate in 1906. As the only Labour M.P. for Leicester between then and the first world war, and as the leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party between 1911 and 1914, he was an exceedingly powerful individual at all levels in the party. He had a flair for oratory that must have impressed Liberal Non-conformists in his constituency, and a political flair that was keen enough to sense this, for G. D. H. Cole has noted that MacDonald's parliamentary following before the first world war consisted in part of 'half-Liberal Trade Unionists'.<sup>13</sup> So that to the moderate group that had originally selected MacDonald were added those that he wooed from the Liberal ranks, giving the local party a larger but relatively more conservative

following. This movement had clear reflections in the area of secondary education. For instance, C. R. Keene, a Labour businessman, who was a member of the Leicester Education Committee for 44 years, from 1926 onwards, was a keen supporter of the tripartite system as it developed.<sup>14</sup> C. E. Wilford, a Labour boot and shoe factor, proposed in 1919 that 'provision be made in Leicester for free secondary education for all children desirous and capable of profiting by it, such provision to include adequate maintenance allowance where necessary'.<sup>15</sup> Both Keene and Wilford, like many others, accepted the idea of a selective secondary system rather than an all-inclusive one.

One may reasonably conclude that men like Keene and Wilford were concerned as much about the children of small businessmen (like themselves) as they were about the children of working-class parents, for there were many sons and daughters of small businessmen, whose incomes fluctuated from year to year according to fashion or the trade cycles or the individual's state of health, who found the gaining of a secondary education not always an easy thing. At the Wyggeston Schools, for instance, the proportions of parental occupations in 1912 were stated to be:

	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
Professional	21%	18%
Farmers	3%	4%
Wholesalers	24%	25%
Retailers and contractors	19%	23%
Clerks and commercial agents	15%	16%
Public service	4%	2%
Domestic service	1%	1%
Artisans	11%	8%
Labourers	1%	2%
Unknown	1%	1%

So that at the boys' school the classes of retailers, contractors, clerks, commercial agents and farmers were represented by 37% of the pupils, while at the girls' school they amounted to 43%<sup>16</sup> The declining fortunes of many such people in the 1920s resulted in numerous requests to be allowed to withdraw pupils. In some cases the opening of a new school with lower fees encouraged parents to seek transfers for their children, which were, however, prevented by specific rulings of the Education Committee. When the Pupil Teacher Centre was succeeded by the Newarke Secondary School one parent complained bitterly that there were 'many small tradesmen and struggling professional men making an effort to give their children the best education within their power, yet these are to be penalised if it should happen that they have been so misguided as to send their children to the Wyggeston Schools'.<sup>17</sup>

Another significant factor concerning the influence of Labour was the need to compromise within the political arena. This was true both nationally and locally, for in neither case was power held consistently and substantially over long periods. The Labour governments of 1924 and 1929 were both minority governments held in power with Liberal support. So that they were severely limited in their ability, for instance, to improve the free place regulations introduced by the Liberals in 1907. Although R. H. Tawney's Secondary Education for All (1922) envisaged an overall extension of secondary education from the 25% free place maximum allowed by the Geddes economies, the 1924 Labour government's



President of the Board of Education, C. P. Trevelyan, was prevented by the Treasury from advancing beyond 40%.<sup>18</sup> Even this was retarded by the return of a Conservative government opposed to further increases of secondary school places, for Trevelyan's grant to local authorities to enable the 40% goal to be attained was withdrawn.<sup>19</sup> Similarly in 1929 the second Labour government's attempt to reach a goal of 50% of free places was reversed by the National government's economies in 1932, which replaced the free places with special places.<sup>20</sup>

The Leicester Labour Party was in a similar situation, for only in one election, in 1928, did it secure an overall majority. Its campaign for free secondary education in 1919 was a dismal failure, for it did not result in a single gain in the Council elections of that year.<sup>21</sup> As a minority group within the Education Committee for most of the time it chose to work with the Liberals in raising the number of secondary school places in the town from 753 in 1914 to 3,100 in 1921,<sup>22</sup> and the proportion of free places from 25% to 40%.<sup>23</sup> When the Geddes economies made it incumbent upon the Committee to reduce this proportion, both Labour and Liberal groups were forced into agreeing with the imposition of a means test, with free places given only to those pupils who, having qualified by examination for a scholarship, came from families with incomes of less than one pound per week,<sup>24</sup> thus unwittingly providing the basis of the future National

government's special place regulations.

Important as the local Labour Party was in urging increased provision for secondary education, it was the Liberals who, whether possessing a majority or not, maintained their own dominance. Standing athwart the divide between Labour and Conservatives, and having to rely on each for support from time to time, they were able to hang on to power long after it was irreparably lost at the national level. This was particularly evident in the Leicester Education Committee, where Jonathan North reigned supreme as chairman. North was a highly successful businessman. With little formal education, but considerable drive and organisational ability, he had forced his way to the summit of Freeman, Hardy and Willis, the largest shoe manufacturing and retailing firm. Having already succeeded in this sphere, he turned, at the age of 34, in 1889, to local politics.<sup>25</sup> His espousal of the Liberal cause at a time when Liberalism was still dominant, his ability as an organiser, his commanding personality, and even the missing aspirates of his rough speech, combined to bring him electoral success in many Council elections. Like one of his senior colleagues, Sir Edward Wood, he became a member of the fashionable Victoria Road Baptist Church, preferring the company of the wealthier middle-classes and the ~~board~~ liberal character of their Non-conformity to the idealistic but cramping fundamentalist style of the Church of Christ that he had joined in his youth.<sup>26</sup> Like Wood also he was to be mayor more than once, an honour shar-

ed by few. In 1919, when Leicester became a city, he was knighted by King George V, somewhat dramatically, on the stage of the newly erected De Montfort Hall. North joined the Education Committee at its inception, and soon succeeded to the chairmanship, which he continued to hold even when well advanced in senility, for almost the whole of this period, his resignation occurring in 1937, and death in 1939.

Significantly, the first Director of Education, Francis Paul Armitage, who took office in 1919, was as forceful a character as North, who, as chairman, was largely responsible for his choice. Of blunt northern stock - he had been a pupil at Lancaster Grammar School from 1884 to 1894 - Armitage had graduated from Oxford with first class honours in Chemistry. Thereafter he had taken a post at St. Paul's School in London, where he had risen by 1910 to the headship of modern studies, and was also senior science master.<sup>27</sup>

In the realm of secondary education it was North and Armitage who, between them, were the main determinants of the direction that it took within the framework of the Board's regulations. Both men sympathised with the extension of the free place system, but were responsible for the development of a hierarchical structure of schools - typical in its day - that reflected class distinctions more than gradations of ability. It is this that we must now examine.

Though the Education Act made local authorities responsible

for the oversight of all educational facilities, and did not place artificial strictures on spheres of activity, it failed to provide the means by which secondary education could be advanced. The term 'secondary' was not even used in the 1902 Act. It was left to R. L. Morant to prepare the framework within which secondary schools would operate. With ideas on liberal education derived from Humboldt and Matthew Arnold, Morant wished to see grammar schools<sup>used</sup> as a means of preparation for the honours courses of the universities.<sup>28</sup> Michael Sadler, his erstwhile colleague, who had become Professor of the History and Administration of Education at the Victoria University of Manchester, agreed with him (though their personalities clashed) on educational organisation, stating, in connection with the secondary schools of Liverpool, that:

'One of the great functions of a well-organised system of modern secondary education is to give the best opportunity to boys and girls of marked ability to rise to those positions for which their talents fit them, but from which the narrow means of their parents would otherwise shut them out'.<sup>29</sup>

It was a view shared by many middle-class people. Morant, however, felt that it was impracticable to think in terms of more than a trickle of working-class children entering such schools, for few of them would be likely to remain long enough to profit by the education that was offered. Their needs were for the kind of extended elementary education that would fit them for life in a more limited environment. So that the model offered by the existing grammar schools was accepted, providing for a few scholarship places among the essentially middle-class pupil bodies.

On the other hand, Morant had to face the (for him) unpleasant fact that there was already in existence another group of secondary schools, the old higher grade schools, often organised as science schools, which trained their pupils for a life in business. Their pupils did not normally remain at school until the age of eighteen; nor were they interested in a classical curriculum. Though their scientific bias was modified they had to be recognised as part of the system. For them Morant envisaged a four-year course from twelve to sixteen years of age, less scientifically inclined than they had been.<sup>30</sup>

Municipal secondary schools were not really encouraged until after the Liberal victory in the general election of 1906, when the free place regulations were imposed. With up to 25% of free places, the door was open to expansion. In Leicester there was not one municipal secondary school in existence in 1903, but the 'Proposed Scheme for Co-ordination of Higher Education' prepared in 1906 envisaged the transfer of the Wyggeston Schools and the Alderman Newton's School to the town. The plan fitted neatly into Morant's classification system, for the former were to continue 'with a course of study arranged to meet the needs of scholars intended for the universities, professional pursuits or commerce', while the latter was to become 'an intermediate school of the "scientific and commercial type" for boys, where instruction will be given which will fit boys to become high-class skilled workmen and men of business', and be matched by a girls' school

of a similar type 'with a curriculum which will include domestic economy'.<sup>31</sup>

The absorption of the Alderman Newton's School into the town's administrative structure was accomplished with relative ease, though there was some initial opposition. The financial difficulties of the school were mentioned at the first meeting of the Leicester Education Committee, when a scheme for the future of the school was discussed.<sup>32</sup> The Secondary Schools Sub-committee, which examined the scheme in detail, noted that the school would be mixed intermediate in category, taking pupils between twelve and sixteen. The scheme was opposed on the grounds that it would be too expensive, with a two-shilling fee, for the upper working-class pupils who formed the bulk of the fee-paying pupils, and because it was feared that it would compete with the technical school, which was trying to develop day classes.<sup>33</sup> The decision was delayed until the total situation regarding secondary education had been investigated.<sup>34</sup> Moreover there was opposition from the Board of Education regarding the transfer of property and endowments because of denominational restrictions that had to be safeguarded. The matter was decided in 1906 by the discovery that the general school account was overdrawn to the extent of £2,432, which the Charity was unable to make up. The governors decided that, if the Education Committee did not take over the school, it would have to close down on 31 July.<sup>35</sup>

In the event the school continued independently for another year, and was taken over on 1 August 1907, as a secondary school with a scientific bias. The formal agreement, not approved until two years later, provided for nine representative governors, of whom five were to be chosen by the Council, and four co-opted members. Three governors ex officio, since they were parish incumbents, were necessarily Anglicans, but the others were to be appointed without consideration of denomination. Some scholarships were also to be granted to Anglican boys, but no other features of the Church connection remained.<sup>36</sup>

The situation of the Wyggeston Schools was different. They were sufficiently well-endowed to remain financially independent of the rates even after the Council take-over. It is possible to regard the take-over as an instance of 'empire building'. In presenting the honorary freedom of the borough to Alexander Baines in 1905, the mayor, Councillor Hilton, stated that: 'The Secondary Schools Committee has got to bring these [Wyggeston] schools within the area of its influence', giving as his reason the need for a co-ordinated system of secondary education.<sup>37</sup> Yet this does not explain why the governors agreed to forego their independence. Seaborne has suggested that the fact of the school's purely local appeal and support was significant, and hinted that they were already regarded, being late Victorian creations, as part of the public amenities of the town. The schools had been non-denominational from the beginning. There was a strong Liberal

element among the governors, as well as some overlapping of membership between them and the Education Committee.<sup>38</sup> It is possible also that the needs of the more distant future were considered, for the endowment, although immediately sufficient, was far from inexhaustible. By 1914, in fact, only five years after the Council had taken over, it had to be admitted in Committee that the rates would have to contribute £1,290 for scholarships at the schools, 'owing to the fact that the reserve fund....was now exhausted'.<sup>39</sup> Seaborne has also suggested that the governors may by this time have foreseen the need for new premises, which the endowment could not provide.<sup>40</sup> Only four years after the take-over, the Education Committee considered the respective merits of two possible locations for a new boys' school, one on the site of the old asylum, which stood empty on the edge of Victoria Park, and the other, a convenient distance from the Midland Railway station, in Regent Road.<sup>41</sup> By this time the school had grown so large that its original building was no longer adequate.

The Alderman Newton's Girls' School did not materialise according to the plans, because of the decision to convert the Pupil Teacher Centre in Newarke Street into the Newarke Secondary School. When the Education Committee succeeded the School Board it inherited from the latter a thriving centre with 350 pupil teachers. There followed a rapid expansion, resulting from the closure of a smaller centre at the Alderman Newton's Boys' School, administered on behalf of the Anglican elementary schools, and of the centres



that had been the responsibility of the new defunct school boards at Hinckley, Coalville and Loughborough.<sup>42</sup> In 1905 the boys attending the nearby Oxford Street School were transferred to other schools to provide more accommodation for the pupil teachers.<sup>43</sup>

There was no sign that within a very few years the Pupil Teacher Centre would disappear. There was, indeed, more than a hint of permanency in the report that 'the Board of Education have intimated that they cannot continue to recognise the Pupil-Teacher Centre, or to pay grants thereon, unless assurance is given that immediate steps will be taken to prepare a scheme, and submit plans, for the erection of suitable buildings for carrying on the work'.<sup>44</sup> By January 1906 a plan had been adopted 'for the erection, on a portion of the site of the Newarke Street School, of a Practical Science Laboratory for the use of pupil teachers and students in the Preparatory Classes'.<sup>45</sup> By 1907 there were 1,011 pupils, working in three buildings, of whom 70% were from county areas.<sup>46</sup>

The rapid increase in numbers attending the Centre was not entirely due to its functions as an initial trainer of future teachers, for only a small trickle of its female pupils was able to take advantage of the award of King's Scholarships. As one of them has reminisced: 'I did not go to college even though I passed the Examination; only people with private means could go to college in those days'.<sup>47</sup> Growing in importance was the Centre's function in offering an alternative form of secondary education. Simon has noted: 'they provided with considerable success a sec-

ondary education for intending teachers' and 'constituted an important means by which working class children could gain a secondary education'.<sup>48</sup> Morant's regulations had required the Centres to provide pupil teacher training at the age of sixteen, rather than fourteen, as in school board days, so that it had become necessary to provide preparatory classes that were entirely secondary in their scope and function'.<sup>49</sup>

In 1906, while the Leicester Pupil Teacher Centre was still expanding, its end in that form was already approaching. The Liberals' return to office, and the institution of the free place system in secondary schools, together with an increase of teacher training places in colleges in 1907-8 of 2,043, ensured that an increasing number of intending teachers would by-pass the centres. While those who attended because there was no other means of entry to secondary education would in future take advantage of the free place system. The Report on 'Instruction and Training of Pupil-Teachers 1903-7' expressed doubts about the continuance of the scheme, which was considered to have outlived its usefulness.<sup>50</sup> Though the Education Committee pursued the idea, unsuccessfully, of elevating the Leicester Centre to a day training college, it had also been under pressure to provide more secondary school accommodation. A regular contributor, under the pseudonym 'Alpha', of a column of 'Education Notes' in the Leicester Daily Post, noted in late 1907 that: 'All the local secondary schools are overcrowded; there are not sufficient places in them for the boys and girls who desire such accommodation.... The committee will have to cons-

ider whether it would not be wiser to leave the provision of a local training college....until the proper provision of secondary school places....is procured'. So overcrowded indeed was the Wyggeston Girls' School that, in addition to the 140 preparatory class pupils, the Centre had added to its numbers many pupils 'for whom there is no accommodation in the Wyggeston Girls' School'. Male pupil teachers meanwhile were sent to continue their studies at the Wyggeston Boys' School.<sup>51</sup> Since the overflow of secondary school pupils at the Pupil Teacher Centre was not eligible for Board of Education grants, the Education Committee lost no time, after Morant turned down their training college proposals, in altering their plans. On the Committee's suggestion to the Board that the Centre be converted into a mixed secondary school a reply was received that 'a definite proposal in this direction would probably be considered favourably'.<sup>52</sup> Within a few months the number of pupil teachers had been drastically reduced, as the County education authority made arrangements for the instruction of its own pupil teachers, and the Newarke Secondary School, described initially as 'a dual school with a Pupil-Teacher Centre forming an integral part', came into existence.<sup>53</sup>

It may be observed that a hierarchy of schools already existed before the Education Committee was called into being. The Wyggeston Schools prepared pupils mainly for business and the professions, and so were regarded as middle-class institutions. The Alderman Newton's School took mainly the sons of artisans and prepared

them for life in the business community. The Pupil Teacher Centre, where no fees were paid, was available to some working-class pupils. It was this hierarchy that was intensified after the Committee took over. To some extent it could be claimed that the Committee was the victim of circumstances, that in taking over schools already in existence it had had to make agreements that were not entirely in keeping with its ultimate purposes. There is some justification for this view, for, as we have noted, the Wyggeston Schools were in a secure enough position to exact an agreement favourable to maintaining the place they had already attained, while the Alderman Newton's School was in no position to do the same. It could also be claimed when the Collegiate School for Girls was taken over in 1922.

