

'Activity and Experience'?

by K.J. Funnell, M.Ed.



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"....but governing the teacher's whole design of instruction.... should be the aim of calling forth, by some means or other, in every pupil a sense of pleasurable activity and of creation; he should resist being made a mere ladder with information."

(The concluding section of Matthew Arnold's last General Report, 1882.)

"... the curriculum of the primary school is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored...."

(The Primary School, p.91, para.75, 1931)

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SYNOPSIS

The theme of this study is the enormous gap between the theory and the practice of primary education in the years between the two World Wars when the primary schools were slowly emerging from the elementary, all-age school tradition.

The theory is in this case represented principally by the 1931 report of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education entitled The Primary School, and the practice is related mainly to the situation at that time within the schools of the South East Midlands.

The local and national records which have been consulted have not been used merely to provide a description of what was going on in the schools but also to answer two questions fundamentally related to the theme of the study.

The first question is "Why was the 1931 Hadow Report apparently so 'child-centred' and progressive'?"

The second question is "What was the truth regarding contemporary school practice, and, if schools failed to seize opportunities for educational change, what were the underlying reasons for that failure?"

The study includes a comparatively brief consideration of the effects, if any, of the Second World War upon primary school practice, and of post-war developments.

The concluding chapter is followed by appendices containing evidence which it was felt desirable to record in accessible and permanent form, but which in most cases was too extensive to be incorporated in the main text.

Section I Introductory.

Chapter 1 Introduction.

1. "Activity and experience".
2. "Junior" or "Primary"? Some definitions.
3. The vocabulary of reform.
4. Criteria adopted in the present study.
5. The significance of teaching styles.
6. The value of regional studies.
7. A definition of the regional limits of the present study.
8. The historical period covered by the present study.
9. A note on the primary sources.

INTRODUCTION

I. "Activity and Experience"

When the members of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education asserted in their 1931 Report, "The Primary School"¹, that

"...the curriculum of the primary school is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored.." ²

they coined a significant phrase which still has resonance today, over half a century later. Opinions about its effects on the conduct of primary education have been divided ever since the report was published, with no real consensus yet emerging regarding the state of primary education during the inter-war years, or of the underlying causes of that state.

Many commentators - perhaps even the majority - have asserted that the 1931 Report had very little effect upon teachers' attitudes to education and to the actual conduct of the schools.

Mary Atkinson wrote, in 1949:

"In the length and breadth of the country there are very few junior schools organised throughout on the principles suggested as long ago as 1931 in the Report on the Primary School." ³

The same view was expressed by A.G. Hughes who, in a foreword to Atkinson's book, noted with regret that "little progress had been made." ⁴

W. Kenneth Richmond, in his account also published in 1949, had reached the same conclusion:

"Here and there honest attempts have been made to translate the theory of a curriculum 'thought of in terms of activity and experience' into practice, but on the whole there is no denying that such changes as have been introduced have been piecemeal, tentative and sporadic."⁵

In the following year Philips and McInnes suggested that even the Second World War had failed to modify entrenched attitudes and time-honoured traditions in the primary schools:

"...it is regrettable that the inspiring lead given at that time (i.e. 1931) was followed in 1944 by the comment in the White Paper on the mass production which still takes the place of education in the Infant and Junior Schools...." ⁶

All the above commentators were merely echoing Nancy Catty's words written ten years after "The Primary School" had appeared:

"....the Primary School Report in 1931 gave a lead for a revolution in curricula and methods; but curiously little notice has been taken by teachers and educational authorities.....In many Junior Schools one wonders if the teachers have heard of the Primary School Report, or, having heard of it, have realised what was its meaning." ⁷

A different interpretation of events, however, is to be found in Ross's "The Education of Childhood": the 1931 Report was not a damp squib but a time bomb:

(After the Second World War) "newly converted devotees of 'modern methods' tried to transform primary schools overnight. The bad press received by the new methods was due in part to the travesties perpetrated by those who, half-comprehendingly, had acquired a few catch-phrases - 'free activity', 'no inhibitions', 'self-expression', - and proceeded to antagonise industrious teachers of the traditional type striving to re-establish the pre-war pattern after the turmoil of war". ⁸

This significant paragraph begs numerous questions, suggests that "modern methods" were a new and undesirable aspect of education seized upon by the young and uncritical teachers only, and generalises, one suspects, from very limited evidence.

Other writers have even more specifically credited the 1931 Report with a great, but malign, influence upon junior school education for, in that inauspicious year, according to one writer, the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education had given respectability to Dewey's subversive philosophy

"....by declaring loud and clear: 'the curriculum is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored....'

This ill-conceived utterance was to sound the death knell of school learning as it had been known for centuries.....I well recall how in the years after 1931 Inspectors of schools began to seem more interested in the transient happiness of the children than in their competence to read well, write grammatically and compute (sic) accurately..."⁹

At least, such a quotation, so redolent of the tone of the "Black Papers" which were published at around the same time, shows quite clearly where the writer stands, even if it offers more vehemence than evidence. Some other writers' accounts, by contrast, lack conviction or internal consistency, as in the following:

"Traditional methods....continued therefore to be practised for many years in the primary schools...."¹⁰

"Inevitably there were miscarriages of the new methods in some primary schools when a minority of teachers, experienced in the old ways, went to extremes... the general effect was to create an unwarranted suspicion of the new doctrines..."¹¹

Yet other writers have shifted their ground over the years, probably as a result of a tidying up of their mental furniture rather than the incorporation of new evidence:

"With the swing of the pendulum against lifeless, formal work, we have become afraid of teaching."

(E.B. Warr, 1937)¹²

"In my last book, written in 1937, it was noted that in general the Junior School at that time lagged behind the suggestions which had been put forward by the Report on the Primary School in 1932" (sic)

(E.B. Warr, 1951)¹³

Similarly, in 1942 H.C. Dent was of the opinion that the 1931 Report was "much neglected" ¹⁴ but thirty years later he believed that its influence had been beneficial and positive for the many but excessive for the few :

"They did great harm, those teachers with their classrooms full of chaotic noise and movement, a harm out of all proportion to their numbers, for they were never more than a small minority. A vastly greater host of junior school teachers have from the day the 1931 Report was published down to the present time, set themselves patiently and intelligently to put into practice the precepts of the Report".¹⁵

A similarly unconvincing summary, suggesting tidiness and deliberation in English educational development, where one would expect change to be piecemeal, erratic and tentative, is to be found in a comparatively recent thesis:

"At first a compromise was adopted. In organisation and curriculum the Junior School resembled the Infant School in its lower classes; and adopted formal lessons as the hurdle of the 'scholarship' or the move to the Senior School approached. By degrees, however, the Junior School formed its own pattern, its ethos and philosophy, and became everything, and more than, 'The Primary School' promised." ¹⁶

All the above accounts of what the 1931 Report caused, or failed to cause, to happen in primary schools in subsequent years have one feature in common: they suggest that every teacher either responded to, rejected, or ignored, the Report individually and directly without the involvement of any intermediary parties or individuals whatsoever. An unlikely mental picture is suggested of each teacher prepared to read, mark, learn, consider and apply - or reject - official wisdom without any regard for the many constraints existing in schools and society, not the least being the views of the head teacher!

Curtis and Boulton almost alone suggest that other agencies were at work from 1931 onwards, and that their influence was benign and encouraging with regard to a more

child-centred approach to education:

"The recommendations of the Report were made known to teachers through the visits of H.M.I.'s and through conferences and short courses organised by the Board of Education. The result has been that the primary school today is far brighter and happier than its predecessor of the nineteenth century." 17

This statement to the effect that the officials of the Board were actively concerned in the promotion of the 1931 Report and its contents is one which was seen to require further investigation. This, together with the great variety of judgments already quoted, acted as the initial stimulus towards further research.

As the evidence was being gathered, it became increasingly apparent that it tended strongly to support the views of the educational commentators who believed that the 1931 Report had exerted only a very slight effect on the course of primary education during the 'Thirties.

Two questions therefore gradually emerged, assumed great prominence, and demanded answers:

"Why was the 1931 Hadow Report apparently so 'child-centred' and 'progressive'?"

and

"Why did the schools fail to seize the opportunities offered for educational development in line with contemporary educational thought?"

First of all, however, it is necessary to define the terms of reference and the scope of the present study. This will be the purpose of the rest of the introductory chapter.

2. "Junior" or "Primary"? - Some definitions.

During the period between the First and Second World Wars, the archetypal school was the all-age elementary school catering for the entire period of formal education in the life of a child from the age of five or less to the leaving age of fourteen or earlier. This organisational pattern was not entirely monolithic: in populous areas the Infants usually occupied a separate school or department; in some places separate boys' and girls' departments replaced the "Mixed" department; and for a minority of the older children there were places in the Grammar Schools and the Technical Schools for which they could compete.

When, therefore, the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education considered the subject of "The Primary School" it existed rarely in the form which is so familiar to us today and which perhaps springs to mind as a single-storey, purpose-built, light and airy structure with its own hall and playing fields, and enjoying virtually complete independence under its own head teacher. In 1931 "The Primary School" was usually merely the "Junior Department" of the all-age elementary school, and it had begun to appear almost by accident during the 'Twenties. Its development had been given added impetus by the Consultative Committee's previous report of 1926, The Education of the Adolescent, which advocated distinct and separate provision for the senior (i.e. over eleven years of age) children in departments quite apart from the juniors. The 1926 Report was also instrumental in encouraging the development of entirely separate senior schools, usually called "Central", "Modern", or "Senior", which also hastened the creation of separate junior schools, which were often left

behind in the old buildings. ¹⁸

The infants were considered separately almost as a matter of tradition. They usually occupied a separate room wherever possible, even if a separate department or school were not feasible. Their teachers enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy, having been excluded from the requirements for individual pupil examination demanded by the Revised Code of 1862. The infant teachers, although very commonly subordinate to the head teachers of the "Mixed" school, were comparatively free to develop an appropriate education quite distinct from the content and methods employed "next door". The Consultative Committee had accepted the traditional wisdom of the break between the infant and junior stages of education, and gave each stage its own enquiry, the Report on Nursery and Infant Education appearing somewhat illogically in 1933, last of the three.

By the term "Primary" the Committee was actually referring to the school age-range which we would now refer to as "Junior", that is, relating only to children between the ages of seven and eleven. The Committee members had avoided the word "Junior" because it had for them undesirable connotations, having been used on occasions for the educational "no-man's-land" in the middle floor of some three-decker schools where the children in the middle years of compulsory schooling were left in a kind of limbo: neither infants nor seniors, they spent almost all of their time on the formal practice of the basic skills. ¹⁹

Since that time, the word "Primary" has changed its significance as well, for with the provision of universal secondary education, it is customary for the infant and junior stages to be considered as sub-divisions of primary education and for Primary Schools (as opposed to separate Infant Schools and

Junior Schools) to contain the complete Infant and Junior age-range from the ages of five to eleven.²⁰

The present study is not strictly limited to an examination of those schools, classes or departments which would now be called "Junior", for in practice it cannot be so limited. Often in the smaller schools the teachers of the juniors taught either the seniors or the infants as well or, in the case of very small schools, the entire age-range. It would not be realistic to consider the juniors in isolation, for their education was also influenced by the views of teachers, inspectors, administrators and parents on what constituted good practice in the preceding infant stage and the succeeding senior stage.

3. The Vocabulary of Reform.

Similarly, it is not practicable to attempt to define too closely what the Consultative Committee meant by the words "activity" and "experience", nor to limit too arbitrarily the contexts of such terms as "progressive education" or "child-centred education". The fact that the following four quotations, of which the first two form a pair, strike the reader as absurd or idiosyncratic, must surely demonstrate that there are accepted limits to the uses to which the descriptive words of education can be put.

1. "A teacher was cheered when he said, 'I would not like Mr. Neill to think that you are wondering what freedom is. We have almost positive incitement from our own educational authority to go out and be adventurers ourselves....in no sense have we come to learn what a wonderful thing freedom is, but rather as people who know something about freedom.'" ²¹

2. "Alderman W.N. Smith, Chairman of the County Education Committee, said, 'If what he (Neill) has been saying is to be believed and practised there will be seventeen different kinds of earthquakes in the educational systems of this country, and one of them will be in Durham!'" ²²
(Both speakers were at the Durham Refresher Course when Neill spoke to 700 teachers in 1938)

3."...good self-expression can only be obtained by unceasing labour on the part of the teacher, because in each lesson she has so many wrong impressions to correct." 23

4. In 1925 "The New Era" listed thirteen Council Schools and seven kindergartens run on "progressive" lines. They formed a motley collection: the Council Schools contained eleven "Dalton Plan", one "special experimental elementary council school" and one which used "individual methods indicated by Mr. E.F. O'Neill". The seven kindergartens consisted of two based on "individual work", three "Montessorian", one "Self-Government" and one, namely Margaret Macmillan's Camp School, "Unclassified". 24

The term "progressive education", which clearly includes "activity and interest" at its core, if only as a matter of conventional usage, can perhaps be most easily defined in contradistinction to such words as "traditional", "formal" or "classical humanist". 25 The continuous subdivision of such terms has no end. One of the best lists is Jusmani's:

"Progressive schools uphold.....