The proprietors of the Collegiate School also owned a school in Eastbourne, which had been purchased in 1917. The latter, St. Helena's, took over the boarding functions of both schools, so that the Collegiate became limited to pupils from the Leicester area. In 1921 the owners of the Collegiate buildings (as distinct from the school proprietors) decided to sell them, informing both the proprietors and the Education Committee of their intention. The proprietors were unable to raise sufficient capital to make the purchase, so that the impending closure of the school was announced. Since this would have left 330 pupils without a school, the other secondary schools being unable to offer places to all of them, the Committee had little option but to purchase the buildings and maintain the school.<sup>54</sup>

There had been other possibilities though. The Labour case for free secondary education, supported by evidence that three of Sheffield's secondary schools were entirely free, and that Bradford was offering free secondary education and maintenance grants where necessary, was deliberately spurned.<sup>55</sup> Wilford's motion in Committee to this effect was amended, so that, by committing Leicester to 'such provision....for free secondary education as shall ensure that no child desirous and capable of profiting by it', with 'adequate provision of maintenance where necessary', it fell short of the aim of free secondary education for all pupils able to profit by it.<sup>56</sup> Free secondary education was countered by its opposite. One critic of the proposal to take over the Collegiate School remarked that 'the people who could afford to send their children to school on ponies with grooms behind them or in motor cars did not desire any assistance from the rates'.<sup>57</sup> Councillor E. A. A. Fry, who spoke vehemently against making the school a charge on the rates, stated that if this was done, 'there would be a demand for free scholarships and reduced fees', and suggested that 'under such conditions the school would not be supported by the parents of the present scholars'.<sup>58</sup> Sir Jonathan North's attitude must be seen in this context, as one of reconciliation between two extremes. No doubt he had already taken careful note of the arguments of J. L. Harrison, who in 1912 had argued, in relation to the Wyggeston Schools, that if the fees were increased to the maximum by the Board for those able to pay for them, 'the poorer classes could pay less, and there would be more free schol-

arships',<sup>59</sup> for this was precisely the view that he supported. North argued that, if the school was not taken over, the fees, which at £26 5s. were substantially higher than the £12 charged at the Wyggeston Girls' School,<sup>60</sup> would be lost to the city.<sup>61</sup>

The old Leicester tradition of rate-saving was the most important factor behind North's argument, and the main reason for extending the already existing hierarchy of schools. When the fees at the Wyggeston Schools were raised during 1923, in accordance with Board regulations, to a standard level (within each school) of twelve guineas (boys) and twelve pounds (girls) it was noted that this would realise operating profits of £500 and £200 respectively, 50% of which would be used to defray the rates.<sup>62</sup> This encouraged the Committee to consider the ratio of fee-paying pupils to scholarship pupils on a city-wide basis rather than on an individual school basis. So that, while the Collegiate had only 15% of free places<sup>63</sup> and the Wyggeston Girls' only 21%,<sup>64</sup> the Alderman Newton's Girls', newly established in 1921, has as many as 50% (259 out of 520).<sup>65</sup> The same was true of the boys' schools.

North's policy of differentiation was also reflected in building programmes. By 1922 there were seven secondary schools in Leicester under the control of the Education Committee. Of the boys' schools the Wyggeston was the largest with 580 senior and 300 junior places. Alderman Newton's had 520 senior pupils, while the City Boys' School (recently separated from the Newarke School) had 290 senior places. In the girls' schools Wyggeston

had 420 seniors and 90 juniors, the Newarke 500 seniors, the Collegiate 280 seniors and 90 juniors, and the Alderman Newton's 280 seniors.<sup>66</sup> All were accommodated in premises that had been built before the beginning of the century, the most recent being the Wyggeston Girls' building, some 44 years old. Most of them were hopelessly inadequate. The City Boys' School, for instance, resulting from the decision to accommodate girls only at the Newarke, was using the Bond street premises of the old Great Meeting School, which had gone out of existence in 1874. Some classes were separated only by narrow partitions, and physics had to be taught in a billiards room.<sup>67</sup> The newest school, the Alderman Newton's Girls', was using the premises formerly used by its male counterpart, and built in 1867. At the Newarke Girls' School it was noted by visiting Inspectors that: 'The main defect is the lack of sufficient special accommodation. There is no provision for Housecraft classes in the premises.... There are only two laboratories.... There is no room which can be set apart for use only as a School Library for reading and private study.... Some classrooms are overcrowded and there is no special room for the Sixth Form'.<sup>68</sup> It was, therefore, clear that some new buildings would be needed.

Before the first world war the Wyggeston Boys' School had already outgrown its premises, and was using the Vaughan College as an annexe. The growth continued through the war. In 1917 it was noted by the Education Committee that there was an increased 'eagerness of parents' to give their children a secondary education.

Only 48 pupils were intending to leave the school during the summer of that year, while about 170 had applied for admission.<sup>69</sup> Quite clearly its growth could have been checked at some earlier point, but the school was already of a considerable size before it came under Council control. The strong personality of James Went, still in command as headmaster until his retirement in 1919, would have daunted anyone seeking to change this situation. Moreover the school had been the only avenue to the universities, and was, through its former pupils, influential in the town. Its claim to new premises could hardly be denied, especially when Thomas Fielding Johnson, a wealthy woolspinner and dyer, donated the old asylum site - used by the army for a base hospital during the war - specifically for use by a university college and the two Wyggeston Schools.<sup>70</sup> Subsequent to this occurrence North stated that: 'Secondary school accommodation was 1,881 places, whereas 3,120 places were required; if the buildings were available there would be nothing to prevent them being used for the Wyggeston Boys' School, leaving the existing buildings available for other secondary needs'.<sup>71</sup> The old hospital wards had unprepossessing exteriors, but there was more satisfactory accommodation within them than in the old building, and they were surrounded by undeveloped land providing space for playing fields and for the new buildings planned for the future. The removal of the boys' school to this site provided alternative premises for the Alderman Newton's Boys' School.



Johnson's donation had also included provision for the Wyggeston Girls' School, so that it was difficult to deny consideration to the resiting of that school. On the other hand North was opposed to this particular provision. When the Committee had considered the possibility of using the asylum site for both schools in 1914, before the donation, North, who disliked not only co-education, but the close proximity of boys' and girls' schools, had retorted: 'That was supposing that in a little time they would want a new girls' school, but lately the girls' school had been considerably enlarged; and even if it were necessary....did not think it would be any advantage that it should be on the same site as the boys' school'.<sup>72</sup> With the purchase of land in Regent Road, intended for the Wyggeston Boys', consideration of the asylum site had lapsed, but following the announcement of the Johnson donation, the Committee, despite North's predilections, did not feel able to continue with the plans laid in 1914. Armitage re-allocated the Regent Road site, in his 1920 projections, to the City Boys' School, with the Humberstone Gate premises that the Wyggeston Girls' would vacate on their removal to the asylum site set aside for a hypothetical 'City Girls' School'.<sup>73</sup> In fact development of the plan was delayed. The asylum site was not immediately available, as the government were still making use of some of the buildings on it.<sup>74</sup> By the time it was free the Geddes 'axe' had fallen. Not until the Labour Party took office in 1924 could building plans at the Regent Road site gain approval in London. By that time, however, Johnson was dead, and North was able to return to his

stated position of 1914. One suspects that it was at Sir Jonathan's prompting that the Wyggeston governors decided on the undesirability of the asylum site for a girls' school, and to request the use of the Regent Road site instead.<sup>75</sup>

It was not North's prejudices alone, however, that induced the Education Committee to vote in favour of the Wyggeston proposal as now amended. The Wyggeston Girls' had found it necessary to use a house in the Newarke as an annexe, as enrolment had grown too large for the Humberstone Gate building alone. The City Boys', however, with a much smaller enrolment, fitted neatly into the latter building, and it was there that it found itself in 1928 when the Regent Road building was completed. The new building was described admiringly by an Inspector:

'The rooms all face outwards, being ranged along the sides of a rectangle with interior corridor. The enclosed space is crossed midway by the Assembly Hall, which thus divides it into two open quadrangles.... There are twenty-five ordinary classrooms; two gymnasias, two rooms for Art, one for Geography, one for House-craft, and a complete range of Science rooms including three large laboratories for Physics, Chemistry and Biology, two smaller ones for senior work, two preparation rooms, a balance-room and a lecture-room'.<sup>76</sup>

Not until the 1930s were other new buildings for secondary schools considered. The Newarke Girls' School was then housed in a similarly designed (though less pretentious) building in 1938. The Alderman Newton's Boys' School was less fortunate. In 1936, following severe criticisms by the Inspectorate of the old building, the Committee agreed to purchase a site on the east-

ern outskirts of the city.<sup>77</sup> By the following year a site had been purchased and approved by the Board. An open competition for architectural plans was proposed.<sup>78</sup> Before plans could be completed, though, the Director was forced to report 'that the Board of Education have, in circular 1464, dated 14th October 1938, intimated that, save in exceptional circumstances, they will not sanction the replacement....of Secondary Schools except where expenditure.... is necessitated by considerations of the health of the pupils or where enlargements are required owing to movements in the population'. It was noted that the School Medical Officer was prepared to certify that continued use of the building was 'likely to be prejudicial to the health of the pupils'.<sup>79</sup> The beginning of the second world war intervened before further action could be taken.

While the academic secondary schools were developing in their hierarchical fashion there was a movement in technical education that was to result in the establishment of a new type of secondary school. During the early years of the century the technical and art schools began rapidly to grow into colleges. Like others of their kind they found that as they did so the level at which courses were aimed rose to the point at which only the maturer pupils could appreciate them. When J. H. Reynolds, Principal of the Manchester Municipal School of Technology, spoke at the 1908 prizegiving ceremony of the Technical and Art Schools, he regarded sixteen as the normal age of entrance to courses. Leicester was clearly regarded as an exception to the rule.<sup>80</sup> The availability of employment was retarding the development of day classes, so

that instructors had been satisfied initially with any pupils they could acquire. In 1904 it was observed that 'a number of boys are received who are too young and are not educationally qualified to adequately profit by the instruction given'.<sup>81</sup> It was suggested that the lower age limit be fixed at fifteen, but it was recognised that student numbers would, as a result, be reduced.

The risk was too great to be taken, for it was realised that once school-leavers lost contact with the educational system they would be unlikely to return. A gap of even a year would be likely to reduce substantially and permanently the future supply of students. The Chamber of Commerce was particularly concerned, and began discussions on the matter, for the problem could not be separated from the fact that the engineering industry, though still small, was developing more rapidly than in the past. Charles Bennion, head of the British United Shoe Machinery Company, already the largest firm of its kind in the world, was aware of his need for workers commanding a high level of skills. Thomas Smithies Taylor, one of the founders of a firm of precision engineers, and soon to become associated with the Imperial Typewriter Company, was also much aware of the same need. Moreover the engineering apprenticeship did not begin until the age of sixteen, by which time other industries had given employment to boys with latent talent for the learning of engineering skills. Bennion and Taylor were both present at a meeting at which a new course was devised for school leavers, to fill in the gap between the age of fourteen

and the beginning of apprenticeship and senior courses at the Technical and Art Schools. It was noted that the course would consist of 'interesting experiments in elementary science, measurements, and arithmetic applied to local industries', the object being 'to develop the powers of observation of the boys, and give them such general principles in connection with elementary science which would make the lectures and courses of instruction at the technical school come within their comprehension'.<sup>82</sup> The Leicester Education Committee approved the course in 1908.<sup>83</sup>

From a national point of view the development of the junior technical school at this particular time was important. The higher elementary schools, for which both Sadler and Morant had had high hopes, and which had been authorised by a Board of Education minute in 1900, were already a failure.<sup>84</sup> Very few local authorities had taken advantage of the possibility, and those who did were frustrated by an inability to define precisely the role and purpose of such schools.<sup>85</sup> Most of those which had come into existence before 1903 had been turned into municipal secondary schools, to the great concern of those who favoured a much more elitist situation. In a widely reported speech on the Education estimates in 1905 Sir William Anson stated that: 'If no intermediate type of school between the elementary and the secondary is created, I fear it will lead to the lowering of the standards of the secondary schools'.<sup>86</sup> Though the junior technical school did not originally fulfill the role envisaged for the higher elementary school by the

Board, in that it was vocationally orientated, and was only concerned with the instruction of pupils already beyond the statutory school leaving age, it did at least provide a base upon which a more balanced alternative to the existing secondary schools could ultimately be erected.

As one of the earlier institutions of its type the Junior Technical School had to face a number of difficulties. While Morant was controlling the destiny of the Board of Education there was no likelihood of national recognition.<sup>87</sup> Moreover, despite the hopes of its founders the enrolment was very low. In June 1908 only 25 sought admittance.<sup>88</sup> 'Alpha', the anonymous educational commentator in the Leicester Daily Post, recommended that pupils be admitted before the age of fourteen, stating that:

'The children....for whom I should like to see some provision made are those who pass Standard VII....at 11, 12, or 13 years of age, and who either get employment as errand boys or nurse maids, or ....leave school with no employment in view, and so run wild in the streets.... It is during the interval between school life and regular work that many, especially boys, sink into those lazy, slovenly ways which prevent them later on in life maintaining themselves steadily at work'.<sup>89</sup>

'Alpha' had perceived that, by limiting the intake to boys over fourteen, some of the most talented pupils were being lost. This, however, needed the consent of the Elementary Schools Sub-committee, which, since it was in the throes of a re-organisation that had already resulted in a substantial decrease of applicants for the Labour Certificate, was not willing to lose the oldest and brightest pupils from the elementary schools.<sup>90</sup> On the other hand, it

made little sense to deny these pupils the opportunity of attending Junior Technical School, when, had they taken and passed the Labour Examination, they could have left the elementary school anyway. Finally, in 1911, when Morant was removed from the Board of Education, and the political climate changed, the Inspectors were giving encouragement to the re-organisation of upper elementary classes to provide for industrial and clerical biases.<sup>91</sup> The Sub-committee then agreed to allow boys to begin at the Junior Technical School on attaining the age of thirteen.<sup>92</sup>

By 1913 the Board of Education regarded junior technical schools as having passed beyond the experimental stage. But although the new regulations were framed to encourage the development of more schools of the same type, they had a cramping effect on schools already in existence. They took the schools as they existed and codified their present practices, so that, far from being a liberating influence, the result was stagnation. By retaining the late age of entry and forbidding the teaching of a foreign language, except where it could be shown to have direct value for a particular trade, the interests of the secondary schools were safeguarded, for there was little chance of many really bright pupils finding their way into a junior technical school.<sup>93</sup> Nor could many middle-class pupils be attracted. The award of scholarships in 1921 showed that 29 went to boys who would have had to pay fees had they been attending a normal secondary school.<sup>94</sup>

The 1913 regulations governing junior technical schools remained in force until 1934,<sup>95</sup> and were a cause of considerable irritation in Leicester. Since a Junior Art School had also been developed, the Technical and Art Schools had been able to concentrate on studies at a higher level. As they did so it became clear that their intake would not remain entirely at the artisan level. Moreover, after the first world war, the secondary schools were beginning to supply apprenticeship students at or near the school certificate level. So that it became necessary to consider the Junior Technical School as an institution of a secondary type. Armitage wrote in 1920 that: 'There are at present 2,500 Secondary School places in this city. The new Junior Technical School for boys will provide a further 185 places'.<sup>96</sup>

The opportunity to give effect to the elevation of the school to real secondary status was presented in 1928, when premises in the Newarke, adjacent to the Art and Technical Schools, became vacant. Used as an annexe for the Wyggeston Girls' School they were no longer needed for this purpose when the girls were transferred to the new building in Regent Road. When the case was presented to the Education Committee for decision, it was noted that the new secondary school would consist initially of pupils from the Junior Technical School, the Junior Art School, and from elementary schools. The youngest pupils, entering at the age of eleven, would consist of both scholarship winners and fee-payers in equal proportions. The only difference between it and the other secondary schools would be in the matter of curriculum and



in its relationship with what had now become the Leicester Colleges of Art and Technology. The latter was intended to be in lieu of the university college relationship of other schools. The former was explained thus:

'There are a number of children from all sections of the community whose parents wish them to stay at school until 16 at least and whose powers when exercised on other than academic subjects, are considerable, and there are others whose academic attainments justify admission to a Secondary School who would nevertheless do better with a curriculum formed on Junior Technical School lines than the conventional Secondary School lines.

During the first two or three years at the new school more ample provision will be made for Handwork than is customary in Secondary Schools, and when pupils reach the age of 14 or thereabouts they will follow different branches of the curriculum according as their interests are found to be primarily artistic or craft interests, scientific or technological interests. During certain periods of the week, the boys will attend the College of Technology or the College of Arts and Crafts and be taught by the masters there'.

In approving the plans for a 400 pupil school the Committee decided to appoint a governing body that would report to the Colleges of Art and Technology Sub-committee instead of the Secondary Schools Sub-committee.<sup>97</sup>

The Gateway School (as the new secondary institution became), though solving some of the problems that hampered the work of the Junior Technical School, had problems of its own. Since it was a pioneer (for the Spens Report, favouring a tripartite system of secondary education, did not appear for another decade) there were no precedents, a situation that had some disadvantages. C. R. Keene, the first chairman of the governors, has said that there was to be 'a headmaster who would be free to develop the school on different

lines from the Grammar Schools....having in mind that most of them would probably find their career in the city's industry and commerce', and providing that the close association with the Colleges of Art and Technology was maintained.<sup>98</sup> Beyond that brief there was little further guidance that anyone could give to Harold C. Dent, B.A., the person appointed to the headship. As Dent, on reflection, has himself stated:

'But first it was necessary to discover what courses the Gateway should give. This was a truly formidable problem. It is difficult today to realize how little we knew in 1928 about what and how to teach boys who (to quote the school prospectus) "having considerable ability and power, are likely to develop more fully by following a curriculum which includes more practical work in art, crafts and science than is customary in other secondary schools"'.<sup>99</sup>

In an attempt to break new ground Dent and his staff allowed the pupils complete freedom during certain periods to follow whatever ideas they had. In terms of learning experiences the experiment seems to have been worthwhile. Dent recalled that:

'Two brothers - twins - occupied a cupboard under a staircase, and spent all their time fitting it with miniature electrical gadgets. Two other boys wired most of Tudor House....for electric light - and had their work passed by the City electricity authority. One boy made architect's drawings of the entire building - and won high praise for them from the city architect. Another produced some lovely pencil sketches of beauty spots outside Leicester. Many hours were spent by other boys in the city library and museum'.<sup>99</sup>

What Dent failed to mention, however, was the increasing frustration of attempting to conduct an adequate secondary education with a staff that consisted predominantly of inadequately qualified tradesmen inherited from the school's predecessors.

Where Dent, with his active, questing, analytical mind led, not all of his less imaginative staff were able to follow. His impatience to achieve what he would have regarded as reasonable success led him to resign within two years, and embark on a new journalistic career.<sup>100</sup>

Dent's successor, E. C. White, B.Sc., differed little in ideas. What one had begun the other continued. The difference between them was one of temperament. A quiet, patient Quaker, who insisted on teaching religious knowledge to every form in the school, White had no higher ambition than to make the school a success. Remaining at the school until his retirement after the second world war, he was able gradually to build up the strength of the academic side of the school, so that it could compete with the other secondary schools in Leicester.

Both Dent and White realised what local politicians did not envisage, that the neat division of boys into the academically orientated and the technically orientated at the age of eleven was not really possible. Though he has a significant place in educational history as one of the founding fathers of the selective technical school, Dent had qualms about the development of a tripartite system. What he really wanted to see was the improvement of the grammar school, with technical studies included among the options for any child. The grammar school curriculum of the late 1920s and early 1930s was regarded as being too narrowly

based.<sup>101</sup> Though he expressed these views subsequent to his experience at the Gateway School, there is evidence that suggests he was already thinking along these lines, for he took great pains to see that the curriculum was flexible enough to allow boys to change from one kind of emphasis to another, from a technical bias to a craft bias, or from a boot and shoe course to engineering or hosiery. No boy was destined from the beginning to remain with a particular kind of bias through his secondary school life.<sup>102</sup> By the mid-1930s White had established a common core curriculum for the first three years, with differentiation (as urged by the Education Committee) in the fourth year. His Majesty's Inspectors noted that the four divisions in that year consisted of:

- '(a) boys with ability in Art or Craft who attend the College of Art for from 3 to 5 half days each week according to the subjects selected for special study;
- (b) those with a Technical bent spend three half days at the College of Technology, receiving instruction in Engineering or in preparation for the Textile or the Boot and Shoe Industry;
- (c) those who wish to continue to pursue a more academic course or to study for the School Certificate Examination;
- (d) those taking a course in Commercial Subjects. But this is open only to boys of 15 and therefore corresponds rather to a fifth than to a fourth year option'.<sup>103</sup>

So that boys who proved to be more 'academic' than 'practical' were accommodated in much the same way as in the other secondary schools, though they were limited to only one foreign language, French.

The Inspectors were not, however, very impressed by the school. They waited until 1936 before carrying out a full inspection. When they did so they recognised the unique character

of the school, but failed to realise that it could not be judged by the criteria they were using to assess other secondary schools. They noted that in 1934-5, out of some 71 boys over fourteen leaving the school, only ten had sat for the school certificate examination, and only half of them had achieved passes. At the same time they observed that the school, by using the same selective device as for other secondary schools, was perhaps excluding artists of considerable promise, for no expertise in technical abilities could have been discerned by the use of Armitage's 'eleven plus' examination. Firmly embedded within the modes of their time the Inspectors could only suggest that school certificate work should be abandoned, so that the school would revert to something like the status of the Junior Technical School.<sup>104</sup> Even had they thought of it though, they would have been unlikely to mention the obvious solution in the development of larger schools with a more flexible and more widely-ranging examination system. For they were concerned with the problems of a particular school in a situation that was less than ideal. Moreover, since they were employed by a predominantly Conservative National government, they were not likely to mention an idea that stemmed from Labour sources, and which even leading members of that party tended to regard as impracticable at that time.<sup>105</sup>

The Gateway governors and the Leicester Education Committee were more hopeful than the Inspectors. It was important, if the school was to gain prestige within the town, that selection should

be on the same basis as for other secondary schools and should work at the same kind of level. The fact that the proportion of fee-paying pupils had gradually increased to 43.5% was an indication that the school's attempt at straddling the divide between academic and technical studies was appreciated by an impressive number of lower middle-class and upper working-class parents.<sup>106</sup> So that White continued along the same lines that he had taken over from Dent in 1930.

The Leicester Education Committee had also wished to follow the founding of the Gateway School with a similar school for girls. In 1929 the use of the old St. Mary's Home, which had been serving since the end of the war as a temporary accommodation for homeless families, was considered for this purpose. The Colleges of Art and Technology Sub-committee presented to its parent body a plan for a 'school for 400 girls on the lines of the Gateway School for boys'.<sup>107</sup> The onset of another period of severe economic depression, however, prevented this from being accomplished until after the end of the second world war.

The effect of the opening of the Gateway School on the other secondary schools in Leicester was to complete the movement of the boys' schools away from the over-dependence on science teaching that the former Science and Art Department's grants had originally encouraged. Even the Alderman Newton's Boys' School, which had been an organised science school, finally succumbed to the

new order. But the Gateway School was only the final touch, for Morant's 1904 regulations had already done much to redress the balance. More important indeed than either the new technical school or the 1904 regulations was the development of the external examination system, and especially the way in which it was manipulated by the Board.

Whereas the custom had been for small numbers to be presented for a variety of examinations, like those of the College of Preceptors, London matriculation, and the Oxford and Cambridge Local examinations, the newer practice, beginning early in the century, was for whole classes to be presented for one examination.<sup>108</sup> In 1908 the governors of Alderman Newton's noted that the Board had refused to allow 'scholars under fifteen years of age to sit for External Examinations which do not comprise the whole school'.<sup>109</sup> Thus through the examinations it became possible to influence the curriculum throughout whole schools. The examination schemes meanwhile became more arts orientated than they had been. Alderman Newton's headmaster, Muston, was forced to report to his governors in 1918 that 'owing to recent changes in official regulations by which English and French are made compulsory subjects for securing passes at the Oxford Local Examinations, a number of boys have failed at this year's Examinations, who, under old conditions, would almost certainly have passed - probably with distinction - this being due to the fact that the school, being organised with a Science bias, does not specialise in the subjects referred to'.<sup>110</sup>

That such a provision was becoming general is indicated by the fact that Muston frantically enquired about the possibility of changing to the Cambridge examinations, but did not do so. Later, when a change was made to the London General Schools Examination, French was not avoided, for a language other than English became a compulsory requirement for those aspiring to exemption from matriculation. Latin or mathematics were also essential requirements.

The examination system developed by Oxford, Cambridge and London was originally designed to lead to university entrance, but it was already obvious, since the majority would leave school before the age of eighteen and not seek entrance to a university, that an examination at fifteen or sixteen would provide an incentive for pupils and might conceivably commend itself to employers. With an increased number of secondary pupils it became necessary to recognise that an examination system in which the first stage was attainable by the great majority of them was important, especially as it was thought that this might induce more to remain at school beyond the age of fourteen. The school certificate (and higher school certificate) examinations were instituted in 1917. Though greater flexibility was intended, for it was possible to gain a school certificate by passing in the English language and four (or five) other subjects, in fact the flexibility was destroyed by the superimposing of regulations governing exemption from matriculation, which required the aspiring university student to



pass also in a classical or modern language, at least one of the sciences, and to ignore, in his other elections, music, art, handicrafts and domestic science.<sup>111</sup> This tended to lower the status of practical subjects, which were either ignored, or dropped at an early stage, or provided only for the pupils who had little hope of gaining matriculation exemption, while one or more languages became a necessity.

Despite the establishment of the school certificate the situation in Leicester, as far as the early leavers were concerned, was little different in the 1920s from what it had been earlier. It took some time for employers to realise the usefulness of the school certificate as a measure of potential abilities, though this was improved by Armitage's appeal to them. On the suggestion of the Secondary Schools Examinations Council he approached the public through the medium of the press, seeking 'to bring to the notice of business houses, banks, insurance offices, etc., the benefits that would accrue if emphasis were laid by them on the desirability of applicants for posts in these houses possessing a School Certificate or a Higher School Certificate'. 'The business house', he declared, 'would profit by a guarantee of proficiency, and young people would have an added incentive to stay at school till they had at least taken a Leaving Certificate'.<sup>112</sup> Early leaving was particularly high at schools where there was a large proportion of working-class pupils. At the City Boys' School, for instance, 81.4% of leavers in 1921-2 were less than

sixteen years of age, and the Board of Education took the step of warning the governors that the continued recognition of the school might be endangered if the high rate of wastage continued unchecked.<sup>113</sup> At the Alderman Newton's Boys' School 56.8% of the leavers over fourteen in 1932-3 had not taken the school certificate examination.<sup>114</sup> Only the Wyggeston Boys' could claim a reasonable number of pupils remaining up to and beyond the age of sixteen. In 1938 the average leaving age at this school was 16.9 and the average school life as high as 5.6 years.<sup>115</sup>

Early leaving from the girls' schools was no less chronic. At the Newarke School it was noted that 'of those who left over 15 in the school years 1925 to 26 and 1926 to 27 only 19 per cent. and 13 per cent. had gained the School Certificate. The results would be very much worse if the large body of leavers between 14 and 15 years of age were taken into account'.<sup>116</sup> Even at the Collegiate School, with its very high proportion of fee-paying pupils, the Inspectors were aware that: 'During the school year 1932 to 1933 48.7 per cent. of the pupils leaving over the age of 14 did so without sitting for their school certificate examination and the corresponding ratio for the year 1933 to 1934 was 56 per cent. This is....an improvement but still compares unfavourably with the general result for the country as a whole'.<sup>117</sup>

Before the first world war the tendency was simply to accept as inevitable the early leaving tendency. The schools had never known any other situation. Greater concern after the war was

expressed in the granting of maintenance allowances and in the employment of some senior pupils as laboratory assistants, as well as in the continuance of teacher training bursaries. Some of the working-class pupils who benefitted ultimately achieved prominence in the fields that they were enabled to pursue. When Charles Snow (later Lord Snow) began as a pupil at the Alderman Newton's School a senior boy named G. H. Getliffe must have made an impression upon him, for not only did the surname find its way into the 'Strangers and Brothers' novels that he wrote in later years, but Snow also became, in later school life, one of Getliffe's successors as a laboratory assistant. In 1922, at seventeen years old, Snow was appointed to the post, at a salary of £60 per annum,<sup>118</sup>

In 1917 George Deacon (later Sir George Deacon, D.Sc., F.R.S., the famous oceanographer) was awarded a scholarship at the Newarke School.<sup>119</sup> Three years later, after he had been transferred to the City Boys' School, his parents applied for a maintenance allowance.

<sup>120</sup> Two years later still he was awarded a bursary, as an intending teacher.<sup>121</sup> The increase in free places and the various forms of assistance also helped pupils like Myrtle Boulton, who attended the Newarke School and Leicester University College, and ultimately became Senior Lecturer in Education at Leeds University, R. F. Aldwinckle, who attended Alderman Newton's and Leicester University College, and ultimately became Professor of Theology at McMaster University in Canada, and Trafford Smith, who attended the City Boys' School, whence he proceeded by scholarship to Cambridge, ultimately becoming British Ambassador in

Burma. J. H. Plumb, the Cambridge historian, was contemporaneous with Aldwinckle at Alderman Newton's.

The development of juvenile employment assistance was also, in part, an attempt to cut down the number of early leavers from both secondary and elementary schools, as well as to protect the leavers themselves from undue exploitation. In 1909, after the Education Committee had adopted a uniform school year for all the Leicester schools, the headmaster of Alderman Newton's complained that employers were taking advantage of the fact that so many leavers were being thrown on to the labour market at the same time. North's reply indicated that the Committee was 'making a register of the children leaving school, containing notes by the headmasters, forming as it were a bureau to which manufacturers might apply when seeking candidates'.<sup>122</sup> Within a few months the Labour Exchange, newly created, had taken over the bureau's functions.<sup>123</sup> This, however, was a failure, for the Labour Exchange was merely concerned with channelling labour to employers. The school leaver needed considerable guidance on whether or not he should leave school at a particular time, and on the kind of employment for which his abilities might fit him.