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. active learning | v. passive learning |
| 2. interest | v. forced effort |
| 3. the child | v. the curriculum |
| 4. child centredness | v. teacher centredness |
| 5. individuality | v. society |
| 6. freedom | v. discipline |
| 7. self expression | v. authority |
| 8. immediate needs | v. outgrown needs |
| 9. creative individual work | v. formal imitative exercises |
| 10. vocation | v. "culture" |
| II. pupil initiative | v. teacher initiative |
| 12. child | v. adult |
| 13. present | v. past |
| 14. learning by doing | v. learning by study and instruction |
| 15. ethical idealism | v. dogmatic religious instruction |
| 16. manual work | v. bookish learning |
| 17. learning by discovery | v. absorbing knowledge |
| 18. learning by experience | v. learning by cramming |
| 19. spontaneity | v. planned activity |
| 20. flexibility | v. rigidity. " 26 |

No such list, however, ever entirely satisfies a third party: in No. 7 above, "self expression" could be opposed to "conformity"; in No. 8, "immediate needs" could be opposed to "perceived future needs"; and in No. 13 "the present" could be opposed to "the past and the future".

It is probably almost as satisfactory to base one's judgments regarding the ethos of individual schools on the question of whether or not they "work with the grain of the natural urges of children".²⁷ The spirit of this phrase is also caught in the term "naturalism" which, unfortunately, has not been employed in the literature as frequently as it might have been. It adequately typifies the key aspects of the philosophy of such educational thinkers as Pestalozzi, Froebel, Rousseau, Comenius and Edmond Holmes²⁸ - men whose thoughts had obviously influenced many of the Consultative Committee's witnesses.

(Naturalism's) "watchword is 'Back to Nature' and its fighting adjective is 'artificial'. Thus when an educational movement has exhausted its mandate....retaining only the letter and not the spirit of its original form, it is normally succeeded by a wave of naturalism." ²⁹

"Naturalism" is a term which would have also been acceptable to the enlightened but professionally cautious compilers of the 1927 "Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers", some of whose recommendations anticipated those of the 1931 Report:

(The teacher) "must become....a close and sympathetic student of the nature of his pupils....ready to modify his teaching to meet their needs. Briefly, his task is to make the most of the mental qualities which already exist in them and are seeking opportunities for exercise, their motives, interests and instincts; their sense of wonder and romance; their natural curiosity, constructiveness, combativeness and so forth. His starting point must be no rigid syllabus or subject, but the children as they really are- he must work always with the grain of their minds, try never to cut across it. The problem for the teacher is....how to prevent school life from being artificial..." ³⁰

It could be said, finally, that "developmental" psychology which has gained much recent currency through the work of Susan Isaacs and Jean Piaget, consists of naturalism combined with close "scientific" human observation.

4. Criteria adopted in the present study

In seeking evidence for the growth of "progressive" education based on "activity and experience" neither dogmatic nor exclusive criteria have been adopted, nor examples been sought of extreme child-centredness in state education:

"There is a due mean between a system which counter-acts the natural aspirations of the children and one which in the name of freedom refuses them the aid and guidance they require." ³¹

It is that "due mean" which is sought and which, though requiring only modest changes from the still-prevailing late Victorian traditions, was seen by some in the inter-war years to be a threat to all established values. Yet it is worth noting at this point that the teachers who were able to go beyond that "due mean" in the pursuit of their educational ideals have had a beneficial effect upon the entire educational system, even though they would not have been tolerated within the publicly-maintained schools. Such influential figures as A.S. Neill, Homer Lane, Norman MacMunn and Nathan and Susan Isaacs operated outside the system, and even Teddy O'Neill, "The Idiot Teacher", was only barely tolerated within it. ³² There are, too, examples from the more recent history of education which reveal the exemplary retribution which schools which "go too far" can expect from their clients. ³³

Evidence for the "due mean" reveals itself in numerous small ways in the school records examined: the permitting of a reasonable measure of freedom for children to work together; learning sometimes by trial and error without the inhibiting fear of being wrong; freedom to choose at least the order in which studies will occupy the day's timetable, even if there is little choice in the content itself; freedom from the fear

of corporal punishment or humiliation for small misdemeanours or mistakes in school work. Evidence has been sought for examples of learning associated with variety and pleasure rather than dull routine; for happiness now rather than anguish now with the promise of future happiness through deferred gratification; for a bond of mutual affection and respect between teacher and pupil; for good relationships extending beyond the school to the larger community; for schools which looked outwards, which were lighthouses rather than prisons.

The phrase "activity and interest" has been interpreted somewhat loosely in the terms of reference of the present study. "Activity" does not, of course, have to involve gross physical movement: - that is self-apparent. The converse, however, is often overlooked, namely, that lessons involving physical activity are not therefore automatically educational, lively and exciting.

For that reason the traditional Senior School or Senior Department practical subjects such as gardening, cookery, woodwork, craft and needlework have not been considered "activities" in the sense in which the word was employed in the 1931 Hadow Report.

Such subjects usually involved the pupils in performing tasks for the express purpose of learning specific skills, which were only rarely applied in the directions which the children would have chosen if, indeed, they were applied at all.

Even in the subject of gardening, which is ideal for learning by doing, and by trial and error and experiment, and to which subject many children must have brought a good deal of prior knowledge acquired from relations or neighbours, H.M. Inspectors constantly demanded crop rotation plans and neat notebooks rather than evidence of success in the more tangible form of enormous onions or beautiful roses!

Similarly, I have not taken the word "interest" to refer only to the spontaneous and uniquely personal interests which a child may - or may not - bring to school with him. Even a progressive and child-centred teacher has at times to work hard to engage the child's interest and to stimulate it, even as at other times natural or transient interests need to be encouraged and developed and used as springboards for further study, research or exploration.

As already implied, much of the dogma of progressive education will have to be accepted - though not uncritically - as part of the "given" on which the present study is based.³⁴ A history and critique of progressive education is obviously far beyond the scope of this study, and has already been covered, in admirable detail and from complementary standpoints, by Selleck, Lawson and Petersen, and Van Der Eyken and Turner.³⁵

No researcher works in a moral and intellectual vacuum from which his own beliefs, experiences and values can be excluded. The present study is not based on the assumption that "the progressives" are necessarily right in their judgments and actions, nor that what is still advertised as "new" is automatically "improved". It is believed, however, that responsible education of young children should take great heed of the liberating insights of the intuitive philosophers like Comenius, Rousseau and Pestalozzi and of liberal and humane educationalists such as Newman, Arnold and Quick.³⁶ From such writers, the sensitive and thoughtful teacher can form his own synthesis of the intuitive, the intellectual and the pragmatic. The resulting articles of faith would, surely, be similar to those of that progressive Chief Education Officer, Sir Alex Clegg:

"We overemphasize and overvalue what we can measure

and neglect and undervalue what is not susceptible to measurement...." 37

(Commendable junior schools) "accept that every child must succeed....They act on simple but powerful principles, that a child will talk and write and paint more effectively about something he has done than something he has merely heard of; that a child will be more eager if he is allowed some choice....that he will be helped if he can work at his own pace..." 38

5. The Significance of Teaching Styles

The present study relies to a considerable extent upon the recorded words and deeds of the teachers themselves in order to establish the facts regarding the ethos of their respective classrooms, for a study of teaching styles and attitudes appears to be a fruitful approach to this aspect of research.

Though Barker Lunn's work is comparatively recent,³⁹ in general terms it appears to be applicable to other periods, such as the inter-war years. She found that she could classify teachers as "progressive" or "traditional" in several statistically significant ways, and her criteria are relevant to the present study. Barker Lunn's "progressive" teachers were the younger group; they made less use of formal lessons; they gave fewer tests; they were more tolerant of children's natural behaviour such as noise-making and talking; they were less in favour of streaming, punishment and the "Eleven-Plus"; they were not as strongly biased in favour of "the A-Stream" as their more "traditional" colleagues.

On the other hand, traditional" lessons were: class-prepared compositions; spelling lists; formal grammar; tests; formal sums; multiplication tables, while "progressive" lessons were: writing stories; projects based on the children's own work; nature walks; co-operative work; practical arithmetic; free activity; free choice in art lessons.⁴⁰

A minority of "progressive" teachers was found in schools

typified as "traditional" and vice versa, suggesting that teaching styles depend more upon individual attitudes and beliefs than upon the ethos of the school in which each teacher finds himself. ⁴¹

Once again, evidence requires very careful consideration, as the following examples show.

Telford's succinct conclusion that "unstreaming is one of the most potent precursors of progressivism" ⁴² is corroborated by the research of Barker Lunn:

"Since of all Junior Schools in the country which were large enough to do so, 65% streamed and 6% did not stream, it seems reasonable to suppose that most junior school teachers were in favour of streaming. Since attitudes for and against streaming seem to form part of a whole syndrome of views, practices and beliefs, the opinion of Type 2 ("Traditional") teachers on teaching methods and other educational matters seem to represent the majority viewpoint." ⁴³

There is obviously a considerable logical difficulty if Telford's and Barker Lunn's conclusion on the strong link between streamed schools and traditional teachers is related to the 1931 Hadow Report, which recommended "progressive" methods but "traditional" organisation:

"....The curriculum of the primary school is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience..." ⁴⁴

"In general we agree with our psychological witness in thinking that in very large primary schools there might, wherever possible, be a triple track system of organisation, viz.: a series of 'A' classes or groups for the bright children, and a series of smaller 'C' classes or groups to include retarded children, both series being parallel to the ordinary series of 'B' classes or groups for the average children...." ⁴⁵

The logical inconsistency may well be in the very fabric of the Report itself, but the fact remains that classifying schools as "traditional" or "progressive" in terms of organisation may not reveal the true picture. This is particularly the case with regard to small schools during the inter-war years: they were obviously unable to "stream" their pupils, but they were

not therefore automatically "progressive".

It is therefore clear that a very careful and sensitive analysis of the existing evidence will be required, but, as stated previously, the use of objective criteria may tend to falsify and distort the true picture rather than provide illumination. Even "official" pronouncements and definitions appear to have little lasting validity. For example, in 1978 H.M. Inspectors described teaching methods as falling into two main groups which could be referred to as "didactic" and "exploratory".⁴⁶ Three years later the Schools Council protested against such divisions but without, it is suspected, having any clear ideas on the alternative modes said to be available:

"Crude descriptions of teaching as progressive or traditional, exploratory or didactic, fail to convey the variety and range of modes of teaching and learning teachers have at their command."⁴⁷

Finally, it is essential to attempt to separate "the hidden curriculum" from the official, explicit and overt curriculum, for often the message which children receive from lessons, school assemblies, games, duties, responsibilities, punishments, rewards and so on is quite different from what is intended or assumed. In this context Barker Lunn has a very telling anecdote:

"An A-stream teacher at Green Mount claimed that his children did not regard themselves as "superior beings" and said that if they did he "would soon knock it out of them". When a visitor left his classroom to go to a 'D' class, however, he called out, 'Good luck - you'll need it there!' and joined in the gale of laughter which this evoked from the class."⁴⁸

6. The Value of Regional Studies

Neither the broad sweep of historical generalisations nor the conclusions of educational commentators seemed able to answer the question, "What was really going on in the schools around the period of the 1931 Hadow Report?" and it was obviously impossible to assess the influence, if any, of the Report without first establishing the facts regarding the school situation.

The best hope of a valid answer appeared to lie in the close study of a particular region in order to build up a reasonably complete picture of educational activity in the elementary schools in that one area in particular at that particular time, for:

"....until the local situation, on a county or town basis, is built up and understood as a whole, the data for generalised statements or conclusions on a national scale do not exist....this is a field in which students could most easily make a contribution-..." 49

(The growth of interest in local history) "involves a new approach to the history of education as part of the changing local scene, an approach which is broader, therefore, than the history of specific institutions, yet limited enough to allow concentration on detailed developments, the interconnections and shifting relations between institutions, and between educational provision generally and social change....not a great deal has, as yet, been achieved. But it seems clear that this is a fruitful and necessary field of work." 50

A similar point was made by Stephens, namely that the history of education is written in a vacuum if it is unrelated to economic change, and therefore regional and local studies are required rather than research with its emphasis on Acts of Parliament, the history of individual institutions and the growth of educational administration, for:

".....local variations may have been so great that talk of a national condition of education may give a distorted conception...." therefore

"The immediate task is to build up a detailed series of analyses of regional variations, taking into account evidence from the many local studies of education (often theses) which have been produced largely in isolation and too often with an assumed obligation to treat local education as the national story writ small....." 51

Stephens was, of course, referring to an earlier era in the history of education than that covered by the present study, but it seems likely that his conclusions are relevant to the present century also. Wardle believes that, even today:

"It is the untidy and unpredictable nature of the development of popular education in England which makes it unrewarding to write its history round the major reports and education acts. These were important in marking points at which changes in direction were made, but to find out why the direction was changed it is necessary to get behind the acts and reports to the aims and ambitions of pupils and teachers, and to the social, political and economic pressures which bore upon them." 52

It will be for future generations, with their presumably more sophisticated and powerful research tools, to analyse and synthesise data which, at present, is either fragmented or still to be recorded in accessible form. In spite of the apparent numbers of researchers and the continuing interest in the production of school histories - often timed for a significant local anniversary - plus much investigation into the development of school subjects, or into the effects of various Acts of Parliament, of economic and demographic changes, of religious movements and of wars, the picture which emerges is still woefully incomplete.⁵³

It may be true, in one sense, that "When you have read one school history you have read the lot",⁵⁴ but it is far more important to realise that the routine work has to be done. We cannot assume that any one piece of historical evidence is truly representative of the rest until we have examined and recorded as much as possible of what is still available:

(H.M. Burton) "has provided an interesting insight for the educational historian into the vexed problems of determining just what schools were really like in the past as compared to the present. Thus, 'In some respects, alas, he might notice very little difference. The classroom....might look just as crowded....The work done in the school might vary from an astoundingly close imitation of the work he was doing 40 years ago to something....wildly and improbably different'. Every writer, he contends, who has tried to 'sum up' on English education, 'has hacked his shins on this obstacle - the impossibility of generalising.' Curriculum, subject-matter, timetable, discipline, text books, 'differ not only from school to school but from class to class.' Although such freedom is 'a matter of pride among teachers and administrators', yet 'it plays the devil with robust generalisations.'"⁵⁵

For the purposes of the present study, no evidence has been left unconsidered because it appears to be trivial, parochial or anecdotal. The attempt has been made to give it due weight and if it is relevant, to record it. If all "subjective" or "impressionistic" or "anecdotal" evidence were to be rejected, then very little would remain, for H.M. Inspectors' reports, school log book entries, and annual government reports on education all depend upon the impressions

of fallible and selective humans as much as the personal accounts of school life recorded by past pupils or teachers do.

For this reason, not only have school histories, school log books, H.M. Inspectors' reports, Board of Education and L.E.A. files been examined, but an attempt has been made to obtain personal accounts by means of a questionnaire sent to every school in the area selected for closer study. ⁵⁶

The period selected - approximately 1920 to 1945 - has several advantages from the researcher's point of view. It is remote enough to be examined with some detachment, yet near enough for teachers and pupils of the period still to be available as witnesses. It is part of the near past which is so often rejected as "old-fashioned" or "boring" (especially by the young when their elders reminisce) or evaded as "still rather a sensitive matter round here" ⁵⁷ until it is suddenly too late and the witnesses themselves have become a part of the silent past. ⁵⁸

Another advantage derived from the period chosen has been the accessibility of documents recently released under the Thirty Year Rule, though some individual school files in the Public Record Office remain closed because their final entries are dated less than that period of time ago. Fortunately, similar problems were overcome when consulting recent school log books in the County Record Offices in Huntingdon, Northampton and Leicester, the respective Chief Education Officers most helpfully providing written permission which overrode the Thirty Year Rule. They also were most helpful in permitting the free distribution of questionnaires to schools through their internal mail systems, as was the Senior Area Education Officer for Peterborough.

The above acknowledgements reveal another valuable asset enjoyed by the student of regional history: he can depend upon the willing co-operation of many people within the community for vital assistance.

7. A Definition of the Regional Limits of the Study

The area selected for closer study and designated, for the purpose of the study, "The South East Midlands", is a somewhat arbitrarily-defined region, embracing the counties of Leicestershire, Rutland, (now, in 1985, a part of Leicestershire), Northamptonshire, and the Soke of Peterborough (formerly associated with Northamptonshire but now part of Cambridgeshire), and the independent education authorities within those counties: Kettering, Leicester, Loughborough, Northampton and Peterborough.

There is some historical justification for treating this area as an entity, for it is the area taken from the Diocese of Lincoln in 1837 to form the new Diocese of Peterborough which, in turn, was reduced in size when the Archdeaconry of Leicester became a separate Diocese in 1926. There is, therefore, in the region selected, a continuity of Anglican organisation which was an important unifying agency in the Nineteenth Century when the Church held a commanding position in the life of England. Yet the Church did not dominate, in any pejorative sense, in the South East Midlands, at that time, and many commentators remarked upon the unusually high degree of harmony and mutual toleration within the Diocese between the Anglicans and the Dissenters. H.M. Inspector, the Rev. J.R. Blakiston, covered the entire Diocese in obtaining evidence for his Report of 1867-1868, and was clearly impressed by his findings:

"Dissent is unusually rife in this district, but does not seem to affect attendance at Church schools, or to interfere with the religious teaching of the clergy therein. This absence of religious difficulties and of objections to Church teaching is doubtless due to the character of the clergy and the tone of their teaching, which, I have reason to think, are of more than average excellence and catholicity in the diocese of Peterborough. Untroubled by the vagaries of men of extreme views they yet cannot, for the most part, be accused of lukewarmness and indolence so often unfairly imputed to men of moderate opinions. Without looking for gratitude, or even for the natural reward of their self-denial afforded by extended influence in their parishes, as often through evil as good report, the clergy, in almost every village where a school has been established, have been the pioneers of education among their poorer brethren....the pecuniary contributions of the clergy to the spread of element-

ary education have been and still are in proportion to their respective means tenfold those of the landowners....." 59

Successive Bishops of Peterborough inspired affection and respect throughout the Diocese among all sections of the community. At the 1880 Church Congress held in Leicester, Bishop William Connor Magee was welcomed by a large group of nonconformist ministers, and such crowds of working men arrived on the evening when he was to address them that many were turned away. Magee was sometimes called "the Navvies' Own Bishop" because he was so well liked by the labourers building railways across his Diocese. 60

The formation of the School Boards after the 1870 Education Act, and the assistance of denominational schools from the rates after 1902 caused a few local and temporary difficulties, but they left no lasting bitterness. In Thurmaston, Leicestershire, for instance, the Methodists withdrew their children from religious education in the National School for several years after the passing of the 1902 Act, and a few withheld a portion of their rates. The consequent seizure and auction of their clocks and armchairs became a good-natured demonstration, and sympathisers redeemed the articles for a few shillings and returned them to their rightful owners. Although Nonconformist principles were at stake, and protests were felt to be necessary, there was mutual respect between the parties which, if anything, grew stronger as time went on, and which still endures. 61

Rutland was a more "churchy" county, having only two school boards in the Nineteenth Century, and with only 20% - 30% of Dissenters compared with Leicestershire's 47% and Northamptonshire's 44% during the same period. However, even Rutland wore its allegiance lightly:

"In regard to Church Services, though it would not be reasonable to apply the same standard of requirements as in more stirring centres of life, the official record....is fair for a small archdeaconry which only expects the attendance of ten thousand people in all its churches put together. In more than half the parishes there is a celebration of the Holy Eucharist at least once a fortnight." 62

Geographically, the difficulty lies not in justifying what is to be included within the confines of the chosen region, but in justifying the exclusion of adjacent areas. There is no unanimity with regard to the perceived limits of the East Midlands, and to find agreement upon the subject of a further division into the South East Midlands and the North East Midlands would be impossible. The East Midlands Geographer quite naturally addressed itself to the problem in its first issue:

"The East Midlands as a geographical expression applies most appropriately to that part of the country drained by the middle Trent and its tributaries, to which might be added adjoining parts of the Witham, Welland and Nene.....

Today, however, the term 'East Midlands' demands acceptance as the name for a larger unit which includes the historic nuclear area. This larger area is one of the eleven regions into which the country was divided for Civil Defence early in 1931.....(It) followed closely that of the Traffic Areas adopted by the Road Traffic Act of 1933. In the case of the East Midlands the Civil Defence region was made smaller than the corresponding Traffic Area by the exclusion of Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire. It was arbitrarily defined as the block of counties embracing Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire, Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire including the Soke of Peterborough.....

In the sense just described the East Midlands is an administrative region...." ⁶³

Having failed thereby to define "The East Midlands" to his satisfaction, the author then takes refuge in incontrovertible generalisations: it is a region containing a wide variety of geology and soil conditions, but united by a long tradition of invention and skill, thus supporting a wide range of economic activities all well served by adequate and varied communications.

Benet Jones, on the other hand, includes in his map of "The East Midland Province" only Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire and Rutland. ⁶⁴

In contrast, however, Dury gallops off in all directions - except Lincolnshire:

"The area described in this book does not constitute a geographical region....An arguable case exists for placing Derby, Nottingham, Leicester and Northampton in a single group; when the counties go with the towns, the region comes to include the Peak District. There can be no point in detaching Rutland from Leicestershire, or the Soke of Peterborough from Northamptonshire, and once Northamptonshire is included, Huntingdonshire and Bedfordshire introduce themselves, if merely in contrast to the fens adjacent to the east. By a reasonable process of extension, much of Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire are also added...." ⁶⁵

From the point of view of the present study, the region chosen has several advantages, and has more integrity and coherence than some of the versions of "The East Midlands" proposed above.⁶⁶

It was, as has already been stated, all one diocese during a very vital part of its educational history; it is reasonably compact, thereby not only simplifying access to educational records but also keeping the data within manageable limits and making the issuing of a questionnaire to every school feasible; it is sufficiently distinct to leave adjacent areas clearly defined and available for parallel research projects. The region is devoid of gross economic extremes just as it has traditionally avoided religious extremes. Apart from the influence of the expansion of Leicester it was, particularly between the Wars, comparatively free from the pressures exerted upon their surroundings by large conurbations. Though Rutland was undoubtedly the poorest and least industrialised county, both its larger neighbours to the south and west respectively had large areas of open countryside and many small villages. Throughout the entire region isolation in rural surroundings was only comparative, with numerous large villages and small towns and with the bigger centres of population at no impossible distance. Conversely, the countryside was never out of reach for the town dweller, the Northampton shoemaker or the Leicestershire miner. Good roads, footpaths, canals, rivers and railways led to it and beyond it in all directions

8. The Historical Period Covered by the Study

The choice of the period for study to a large extent defined itself, for any study centred on the year 1931 must obviously take into account those significant events extending in time backwards and forwards from that date. At the brief distance of a decade in each temporal direction lay a World War. 1918, the year in which the First World War concluded, provided a good starting point, as it marked the end of several years of exceptionally difficult conditions which, with regard to the schools, had left teachers and pupils in a state of near exhaustion.

However, when working forward from that time and beyond 1931 there was no apparent justification for concluding the study in 1939, because the commencement of the Second World War in that year had far more significance for educational development than had been the case during the years of the First World War, if only for the fact of large-scale evacuation. The Second World War, through evacuation in particular, in some respects actually encouraged educational changes, or at least prepared the ground for changes to come. Therefore evidence for changes has been sought not only before, but also during and after, the Second World War, even if that search has led almost into the era of the publication of the 1967 Plowden Report which appeared 36 years after the Hadow Report, The Primary School, and was a worthy successor to it.

Deplorable as the waging of modern warfare is, it is still probably true to say that there was a unity and sense of purpose in Britain during the years of the two World Wars which has found no counterpart in recent times of peace. If anything unifies the mood of the period which forms the main background to this study - the inter-war period - it is, paradoxically, the total lack of unity and clear purpose displayed by the country as a whole. Successive governments confined themselves to "the adequate discharge of routine duties" and

at every turn revealed "complacency, failure of imagination and will." ⁶⁷

It is, in fact, hardly appropriate to speak of the state of the nation between the wars as "the background" to an educational study. Rather than "the background", the social, economic and political situation formed the Procrustean bed upon which education had to lie and make the best of it.

Political tensions, economic difficulties, strains in society, with frequent industrial disputes and consistently high levels of unemployment were felt to be poor rewards for a nation whose enormous sacrifices during the First World War had led to high expectations of a new and just social order.

The middle classes, already feeling impoverished and insecure, feared working class and trades unions expressions of grievance as harbingers of a Bolshevik-inspired revolution. Even Labour M.P.'s were feared by many as a serious threat to democracy. Blythe states, quite categorically that, in the 1920's,

"....a contempt for working class people of a kind quite unknown before the War began to develop." ⁶⁸

This judgement is echoed in Seaman's uncompromising phrase to the effect that "the working class was feared and despised." ⁶⁹

It is apparent that many of the reasons for Hitler's rise to power in Germany were also to be found in Britain at the same time: fear of trades unionists and all who could be considered "left-wing"; a discontented middle class desiring strong government; apparently insoluble economic difficulties; the decline in the influence of an elected Parliament as successive Cabinets desperately sought the guidance of Committees and Experts; fear of war and distrust of the nation's erstwhile allies and antagonists alike. ⁷⁰

It is against this situation that the history of the education of the period must be examined. Predictably, influential sections of society such as the employers, the landowners and the Tory press, saw proposed educational improvements as luxuries which would be merely

squandered on the ungrateful working classes and which would only serve to make them expect even greater social levelling and enhanced opportunities for themselves and their families. Demands for cuts in educational expenditure arose long before the enlightened provisions of the 1918 Education Act could be implemented, and Fisher, President of the Board of Education, was blacklisted by "The Daily Mail" as a "spending minister" and referred to in Parliament as "one of our most expensive Statesmen" as early as 1919. ⁷¹

In 1921 a Committee was established to consider ways of cutting national expenditure and the Chairman, Sir Eric Geddes, "the vindictive squeezer of Germany" at Versailles, ⁷² set the pattern for the future economy drives which were "to remain the main plank of educational policy for nearly twenty years." ⁷³ Geddes proposed, with regard to educational expenditure, that children should be excluded from schools until they were six years old; raising all the fees paid by parents in grant-aided schools; increasing class sizes to economise on teachers; reducing teachers' salaries and imposing levies upon them towards their own pension funds, at that time entirely non-contributory.