In 1913 a juvenile employment committee was formed, based on the experience of Birmingham. The chairman, G. C. Turner, stated that the object was to prevent boys getting into 'blind-alley' jobs and thus 'wasting' their education.<sup>124</sup> The borough was divided

into 21 districts, each, with a small committee, responsible for school leavers in its area. Three months before leaving school, pupils were reported to the Labour Exchange by the head teachers, who classified them in one of three groups. Group A, which in that year consisted of 604 boys (76.7% of the total number of boys) and 615 girls (80.07% of the total number of girls), was considered not to need after-care. Group B, consisting of 157 boys (19.9%) and 131 girls (17.05%), was considered as needing some after-care. Those needing most help, some 26 boys (3.3%) and 22 girls (2.8%), were placed in group C. Where after-care was considered to be necessary, helpers were to visit homes and to seek the co-operation of Sunday schools, Boy Scouts, Boys' Brigade, and other similar organisations. This was to continue up to the age of 17.<sup>125</sup> During 1914, when there was a lack of demand for juvenile labour, the juvenile employment committee was encouraging parents to keep their children at school.<sup>126</sup>

Juvenile employment committees were too unwieldy in organisation to survive for too long before being superseded by something simpler, though more costly. In 1919 Young People's Employment Bureaus were set up nationally, in association with the Ministry of Labour. It was clear that national policy had been suggested by the experience of various localised experiments, like that in Leicester.<sup>127</sup> Muston, who had been complaining about a lack of policy in 1913, was able to call 'the attention of the town to the fact that the whole of its secondary schools are overflowing', and

that this was in part due to the success of the juvenile employment advice given. Many were being persuaded to remain at school longer than they would otherwise have done.<sup>128</sup> On the other hand, this was an exaggeration, for the majority were still leaving very early.

In spite of all the Education Committee's efforts, in fact, school certificate entries remained low. Even the school life

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Table 16      School Certificate Examination Results in Leicester  
1926 and 1931

	<u>1926</u>		<u>1931</u>	
	No. pres- ented	No. passed	No. pres- ented	No. passed
Alderman Newton's Boys'	54	33	70	45
City Boys'	28	13	27	17
Wyggeston Boys'	92	63	99	79
<sup>a</sup> Alderman Newton's Girls'	14	13	9	5
<sup>+</sup> Collegiate Girls'	11	10	16	11
Newarke Girls'	37	11	30	22
<sup>a</sup> Wyggeston Girls'	42	37	54	30
	278	180	305	209

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<sup>a</sup> Oxford Local Examinations

<sup>+</sup> Cambridge Local Examinations

Other schools: London General Examinations

Sources: Leicester Education Committee (Secondary Schools Sub-committee) Minutes, 22 September 1926 and 13 October 1931.

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agreements did not help much, for they related to age rather than to examinations. As the Inspectors noted, 'the Agreement itself runs only to the end of the term, and not to the end of the school

year, in which a boy reaches 16'. 29 pupils left the Alderman Newton's Boys' during 1933-5 at the end of the school term in which they attained sixteen, but before taking the examinations. Moreover many others chose to pay the £5 penalty rather than wait until they were sixteen.<sup>129</sup>

The school certificate may, in fact, be said to have been a 'double-edged sword', for while it encouraged highly intelligent academically ambitious pupils to remain, it discouraged others, for at least the humiliation of failure could be avoided by leaving early. Failure rates were sometimes high in the earlier years of the school certificate examination, resulting in part at least from failures to adjust the marking levels to allow a reasonable proportion of passes. Of 37 Newarke girls who sat for the London examinations in 1926 some 26 failed entirely, while only 3 passed in French. It was commented that other schools in the area also had similar results.<sup>130</sup> Indeed there were 98 total failures out of 278 pupils entered from Leicester secondary schools.<sup>131</sup> The Newarke School threatened to opt out of the London examination system, and revert to the Oxford examinations,<sup>132</sup> for between them the Alderman Newton's Girls' and Wyggeston Girls' had only six failures out of fifty-six Oxford entries. Similarly, in the Cambridge examinations of the same year, the Collegiate School had only one failure out of eleven entries.<sup>133</sup>

The effect both of early leaving and the incidence of Fail-

ures was to bring about a number of adjustments both in curriculum and organisation of the secondary schools. Latin, which had been introduced for the benefit of those destined for the universities, was, except at the Wyggeston Schools, dropped from the timetables of the lower forms, mainly at the insistence of the Inspectorate. After an inspection of the Newarke School, it was commented that:

'The subject cannot be made a success in any school where so few survive to the stage of the First Examination. It should be dropped from the curriculum, and special arrangements be made for the few girls at the top of the School who may want to learn it for the purposes of an arts degree'.<sup>134</sup>

The same recommendation was made in respect of the Alderman Newton's Girls', H. L. Firkins, H.M.I., suggesting that the teaching of the subject 'be confined to an intensive course for the relatively few (older) pupils who may have need of it'.<sup>135</sup> The City Boys' School, after R. W. Crammer was appointed to the headship in 1931, also took the step of dispensing with the teaching of Latin below sixth form level.<sup>136</sup>

An even more notable result of early leaving and examination failures was to leave the fifth and sixth forms as very small groups.\* Though in a later age they would have been regarded as uneconomic, they provided teachers with an excellent opportunity for developing close contacts with their pupils. When Thomas Yates Benson, the

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\* Sixth forms also suffered competition from Leicester University College, for pupils with matriculation exemption gained on their school certificate results could enter intermediate courses there.



physics master at the City Boys' School, died in 1932, his obituary stated that: 'Those who reached the sixth will recall many happy hours when T.Y.B., the teacher, became the guide, philosopher and friend, sitting as one of a small group around a bench, gently leading the way by questions and answer and discussion into the mysteries of the physical universe'.<sup>137</sup>

**Table 13 Higher School Certificate Results in Leicester 1926 and 1931**

	<u>1926</u>		<u>1931</u>	
	No. pres- ented	No. passed	No. pres- ented	No. passed
Alderman Newton's Boys'	6	6	16	13
City Boys'			6	6
Wyggeston Boys'	20	12	30	23
Alderman Newton's Girls'			5	5
+ Collegiate Girls'			5	2
Newarke Girls'	2	2	1	1
a Wyggeston Girls'	2	1	9	5
	30	21	72	55

+ Cambridge Local Board  
 a Oxford and Cambridge Joint Board  
 Other schools: London examinations

Sources: Leicester Education Committee (Secondary Schools Sub-committee) Minutes, 22 September 1926 and 13 October 1931.

A less pleasant aspect of the accommodation to small numbers at the upper ends of the schools was the tendency to sacrifice by streaming the less able and those most likely to become early

leavers, in order to pay special attention to the pupils most likely to realise examination success. This was understandable when it is realised that schools were judged by the number of passes and distinctions gained, but it led Miss E. E. Caulkin, the headmistress of the Newarke School, in the same breath, as it were, to express concern about the lack of exhibitions for prospective university students, and to complain 'that a large proportion of girls who enter the school are not the kind of girl for whom a Secondary School is intended'.<sup>138</sup> At the Alderman Newton's 38 boys out of 184 leavers were said to have been 'unable to maintain the rate of progress which is expected of them'.<sup>139</sup>

It is important to realise that, while the Inspectors and members of the local authority were usually genuinely concerned about early leaving and its repercussions, teaching staffs were less concerned, because of the opportunity it gave for intensive coaching of those who remained. The effect on the pupils varied. There were those for whom the intense pressures were repugnant, a feeling that was betrayed by Trafford Smith in a letter from Cambridge to the editor of the City Boys' School magazine. Though a brilliant student for whom examinations presented no serious problem, he stated quite emphatically that: 'The whole trouble with modern education is this mania for passing examinations. It is all the fault of people who think that a long gown and an academic hood are signs of culture, when in actual fact they are often quite the reverse'.<sup>140</sup> Others, however, especially those from lower points

in the social scale, were appreciative of the system that enabled them to achieve social mobility. They often tended, quite unconsciously, to transfer the purposive production-consciousness of the clicker's bench to the academic scene. Dennis Bassett, who attended the same school and university as Smith, was baffled by the intellectual climate of Cambridge, stating that: 'The activity of Cambridge is artificial and not like that of a large industrial town, in which there is seething life, perhaps grim and weary with struggle, but always purposeful, vital and interesting. Here one feels that much of the activity consists of scurrying to and fro, vainly searching for the elusive Something'.<sup>141</sup>

By the end of the 1930s there were more pupils remaining beyond the statutory leaving age, though the growth was not, and could not be, spectacular, because of the continuing good employment situation in Leicester for young people. But the growing prestige of the examinations was rising as employers became more apt to prefer the aspiring employee with the school certificate to the one without. R. W. Crammer was able to note in 1938 that: 'The fear sometimes expressed by parents that it is difficult to obtain work at the higher school leaving age of the secondary school boy has no foundation in fact'.<sup>142</sup> There were also greater opportunities for entering secondary schools and for continuing beyond them to one of the universities or to one of the local university colleges. So that the 244 pupils taking the school certificate examinations in 1924 grew to 387 by 1939, while at the higher school certificate

level examinees grew from only 14 in 1924 to 54 by 1939.<sup>143</sup>

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7. Leicester Daily Post, 1 May 1907.
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9. D. Cox, op. cit., 88-9. The Leicester Labour Party was not, however, unique in this respect. There was a considerable body within the Labour movement as a whole which reflected Sidney Webb's elitism rather than the concept, developed later, of comprehensive education. Even Tawney's Secondary Education for All envisaged the development of schools for adolescents that were more practically and creatively inclined than the grammar schools, which would continue to serve the needs of children possessing a superior intellect. Vide R. S. Barker, Education and Politics 1900-1951: A Study of the Labour Party (Oxford, 1972), chapter 2.
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81. Ibid., 7 March 1904.
82. Ibid., ? 1904 (taken from cutting). Michael Sadler had also suggested, in his report on the secondary schools in Liverpool, the possibility of a 'manual training school', with the intake



at 13 from the elementary schools, to fill in the gap between school leaving and the engineering apprenticeship. It is not known whether Sadler influenced the Leicester Chamber of Commerce or vice-versa, or if each came to the same conclusion independently. Sadler's specific mention of the engineering apprenticeship and the particular interest of prominent engineers in Leicester suggest that there was some connection between them. Vide M. E. Sadler, op. cit., 157.

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Two significant series of events dominate the whole course of development in technical and higher education in Leicester during the early twentieth century. Each, by acting as the focus of attention in its time, served as the main determinant of the course of development that followed in its train.

The first series of events surrounds the attempt to elevate the pupil teacher<sup>centre</sup> to the status of a day training college, and the subsequent failure of that proposal. From its inception the attitude of the Leicester Education Committee was that the centre should be either added to or superseded by a training college. The Committee's predecessor, the School Board, had noted the regulations of 1890 that made the institution of day training colleges a legal possibility.<sup>1</sup> Its members had also watched the developments in Nottingham that saw the 'evening classes on the science of teaching and school management' begun at the University College in 1885 turn into one of the first five day training colleges to be founded in 1890. As the Education Act of 1902 took effect the Nottingham College, under Amos Henderson, already had a student body large enough to support a total staff of seven,<sup>2</sup> so that the outgoing Board, concerned about the supply of an adequate teaching staff for the Leicester schools, stated that: 'One of the first duties of the new Education Authority will evidently be that of taking the necessary steps towards the erection of a Municipal Training College for Teachers, in which both Elementary and Secondary

Teachers.....may be fully and completely trained'.<sup>3</sup>

The new Education Committee followed up its predecessor's charge early in 1904, when the accounts of the Pupil Teacher Centre, presented for approval, began to be referred to as 'Expenses of the Training College for Teachers'.<sup>4</sup> In March it was reported that the chairman of the Committee, Councillor J. Tudor Walters (with the secretary, Thomas Groves as convenor), had taken the chair at a Conference of local education authorities (soon to develop into a permanent association) in London, the subject of discussion being the supply and training of teachers. A provisional committee had been formed, which, at its initial meeting, adopted a resolution to the effect: 'That the Board of Education be urged to make it incumbent on Education Authorities to train Pupil Teachers and Assistant Teachers in numbers proportionate to the average attendance in their schools'.<sup>5</sup>

In September 1904 the Secondary Schools Sub-committee reported that 'there is ample space for the erection of a suitable building for the training of teachers on the unoccupied portion of the site of the Municipal Technical and Art School'. The architects were instructed, following acceptance of the report, to prepare plans for accommodation that would include laboratory space.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the Committee's plans, and the hopes that were engendered by the new Liberal government's offer to pay 75% of the capital cost of new undenominational training colleges,<sup>7</sup> the

college did not materialise. Between 1904 and 1908, when the plan was finally abandoned, it was apparent that the Board of Education and the Leicester Education Committee were not on good terms. Their disagreement had no apparent party political undertones. Nor may one place all of the blame for the widening rift upon the civil service tendency to maintain regulations at all costs, though some of the blame must certainly rest with Morant, who would not accommodate ideas that lay outside the framework which he had himself devised. For each party had a fundamentally different outlook.

Within the offices of the Board the influence of Robert Morant, the secretary, was such that there was a clear mental separation of pupil teachers and training college facilities. Pupil teacher centres were neither associated with, nor did they grow into, training colleges. If a centre changed into anything it was a municipal secondary school.<sup>8</sup> Training colleges were considered, not in relation to other forms of higher education, but with respect to the functioning of their products in elementary schools. Moreover there was a clear separation between the training of teachers for secondary and elementary education. Secondary teachers were to be university graduates; elementary teachers were to be non-graduates, trained in training colleges.

Leicester's viewpoint, at least officially, was different. The Committee's tendency to refer to the Pupil Teacher Centre as a 'Training College for Teachers' indicated that the higher institution would logically be built upon the foundations that the

Centre had already laid. It could use the same experience, building and equipment. Rate-saving was a factor of course, for when it was noted that the plans for the building of the training college also took into account the needs of the Technical and Art Schools, which were 'pressed for room in several directions, especially in the matter of laboratory accommodation', there was considerable enthusiasm.<sup>9</sup> Indeed the Committee, carried away by its enthusiasm for saving the rates, as well as by reasonable hopes for the co-ordination of all higher educational institutions in the town, decided to carry its idea a stage further. In its plans for 'the Co-ordination of Higher Education', outlined during June 1906, the Committee proposed that 'a scheme shall be prepared forthwith for the erection of buildings....adjoining the Technical Schools....to serve as a Day Training College, and in connection therewith....a central hall suitable for examinations, lectures, exhibitions and large meetings'. Continuing further, it was stated that: 'The various departments of higher education in the Newarke shall be formed into a "Municipal College", which must first serve as an university extension and examination centre, and ultimately attain the dignity of a "University College"'.<sup>10</sup>

The opportunity to carry integration a stage further had occurred a few months earlier, when the Committee of the North Midland School of Cookery communicated with the Education Committee to say that they could no longer continue to conduct the work of the institution independently. It was resolved to take over the School on 1 April 1907, and that it be 'ultimately accommodated at the



Day Training College'.<sup>11</sup> The school was renamed soon afterwards, and became known as the 'Leicester Municipal College for Domestic Subjects'.<sup>12</sup>

The members of the Leicester Education Committee were justly proud of their plan to integrate post-secondary (as well as secondary) education. It was not entirely original, in that there was already a University College in Reading, which had combined a technical and art school, a training college that had developed out of a pupil teacher centre, and an extension centre.<sup>13</sup> So that it was decided that the matter should be pursued further with the Board. Unfortunately the Reading experiment was not in favour at this time as a precedent.