Not all of the proposals were adopted, and most were mitigated to some degree because it was feared that a discontented teaching profession could do great harm by radicalising the young and inspiring revolutionary fervour among them. ⁷⁴

After an unsettled decade, the international economic situation deteriorated even further, and in 1931 the May Committee suggested even more severe economies in education in order to reduce national expenditure, including the reduction of teachers' salaries by 20%. In the following year the Ray Committee, convened for the purpose of examining local government expenditure, suggested that teachers should receive increments of salary only biennially, and also in 1932 the notorious Circular 1421 proposed the abolition of the Grammar School

free places instituted in 1907 and guaranteed in the 1918 Education Act.⁷⁵

The amounts actually cut from teachers' salaries, though considerably lower than those initially proposed, caused great resentment in the profession, even though the cuts lasted only until 1935. Soon afterwards, conditions eased a little, and there was even "jam tomorrow" in the form of a promise to raise the school leaving age in 1939. However, the outbreak of the Second World War only two days after "the appointed day" meant the indefinite postponement of all reforms.

Yet sometimes improvements can occur in spite of great difficulties, and it may be that the social and cultural changes which became noticeable in the late 'Thirties helped to make schools a little more liberal and humane than they had previously been, and to make the slowly-evolving separate primary and senior schools more receptive to new ideas.

"Important social and cultural changeswere taking place. Talking films from 1928 and the mushroom growth of radio...were two such salient changes, as was the circulation warfare of the mass newspapers....The motor car, the seaside holiday, and the continued increase in the use of birth control were other features of the period (average family size was almost down to two children by 1939). The position of women had been profoundly altered by the war, and relationships between parents and children were changing." ⁷⁶

Somehow, in spite of the continued decline of the shipbuilding, mining and heavy engineering industries, a certain guarded optimism was felt, particularly in those areas - like the East Midlands - where electrical and light engineering and motor car production provided new and relatively well-paid employment. The implications for education were considerable, making "it necessary for those engaged in education to review their task afresh". ⁷⁷

How that task was seen by "those engaged in education", and whether change was encouraged, resisted, accepted or rejected, forms the subject of most of the following pages.

9. A note on the primary sources.

Most of the school log books consulted in the respective county record offices have been placed there because the schools where they originated are now permanently closed. However, a large proportion of this now defunct group of schools was closed comparatively recently and usually on grounds of size or reorganisation, and during the years covered by the present study there was no sign of imminent closure or of gradual decline. It cannot be claimed, therefore, that to study the log books of schools now closed is to concentrate on the failures of the system: small the schools may have been, but failures only rarely.

The picture has been supplemented because existing schools have begun to deposit completed log books in their local record offices owing to increasing threats to the security of public buildings. No significant differences have been found in the accounts of schools now closed compared with those schools still flourishing.

However, the evidence has been further supplemented and corroborated by the loan of log books from existing schools; by H.M. Inspectors' reports bound in education committee minutes; by log book extracts selected and sent by respondents to a questionnaire; and by local school histories and theses on local subjects.

In order to provide comprehensive coverage of at least one area in the region to serve as a yardstick, the Board (or Ministry) of Education file of every Northamptonshire school available at the Public Record Office has been examined if its log book is not deposited in the county record office. In this way some information has been gleaned in respect of nearly every school in Northamptonshire, Northampton and Kettering except in the cases where the files in the Public Record Office are still closed because the last entry is less than thirty years old.

Unpublished material deposited in the Public Record Office at Kew has been quoted extensively in the appendices not only to illustrate aspects of the thesis, but also to make some fascinating and valuable documentary evidence somewhat more readily available.

For instance, the evidence of witnesses to the Consultative Committee on the subject of primary education reveals ranges of thought and experience which in many cases deserve publication in an educational anthology, rather than to be consigned to a box file whose contents are even now far from complete. A selection is to be found in Appendix V of the present work.

Similarly, General and special reports of H.M. Inspectors issued between 1938 and 1947 and summarised as Appendix XVIII, have a breadth and judiciousness which make them of considerably more value than the routine individual school reports which are so familiar to all concerned in any way with the history of elementary education in this country.

Finally, to fill in what is necessarily a broad canvas, even though dealing with a limited area over a fairly short period of time, Appendices XII, XIII and XVI provide further information with regard to the working lives of four teachers who were active in the South East Midlands during the period.

They are typical of teachers as a group only in the degree of individuality and independence of outlook which each reveals. In this way they can stand for the entire profession, if only to remind us that it is all too easy to judge our predecessors harshly, and to forget the daily hopes and plans, disappointments and disturbances which, multiplied by weeks, months, terms, years and decades, make up the teacher's life.

Notes to Chapter 1.

1. Hadow, Sir Henry, Chairman, The Consultative Committee of the Board of Education. The Primary School. London. H.M.S.O. 1931. (Hereafter referred to as 'The 1931 Hadow Report' or 'The 1931 Report').
2. *ibid.* p. 91, para. 75.
3. Atkinson, M. The junior school community. London. Longman. 1949. Revised edition, 1962, p.xiii.
4. Hughes, A.G. in Atkinson, M. *op.cit.* p.viii.
5. Richmond, W. Kenneth, Purpose in the junior school. London. Alvin Redman. 1949. pp. 3,4.
6. Philips, H. and McInnes, F.J.C. Exploration in the junior school. London. U.L.P. 1950. p. 16.
7. Catty, Nancy, Learning and teaching in the junior school. London. Methuen. 1941. Reprinted, 3rd. ed. 1952, p.21.
8. Ross, A.M. The education of childhood. London. Harrap. 1960. pp. 32, 33.
9. Froome, Stuart, A schoolmaster looks back, in Boyson, Dr. Rhodes, ed. Education: threatened standards. Enfield. Churchill Press. 1972. pp. 61 - 72.
10. Mann, Dorothy, 'The influence of progressive ideas on official thinking about education'. M.Ed. Bristol. 1978. p.88.
11. *ibid.* p.89.
12. Warr, E.B. The new era in the primary school. London. Methuen. 1937. p.2.
13. Warr, E.B. Social experience in the junior school. London. Methuen. 1951. (Preface dated 1949). p.4.
14. Dent, H.C. A new order in English education. London. U.L.P. 1942. p.53.
15. Dent, H.C. 1870-1970. Century of growth in English education. London. Longman. 1970. p. 103. Emphasis added.
16. Johnson, H.I. 'The new education. Influences and trends in elementary schools, 1918 - 1933'. M.A. Keele. 1971. p.209.
17. Curtis, S.J. and Boulthwood, M.E.A. An introductory history of English education since 1800. London. University Tutorial Press. 1960. p.189.
18. By 1931 one third of the children over eleven were in reorganised schools, and by 1939 the proportion was nearly two-thirds. (Mowat, C.L. Britain between the wars. London. Methuen. 1955. (pp. 209 and 498)).
19. The 1931 Hadow Report, p.65, para. 54.
20. There was often in practice some overlap between the two stages and this had long been recognised. It was usual for "Standard I" to remain with the infants, and in the City of Leicester children remained in the Infant Departments or Schools until well over eight years of age.

20. (Continued) A survey conducted in 1978 found that 49% of all primary schools were combined infant and junior schools; 19% were infant only and 19% were junior only; 11% were "first" schools and 2% were combined "first" and "middle". (Primary education in England: a survey by H.M. Inspectors of schools. London. H.M.S.O. 1978. p.5.
21. Jusmani, A.A. 'The attitude to the child in progressive educational theory and practice in England since 1890'. M.Ed. Leicester. 1961. p.238.
22. *ibid.* p.239.
23. Logie, L. Self-expression in the junior school. Oxford. O.U.P. 1928. p.16.
24. The new era. Vol.6 (No. 23) July, 1925. Quoted in Jusmani, A.A. op.cit. p.277.
25. For an account of the roots of classical humanism, see Curtis, S.J. and Boulwood, M.E.A. *op.cit.* pp. 131-139. The term is used to good effect in Reader, E.S. 'Towards progressivism'. M.Ed. Nottingham. 1983.
26. Jusmani, A.A. *op.cit.* pp. 264, 265.
 Extensive lists of progressive and traditional attributes in education are to be found in Telford, D. 'Traditional and progressive attitudes in junior schools'. M.Ed. Newcastle. 1970. pp. 71 - 75. Even Telford's lists tend to overlook the significance of relationships between pupils themselves, and between pupils and teachers.
 See also, for a penetrating and balanced overview of the educational dichotomy, Bloomer, M. and Shaw, K.E. Introduction: beliefs, interests and decisions, and Richard, C. Primary education: belief, myth and practice both in Bloomer, M. and Shaw, K.E. eds. The challenge of educational change. Oxford. Pergamon. 1979. pp. 1 - 15 and 39 - 55 respectively.
27. Dent, H.C. A new order in English education. London. U.L.P. 1942. p.53. The phrase is not his own, but is to be found in: The Board of Education, Handbook of suggestions for the consideration of teachers and others concerned in the work of the public elementary schools. London. H.M.S.O. 1927. p.3. It is quoted in its context, also on p. 18 above.
28. It is adequate for the purposes of the present study to accept such terms as "nature", "activity", "interest", etc. in their educational contexts and at their face values, but bearing in mind also the penetrating analyses of such terms in Dearden, R.F. The philosophy of primary education. London. R.K.P. 1968.
29. Ross, J.S. Groundwork of educational theory. London. Harrap. 1942. p.87. Ross also includes in his list Sir John Adams, who himself - and perhaps only he! - preferred the term "paidocentrism" which Stanley Hall apologetically coined. (Adams, Sir John, The new teaching. London. Hodder and Stoughton. 1918.)
30. See Note 27 above.

31. The Board of Education. Handbook of suggestions....1927.
op. cit. p.16.
32. Holmes, G. The idiot teacher. Nottingham. Spokesman. 1977.
(First pub. 1952).
33. See e.g. Berg, Leila, Risinghill: death of a comprehensive school. Harmondsworth. Penguin. 1968., for a graphic but hardly objective account of one such. See, also, references to the William Tyndale Primary School, London, in numerous works dealing with current educational issues. The definitive account has still to be written. Most of the teachers involved are still unable to resume their careers ten years after the controversy and resulting enquiry. (T.E.S. 4.10.85. p.6).
34. See Note 28 above.
35. Selleck, R.J.W. The new education, 1870-1914. London. Pitman. 1968.
Selleck, R.J.W. English primary education and the progressives, 1914-1939. London. R.K.P. 1972.
Lawson, M.D. and Petersen, R.D. Progressive education: an introduction. Sydney. Angus and Robertson. 1972.
Van Der Eyken, Willem, and Turner, Barry, Adventures in education. London. Allen Lane. 1969.
36. Quick, R.H. Essays on educational reformers. London. Longmans. 1904. (Originally pub. 1866).
Quick in particular deserves more honour in his own country. Even Curtis, S.J. and Boulton, M.E.A. op.cit. p.148, refer to him only as "that gentle scholar" who was "the first to recognise (Herbert) Spencer as an educational thinker".
37. Clegg, Sir Alec, in Braham, Mark, ed. Aspects of education. Selected papers from the Dartington conference. Chichester. John Wiley and Sons. 1982. Chapter 1, p.5.
38. ibid. p.10.
39. Barker Lunn, Joan C. Streaming in the primary school. Slough. N.F.E.R. 1970.
40. ibid. p.323.
41. ibid. pp. 27 and 52.
42. Telford, D. op.cit. p.152.
43. Barker Lunn, Joan C. op.cit. p.56.
44. The 1931 Hadow Report. See Notes 1 and 2 above.
45. ibid. pp. 77, 78. Section 66.
46. The Department of Education and Science. Primary education in England. A survey by H.M. Inspectors of schools. London. H.M.S.O. p.27.
47. The Schools Council. Working paper 70. The practical curriculum. H.M.S.O. 1981. p.20.
48. Barker Lunn, Joan C. op.cit. p.209.
49. Simon, Brian, The history of education, in Tibble, J.W. ed. The study of education. London. R.K.P. 1966. p.121.