At the Education Committee's meeting in January 1908, a report was made by the Secondary Schools Sub-committee on its negotiations with the Board, which had included the sending of a delegation to see Morant himself. The negotiations had not been successful. To all the arguments that the Leicester representatives had expressed Morant provided regulations that indicated negative answers. Apparently the regulations required that the training college building should not be used for other than training college purposes. The Committee had indicated its willingness to submit to the Board's decision in the matter, though it contended that it would be 'an advantage if the ~~the~~ students in the adjoining Technical and Art Schools could have access to those rooms'. As a

possible quid pro quo it was conceded that 'no financial assistance towards the cost of providing rooms for art instruction at the School of Art' would be required. The main problem, however, was the intention to integrate fully the domestic science college with the proposed day training college. The Board was quite prepared to authorise the Committee's take-over of the former, and to approve the provision of new accommodation in the adjacent premises, but was adamant that there should not be any form of integration. The Committee, on its part, subsequent to meeting with Morant, was, as expressed by Groves, the secretary, in a letter to the Board, 'still of opinion that provision for the training of Teachers of Domestic Subjects should form part of any new Day Training College, which may be established.... The Committee are still unconvinced that their proposal for the joint use of the dining and common room contravene the conditions laid down in Chapter 10 of the Regulations for Training Colleges or that their proposal for mutual assistance between the Day Training College and the Technical and Art Schools is not the most reasonable and sensible arrangement'.<sup>14</sup>

Quite apart from the Board's negative responses there were other irritants that frayed the tempers of Committee members. In particular there was the new demand that in addition to the founding of a day training college there should also be a new secondary school, at a time when, as Groves complained, with some exaggeration: 'The town is already heavily rated (the Education Rate was raised 3d. in the £. in March last), trade is not flourishing, and

the number of empty houses is large and rapidly increasing'.<sup>15</sup> Actually, in this instance, the Board was not being unreasonable, for, as we have seen in the previous chapter, some people in Leicester, outside the Committee, would have given priority to the secondary school, for which there was a considerable and growing demand. Also, since the Liberals had taken office, the policy had changed, so that while new secondary school places were to be encouraged, and the pupil teacher centres phased out, it was a logical step for the existing centre to become a new secondary school. But in the minds of Committee members it was the transforming of the pupil teacher centre into a training college that was the logical step. Moreover, to open a new secondary school and a training college at the same time was considered to be a burden the ratepayer could not afford.

Ultimately the Committee, having been informed by Morant that no recommendation would be made for 'a grant in respect of that portion of the building to be used for the training of Teachers in Domestic Subjects, or to make a contribution of 75% of the cost of Dining, Common and Examination Rooms, unless such rooms were designed to accommodate students in the Day Training College only', voted in favour of abandoning the training college proposal. Feelings were so bitter that an attempted amendment by Councillor A. J. Smith to defer the question rather than abandon it gained little support.<sup>16</sup>

The effects of the Education Committee's decision were to delay

the development of a training college until after the second world war, and the founding of a nucleus for the university until after the first world war, while the Schools of Art and Technology and the Domestic Science College were forced to develop independently, causing identity problems for the latter. Consideration of the roles and status of these separate institutions must, however, wait until we have seen outlined and interpreted the second series of events that forms the main focus of attention during this period, for the other institutions were all affected by them.

The other series of events consists of the various efforts to develop a university in Leicester, and of the succession of ideas and activities that produced the particular institution which ultimately, beyond this period, grew into the University of Leicester. The idea of a university in the town was not peculiar to the twentieth century. We have noted already the Reverend Joseph Wood's appeal, in the face of the opening of University College, Nottingham, to the members of the Leicester Literary and Philosophical Society in 1880, to apply themselves to the 'difficult and distinct work of higher education'.<sup>17</sup> The Reverend James Went, headmaster of the Wyggeston Boys' School, gave support in his own presidential address to the Society in 1885, as also did J. D. Paul in 1895.<sup>18</sup> Went in fact was the originator of the idea of a co-ordinated system of higher education in Leicester that, as we have seen, was taken up by the Education Committee.

The question of a university was raised again in yet another presidential address to the Literary and Philosophical Society by Dr. Astley V. Clarke in 1912. As Professor Simmons notes, there was this time more response, the speech being accorded considerable comment in the local press, for Clarke, a distinguished locally born physician trained at Cambridge and Guy's Hospital, commanded great respect in the town.<sup>19</sup> Though there were also doubts about the feasibility of such a project, for past experience with extension lectures had not been very encouraging, the idea was taken up with a greater seriousness than before. The fact was that university institutions had been developing rapidly elsewhere. By 1914 there were fifteen such institutions in England, including university colleges in relatively small towns like Reading and Southampton.<sup>20</sup> Leicester was clearly being left behind. While Dr. Clarke was still president of the Society, the great geographer Sir Halford Mackinder, M.P., who had been the academic founder of the University College of Reading, was invited to speak. Finding himself prevented by parliamentary duties from doing so, he wrote at length to Clarke, outlining the stages by which Reading had achieved its University College status and was about to become an independent University.<sup>21</sup> Further reactions came from local newspapers. The Leicester Mail published articles on the practicability of a college, and whether or not it would be of assistance to businessmen.<sup>22</sup> The Leicester Daily Post, noting that a new county asylum had been built at Narborough, and that the old asylum, with its spacious grounds, at the western end of Victoria Park, had

already been rejected by the Education Committee as a new location for the Wyggeston Boys' School, proposed that it be reserved for a University College.<sup>23</sup> The outbreak of the first world war, when the site was requisitioned for government purposes, brought an end to the proposal for the time being.

Ever an optimist the human being is stirred to take action to achieve some of the greatest ends in the midst of the greatest of disasters. For perhaps the first time war was seen not any longer as an opportunity for glory, but as a means to new and better hopes. The high death toll in the rain-sodden trenches of Flanders encouraged the hope that wars would cease, for clearly there was little advantage in victories achieved at such a cost, and gave rise to generous plans for war memorials. Some of the latter were like less ornate versions of the Albert Memorial; others were more useful to future generations. It was in this atmosphere that further plans were made for the University College, W. G. Gibbs, the editor of the Leicester Daily Post, urging a war memorial of 'practical utility' that might take the form of 'a university college, the stepping stone to a university itself'.<sup>24</sup>

The University College idea received thereafter two areas of support that had lacked hitherto. Firstly there was the support of the Workers' Educational Association and the Adult Schools, as represented in Frank Salter, who combined the tasks of Educational Secretary to the Leicestershire Adult School Union and Secretary of

the Leicester and District Branch of the W.E.A.,<sup>25</sup> and who pledged the support of the groups that he represented for the idea of a University as a war memorial. He stated that: 'We do not want a University simply because Birmingham and Bristol possess one. We do not want a University to develop only the special gifts of a few, nor to be at the direction of those interested in a particular industry. But we do most urgently need a University for the enrichment of the people's lives and the widening of their interests'.<sup>26</sup>

The other new support was in the area of finance. Commenting on J. D. Paul's advocacy of the University idea in 1895 Professor Simmons has suggested that if a substantial donation had been made a College might have come into existence at that time. But the pre-occupation at this time had been with the Technical School and the College of Art.<sup>27</sup> In 1917, however, a Mr. Duncan Henderson undertook to contribute £500 when a properly constituted Leicester and County plan had been formulated.<sup>28</sup> During 1919 Dr. Clarke campaigned for funds. Addressing the Rotary Club on the 'Leicester and Leicestershire War Memorial' project he stated that: 'Dr. Bennett had promised £500 in honour of his nephew Garth Taylor - a young life of promise cut short in action....and he had received two cheques, both unasked for, from Miss Humberstone and Mr. Henry Hancock'. The speaker had himself opened the Leicester University fund account with £100.<sup>29</sup> Two particular donations were crucial though. Early in 1919 the death occurred of Dr. J. E. M. Finch, who had been superintendent medical officer at

the Borough Mental Hospital. In his will there was a bequest of £5,000 to the fund, conditional upon the University College coming into existence within one year.<sup>30</sup> This was followed quickly by Thomas Fielding Johnson's donation. Writing to North (the mayor at the time) on 4 April 1919, Johnson offered the old asylum site for use by the University College and the Wyggeston Schools.<sup>31</sup> The availability of a site with usable buildings and Finch's bequest made action to open a College an urgent necessity; further donations, including one of £20,000 from H. Simpson Gee, a local printer,<sup>32</sup> amounting to 64,000 by October 1919,<sup>33</sup> made it possible.

A University College, by definition, is an institution preparing students for degree examinations, but not itself in a position to award degrees. So that before the College could be opened the question of affiliation had to be discussed, and a decision made. A relationship with Nottingham University College within a structure embracing both institutions was an obvious possibility, for some local citizens were already fearful of the possibility that the Nottingham institution might become the University of the East Midlands, and prevent Leicester from sharing in the enterprise if the town did not quickly develop a comparable college. In 1914 it was noted with considerable alarm that: 'Nottingham is already reaching forward and formulating a scheme by which its University College shall be developed into a university for the East Midlands. That implies immediately the subordination of Leicester from an intellectual standpoint; if we continue our pol-



icy of laissez-faire it will mean commercial and manufacturing subordination, and stagnation also'.<sup>34</sup> In 1917 support was given to the idea of a federally structured university by W. A. Brockington, the County Director of Education, who rejected the taking of external examinations as being obsolete. Taking account also of the development of an agricultural college at Sutton Bonington (on the Nottinghamshire-Leicestershire border) and of an engineering college at Loughborough, he envisaged a federal structure in which these and the University Colleges at Nottingham and Leicester shared.<sup>35</sup> Brockington's proposals were accepted by the Nottingham Court of Governors.<sup>36</sup>

Leicester suspicions of Nottingham's intentions were not, however, easy to allay. The mayor (Councillor W. J. Lovell), Councillor North, and F. P. Armitage, the new Director of Education, attended a conference in Nottingham to discuss Brockington's proposal in greater detail. They returned convinced that the Nottingham representatives 'wanted the University in their town, and would expect Leicester to contribute towards the cost'. Accordingly the Leicester Education Committee, while agreeing to appoint representatives to the East Midlands University Committee, announced that it would not be content that an institution in Leicester should be an affiliate of a future Nottingham University. 'Their ambition', North stated, 'would not be met with any thing less than the provision of a University College of their own, federated with the other colleges of the East Midlands University',

which was essential if they were to have the position and freedom and scope for future developments which they were entitled to'.<sup>37</sup>

Opinion within Nottingham University College itself was not wholly against the idea that Leicester and Nottingham Colleges should be equal entities within a federal structure. Professor A. W. Kirkaldy, Head of the Department of Economics and Commerce, for instance, wrote an article in which he gave his full support. He appreciated the administrative ease of a structure based on Nottingham, but was aware of the local hostility being engendered in Leicester, so that he welcomed 'the suggestion that the apex.... shall take a federal form, under which institutions in existence, or on the point of achievement, may be modified and developed to fit in with a new scheme'.<sup>38</sup> What Kirkaldy probably realised, as did Clarke in Leicester, was that unless there was a federal structure with full autonomy for local colleges it would be difficult to maintain the interest of businessmen in Leicester. The latter (Clarke) had himself welcomed the Nottingham proposal to change the title of the proposed University to that of the 'University of Mercia',<sup>39</sup> and suggested that the University Court 'would be elected by the constituent colleges, and would be supplied with the necessary money by grants from them.... Inside this federal body the local College would have its own body of governors, and be its own master for local affairs; it would be a truly democratic body and would elect its own executive - the Council'.<sup>40</sup>

Kirkaldy's article was one of a series written by Nottingham

University College staff in an attempt to close the widening gap of ill-feeling between Nottingham and Leicester. The Rotary Clubs of the two cities also attempted to act as peacemakers. But the East Midlands University idea was still-born nevertheless. The fact was that the majority opinion in Nottingham was that its University College, already forty years old, with 830 students and a staff of 57, should have primacy of place and power within the new structure. For other entities either did not exist or were in the formative stages, and, though the idea of equality was interesting, it did not face up to the realities of the existing situation.<sup>41</sup>

Professor Frank Granger, the Nottingham Vice-Principal, wrote an article in which, though attempting to outline the case for federation, he in fact showed the Nottingham interest in a much closer union than Leicester was prepared to accept:

'The close neighbourhood of Derby, Leicester, and Nottingham renders them almost one capital centre.... By the union of various centres into one corporation it will be possible for the services of a single expert to be spread over a large field, and whereas a single institution could not hope to retain the services of expert teachers in subjects where the local demand was small, it will be possible for a lecturer to divide his work, say, between Derby, Leicester and Nottingham in such a manner that each locality will enjoy the services of an expert who can devote his whole time to the subject'.<sup>42</sup>

It needed little kindling to light the fire that destroyed the paper edifice of the 'University of Mercia'. It came in the form of a bitter exchange between Sir Jonathan North and the Town Clerk of Nottingham, Mr. Board. At a meeting of the Leicester University College Committee on 13 January 1920, North presented

the draft charter of the East Midlands University, which the Nottingham Town Clerk had just sent to him. It was noted that the Court would consist of eighteen representatives of the City and County of Nottingham, while Leicester and Leicestershire would have only six representatives. Moreover, while Nottingham would have the right to nominate twelve representatives of learned societies, Leicester would nominate only nine. On the Council there would be ten Nottingham and four Leicester representatives. Even Brockington, who had been one of the staunchest advocates of federalism, expressed his disappointment that Nottingham seemed to want to take over the property of the Leicester College, without making any similar concession itself. North voiced his strong condemnation, complaining that 'from beginning to end the East Midlands University....simply meant a Nottingham University'. He demanded equality between the Colleges, and threatened that Leicester would go forward with a scheme of its own.<sup>43</sup>

The Nottingham Town Clerk's reply was curious, for he accused North of 'a distinct breach of faith' in that the draft charter had been sent in confidence.<sup>44</sup> Even more curious was his defence of Nottingham University College, to which institution a copy had not even been sent, 'for it had nothing to do with them'. It became clear that the draft had been prepared by a Nottingham City Council sponsored 'Joint Committee of the East Midlands, with representatives from the counties of Leicester, Lincoln, Northampton, Derby, and Nottingham'.<sup>46</sup> North protested that the document had not been marked as being confidential, and that Leicester's

demand for equality of treatment (by now more reasonable since the Leicester College had become a corporate entity and was about to commence operations) had not changed.<sup>47</sup> Such a breach, which reached the pages of the national press, could not be repaired easily; nor was it repaired, for on 1 June 1923 the Principal of the Leicester College wrote to the Nottingham Town Clerk to say that, since the scheme had not been altered to meet Leicester objections, the institution was now formally withdrawing from the proposed federation.<sup>48</sup> Arguments continued for some time, and attempts were made from Nottingham to maintain a connection between the Colleges, but these were finally abandoned in 1927, the result of the whole exercise being that neither Nottingham nor Leicester could escape from the University of London's external examination system, for independently their resources were insufficient to be able to advance the claim to full university status.<sup>49</sup>

By tying itself to the London external examination system the new College, which opened in October 1921, with nine students, three lecturers, an acting principal and a secretary, lost the opportunity that it might have had, within the framework of an East Midlands University, of developing a distinctive pattern of courses. Dr. Astley Clarke's hopes, expressed in a lecture at the Leicester Museum, of 'some study which was not at present represented in English universities', such as photography, printing and illuminating, ventilation, and the history of arts and sciences, were dashed.<sup>50</sup> Lost also was F. P. Armitage's hope of

a College 'where those who would qualify themselves for the learned professions of medicine, law, teaching, engineering or technology, might find opportunity and inspiration'.<sup>51</sup> There was some hope that a department of education might be started in 1921, for the training of teachers for secondary schools, in the light of rapid developments in secondary education, was seen as a feature that would commend itself to the arts and science students who formed the initial intake, and attract grants from the Board of Education. Unfortunately for the infant College, the output of teachers was already accelerating sufficiently elsewhere, and it began to look as if there would soon be over-production. In 1919-20 there were 22 teacher training departments, whose annual output was 225; by 1924-5 there were 26 departments, with an annual output of 808. Dr. Shakoor has commented that this number could not be absorbed in the schools at that time.<sup>52</sup> It was understandable, therefore, that in seeking economies the government would deny the Leicester College's claim. The delay in this case, however, was only temporary, for in 1925 negotiations began again, and, with the assistance of Captain Charles Waterhouse, then Member of Parliament for Leicester South, were successfully concluded in 1928, when Lord Eustace Percy, President of the Board of Education, acceded to the Principal's request for recognition of a one-year course. During 1929-30 some 17 graduate students were trained.<sup>53</sup>

There were also advantages in attachment to the London system. Right from the beginning the College was able to offer courses for

examinations that were accepted as being of a high standard, a facility that attracted Colleges and students in other towns in England and was later to appeal to the developing countries.<sup>54</sup>

Indeed they enabled Leicester to begin on a smaller scale than would have been feasible for a fully-fledged University, to cope with a difficult financial situation, and to open the doors of the institution at the time when it was vital to do so. As North stated: 'It was the decision not to wait till Leicester has its own chartered College, but to get going at once with classes of the University standard, at which young men and women can work up for external degrees'.<sup>55</sup>

By opening in the period just after the ending of hostilities, despite the depression of 1922, it was possible to gain support from those wishing to donate money toward a war memorial and to gain an annual grant from the City of Leicester. On the other hand, in spite of being given, initially, the title of 'Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland College' it lacked support from the County Councils of Leicestershire (which was pre-occupied with developments at Loughborough, and which tended to regard the College as a city enterprise) and Rutland, which had no substantial resources.<sup>56</sup>

What was lacking in money and resources was compensated for by esprit de corps, for the close attention which each lecturer was able to give to his small group of students lead readily to the development of a rich community life, often lacking in the larger institutions. By 1934 the quality of work was high enough for several master's degrees and one Ph.D. degree to have been awarded to students in the College.<sup>58</sup> Yet even by

1938-9 there were only 122 full-time students, a figure that some still considered to be not viable.<sup>58</sup>

Technical education was much affected by the two main series of events in higher education during the period. In the first place the failure to provide a link between the various forms of higher education left the Schools of Art and Technology linked with each other, but the Domestic Science College was left without any connections with other Colleges. This was the common fate of domestic science colleges. In 1929 there were eleven such Colleges in the country, none of which had any connection with other types of Colleges, or even with each other.<sup>60</sup> In addition the Leicester College lacked both suitable premises and a raison d'etre.

On being taken over by the Leicester Education Committee in 1907 the Domestic Science College was moved from the old Town Hall (now known by its older name as the Guildhall) to a large house nearby, where it served as a cookery centre for girls from various schools in the town. Though the premises were adequate for the small number of students using them at that time, they were inadequate from the point of view of expanding numbers of students and the broader range of subjects that it was hoped could be offered. Essential for the expansion of numbers was the provision of a hostel, so that a wider area could be served. In 1920 it was observed that twelve out of a total of 26 students were from outside the Leicester area.<sup>61</sup> A proposal to provide a hostel for 15 to 20 students had been made in the previous year, but it had foundered



when the Board of Education considered the house selected in De Montfort Square to be inadequate.<sup>62</sup> The Committee had also considered erecting a building for the purpose.<sup>63</sup> During 1920 it was suggested that, since the new University College would not be able to use all the buildings on the site provided for it, the whole College might temporarily be removed to there. This would have the advantage of providing not only hostel accommodation, but also the space in which the College's activities might be expanded.<sup>64</sup> During 1925-6, after the transfer had taken place, the hostel was shared by 23 Domestic Science College students and three University College students.<sup>65</sup>

By 1931, six years after Miss M. Willcock had taken over the Principalship, the student body had increased from 37 full-time students to 77 full-time and 57 part-time students.<sup>66</sup> It became necessary to expand its facilities on another site, or be absorbed within the University College. The latter proving impossible, a spacious site in Knighton Fields was acquired in 1932, where hostel accommodation was provided for 100, and where in 1938 the whole College was re-established in purpose-built premises.<sup>67</sup>

The question of the purpose of the Domestic Science College was not as easily settled as that of accommodation. By the first decade of the century its earlier functions had disappeared. The training of middle-class and artisan-class women in simple home cooking had become less important as younger women left school having acquired such knowledge already. Though its field widened

to include a greater range of domestic arts, it was superseded in all of these by the development of domestic science centres in the schools themselves. Some of this work remained, but it was vestigial, and likely in time to disappear. The Education Committee, in taking over the institution's assets, clearly considered its purpose to be that of training teachers, so that its merging with the proposed day training college seemed to be a logical step. The denial of this step by the Board of Education in 1907 left the College's raison d'être uncertain.

Transference of the Domestic Science College to the site of the University College encouraged consideration of the possibility of merging with that institution. Armitage approached the latter with this in mind. He was able to draw attention to the increasing status of domestic science, citing London and Bristol as Universities offering degrees in the area, and hoped that it would be found possible to merge teacher training functions within the Department of Education that was then in the planning stage. This also was a failure, discussions being broken off in March 1928.<sup>68</sup> Nevertheless the Collège did broaden its intake subsequently by offering training in large scale and institutional cookery, a factor which increased the size of the student body, but raised other problems, such as the question of entrance qualifications.<sup>69</sup> Ultimately, beyond the period with which we are concerned, the teacher training functions were to be merged with a post-second world war training college, and the institutional management functions with a new

college of further education. Until then, however, the uneasy tandem ride was to continue for another forty years.

The Schools, or Colleges of Art and Technology (as they soon became) were also searching for a raison d'être. They were in several respects more fortunate than the Domestic Science College. In B. J. Fletcher and J. H. Hawthorn the institutions had able principals who worked cheerfully and imaginatively together, until Fletcher became Principal of Birmingham School of Art and the latter retired in the early 1920s. The quality of their co-operation was not fully appreciated until the new principals, neither of whom had had experience in a co-operative venture, showed by their tendency to move in different directions that unity in duality could not always be assumed. Then it was that the Education Committee created a Board of Studies, consisting of the two principals and the heads of departments, to plan the future work of the Colleges, and to bring them closer to the organic unity that ultimately was achieved on the attainment of Polytechnic status.<sup>70</sup>

The Colleges were also fortunate in that the formation of junior technical and art classes provided a steady stream of entrants whose standard of work was higher than during the nineteenth century. Whereas many of the earlier students had been middle-aged men, the student bodies of the 1920s and 1930s consisted mainly of young people at the beginning of their careers, and mostly in apprenticeships.<sup>71</sup>

There was also a measure of good fortune that accrued from

the failure of the attempts to achieve a federal East Midlands University. In 1919, when there was a shortage of teaching space, it was suggested by Armitage, as Director of Education, that the existing building should be left for the use of the College of Art, while the College of Technology was rehoused elsewhere. For the Director this was the first stage in the process of absorbing the latter's pure science and engineering departments into the new University. The move was prevented, however, partially by the controversy surrounding the development of the University College, and also by the objections of Councillor Sidney Gimson, a son of Josiah Gimson, the greatest of Leicester's engineers and ironfounders in the nineteenth century, and himself a distinguished engineer. Gimson supported Hawthorn's contention that 'the intimate connection between the two schools' was necessary to the well-being of both of them.<sup>72</sup> It was also clear that facilities for engineering apprentices would be lost in the process. So that, while the Colleges continued to develop the more advanced side of their work, and enter some students for London external degrees, it was the apprenticeship level that continued to be of greatest importance at this stage.

Higher standards of workmanship were also being demanded in some industries and professions. Between 1901 and 1911 the rapid pace of town building slowed down. The birth rate had begun to decline. So that the building industry's work-force declined from 1,216,000 in 1901 to 1,140,000 in 1911. The need for a

higher standard of workmanship in competing for employment encouraged the development in Leicester of part-time day classes for builders' apprentices. In the case of pharmacy higher standards were imposed by the Pharmacy Act of 1909, resulting in an appeal by local pharmacists for study facilities in the College of Technology.<sup>73</sup>

Though the Colleges of Art and Technology were more fortunate than other areas of higher education, they were not devoid of problems, despite their close attention to the local industrial scene. In 1907 the Leicester Daily Post's educational correspondent, 'Alpha', noted that, after having been 'somewhat nebulous', 'the work is gravitating round centres, and is taking much more definite shape. Each trade and profession has its own special group of classes plainly set forth, and all are so arranged as to co-ordinate well with the rest of the group'.<sup>74</sup> A month later though, 'Alpha' had to admit that 'after a lad has done well at the Council school....., and has further spent two or three years in a secondary course at the Wyggeston or the Technical Schools, there is difficulty in finding him a place'.<sup>75</sup> In addition to this disincentive, there were also problems within some industries that were discouraging. In printing the rigid trade union control of entry into apprenticeships was a factor. An apprenticeship in lithography, for instance, began at the age of fifteen, and allowed no time for day release.<sup>76</sup>

The general industrial situation in Leicester, particularly before the first world war, was not too encouraging for the work of the Colleges. As Millwood has indicated, a high proportion of female labour meant that the unemployed married man was not usually entirely bereft of income.<sup>77</sup> It also meant that in good times there were at least two incomes in the family, thus reducing the incentive to achieve a qualification that would increase the rate of pay.

The first world war, in its immediate effect, was discouraging also. Comparing the figures for 1914 and 1918 it may be noted that total enrolment dropped from 1,088 to 828. Evening work, which showed the greatest losses - 932 to 671 - was reduced in every department except dress-making. Part-time students were reduced in number from 65 to 22. Among full-timers engineering had disappeared entirely, but other sections had increased, so that there were 135 students, as compared with 91 in 1914.<sup>78</sup>

The long term prospect was, however, much brighter. In order to regain world markets there was a need for more technological research as well as more intensive technical education to higher levels. Perceiving the need for close co-operation between the Colleges and industry Hawthorn had established as early as 1899 a series of advisory committees, linking up members of the Colleges with particular industries, so that the latter could be served better, and so that appeals for assistance to the Colleges could be

channelled to particular industries through influential people in those industries.<sup>79</sup> The committees had been the means by which the system of permanent loans of tools and machinery from particular firms or groups of firms was developed. This had enabled the Colleges to keep abreast of new developments in the local industries, and so enhance their credibility. Also, by inviting only the more intelligent and broad-minded industrialists to join the committees, Hawthorn had ensured that the education provided would stress underlying scientific principles and not become trade training only.<sup>80</sup> At the end of the first world war the committees became particularly active. The activities of the Textile Trades Advisory Committee resulted in the establishment of a new School of Textiles in 1921, with the provision of one and two year full-time courses in addition to the existing part-time and evening courses, and of facilities for research in hosiery.<sup>81</sup> The activities of the other advisory committees produced similar effects in other departments, with the result that the work of the Colleges rotated around four key departments, hosiery and textiles, boot and shoe manufacture, printing and allied trades, and building.<sup>82</sup>

The increasing success of the Colleges of Art and Technology was the cause of serious problems in the Vaughan College. During 1904 there was an 8% decrease in the number of students, regarded as being attributable to competition from the Technical School.<sup>83</sup> In 1906-7 it was noted that: 'The number of youths has somewhat diminished, possibly from the fact that the Local Education Auth-

ority had established classes for youths in the same locality with a view to preparing them for higher Technical instruction'.<sup>84</sup> This placed the College in a difficult situation, for it was the fees received in respect of examinations and government grants that had subsidised the rest of the work. So that, while adult members (men and women) in non-examination classes continued to increase from 1,920 in 1903-4 to 2,088 in 1912 income declined appreciably.<sup>85</sup> The increase in non-examination classes was not constant either. Some years between 1903 and 1912 showed a substantial decline in membership. An attempt to charge entrance fees having failed in 1903, it was decided that changes of status would have to be made. In 1904-5 the College was recognised officially as a secondary school by the Board of Education, which entitled it to grant-aid amounting to between £325 and £350 per annum. This, however, only provided a slightly higher grant than had been available under the previous arrangement, whereby there had been recognition as an evening continuation school. It was not sufficient for the maintenance of the College. So that, in spite of the generosity of subscribers the reserve fund had to be used. Since that fund amounted to little more than £225 in 1904-5 it was obvious that more assistance would have to be sought.<sup>86</sup>

Both the Vaughan College committee and the Leicester Education Committee were anxious for development of a relationship between them. When North stated that he 'thought the Committee were agreed that they ought to have control of the various educational enter-



prises of the town' he was thinking not just of the secondary schools, but of the Vaughan College also.<sup>87</sup> For, while the Vaughan College was concerned about the overlapping of courses, North, as chairman of the Education Committee, was concerned about the protection of the Colleges of Art and Technology. Therefore he wished to see the Committee take over at least the curriculum aspects, so that overlapping could be prevented.<sup>88</sup> On the other hand, there were factors militating against a smooth take-over. In the first place, the College was engaged in social work of various kinds; a sick benefit society, a provident society, a Christmas Club and book and magazine club, as well as rambling, cycling and cricketing activities.<sup>89</sup> These did not belong within the sphere of the Education Committee's responsibilities yet. Moreover, the building in Union Street was in need of replacement, for in 1903 it had been sold by the vicar and churchwardens of St. Martin's to the Leicester Co-operative Society, who wished to use the site for an extension to the adjacent shop.<sup>90</sup> The Committee was reluctant to take over a College without premises, and would accept no responsibility for its welfare unless a new building was provided voluntarily. The fact, however, that a new building was erected in Great Central Street, near to the old County School, during 1907, from funds in part donated by Mrs. G. H. Ellis and other benefactors, made the transfer even more difficult. The building was indeed not completed at the time when the matter of a take-over was considered by the Education Committee again. With good feeling on both sides, a compromise was reached whereby the

governors of the College would continue to administer it financially independently of the Committee, but would surrender the purely educational side of the work when its funds were exhausted. In the meantime the Committee would exercise some supervision over curricula to prevent overlapping with the Technical College courses.<sup>91</sup> Plans were also made for a new governing body, consisting of fifteen members, three of whom (the mayor, the vicar of St. Martin's and the chairman of the Education Committee) were to be ex officio, four of whom were to be elected by the Town Council (though not necessarily from Council members), and the other eight were to be co-opted members. This governing body took office when the new building, opened by Sir Oliver Lodge, the Principal of Birmingham University, on 12 October 1908, came into use.<sup>92</sup>

The new Vaughan College's scope was defined by the Board as providing education in a broad range of subjects, the offering of public lectures, providing facilities for the formation and meeting of clubs and societies, and for a library, museum and reading room,<sup>93</sup> but the Education Committee limited this in respect of the teaching of technology and commerce. Despite this, however, the decline noticed earlier continued. By 1921-2 total enrolments had shrunk to 1,005 (274 men and 731 women); three years later there were only 785 (253 men and 532 women).<sup>94</sup> Several reasons may be suggested. In the first place the death of old stalwarts had substantially altered the character of the institution. The death of Vaughan himself in 1905 was only one of a number of deaths

that robbed the institution of valuable workers, who had over many years attracted others by the warmth of their personalities and by their missionary efforts. Thomas Cotchett Lea was one such person. Lea, who died in 1919, combined boot and shoe and hosiery manufacturing. He had joined the College committee in 1873. In order to gain recruits for the Sunday evening classes he would visit local public houses, enticing away from their tankards men who ultimately became 'permanent and most loyal students'.<sup>95</sup>

In any institution with a core of members who remain for many years there is another danger. Classes become semi-corporate entities in themselves, with a system of personal relationships established over the years. The newcomer finds it difficult to gain acceptance. The older becomes the average age of the class, the more is the newcomer repelled, until the class eventually dies out. This is particularly true of Bible classes existing over many years, and it is significant that it was the Sunday classes, eroded also by the increasing secularisation of English society, that declined more rapidly than the other classes.<sup>96</sup>

The first world war, which deprived the College of many young men, was another factor in the decline. It broke up old associations and destroyed many of the social activities. The sick benefit club, founded in 1867, was no longer as necessary since the passing of the National Insurance Act in 1911; it too disappeared during the war, along with other similar clubs and societies.<sup>97</sup>

The College would not, in future, have quite the same meaning

for those who frequented it. Having only the common attendance at classes to bind them together, students could not be expected to have the same loyalty as the pre-war habitués had. It mattered little to them whether they attended classes arranged in one of the schools by the Education Committee, at the Colleges of Art and Technology, a W.E.A. class, or one arranged by the Vaughan College. In general better prepared for study than their predecessors, they were more selective, both as regards the courses themselves, and the supporting library services. When the College was inspected by Joseph Owen, Her Majesty's Senior Inspector, and a specialist in adult education, and Albert Mansbridge, the founder of the Workers' Educational Association, they reported that the teachers were, on the whole, inadequately qualified, that the library had not enough books, and those that it had were mostly out of date, and that, perhaps because students were not consulted, the programme was old-fashioned in style, consisting entirely of lecture courses.<sup>98</sup>