50. ibid. p.120.
51. Stephens, W.B. Regional variations in education during the industrial revolution. The task of the local historian. Leeds University educational administration and history monograph. No. 1. pp. 3,4.
52. Wardle, D. English popular education, 1780-1975. Cambridge. C.U.P. 1976. p.79.
53. Furthermore, some of the theses listed have not been retained by university librarians, presumably economising on shelf-space at the expense of hard-won knowledge. In addition, many worthy B.Ed. and Diploma studies have not even been listed before being returned to their writers.
Theses listed in Gilbert and Holmes' Guides to sources in the history of education but reported unobtainable include:
Diggle, J. 'A study of the ministers responsible for education, 1856 to 1944'. M.Ed. Manchester.1962-63.
Warting, W.K. 'The effects of war on elementary education in Altrincham'. M.Ed. Manchester. 1943.
Dutt, B. 'A comparison of English and Scottish education, 1870-1944'. M.Ed. Leeds. 1949.
54. Morris, Norman, Contributions of local investigations to historical knowledge, in Cook, T.G. ed. Local studies and the history of education. p.163.
55. Cook, T.G. Autobiography and the history of education: a selection of sources, in History of education bulletin, No. 20. Autumn, 1977. pp. 46 - 51. (Emphases and omissions are Cook's own).
56. Further details of the questionnaire are included as Appendix I.
57. See e.g. Funnell, K.J. The history of Thurmaston National School, 1844 - 1968. Pub. The author, 1979, pp. 22, 23.
George Turpin, a popular headmaster and clerk to the U.D.C. had been found guilty of embezzlement and sent to prison for six months in 1913, two years after his retirement at the age of 65. Even sixty years afterwards, people were reluctant to talk about the events, feeling that they had betrayed Turpin by not raising the £100 which he had lost through mismanagement rather than by dishonesty.
58. The most notable pre-war Leicestershire H.M.I., R.D.Salter Davies, died only a few months before his retirement address was traced for the purpose of the present study. His widow replied that all his papers had been disposed of....
59. Blakiston, the Rev.J.R. Committee of Council on Education Report, 1867-1868. London. H.M.S.O. pp. 93,94.
60. Poole, G.A. Peterborough. (Diocesan Histories) London. S.P.C.K. (1881?) n.d. pp. 208 - 213.
61. See Funnell, K.J. op.cit. pp. 20, 21.
62. Victoria County History of Rutland. 1908. p.157.
The statistics are from: Everett, Alan, The pattern of rural dissent: the nineteenth century, in Leicester University Department of Local History occasional papers. (Second series). No. 4. 1972. p.75 et seq.

63. Edwards, K.C. in The East Midlands geographer. Vol. I. No. 1. June, 1954. pp. 3 - 6.
64. Benet Jones, R. The pattern of farming in the East Midlands. Sutton Bonington. University of Nottingham School of Agriculture. Department of Agricultural Economics. 1954.
65. Dury, G.H. The East Midlands and the Peak. London. Nelson. 1963.
66. The demarcation of such a region, in the absence of strongly contrasting geographical or political features, is unlikely ever to be settled finally. In 1965 Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland were part of the North Midland Standard Region. The Ministry of Labour, however, included the three counties in a region called "The Midlands" and extending as far west as Herefordshire and Worcestershire. In the following year, 1966, the three counties were part of the New Standard Region of the East Midlands, except for the Soke of Peterborough, which was placed in the East Anglia region. (H.M.S.O. Abstract of regional statistics. No. 1. 1965. pp. 48,49, and No. 2, pp. 60,61).
67. Mowat, C.L. Britain between the wars. London. Methuen. 1955. p.144.
68. Blythe, Ronald, The age of illusion, 1919-1940. London. Hamish Hamilton. 1963. p.20.
69. Seaman, L.C.B. Life in Britain between the wars. London. Batsford. 1970. p.23.
70. Typified by Halévy as "étatisme" and instituted in 1916 by Lloyd George, who sidestepped Parliament by creating departments, bureaux, committees and issuing Orders in Council). (Mowat, C.L. op.cit. pp. 13,14).
71. Simon, Brian, The politics of educational reform, 1920-1940. London. Lawrence and Wishart. 1974. p.28.
72. Blythe, Ronald, op.cit. p.246.
73. Simon, Brian, op.cit. p.37.
74. ibid. pp. 32, 46 and 47 for illuminating insights on this subject.
75. ibid. Appendix I, pp. 335 - 358.
76. Lawson, John, and Silver, Harold, A social history of education. London. Methuen. 1973. p.386.
77. Board of Education. Handbook of suggestions..... 1937. p.6. Quoted in Lawson, John, and Silver, Harold, op.cit. p.386.

Section II The theory.

Chapter 2 The Consultative Committee's 1931 Report.

1. Committee versus Board.
2. The evidence on which the 1931 Hadow Report was based.
3. The 1931 Hadow Report, The Primary School.
4. The reception of the 1931 Hadow Report.

1. Committee versus Board.

Before considering in detail the circumstances leading to the publication of the report, The Primary School, itself, it is instructive to examine in some detail the more general questions regarding the ways in which the Consultative Committee selected its subjects for consideration, and the nature of the relationship existing between the unpaid Committee members and the professional civil servants at the Board of Education, "the full-time plotters" as Selleck called them.¹

In the year 1931, when its report on the primary school was published to almost unanimous approval, the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education, under its chairman, Sir Henry Hadow,² was at the height of its influence. The previous report of 1926, The Education of the Adolescent,³ was continuing to guide and encourage the development of more appropriate and practical educational provision for the senior pupils of the elementary schools. (Indeed, it was customary for the process of building new senior departments or "modern" schools to be referred to as "Hadowisation"). Already, too, evidence was being gathered for the next report, to be published in 1933, on infant and nursery schools.⁴

However, the assured style and authoritative tone of the three reports, and their ready acceptance by the public and by those concerned in all aspects of educational work, have almost invariably led to the assumption that all three together had been planned as a trilogy from the beginning with the full support and approval of the Board of Education.

This eminently reasonable assumption was made by almost contemporary reviewers, as the following selection of quotations clearly shows:

"It was necessary that the Consultative Committee should issue a Report which would be complementary to the previous Hadow Report; the rehabilitation of the Primary School was a natural corollary to the evolution of the 'Modern School'..."⁵

"The Report of the Consultative Committee is the second of three important and invaluable compilations. The first was the much-discussed and oft misconstrued Hadow report; the primary school (sic) deals with the so-called Junior school, and the infant school report will complete the trilogy..."⁶

"In an interesting introduction, Mr. R.F. Young⁷ notes that the Report (i.e. 'Infant and Nursery Schools') completes a trilogy beginning with 'The Education of the Adolescent' in 1926 and 'The Primary School' in 1931...."⁸

Later writers have accepted the views of earlier commentators regarding the production of the three reports and have in some cases based their tributes to Hadow's Committee upon them. This is particularly the case in regard to the Plowden Report, Children and their Primary schools, of 1967, which can be seen as the successor to the 1931 Hadow Report, and which began with a tribute to the earlier publications:

"When the Minister of Education asked us 'to consider primary education in all its aspects and the transition to secondary education', he was in effect inviting us to tell him how far the intentions of Sir Henry Hadow and his committee had been carried out and how well they had stood the test of time. Hadow, if any man, has the right to be considered the architect of the English educational system as we know it. The three reports of the Consultative Committee under his chairmanship, the Education of the Adolescent (1926), the Primary School (1931), and Infant and Nursery Schools (1933) virtually laid the foundation of what exists today...."⁹

It can now be seen, with the release of contemporary letters and files, that in fact the Consultative Committee had produced its notable trilogy almost by accident and with less than wholehearted support from the Board: this, if anything, does not diminish the credit due to the Committee members, but enhances it.

Contrary to what was generally believed, the Consultative Committee was indeed purely consultative, existing only in an advisory capacity and "a mere shadow" of the Educational Council proposed by the Bryce Commission in 1895¹⁰ and destined to be eliminated by

the 1944 Education Act.¹¹ The chief desire of the officials and the senior Inspectors of the Board of Education was to channel the enthusiasm of the Committee members into non-controversial by-ways of education where the ensuing discussions and recommendations could be dealt with cheaply at a Departmental level.

It has been stated that by the year 1923, when Hadow had already been chairman for three years, the Consultative Committee had become a relatively prestigious body with a certain jealously-guarded independence which it had augmented by establishing the right to make its own recommendations regarding suitable subjects for investigation.¹²

However, a letter written in that year by the President of the Board, Edward Wood (later to become Lord Halifax), to Hadow shows the true nature of the relationship between the Board and its Committee:

"I appreciate the motive of the members in desiring that I should make some move in the direction of increasing the practical vitality of the Committee and giving them an opportunity of dealing with current topics of live interest. I am not, however, disposed to underrate the practical value of the work which the Committee has done and is doing and, whatever else the Committee may be able to do, I shall have to call upon them to devote probably the greater part of their time to topics similar to those which have been referred to them in the past.....

Some complaint was made of the elaboration of the Committee's inquiries and the length of time which they devoted to particular references. Some of the members who addressed me were apparently under the impression that it was the desire of the Board that they should spend a long time in dealing with their references and issuing elaborate reports, and that the traditions of the Committee reflected this desire. This is an entire misapprehension....

I am anxious to meet the reasonable and legitimate desires of the Committee so far as I can. I must however be careful to guard both myself and my successors in this office against any inconvenience or embarrassment which may arise from the modification of the practice which has existed hitherto." ¹³

Undismayed, the Committee continued, through Hadow, to assert itself and to press for a proposal put forward by Mr. J.A. White:

"To investigate the different types of curriculum suitable to children between the ages of eleven and sixteen and the means by which these can be provided." ¹⁴

Such a reference would have opened up the whole question of secondary education for all, with all its financial and political implic-

ations, and there must have been some hasty and high-level discussions¹⁵ as a result of which Hadow accepted on behalf of his Committee the more limited brief which led to the production of the 1926 Report, The Education of the Adolescent:

"To consider and report upon the organisation, objectives and curriculum of courses of study suitable for children who will remain in full-time attendance at school, other than secondary schools up to the age of fifteen."¹⁶

As the report neared completion, the whole problem of finding satisfying but innocuous work for the Committee arose again with urgency. The members had already submitted a long list which certainly gave no evidence that a major trilogy was in the process of creation.

Its subjects included:

- commercial education;
- education in rural schools;
- special courses of study for senior pupils intending to enter commerce or agriculture or industry;
- artistic, musical and dancing side of education;
- education of the backward child;
- character training in school;
- the proper size of schools and classes and the best methods of teaching groups and classes of pupils;
- school examinations and their effects on curricula and methods;
- co-ordination of voluntary and state agencies for adult education;
- organised games in elementary schools;
- the unification of the existing law.

Three suggestions only bore any relationship to the subjects finally selected: Miss Freda Hawtrey and R.H. Tawney wished to examine infant education, and Dr. Barker wanted to consider and report upon the organisation and curriculum of courses of study suitable for children up to the age of eleven. He pointed out that such a reference would appear to be consequential upon "The Education of the Adolescent" investigation.¹⁷

The Chief Inspector, H.M. Richards, found fault with almost every suggestion, particularly Dr. Barker's and Miss Hawtrey's which, he felt, raised wide issues involving religious and political considerations. "By a process of exhaustion" Richards recommended a topic which had not even been mentioned, namely, "the whole question of rural educ-

ation in all kinds of institutions...." ¹⁸ Yet somehow, finally, Dr. Barker's uniquely relevant suggestion was adopted, and research on the primary school began in October 1928. ¹⁹

Only a year later the agitation in the Board began again as it was learned that the Consultative Committee intended soon to complete the report on the primary school. Again the summary of the 1926 suggestions was brought out and the objections to each proposal repeated. This time the Committee was broadly in agreement regarding the next subject, namely infant education, and although in a minority at the Board, H.M. Richards agreed:

"There is a great deal to be said for referring this question to the Consultative Committee. It will complete the trilogy that began with the adolescent and has continued with the Junior School...." ²⁰

Predictably, he also saw objections: with the subject under review, local authorities would have an excuse to mark time instead of improving educational provision; and the care of young children being also a Ministry of Health concern, the giving of such a subject to a Board of Education committee would be seen as a victory for "educationists" over "nurturists". ²¹

Meanwhile, pressure for the adoption of the same subject was growing from other quarters, though Hadow himself did not put forward the "completion of the trilogy" argument when he wrote to Sir Aubrey Symonds, Permanent Secretary to the Board, in terms which were far from flaunting a "jealously guarded independence":

"Miss Hawtrey has written to tell me that a deputation has asked leave to come to the Board on the question of Nursery Schools and Infant Schools.... She asks my advice as to whether the Consultative Committee should apply to have it for its next reference. The question puts me into something of a dilemma.... Meanwhile there is no doubt that, however kind the Board has been in allowing us to make suggestions for our references, it is for the Board to determine and for us to do what we are told. So I am writing to ask you what you think I had better do in the matter.... Is the Infant School problem urgent, and are we the people to deal with it....?" ²²

The redoubtable deputation included not only Miss Hawtrey but also Lady Astor. The President of the Board of Education was pressed to appoint a Departmental Committee on problems affecting children up to the age of seven. When the President demurred, the deputation suggested passing the subject to the Consultative Committee, and, tentatively and provisionally, he indicated that their suggestion would be accepted.

Thus the President got rid of the deputation, and the Consultative Committee obtained the brief which permitted it to complete "the trilogy" with Infant and Nursery Schools in 1933.

Whatever the machinations of the officials of the Board, the Committee emerged triumphantly from its ordeals. It was seen as "a high official body";²³ with considerable status and influence, by all who were concerned with education, particularly as its reports were published by His Majesty's Stationery Office and the names of most of its members were well-known and respected. They were able to address the public on educational topics with a degree of authority unattainable by civil servants, Members of Parliament, or even the President of the Board of Education himself.

Brian Simon, (whose mother, Lady Simon of Wythenshawe, and close family friend, R.H. Tawney, both served on the Committee), has recently written that:

"The most important policy-making reports on education of the late 1920s and 1930s in England were those of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education relating to the organisation of both primary and secondary schooling...."²⁴

High praise indeed, for an essentially amateur, voluntary and merely consultative body!