It was clear to Owen and Mansbridge that a new raison d'être was needed. They suggested that Vaughan should aim to become either a 'higher-grade pioneer continuation school' or 'the focus of higher education of the liberal or humanistic type for working people in Leicester'. Preferring the latter, they hoped that the College could become the focus for university extension work and the Workers' Educational Association activities, and that the classes would become more tutorial in style.<sup>99</sup> Tutorial classes, which had been ignored up to this point, were now favoured in most other

agencies of adult education, partly because they placed more initiative in the hands of the learner, and partly because they increased the contact between university educated tutors and working-class people.<sup>100</sup>

Several factors helped to decide the course of future action at Vaughan College. The first of these was the publication in 1919 of the Adult Education Report, prepared by a Departmental Committee in the Ministry of Reconstruction, presided over by A. L. Smith, the master of Balliol College, Oxford, and including in its membership the talents of Albert Mansbridge, R. H. Tawney and Arthur Greenwood. Noting that adult education 'aims at satisfying the needs of the individual and at the attainment of new standards of citizenship and a better social order', they decided that there should be studies in areas like natural science, modern languages, music and literature, but that there should also be a stress on courses aimed at an understanding of social and economic conditions. Organisationally the report recommended Universities to consider providing resident tutors, with a view to the establishment of local colleges for extra-mural work, so that the work of advanced extra-mural teaching as well as the less exacting pioneering activities of voluntary associations could be co-ordinated.<sup>101</sup>

The publication of the Adult Education Report was followed by a flurry of activity on the part of Universities and University Colleges to comply with the suggestions. A more generous system of grants enabled them to expand considerably the provision of

tutorial classes. Not so many of them went to the length of formally establishing extra-mural departments, but among the first to do so was Nottingham University College in 1920, a fact that could be expected to have repercussions in Leicester, especially in view of the ill-feeling that was being engendered over the East Midlands University proposals.<sup>102</sup> Of very great concern was the fact that Robert Peers, the first Director of the Nottingham extra-mural department, developed classes very rapidly through the East Midlands. Student numbers increased from 838 in 1921 to 1,692 in 1926, making the department larger, in terms of tutorial classes provided, than that of any other institution outside London.<sup>103</sup> While the East Midlands University was still a possibility and Leicester University College was still struggling to establish itself, there could be no objection to the Nottingham department extending its activities into the Leicester area. Indeed several entries in the Leicester Education Committee minutes indicate that it was welcome enough to be awarded annual grants from Leicester rates. By the late 1920s, when the linking of Leicester and Nottingham Colleges was seen as an unlikely occurrence, Nottingham's activities in the Leicester area began to be regarded as unwarranted intrusion into the local University College's territory.<sup>104</sup>

While the future of the University Colleges was being worked out, the Vaughan College had remained unaffiliated to either. It had already developed links with the Workers' Educational Association. In 1908 the Leicester Branch of the W.E.A. had been formed

as a result of a meeting of members of working-class organisations under the auspices of the Trade Council.<sup>105</sup> That it was a true working-class organisation rather than a product of middle-class sponsorship is indicated by the comments of 'Alpha', who, noting the absence of education officials and teachers, stated: 'I don't know if the idea of the promoters is to keep the management entirely in the hands of the working-classes. If so, they are not following the procedure of other towns'.<sup>106</sup> In 1914 the Vaughan College governors allowed the Branch to use a room in the College for one of their classes. Later, other classes developed there. During 1921-2 there were nearly one hundred W.E.A. students using the Great Central Street premises.<sup>107</sup>

A notable feature of the W.E.A. classes was that they affected the normal operations of the Vaughan College so little. The student bodies remained separate, and, although the W.E.A. had tutorial and university preparatory classes conducted by F. W. Kolthammer, Walter Layton, and Henry Clay of Cambridge, and A. E. Smith of Nottingham University College, they remained entirely separate from the College's own programme.<sup>108</sup> No doubt this was to some extent due to the different class composition. The W.E.A.'s working-class members might well have felt ill at ease with 'clerks and warehousemen....who want to push on further with their knowledge, and so make use of the college as a stepping stone to those wider fields of specialisation'.<sup>109</sup> On the other hand this would be less true of the 1920s than in the earlier years of the century, for the war itself had been a leveller. We must, therefore, look elsewhere for

reasons for the continuing failure of W.E.A. and Vaughan College courses to achieve organisational integration.

One reason may be sought in the W.E.A. itself. It had developed links with Nottingham University College, initially in the person of A. E. Smith, who in 1912 became the Organiser and Director of Tutorial Classes. Though appointed by the Nottingham College he also became an unofficial organiser of W.E.A. branches.<sup>110</sup> When Smith resigned to enter the Unitarian ministry, the W.E.A. branches in the area decided to form themselves into an East Midlands District, with headquarters in Nottingham. Frank Salter, a building trade worker, who had been honorary secretary of the Leicester Branch since 1916, was appointed full-time Organising Secretary in 1919.<sup>111</sup> When Robert Peers was appointed by Nottingham University College as Director of the Extra-Mural Department it was natural that a partnership should be quickly and easily established between the department and the W.E.A. Neither Salter nor Peers could have achieved much without the work of the other.<sup>112</sup> What Salter and the W.E.A would have regarded as a prudent arrangement must have seemed like a 'Babylonish Captivity' when viewed from Vaughan College.

There can be little doubt that the supporters of Vaughan College, though recognising that the institution could not continue to maintain its independence forever, wished for a relationship with the University College in Leicester rather than with Nottingham. In this it was supported by the presence on the



body of governors of Sir Jonathan North and Dr. Astley Clarke. At a meeting on 14 April 1919 the latter proposed (and had accepted) a motion to the effect that a committee be appointed 'to consider what may be possible as to co-operation with the University College'. Clarke himself and F. B. Lott, the retired Inspector of Schools, who was soon to become honorary librarian of the new University College, were included on the committee, which was also charged with maintaining liaison between the two institutions.<sup>113</sup> Another link was established when, after considering 29 applicants for the University College Principalship, and turning down all of them, a member of the appointing committee was asked to become the Acting Principal. Dr. R. F. Rattray, the appointee, had gained first class honours in English at the University of Glasgow, and had then continued studies at Manchester College, Oxford, at the Universities of Kiel and Marburg, and at Harvard University. At the latter he had presented a thesis on 'Samuel Butler and the Philosophy of Nature' for the Ph.D. degree. Subsequently he had entered the Unitarian ministry, and, after serving a pastorate in Lancashire, had become minister of the Great Meeting Chapel in Leicester.<sup>114</sup> There can be little doubt that, as an able representative of Liberal Non-conformity, Rattray was very acceptable in the community. He was also known to be an enthusiastic supporter of adult education.

It was Rattray who became one of the main forces behind the movement to link the Colleges, and to bring Vaughan College's own

classes and the W.E.A. classes organisationally closer together. For a whole decade, during most of which he was acting as Principal of University College, he lectured on The History of Civilization and other similar topics to W.E.A. students, and attracted large numbers.<sup>115</sup> He was co-opted to the Vaughan management committee in 1922. Another force was that of the dynamic Charles R. Keene, who was elected to the City Council (in 1926), to the management committee of Vaughan College, to the Council of University College, and to a vice-presidency of the W.E.A., all within a very short space of time. As a student at Vaughan College also he was anxious to see it associated with University College, and worked towards that end.<sup>116</sup>

Despite the additional urging of His Majesty's Inspectors and the recommendation of the liaison committee that Vaughan College should become the headquarters of an extra-mural department of the University College, the latter was in no position to act in the mid-1920s. It is possible also that the presidency of Canon Atkins was a disincentive. Still teaching at the age of 90, he viewed the role of the College as being something like that of his old St. Martin's Science School. As an officially recognised secondary school it was still preparing pupils for London matriculation. By the time that action became possible in 1929, the great man, the last remaining link with the College's foundation, was no longer there; he had died in 1927 at the age of 91.<sup>117</sup>

The difficulty that faced Leicester University College in 1929 was that of making its extra-mural department viable, for as the shadow of Nottingham University College receded, somewhat reluctantly, beyond the northern borders of Leicestershire, a competitor arose in the shape of Loughborough College, whose Principal, Dr. Herbert Schofield, persuaded Peers to 'cede' the northern areas of Leicestershire, not to Leicester, but to a Loughborough department of extra-mural studies. This left Leicester without the most highly developed areas in the county, leaving it with the rural areas of southern Leicestershire and the tiny county of Rutland. To all intents and purposes the new department would be forced to devote its attentions to little more than the city area. Vaughan College formed the basic location for the extra-mural work.<sup>118</sup>

Had the University College decided against extra-mural work in these circumstances, which it might well have done, the Vaughan College would either have disappeared or become one of the city's evening institutes. Deciding to go ahead, the Department of Adult Education was created, with H. A. Silverman (formerly Staff Tutor in Economics at the University of Birmingham) as Director. Gaining the active co-operation of the W.E.A., whose activities now became an integral part of the College's work, Silverman embarked on a substantial development plan, which brought in an appreciable number of new students. Between 1928-9 and 1938-9 student enrolment rose from 260 to 1,387, and the number of courses from 12 to

71. By the time that Silverman resigned in 1944 there was virtually no difference between W.E.A. courses and those organised by the department itself, for the district secretaryship of the W.E.A. had been held by a member of the department staff.<sup>120</sup>

By the end of the period the various institutions of higher education had not solved all of their basic problems. The University College was still not in receipt of regular grants from the University Grants Committee. The number of students was still very small. The future was uncertain, especially in view of the economic depressions. But, like the Colleges of Art and Technology also, it had made steady progress, and had influential supporters within the city. While Vaughan College had been saved from extinction to find new purpose in its continued existence within the structure of the University College. Perhaps most of all, the period may be noted for the delineation of the spheres of activity of the various entities. With the exception of the Domestic Science College, each had established a raison d'etre that did not conflict with the purposes of the other institutions. So that when the time came, after the second world war, for the expansion of higher education, there was a firm foundation on which to build.

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## EPILOGUE

Between 1833 and 1940 Leicester grew from a small town of 40,000 to a city of 280,000 people. From a one industry town with chronic under-employment, it had become a city with three important industries, hosiery, boots and shoes, and engineering, and many smaller industries, with virtually full-employment. Many of the slums that had appeared in 1833 or were soon to be built had either disappeared or were in process of being swept away in 1940. The last row of back-to-back houses awaited demolition as German bombers flew overhead. The inadequate sanitary arrangements of the 1830s had also been replaced by adequate sewerage and piped water supplies from distant reservoirs, so that the high death rate was succeeded by a very low death rate. The lack of open space occasioned by the building of houses before 1864 on the cricket ground that lay between the Humberstone and Belgrave Roads had been compensated for by the provision of parks and recreation grounds throughout the town.

In other respects too, there were differences to be observed. The elementary schools, so few in number in 1833, and offering only a smattering of the 3R's to those who could be persuaded to attend, had been replaced by 1940 with large schools, with bright cheerful classrooms in which trained teachers operated with reasonably smooth efficiency, providing education in streamed classes up to

the age of fourteen for the total child population, except for those who attended secondary schools. Secondary education, almost entirely absent at the earlier date, provided for approximately 20% of pupils reaching the age of eleven, though many of them still left before the age of sixteen. Those who continued could enter, if qualified by examination, the University College or the Domestic Science College, or, if qualified by entrance to an apprenticeship, to the Colleges of Art and Technology, while leisure pursuits could be continued either at Vaughan College or one of the city's evening institutes.

Education was, however, still largely a matter of class differentiation at the end of the period, as it had been at the beginning, for it was appreciably easier for the child of middle-class parentage to proceed through the system than it was for the child from a working-class home. But at least the highly intelligent and ambitious working-class child could reach, by scholarship, through to the highest levels. In 1833 he would have found the way blocked. One cannot imagine men of the calibre of A. J. Mundella or William and John Biggs, who in their own day attended Leicester elementary schools, not being awarded secondary school places if they had been alive in the 1920s and 1930s, as were C. P. Snow and J. H. Plumb. Through the interaction of national and local politics these changes had been brought about.

Yet in spite of all the changes that occurred over the course of a century, one is most conscious of the essential continuity of history, of the continuing contribution to education of various features of urban life in Leicester. Something of this continuity may be observed in the industrial structure. Though the industry of the late 1930s was more varied, and there were some significantly large employers of labour in each of the main areas of production, none was large enough to dominate. There were many small firms in each of the three main industries. The system whereby a shoe manufacturer could rent all of his machinery from the British United Shoe Machinery Company encouraged the continuance of small establishments, as also did the increasing use of gas and electrically powered machinery, which reduced the optimum plant sizes. The fact that there were, as a result, so very few very wealthy manufacturers, and so many staying off a state of insolvency, tended to reduce the scale of charitable undertakings, and to induce a 'penny-pinching' attitude that has persisted almost to the present day.

The 'penny-pinching' attitude of the small businessman was reinforced by the puritanism of the Non-conformists, who tended to agree with rate-saving in any form. Represented politically by elements within Liberalism they normally supported the extension of education to the working-classes, so long as it could be reconciled with the dictates of local economy. Thus the efficiency of the board schools was a matter of pride because it increased

government grants and reduced rate demands. Local inspectors were appointed mainly because it was argued that they would enable the schools to earn higher grants, thus paying for their salaries several times over. During the present century the concern for the possible integration of higher educational facilities was a reflection of economy more than insight into a brighter educational future. It is interesting to reflect that these were the attitudes that produced and supported the Revised Code of 1862. Though Leicester Liberals disagreed with some aspects of the Code, it is significant that at no time did they wholly condemn it. To some extent indeed they mourned its passing, since it resulted in lowered grants being payable to the Leicester School Board.

It would be untrue, of course, to suggest that rate-saving was always the first consideration, but it would be equally untrue to say that economy was not an aspect of municipal affairs that was always in evidence. Often it was the main consideration. At other times it was secondary, as when board schools were built on an imposing scale to impress people in the town, so that they would send their children to them rather than to the voluntary schools, thus earning grant and fee income for the School Board rather than the voluntary agencies. The measure of Liberal Non-conformity's success in this is the small number of Anglican schools that was able to survive beyond the 1930s.

A consistency of attitude may be noted also in those to the

right and to the left of the Liberals. Church-Tories aimed to win communicants through their schools when it appeared that their hold on the masses was in process of dissolution. Bereft of legal means of maintaining conformity they sought to do so by evangelism. New churches and schools usually went together. When, however, the masses chose to send their children to board and, later, council schools, and the Church itself had over-reached its resources, the policy was that of maintaining the teaching of religion by daily acts of worship as well as by formal lessons.

To the left of Liberalism the elements that subsequently grew into the Labour Party, and which ultimately sapped the strength of Liberalism itself, showed as great a division as that between the Liberal 'Economists' and 'Improvers'. For there were those who saw education as the means to working-class salvation, and there were those who regarded any provision beyond the rudiments as irrelevant. Because of this the concern for free meals and medical facilities was often greater than that for education per se. The demand for free and universal secondary education, though it gained ground throughout the early twentieth century, was not shared by the majority. Children were still sent to work as early as possible to ensure a contribution to the family before they married.

Finally one notes the strength of particular individuals, some

of whom added unique features to education and society in Leicester. None of them could be regarded as a national figure. William Biggs, though for a time a Member of Parliament, could not be compared with Edward Baines of Leeds, nor Joseph Wood with John Paton Brown of Nottingham, nor David James Vaughan with Frederick Denison Maurice, the founder of the Working Men's College on which all others were modelled. Yet Biggs was the first mayor of Leicester to champion the cause of national education, and to use a local statistical analysis to support his case. Wood advanced the cause of elementary education during his decade as chairman of the School Board, was among those who created the Wyggeston Schools, and was the initial proposer of the idea of a University in Leicester. David James Vaughan, though not a success as the first chairman of the School Board, founded a College for adults that survived to become the basis of the adult education department of the University College. Others too deserve mention. Among them there is the indefatigable and compassionate Joseph Dare, with his combination of social work and education; Edward Atkins, the self-educated science master, who not only worked well into the night in the cause of scientific education, but who also, for a time, rose early to begin teaching the delights of mathematics to architectural students at 6.00 a.m.; James Went, the first headmaster of the Wyggeston Boys' School, and the father of the project that became the College of Technology; Sir Jonathan North, the rough-hewn businessmen who made



the development of secondary education . . . and the University College his own cause; and Sir Charles Keene, who steered the Vaughan College to its union with University College, and who was largely responsible for the creation of the Gateway School, a unique experiment in technical education. It is undoubtedly true that men reach great achievements in concert, that strength generally lies in parties and associations; it is also true that movements can achieve little without the strength of character of those who initiate them and provide the genius that sustains them.