2. The Evidence on which the 1931 Hadow Report was based.

The 1931 Hadow Report, The Primary School, was not really a report at all, but rather a reasoned compilation of recommendations and proposals, for the simple fact that comparatively few primary or junior schools existed at that time. Almost all that did exist had "just happened" the way Topsy had "just grewed". They were "decapitated" elementary schools from which the seniors had been moved, often to new premises; or they were reorganised "three-decker" buildings now arranged on infant/junior/senior floors instead of the original mixed-infant/boys/girls levels.

The members of the Consultative Committee therefore had to depend upon the views of witnesses of all kinds, lay, professional and expert, even more so as:

"....none of them had had experience of the newly-organised primary schools, and few had had any direct contact with the teaching of young children."²⁵

Nearly five hundred submissions in the form of written evidence or oral testimonies, from individuals and from representatives of organisations, were received and considered.²⁶ The final report appears to represent fairly the weight and bias of the evidence received.²⁷

One group of witnesses, like the writers of the Black Papers²⁸ which followed the publication of The Plowden Report, assumed that they alone stood for traditional standards against a flood of subversive propaganda. They condemned the primary schools for low educational standards, which they believed could be raised by even harder "grind":

"So much stress is now laid upon the 'self-activity' of children that school methods are now dominated by the presumed necessity for providing scope for its exercise. Routine methods are looked at askance- they are condemned as mechanical and 'drudgery' is the term contemptuously applied to them...Everywhere the cry is for the cultivation of the intelligence through the child's own spontaneous activities... The subjects of the elementary schools are tools which the pupils should be capable of using with ease and facility.. But so often they are unable to do this. Their English is meagre, inaccurate and halting; their arithmetic cannot help them with even simple calculations to be done in a hurry;

their ability to write a simple business letter is practically nil; their capacity for enduring the drudgery of the shop of the office has been undermined by the 'play-way' of teaching; and their elaborate mental training and leisurely habits have left them unprepared for the prompt and accurate decisions that business demands." ²⁹

This group of witnesses regarded it as axiomatic that the work of the primary school was of a preparatory nature, serving merely to provide the tools of learning which would then be applied at the senior stages of education. For this group, the three basic subjects of reading, writing and arithmetic were virtually all that should concern the primary school:

"The inclusion of additional subjects meant that less time and attention could be devoted to the fundamental subjects of Arithmetic and English....A proportion of at least 60% of the whole time to be devoted to English and Arithmetic would not be excessive...." ³⁰

"The primary instructional aim of the Junior School should be to lead up to the Senior School by placing in the hands of the child the tools and equipment of learning, so that it may read and write and cipher...." ³¹

The larger, opposing group of witnesses which favoured a more child-centred approach to primary education, did not deny the value of the basic skills except in one case: Miss Grace Owen had a short way with what other people regarded as sacrosanct and referred to respectfully as "fundamental", "primary" or "essential":

"Reading was the acquirement of second-hand ideas.
Writing was an indirect form of communication.
Arithmetic was formulated experience.
Therefore the three R's did not belong essentially to the first stage of education." ³²

A more reasoned rejection of the "Give them the tools" view of primary education was made by Mr. Joseph Wicksteed, Headmaster, King Alfred's School. ³³ Others spoke of the primary school as already too formal and its formal standards too high, even "scandalously high and far in advance of what is necessary for a pupil of 11+." ³⁴

However, the main attack on the contemporary educational practices by this latter group was directed against the "Scholarship" Examination which was seen as a force distorting and stultifying the primary school curriculum in the interests of a minority of pupils, namely those who were seen by their parents and teachers as likely "Grammar School material".

The witnesses in the large, "child-centred" group variously described the examination as "a curse"³⁵ "a bogey",³⁶ and "psychologically harmful".³⁷ Speaker after speaker pointed out that it was illogical for infants to be educated in a free and active environment, but for juniors to be subjected to drudgery and formality, in the supposed interests of the few brightest children in each class. Some witnesses asserted that the examination for the children aged "eleven plus" even threw its shadow across the infant schools, which were expected to pass on to the junior classes children with high standards in "the three R's". It was claimed that the examination was harmful to all children, giving "the successes" a distorted view of life as a series of academic hurdles, and making the rest feel at an early age that they were failures. Furthermore, it was asserted, the examination warped the curriculum and produced children whose emotional and intellectual development had been irremediably distorted. Yet the witnesses were sufficiently realistic to realise the enormous pressures and temptations to which the schools were subjected with regard to the examination:

"Head teachers, both as individuals and the mass are aware of this state of affairs and deplore it. But, with very few exceptions, they are caught in the toils and cannot extricate themselves. With them it becomes a matter of survival of the fittest, and the fittest are judged by a criterion inexorably imposed upon them by a tradition and by an uninstructed public opinion (often intense in its local manifestations) which still finds expression in an antiquated and highly unsatisfactory examination system.

Unless, therefore, the Free Place Examination system is radically altered the new Junior School will never get a fair chance. In areas where they have recently been established the insidious influence of the examination is already perfectly apparent...."³⁸

"The award of a high number of free place scholarships was felt to be an honour to the school and thus the teaching of written Arithmetic and written English tended to be unduly emphasised. It was the impression of the witness that Music, Drawing and Handwork were still too often regarded as 'frills' in the Junior School, and were not given the place their importance demands. The public valued chiefly what could be put down on paper...." 39

"It is quite evident that the number of children of ability in any school at any particular moment does not depend upon the teachers' efforts, yet the effect of an external examination is often to set up in the teacher's mind the contrary view and to lead him to abandon his conception of what is really needed in the education of children between eight and eleven years of age. He tends to adopt an attitude antagonistic to any new thing and the general result may well be the deadening of that spirit of enquiry and zeal for experiment which may evolve a new technique of teaching in Junior Schools." 40

The criticisms of the selection procedures were in fact strongly reminiscent of Matthew Arnold's strictures upon the Revised Code in the Eighteen Sixties, and were equally valid and similarly ineffective at the time they were made. It is not surprising, therefore, that some witnesses tended to ignore the real situation and to describe the ideal primary school which would work in harmony with the child's developing interests. Miss Grace Hadow, Principal of the Society of Oxford Home Students, and younger sister of the Chairman of the Committee, spoke of "the awakening of intelligence" through village surveys, local libraries, Young Farmers' Clubs, and co-operative study involving parents and local employers. 41

The contrast between what the idealists wanted and what they believed to be the real situation can be measured by comparing the following quotations:

".....The key-note of Junior Teaching should be happy revelry in the discovery and control of feelings and emotions. Abstract reasoning should not be attempted. The ideal method would be, to provide each school with a visionary leader, a Story Teller, a Musician, an Artist and Craftsman, and a Games Enthusiast. Abolish timetables and curricula. Prepare for nothing. Leave the children to the care of these guardians and the result would be as good, and as desirable, as could be obtained. But Public Opinion has not yet arrived at the stage when this method would satisfy the tax-payer, therefore some more definite indication of curriculum is necessary...." 42

"From the age of seven the scholar is doomed to 'listen in' to the words of information and knowledge imparted by the teacher. His growth to an appreciable extent is held up from lack of opportunity to do - to create - to break and to make. The room in which he is condemned to spend most of his time is so small, so full of desks and other necessary furniture, that he is compelled to keep pent up that superfluous energy, that conscious force which is a continuous urge to activity, until he can get into the playground. Listen to the noise and watch the energy displayed here and ponder. Should not this superabundance of energy - this desire for movement - should not these rather be harnessed and directed, than cribbed and confined....?" 43

It is interesting to note that two of the Directors of Education whose parts in the development of primary education in the South East Midlands will be considered below, appeared to ally themselves with the conservative witnesses. W.A. Brockington, Director of Education for Leicestershire, himself a member of the Consultative Committee which on this occasion he was addressing, and an enthusiast for "Hadowisation" even before the term had been coined, was concerned mainly with problems of administration and subject teaching. The problems which he put forward as worthy of investigation suggest that he had no desire to base junior school practice on infant activity methods, except for the shortest possible transitional period when children were first promoted to the junior school or department. His 'problems' were, for example:

- "(a) how the technique of the Infant School should be 'shaded off';
- (b) for how long the apparatus work and oral work peculiar to the infant school should be continued in the lower forms of the junior school;
- (c) how the too abrupt introduction of a rigid formality replacing the freedom and self-resource of the infant school, may be avoided." 44

J.L. Holland, Northamptonshire's Secretary for Education, appeared before the Consultative Committee with A.R. Clegg, Chairman of the Shropshire Education Committee, on behalf of the County Council Association. Holland's submission shed very little light on either the present situation or the best course for the future. He asked for

a period of experiment and trial to be made by the teachers under the supervision of the County Authorities and the Local and Board of Education Inspection Inspectors, who would then carry the fruits of experience from school to school. In the light of subsequent events, this suggestion has its ironic aspects, for educational experiments were rarely, if ever, encouraged, and neither Northamptonshire itself nor the great majority of County Authorities appointed local inspectors with responsibility for primary school development until at least another twenty years had elapsed. Some teachers, Holland thought, needed help, particularly those in rural schools but, on the other hand, "frequently it would be the case that suggestions would tend to hamper their initiative". He had apparently overlooked the fact that the Board of Education had long issued its own "Handbook of Suggestions" with a preface explaining that suggestions could not by definition be prescriptive. Holland went on to deplore "the inevitable tendency" for schools to concentrate on "the highly competitive" Annual Schools Examination, but ended with proposals to extend its use to other subjects:

"There are types of clever children whose abilities are not expressed in these subjects (1) for example the practical type and the artistic type. It may be that to encourage the all-round development which should characterise the Junior School we shall have to be more careful not to ignore entirely in examinations the other subjects of the curriculum."⁴⁵

An enormous contrast to Holland's evidence was presented in a letter by Mrs. Gertrude Foster, one of Holland's head teachers in Northamptonshire. She obviously wanted a more active curriculum, and was aware of the practical difficulties:

"....the Authority sometimes appears to believe that village schools do not need books, apparatus, etc. so much as larger schools. I believe quite the contrary to be true. A year or two ago, I asked for a set of scales and weights. for use in Arithmetic lessons. The enquiry was made, 'Why were they wanted in this small school?' I was too vexed to reply, and continued using my own - often most inconveniently.

One lesson, e.g. on ounces and pounds with scales is more lasting with young children than a dozen on mere tables.... Unless I allowed my scholars the use of my own sons' libraries, they would have little opportunity of becoming acquainted with many of the classics; and so be denied one of the greatest delights of childhood.....Many schools have no globe and few atlases - without which it is impossible to teach geography....A Head Teacher should feel perfectly free to alter her timetable if necessary, e.g.

the only suitable time to give a lesson on a Rainbow is at the time of the occurrence...." ⁴⁶

The great mass of evidence presented to the Consultative Committee by its witnesses would make fascinating reading if it had been published verbatim as was the case with, for example, the Report of the Royal Commission on the Elementary Education Acts (The Cross Report) of 1888. However, it is possible in the context of the present work to refer only to a small but significant selection and to provide a few examples at greater length in an appendix. These include the joint submission of a group of H.M. Inspectors, who had "borrowed" it in its entirety from a head teacher whom they visited;⁴⁷ the strongest possible attack on "The Free Place Examination", also from one of H.M. Inspectors;⁴⁸ and the very carefully researched proposals of the Bradford I.L.P., including a recommendation that towns like Bradford should charter liners for educational cruises.⁴⁹

One expert witness was considered so important that his evidence was printed as a twenty-five page appendix to The Primary School: Professor Cyril Burt.⁵⁰ There is much of significance in the evidence for the advocate of "child-centred" education: emotional development; spontaneous interests; even the statement that

"All through the junior period children are pre-eminently active and learn by doing; at this stage, therefore so far as possible, every subject might be taught through active work rather than through mere passive reception. And it must be remembered that the young child.....is still far more interested in the actual job in hand than in the acquisition of dexterity or new forms of skill as such." ⁵¹

There is even a table showing the subjects of the curriculum preferred by school children at varying ages: handwork, singing, dancing and nature study are at the top of the list, and the subjects which traditionally occupy most of the school timetable - reading, spelling, grammar, English composition, arithmetic, history, geography and scripture - well below.⁵²

However, probably the part of Burt's evidence which had most significance for educational development lay at the beginning of his submission:

"....Intelligence...may be defined as inborn, general, intellectual ability. Fortunately this central capacity is the one for which the most reliable tests exist....
.....one of the most important facts revealed by intelligence tests is the wide range of individual differences, and its steady expansion from year to year....Older children, therefore, differ far more widely in intellectual capacity than younger children....By the age of 10 the children of a single age group must be spread over at least three different standards. And by the age of 12 the range has become so wide that a still more radical classification is imperative. Before this age is reached children need to be grouped according to their capacity, not merely in separate classes or standards, but in separate types of schools." ⁵³

3. The 1931 Hadow Report, *The Primary School*

It seems probable that there was a strong liberal, humanitarian element within the Consultative Committee ⁵⁴ and that it could not fail to respond to and accept the arguments of the majority of the witnesses in favour of more "child-centred" primary schools. Naturally, the Report acknowledged the traditional virtues of neatness, accuracy, and high standards of written and formal school work, but the progressive message penetrates much of the typically guarded committee English. There is far more than the one phrase about "activity and interest" for those looking for guidance towards progressive education. The first page of the Introduction asks:

"Is the curriculum humane and realistic, unencumbered by the dead wood of a formal tradition, quickened by inquiry and experiment, and inspired, not by an attachment to conventional orthodoxies, but by a vivid appreciation of the needs and possibilities of the children themselves?" 55

The junior school years were not to be seen as either an interlude or a time of preparation; the children's future would best be served by "a single-minded devotion to their needs in the present" while they remained "vigorous in body and lively in mind". 56

If the curriculum were to be seen from the angle of the child's activities and interests, it had to be viewed in an entirely different light from that envisaged even one generation earlier. The outlook of the primary school had been broadened and humanised. It provided interesting experiences and encouraged individual initiative in each child - and in each teacher, who had to be guided by personal insight and experience. 57

".....we are with the majority of our witnesses strongly of the opinion that primary education would gain greatly in realism and power of inspiration if an attempt were more generally made to think of the curriculum less in terms of departments of knowledge to be taught, and more in terms of activities to be fostered and interests to be broadened. Hitherto the general tendency has been to take for granted the existence of certain traditional 'subjects' and to present them to the pupils as lessons to be mastered. There is, as we have said, a place for that method, but it is neither the only method, nor the method most likely to be fruitful between the ages of seven and eleven. What is required, at least, so far as much of the curriculum is concerned, is to substitute for it methods which take as the starting-point of the work of the primary school the experiences, the curiosity, and the awakening powers and interests of the children themselves." 58

The introduction continued with a clear warning against permitting the work of the primary school to be dominated or biased by the demands of the later stages of education, or by the Free Place Examination. Such a concern was understandable when a child's whole future might be determined by his success or failure in that kind of examination, and ultimately only the easy access of all children to some kind of secondary education would lighten the pressure on the

junior school and improve the quality of the work done inside its walls. However, even under the conditions obtaining, the temptation to give pre-eminence to preparation for, and success in, the Free Place Examination "ought strenuously to be resisted".⁵⁹

The Introduction ended with a call for the true worth of the primary schools to be recognised: the children of that age and their teachers should not be left in old buildings, nor assigned lower status. Teaching junior children was as valuable and interesting an occupation as that of teachers in any other part of the educational system, and as soon as that fact were recognised by the public, a sufficient number of suitable teachers for the junior schools would be forthcoming.⁶⁰ It would then be possible for the junior school to become:

"...the common school of the whole population so excellent and generally esteemed that all parents will desire their children to attend it. It is in the light of that ideal that we should wish our report to be read. We do not pretend to have made startling discoveries or to have enunciated novel truths. The root of the matter is after all simple. What a wise and good parent would desire for his own children, that a nation must desire for all children."⁶¹

In the chapters following the Introduction, the Report tended to become much more traditional, particularly in its compilers' inability to free their minds from the usual school subjects. Thus, chapters on the history of the education of young children and on their mental and physical development; on the "activity and experience" keynotes of the curriculum of the future; on the design, organisation and staffing of the schools; on examinations and on retarded children, are rather strangely concluded, after the summary of the conclusions and recommendations and the Members' signatures, with fifty pages of "Suggestions on the teaching of the various branches of the curriculum of primary schools."⁶² Within these pages, which are neither Report nor Appendix, the curriculum is not "thought of in terms of activity and experience" but as "Religious Education",

"History", "Arithmetic and Simple Geometry" and so on.

Neither could the Committee members really envisage a school in which each child developed in his own way and at his own speed and inclination. Content to accept Burt's views that general, inborn, immutable intelligence levels dominated each individual's life-chances, they allowed each child's "activity and experience" to be subordinated to the iron law of heredity:

"In general we agree with our psychological witnesses in thinking that in very large primary schools there might wherever possible be a triple track of organisation, viz. a series of 'A' classes or groups for the bright children, and a series of smaller 'C' classes or groups to include retarded children, both series being parallel to the ordinary series of 'B' classes or groups for the average children." 63

No doubt the members believed that by organising children in fairly homogeneous classes, they would receive more appropriate assistance. They also added several caveats: "such groupings are not incompatible with re-classification for special purposes";⁶⁴ transfer between streams should be "early and easy";⁶⁵ entrants should not be rigidly classified as soon as they came from the infant school. However, their giving respectability to streaming in schools by perceived mental ability was to have enormous repercussions in the years ahead.⁶⁶

The Report then resumed the tone of the Introduction:

"The schools whose first intention was to teach children how to read have thus been compelled to broaden their aims until it might now be said that they have to teach children how to live. This profound change in purpose has been accepted with a certain reluctance and a consequent slowness of adaptation. The schools, feeling that what they can do best is the old familiar business of imparting knowledge, have reached a high level of technique in that part of their functions, but have not clearly grasped its proper relation to the whole. In short, while there is plenty of teaching which is good in the abstract, there is too little which helps children directly to strengthen and enlarge their instinctive hold on the conditions of life by enriching, illuminating and giving point to their growing experience....." 67

Not only did reviewers praise the 1931 Report as part of the so-called "trilogy" completed in 1933, but they also welcomed it in its own right when it was first published. The most significant review was to be found in The Scottish Educational Journal :

"The new Hadow Report on the Primary School has clarified and systematised thoughts that have been in many minds for some time regarding the need for a change in school methods and curricula to meet the new needs which the school has to face.

The historical reasons for the conventional school, with its logically arranged subject-matter carefully placed in subject-categories, its fixed timetable and its emphasis on book-learning, are sympathetically stated; and the great efficiency of the 'teaching' side of the school is paid a deserved tribute. At the same time, it is made clear that the school has now to serve a different purpose. Its scope is immensely widened. The discoveries of medicine and of psychology are daily shedding new light on the nature and needs of children. The rise of democracy and the spread of democratic institutions necessitates a new kind of citizen. The demands of industry and commerce are changing rapidly and calling for new capacities and a new kind of training. We can no longer count on life out of school to give children practice in the use of the tools that the school has given them. The school itself has to supply not only the tools but the opportunity to use them, and therefore, while still having as its chief function that of handing on to children their cultural heritage, must adopt a new approach to learning." 68

The review in Education was long, detailed and perceptive. As with the Consultative Committee itself, its writer also deprecated the public's tendency to judge a primary school by its "scholarship" results. The article concluded with words of encouragement for the individual teacher:

"The teacher nowadays is liable to be confused by a multitude of counsellors; his own newspapers tell him week by week in a very circumstantial way how to do it, and the newspaper press generally tells him at frequent intervals how he has failed to do it....He must beware of drying up the sources of his own initiative by substituting for the old official syllabus the daily lessons, the daily sets of notes, and the copious exercises for daily practice, which are offered to him on every hand, and which reduce to a minimum his work of preparation. We plead for reliance to be placed not on such specific aids to teaching, but on those books which stimulate individual thinking and encourage personal enterprise. Among such we give a prominent place to the new Hadow Report; every primary school teacher should be afforded

the opportunity not only of reading it, but of having it by him as a reference book." 69

One correspondent to The Times Educational Supplement summed up neatly the predominant message of the 1931 Report, at the same time revealing the way in which the Consultative Committee was seen by the public:

"....there have, indeed, been few documents issued with an official cachet which have so envisaged education as a joyous activity...." 70

Another correspondent of The Times Educational Supplement raised a significant point which had been overlooked by the reviewers:

"On the vexed question of the separate infant school and the second break at seven, the committee come down unequivocally in favour of the break. Although their conclusion is stated emphatically, this is the one point on which their reasoning does not seem very convincing. Many of their observations, indeed, point to the difficulties of the break...." 71

In this aspect of educational organisation, as in the assumption that streaming by "intelligence" was the ideal, the 1931 Hadow Report encouraged developments which have since been seriously questioned. Perhaps inevitably, in spite of the lasting validity of many of the educational judgements contained within it, the Committee's report, when it dealt with organisation, revealed current preoccupations. These included beliefs about mental development and the ways in which it could be measured accurately, and an acceptance of the traditional ages and stages of schooling without questioning their validity.

However, it was the message itself - or, at least, the phrase "activity and experience" - which caught the public imagination, rather than the details of school organisation. It is probable that the message found receptive listeners because other educational writers had been recommending a more practical and congenial curriculum for years.

Notes to Chapter 2.

1. Selleck, R.J.W. English primary education and the progressives, 1914-1939. London. R.K.P. 1972. p.162.
2. See Appendix II. "Names of the members of the Consultative Committee" from p. iv. of The Primary School.
3. Hadow, Sir Henry, Chairman, The Consultative Committee of the Board of Education, The education of the adolescent. London. H.M.S.O. 1926.
4. Hadow, Sir Henry, Chairman, The Consultative Committee of the Board of Education, Infant and nursery schools. London. H.M.S.O. 1933.
5. P.R.O. Ed. 24/1226. Reprint from Education. n.d.
6. ibid. Reprint from The new schoolmaster. March, 1931.
7. R.F. Young was secretary to the Consultative Committee.
8. P.R.O. Ed. 24/1226. Reprint from The new schoolmaster. 7.12.1933.
9. Plowden, Lady Bridget, Chairman, The Central Advisory Council for Education (England) Children and their primary schools. London. H.M.S.O. 1967. p.1. para. 1.
10. Curtis, S.J. and Boulwood, M.E.A. An introductory history of English education since 1800. London. University Tutorial Press. 1960. p.102.
11. Simon, Brian, Does education matter? London. Lawrence and Wishart. 1985. p.67.
12. Simon, Brian, The politics of educational reform, 1920-1940. London. Lawrence and Wishart. 1974. pp. 74,75.
13. P.R.O. Ed. 24/1226. 20.3.1923.
14. ibid. 29.10.1923.
15. See Simon, Brian, (op.cit. 1974) pp. 74-79 and 116,117, and Selleck, R.J.W. op.cit. pp. 167 et seq. for greater details, which still leave much room for speculation, particularly as File Ed.24/1226 is not only incomplete but the contents are badly disarranged.
16. Emphasis added.
17. Ed. 24/1226. 20.7.1926.
18. ibid. undated.
19. On 13.10.1928 a press notice announced that:
"The Consultative Committee of the Board of Education are now about to begin their consideration of the second part of the terms of reference which were given to them in November, 1926:- To inquire and report as to the courses of study suitable for children (other than children in infants' departments) up to the age of 11 in elementary schools with special reference to the needs of children in rural areas!"
Many readers must have assumed that the words "the second part" indicated that The education of the adolescent had been "the first part" and that the excluded "children in infants' schools" would be considered in a future "third part".

This assumption may have been one of the sources of the belief that a "trilogy" of studies on the three main stages of education had long been planned. In fact, the first part of the terms of reference given in November, 1926, had been:

"To inquire as to the selection and provision of books for public elementary schools and to make recommendations for the improvement of their quality and supply".

20. P.R.O. Ed. 24/1226, undated.
21. *ibid.* 20.12.1929.
22. *ibid.* 13.12.1929.
23. Isaacs, Susan, Review of The Primary School. B.J.Ed.Psych. Vol. I. 1931. p.216.
24. Simon, Brian, (*op.cit.* 1985) p.111.
25. T.E.S. 21.2.1931.
26. The full list is to be found in The Primary School Appendix I pp. 207-221. Only a comparatively small number of submissions has survived. See, below, Appendix III, "List of witnesses whose evidence is extant". (P.R.O. Ed. 103148).
27. See below, Appendix IV, "Analysis of progressive/traditional bias of witnesses".
28. Cox, C.B. and Dyson, E. eds. Black Paper One, (1969); Black Paper Two, (n.d.) and Black Paper Three (n.d.). London. Critical Quarterly Society.
29. P.R.O. Ed. 10/148. S.97. T. Caden, Headmaster, Towneley Memorial Intermediate R.C. School, Stanley, Co.Durham.
30. *ibid.* S.12(47) The Women's Co-operative Guild.
31. *ibid.* S.12(13) The London Teachers' Association.
- 32,39 *ibid.* S.12(2) Miss Grace Owen, Hon.Sec. Nursery School Assn.
33. See Appendix V, "Extracts from evidence presented to the Consultative Committee".
34. P.R.O. Ed.10/148. Dr. Dorothy Brock on Free Place pupils admitted to the Mary Datchelor School, Camberwell.
35. *ibid.* Unnumbered. C.A.Richardson, H.M.I. See Appendix V "Extracts from evidence...."
36. *ibid.* S.116. Central Ed. Comm. of the Society of Friends.
37. *ibid.* S.12(2) See Note 32 above.
38. *ibid.* unnumbered. C.A. Richardson, H.M.I.
40. *ibid.* S.2. A Committee of the Board's Inspectors on the aims of the Junior School. Much of this report is a plagiarized version of S.11(37) T.H. Kirkham, Headmaster, Westhill Junior School, Torquay. See Appendix V "Extracts from evidence...."
41. *ibid.* S.15. Miss Grace Hadow, Principal, Soc. Oxford Home Students.
42. *ibid.* S.69. (This number also assigned to the submission of T. Holland, Headmaster, Roke Central Council School, Purley). A.S. Bright, H.M.I.