**APPENDIX I. SCHEDULE OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION**  
**SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION BY THE**  
**LEICESTER SCHOOL BOARD 1871**

MUNICIPAL WARDS.	Total number of children in each Ward between the ages of 3 & 5	Children between 3 & 5 for whom Elementary Education should be provided.	Total number of children in each Ward between the ages of 5 & 13	Children between 5 & 13 for whom Elementary Education should be provided.	Elementary Schools in each Ward.	School accommodation in existing schools at 8 square feet for each child in average attendance.	School accommodation in schools contemplated or in course of erection.	Total school accommodation at 8 square feet, existing & contemplated.	Excess of accommodation.	Deficiency of Accommodation.
<b>No. 1. St. Martin's.</b> In this Ward the Committee propose to deduct 50 per cent. for children under secondary or higher education.	84	42	288	144	1. Friar Lane Schools ... 2. Union Street School ... 3. Green Coat School ...	553 66 120 (allowed)	134	873	687	
<b>No. 2. All Saints.</b> In this Ward the Committee propose to deduct 7½ per cent. for children under secondary or higher Education.	540	500	1805	1753	1. County School ... 2. Great Meeting School ... 3. Vine Street School... 4. St. Leonard's School ...	458 838 60 81		1437		816
<b>No. 3. North St. Margaret's.</b> In this Ward the Committee propose to deduct 10 per cent. for children under secondary or higher education.	618	556	2081	1873	1. St. Margaret's, Church Gt. 2. Ditto, Caroline Street 3. Ditto, Canning Place	295 281 536		1112		1317
<b>No. 4. Middle St. Margaret's</b> In this Ward the Committee propose to deduct 10 per cent. for children under secondary or higher education.	1268	1141	4443	3999	1. British School... 2. Christ Church School ... 3. Wesleyan School Clyde st. 4. Brunswick-street School 5. St. Matthews, Chester-st. 6. Ditto, Curzon-st. ... 7. St. Luke's School .. 8. Metcalf-street School ... 9. Mr. Clarke's School ... 10. Miss Woodward's School	828 503 299 299 200 350 286 188 165 36		3214		1926

MUNICIPAL WARDS.	Total number of children in each Ward between the ages of 3 & 5	Children between 3 & 5 for whom Elementary Education should be provided.	Total number of children in each Ward between the ages of 5 & 13	Children between 5 & 13 for whom Elementary Education should be provided.	Elementary Schools in each Ward.	School accommodation in existing schools at 8 square feet for each child in average attendance.	School accommodation in schools contemplated or in course of erection.	Total school accommodation at 8 square feet, existing & contemplated.	Excess of accommodation.	Deficiency of Accommodation.
<b>No. 5. East St. Margaret's.</b> In this Ward the Committee propose to deduct 15 per cent. for children under secondary or higher education.	616	623	2077	1765	1. St. George's School ... 2. Ditto, New Schools ... 3. Upper Conduit-st. School ... 4. Yeoman Lane School ... 5. St. Paul's Chapel School ...	101 322 286 237 282		1228		1060
<b>No. 6. East St. Mary's.</b> In this Ward the Committee propose to deduct 15 per cent. for children under secondary or higher education.	245	208	937	797	1. St. John's Schools ... 2. Ditto, Dover-street ... 3. Holy Cross School ... 4. Trinity Church School ...	392 120 245	572	1329	324	
<b>No. 7. West St. Mary's.</b> In this Ward the Committee propose to deduct 10 per cent. for children under secondary or higher education.	1034	931	3341	3007	1. St. Mary's School ... 2. St. Andrew's School ... 3. Paradise Place School ... 4. Victoria School ... 5. Knighton-street School ... 6. Thorpe-street School ... 7. Westrotes School ... 8. Miss Monk's School ... 9. Mr. Hickling's School ... 10. Miss Hickling's School ...	374 312 93 198 256 134 155 25 27 24		1598		2340
<b>TOTALS ... ..</b>	<b>4405</b>	<b>3901</b>	<b>15,062</b>	<b>13,338</b>		<b>10,085</b>	<b>706</b>	<b>10,791</b>	<b>1011</b>	<b>7459</b>

APPENDIX II. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ACCOMMODATION IN LEICESTER  
IN 1903 AND 1912.

	1903	1912
<u>Council Schools</u>		
Avenue Road (Mixed)	1,030	929
(Infants)	505	463
Belgrave Road (Mixed)	625	528
(Infants)	421	374
Belper Street (Mixed)	440	440
(Infants)	214	190
Bridge Road (Mixed)	607	607
(Infants)	421	399
Catherine St. (Mixed)	760	757
(Infants)	425	379
Charnwood St. (Mixed)	850	745
(Infants)	382	345
Christow St. (Mixed)	304	278
(Infants)	214	214
Elbow Lane (Boys)	559	498
(Girls)	476	477
(Infants)	372	332
Ellis Avenue (Mixed)	1,012	957
(Infants)	500	490
Fosse Road (Mixed)	<u>Opened 1904</u>	300
Franby Road (Mixed)	625	745
(Infants)	300	265
Green Lane (Mixed)	900	842
(Infants)	450	406
Harrison Road (Mixed)	<u>Opened 1904</u>	1,000
(Infants)	" "	540
Hazel Street (Mixed)	890	851
(Infants)	458	458
Ingle Street (Mixed)	474	474
(Infants)	356	356
King Richard's Rd. (Boys)	567	458
(Girls)	533	455
(Infants)	448	456
Lansdowne Road (Mixed)	754	760
(Infants)	408	362
Mantle Road (Mixed)	1,070	1,006
(Infants)	537	494
Medway St. (Mixed)	912	864
(Infants)	472	472
Melbourne Road (Mixed)	1,044	1,044
(Infants)	537	483
Mellor Street (Mixed)	621	621
(Infants)	349	315
Milton Street (Mixed)	365	365
(Infants)	254	227
Moat Road (Mixed)	1,094	1,036
(Infants)	555	528

APPENDIX II. (Continued from page 513)

	<u>1903</u>	<u>1912</u>
Narborough Road (Mixed)	1,020	1,020
(Infants)	505	505
Overton Road (Mixed)	472	472
(Infants)	250	255
Robert Hall (Mixed)	<u>Opened 1908</u>	306
Shaftesbury Road (Mixed)	503	503
(Infants)	348	315
Slater Street (Boys)	378	302
(Girls)	310	259
(Infants)	406	302
Syston Street (Boys)	283	230
(Girls)	274	273
(Infants)	406	302
Trinity Lane (Infants)*		130
Willow Street (Mixed)	500	500
Oxford Street (Mixed)	775	<u>Closed down.</u>
(Infants)	226	" "
Total	<u>32,961</u>	<u>31,185</u>

\* School taken over from Church of England in 1906.

Denominational Schools

All Saints (Mixed)	224	224
(Infants)	116	102
Belgrave National (Mixed)	369	294
(Infants)	225	179
Christ Church (Mixed)	319	261
(Infants)	226	187
Clarendon Park Nat. (Mixed)	410	410
(Infants)	227	227
Holy Cross R.C. (Mixed)	387	316
(Infants)	75	68
Holy Trinity (Boys)	330	250
(Girls)	245	193
Knighton Nat. (Mixed)	139	113
(Infants)	45	40
Sacred Heart R.C. (Mixed)	115	110
(Infants)	72	59
St. Andrew's (Mixed)	288	226
(Infants)	307	267
St. Barnabas (Mixed)	203	203
(Infants)	141	137
St. George's (Mixed)	318	255
(Infants)	143	120
St. John's (Mixed)	359	263
(Infants)	116	108

APPENDIX II. (Continued from page 514)

	<u>1903</u>	<u>1912</u>
St. Leonard's (Infants)	252	221
St. Luke's (Mixed)	329	269
(Infants)	223	204
St. Margaret's (Boys)	273	225
(Girls)	224	182
(Infants)	302	271
St. Mark's (Mixed)	491	385
(Infants)	274	243
St. Martin's (Mixed)	444	295
(Infants)	114	107
St. Mary's (Mixed)	350	318
(Infants)	149	93
St. Matthew's (Infants)	404	363
Chester St. (Mixed)	413	329
Curzon St. (Mixed)	412	289
St. Patrick's R.C. (Mixed)	180	150
(Infants)	148	120
St. Peter's		
Gopsall St. (Mixed)	317	302
(Infants)	317	214
Upper Conduit St. (Mixed)	184	155
(Infants)	141	141
St. Saviour's (Mixed)	304	245
(Infants)	219	194
Wesleyan (Mixed)	240	240
(Infants)	140	126
County (Mixed and Infants)	457	<u>Closed down.</u>
St. Martin's Union St. (Infants)	426	" "
Trinity Lane (Infants)	174	<u>See list of</u>
		<u>Council Schools.</u>
		<u>Elementary dept.</u>
		<u>closed down in</u>
		<u>1906.</u>
Alderman Newton's (Boys)	303	
 Total	 13,603	 10,293

N.B. All accommodation was recalculated in 1910 after the Board of Education had changed its regulations. From a flat rate of eight square feet per child, demanded without change since 1871, the new rates became nine square feet for infants and ten square feet for older children.

APPENDIX III. ENROLMENT IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN  
LEICESTER                      1926-1939

	<u>Average number enrolled</u>	<u>Average attendance</u>	<u>Percentage attendance</u>
1926	32,066	28,254	88.1
1930	30,328	26,675	87.9
1935	33,504	29,345	87.5
1939	32,716	28,522	87.1

N.B. The increase in average number enrolled and the average attendance in 1935 may be attributed to a boundary extension.

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Figures taken from Leicester Education Committee Annual Report.

APPENDIX IV.      SECONDARY SCHOOL ENROLMENTS.

	<u>1912</u>	<u>1924</u>	<u>1936</u>
<u>Boys</u>			
Wyggeston	580	963	898
Alderman Newton's	268	516	493
City Boys'		241	449
Gateway			410
<u>Girls</u>			
Wyggeston	480	584	722
Collegiate	?	351	356
Newarke	365	524	647
Alderman Newton's		258	298

N.B. The Collegiate School was privately owned until 1922 and so was not included in statistical tables until after then, when it became the property of Leicester Education Committee. Figures for Collegiate and Wyggeston schools include junior pupils. Approximately 25% of the Newarke total for 1912 were boys.

APPENDIX V.      SCHOOL CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION RESULTS  
1924-1936.

		<u>Presented</u>	<u>Matric Exemption</u>	<u>Total Passed</u>
<u>London</u>	1924	184	66	155
	1929	223	88	199
	1936	294	98	197
<u>Oxford</u>	1924	53	1	38
	1929	53	19	43
	1936	84	28	60
<u>Cambridge</u>	1924	7	5	7
	1929	18	2	8
	1936	25	5	13

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Figures for Appendices IV and V taken from Leicester Education Committee Annual Reports.



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- b. School Magazines
- c. Others

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### **IV     PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS, ETC.**

### **V       NEWSPAPERS**

### **VI      PAMPHLETS AND DIRECTORIES**

### **VII     UNPUBLISHED THESES, DISSERTATIONS AND ESSAYS**

### **VIII    PAPERS AND ARTICLES IN JOURNALS**

### **IX      BOOKS**

- a. Educational
  - (i) Local
  - (ii) Others
- b. General
  - (i) Local
  - (ii) Others

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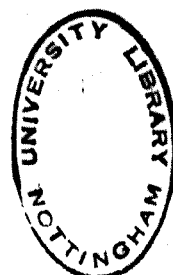
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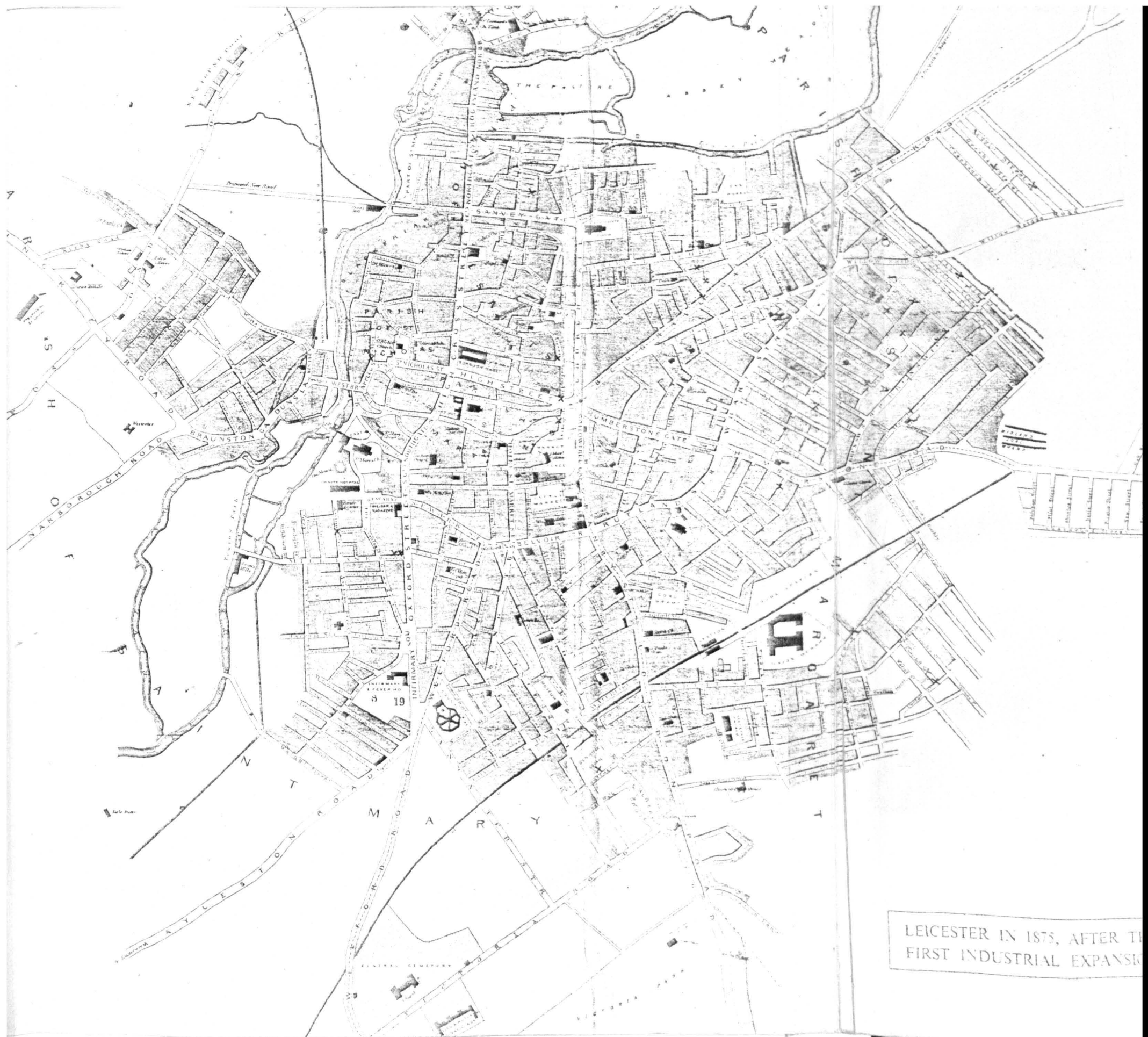
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LEICESTER IN 1828. BEFORE THE FIRST INDUSTRIAL EXPANSION







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