43. ibid. S.98. J.T. Tansley, Headmaster, Middle Row Council School, Kensington.
Other idealists who gave evidence include A.B. Neal, Headmaster, Sir Henry Fermor's School, Crowborough, and Joseph Wicksteed, Headmaster, King Alfred School, London. See Appendix V.
44. ibid. S.7.
45. ibid. S.12(34) (1) refers to English and Arithmetic.
46. ibid. S.56. Mrs. Gertrude Foster, Headmistress, Braybrooke School, Northants. See Appendix V.
47. See Note 40 above.
48. See Note 35 above.
49. P.R.O. Ed.10/148. S.27. Bradford I.L.P. Commission on Education. (Booklet).
50. The Primary School. Appendix III, pp. 254-279. Memorandum on the mental characteristics of children between the ages of seven and eleven by Professor Cyril Burt, D.Sc. Psychologist to the London County Council.
For a recent view of Burt's "fraud" by an educationist who admits that he "dissented radically from all that he (Burt) stood for" see Simon, Brian, (op.cit. 1985) Chapter 5, The IQ controversy: the case of Cyril Burt, pp. 106-125.
51. The Primary School. pp. 261,262.
52. ibid. p.278.
53. ibid. pp. 257, 258.
54. See Appendix II, "Names of the members....."
55. The Primary School. Introduction, p.xiv.
56. ibid, pp. xv, xvi.
57. ibid. pp. xvii, xxiii.
58. ibid. pp. xxii, xxiii.
59. ibid. pp. xxv, xxvi.
60. ibid. pp. xxviii, xxix.
61. ibid. pp. xxviii, xxix.
62. ibid. pp. 150-206.
63. ibid. pp. 77 - 79.
64. ibid. p.78.
65. ibid. p.78.
66. One of the first books to discredit streaming and to reach a wide readership was: Jackson, Brian, Streaming: an education system in miniature. London. R.K.P. 1964. Arguments in favour of comprehensive education had already been presented by Brian Simon in The common secondary school(1955) and New trends in English education (1957) (See Bibliography).
67. The Primary School. p.93.
- 68 - 71 The summaries of undated reviews prepared for the Committee are filed with the witnesses' submissions, P.R.O. Ed.10/148.

Section II The theory. (Continued).

Chapter 3 Liberal advice from the Board of Education.

1. Liberal suggestions from the Board.
2. War again: educational catalyst?

1. Liberal suggestions from the Board.

While the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education was considering the evidence of its witnesses and compiling its 1931 report, The Primary School, its deliberations were clearly eased by the fact that there was by that date a steadily growing consensus regarding the nature and education of young children. It was in many cases more of a feeling than a clearly articulated statement, and it involved several elements: the contrast between children confined in school and children at play; the irrelevance of much that was taught in school to "real" life, and to children's natural interests; the insensitivity of putting developing individuals through a scheme of mass-education devised long before for an entirely different situation; the growth of developmental psychology, and so on.

It is to the credit of the Consultative Committee members that they were able to respond to that climate of opinion and even to distil and fix it in the paragraph of the report which refers to "activity and experience." However, it is noteworthy that the mood of the country which ensured that the report, The Primary School, found a receptive audience was in no small measure due to the efforts of the Board of Education itself. From its inception at the beginning of the century, the Board had prefaced its Codes and Suggestions for teachers with liberal educational statements which, if acted upon promptly, could have transformed elementary education and freed it from the dead weight of habit and tradition in a very short time.

Before considering some of the Board's publications in more detail in order to show their true value, it must be admitted that the officers of the Board, including the School Inspectors, rarely referred to them, or recommended them.¹ No one at the Board objected to the Consultative Committee's taking the primary school as a

subject for study on the grounds that The handbook of suggestions....² of 1927 covered much of the relevant area of research, as in fact it did; nor, on the other hand, did the Consultative Committee produce a report which acknowledged The handbook of suggestions or even included it as an entry in the index. It was as if the two bodies pursued separate but parallel paths. The Board's Handbook of suggestions was mentioned only rarely in the evidence given to the Consultative Committee; but the witnesses who referred to it quite clearly felt that it already covered much of the ground which the Committee was considering anew, and that its recommendations could not be bettered:

"....the admirable Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers covers the ground well and is full of happy suggestions....." ³

"The spirit which prompted the Board of Education to abandon a Code of Regulations and to issue instead a 'Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers' should continue to animate the Central Authority and should guide the administration of the Local Education Authorities." ⁴

(The Handbook of Suggestions) "covers much of the ground, and we should like to be allowed to express our high appreciation of this book, which in a most admirable spirit seems to state the objectives and methods of 'Elementary Education' in consonance with the best thought of the day." ⁵

The N.U.T. commended the last issue of the handbook which, in the representatives' opinion:

".....should be of supreme value to the Consultative Committee in the present enquiry. Indeed it was difficult to see how much could be added to the very detailed consideration of the scope and content of the various subject courses for primary schools given in the 'Suggestions'" ⁶

However, while praising the handbook, an assistant inspector from Nottinghamshire was of the opinion that it was not well known among teachers. ⁷

The first Handbook of suggestions had been published in 1905, but even before that date, and only two years after its establishment, the Board had produced the New Code of 1904 which was intended to liberalise the elementary school. The introduction to the New Code has been called "the classic statement of the aims of the

public elementary school",^{8a} and "a statement of aims....which is as finely conceived and as nobly expressed as any that can be found":^{8b}

"The purpose of the Public Elementary School is to form and strengthen the character and to develop the intelligence of the children entrusted to it, and to make the best use of the school years available, in assisting both boys and girls, according to their different needs, to fit themselves, practically as well as intellectually, for the work of life.

With this purpose in view it will be the aim of the School to train the children carefully in habits of observation and clear reasoning, so that they may gain an intelligent acquaintance with some of the facts and laws of nature; to arouse in them a living interest in the ideals and achievements of mankind....to give them some power over language....to develop in them such a taste for good reading and thoughtful study as will enable them to increase the knowledge in after years by their own efforts.

The School must at the same time encourage to the utmost the children's natural activities of hand and eyeand afford them every opportunity for the healthy development of their bodies....

It will be an important though subsidiary object of the School to discover individual children who show promise of exceptional capacity, and to develop their special gifts (so far as this can be done without sacrificing the interests of the majority of the children) so that they may be qualified to pass at the proper age into Secondary Schools....

And though their opportunities are but brief, the teachers can yet do much to lay the foundations of conduct...

In all these endeavours the School should enlist, as far as possible, the interest and co-operation of the parents and the home in an united effort to enable the children not merely to reach their full development as individuals, but also to become upright and useful members of the community in which they live, and worthy sons and daughters of the country to which they belong."⁹

By comparison, the prefatory memorandum to the 1905 Handbook of suggestions concentrated on the liberation of the teacher:

"....The only uniformity of practice that the Board of Education desires to see in the teaching....is that each teacher shall think for himself, and work out for himself such methods of teaching as may use his powers to the best advantage and be best suited to the particular needs and conditions of the school. Uniformity in details of practice (except in the mere routine of school management) is not desirable even if it were attainable. But freedom implies a corresponding responsibility in its use...."¹⁰

The preface went on to emphasise the facts that "the essential condition of good education is to be found in the right attitude of the teacher to his work" ¹¹ and "it is of the essence of teaching that the mind of the teacher should touch the mind of the pupil." ¹² Relationships were seen as of vital importance, and a sympathetic understanding of the pupil's mind as essential, so that new teaching could be related to past learning experiences.

The framers of the 1905 Handbook of suggestions saw their compilation merely for what its name implied: advice based on experience but offered almost humbly, to be accepted, rejected, modified or improved by each teacher thinking for himself and developing his own professional skills in the light of his own principles and experiences. The task of the inspectorate would not be to act as the Board's policemen, but themselves to look and learn; to encourage the new Local Education Authorities to support judicious educational experiments; "to collate the results of careful observations....so as to be able to issue some general outlines of aim and method, proved by searching tests to be practicable and effective". ¹³ Teachers would be "of predominant importance". They would need libraries "well furnished inpedagogic literature". They themselves would give lectures, demonstrations and talks leading to discussions. Experimental work would be conducted

"....in some cases by teachers of long experience, in others by younger teachers who come fresh from the influence of the excellent professors or lecturers in education who are now to be found in many of our Training Colleges." ¹⁴

The same liberal, judicious tone is to be found in the more detailed treatment of the different subjects of the curriculum: the collecting instinct is to be used to encourage an interest in natural history, but collecting must not be allowed to degenerate into destruction. ¹⁵ Walks and excursions are a legitimate part of the timetable, but require careful planning if they are to be educ-

ationally fruitful.¹⁶ With regard to history:

"The Board do not prescribe any particular method of treatment so that each teacher is at liberty to frame that scheme of instruction which shall best accord with his own skill and capacity".¹⁷

In subsequent years the Board of Education published brief booklets intended to bring the 1905 Suggestions up to date. Each booklet contained an identical prefatory note emphasising the tentative character of the original Suggestions and noting that criticisms, proposals, decisions of conferences, and careful enquiries by its inspectors, had all helped to place the Board in a better position

"....to judge what are the difficulties and dangers which most impede educational progress and what are the tendencies which offer the best promise for the future".

Then follows in each booklet the reprint of the original section of the Prefatory Memorandum which stated that the only uniformity of practice desired was that each teacher should think for himself.

Each booklet contained suggestions designed to liberate elementary education from its Victorian restraints. The Teaching of English (1912)¹⁸ recommended the use of pictures and picture books to encourage questioning and discussion; the reading of poems and fairy tales to the children; more freedom for oral development:

"....insistence on an unnatural and unnecessary standard of quietness in schools and classes for young children.... has often rendered scholars less instead of more communicative."

The teaching of arithmetic (also 1912)¹⁹ stated, among other things, that the success of a particular method probably depended upon the personality of the teacher, but that all sound methods had in common the providing of real experiences for the children:

"....,inasmuch as in all cases the teaching is founded upon the children's experience of actual objects, the objects are handled by the children and not merely seen by them, and the use of abstract number is entirely avoided...."

The Suggestions for the teaching of history (1914)²⁰ were more explicit regarding activities to aid learning than the original notes of 1905. Now the children should be doers, not listeners only. They should be encouraged to ask questions, to retell stories that had been read aloud to them, to draw, write or otherwise express their impressions of some historical scene or incident.

In the following year, Suggestions for the teaching of elementary science including nature study²¹ also emphasised the value of practical work for both junior and senior children who, it asserted, learned more by growing and tending plants, and by looking after animals than by more formal methods. The timetable should be flexible, because at some times of the year short daily periods of science and nature study were appropriate, while at other times of the year less frequent lessons would be sufficient. The timetable should be the servant and not the master: observation and discussion often took much less time than that allowed on the timetable, so that teachers had to make the children repeat what was already understood, "or substitute information for observation" in order to fill in time. The Suggestions also recommended school journeys to bring the subject to life.

Ultimately, the amended chapters were so many that it was obvious that a new Handbook of suggestions was required, and it was duly published in 1927. Mann sees the new publication as providing

"...evidence that progressive ideas were penetrating into official circles at the highest level and that the ideas had been encouraged by the inspectorate."²²

This view is an echo of Selleck's statement that:

"In the period between the wars, the Board's official guide to educational practice became steadily more sympathetic to progressive theory."²³

In fact, as can be seen from the representative extracts from the Board's Suggestions already quoted above, it is more correct to affirm

that in the theoretical groundwork which it offered for the consideration of teachers, the Board was consistently humane and liberal from its very establishment particularly with regard to the full development of each child and each teacher. This was a brave view, particularly at the beginning of the century, or during the years of the first world war, when one considers the many practical hindrances in schools militating against it.

It is therefore not an adverse criticism of the 1927 Handbook of suggestions if it is stated that its contents built on older traditions within the Board. Indeed, the handbook's compilers explicitly referred to past editions as if to emphasise its authority as "the main channel for the expression of the Board's views on the curriculum" and therefore "a knowledge of its contents should be regarded as a necessary part of the equipment of every teacher." ²⁴ The Introduction to the Code of 1904-1926 was reproduced unaltered and it was stated that

"In its aims and content the present volume of Suggestions does not differ materially from previous editions." ²⁵

The 1927 Handbook repeated past advice; an approach to the study of nature should be designed to keep alive and quicken the spirit of wonder and inquiry;²⁶ all good methods of teaching arithmetic depended upon the child's experience of actual objects;²⁷ interest was more fruitful than drudgery;²⁸ the children's emotions and physical conditions within school were important;²⁹ "lasting intellectual habits are not formed under artificial conditions";³⁰ the sudden change in methods at the end of the infant stage was to be deprecated.

It is perhaps in its tone that the 1927 Handbook differs most from its predecessors, being less magisterial and more persuasive, as if in a discussion between equals. The original prefatory note was reproduced unaltered as it had "met with general acceptance" but

it was developed further, as in the forthright statement that

(A teacher who lacks interest or ability in a subject) "had better put the subject aside and compensate his scholars for its loss by widening and deepening the rest of his work." ³¹

Such development of thought led almost automatically towards a consideration of a curriculum based on what was soon to be known as "activity and interest":

".....in literature the teacher's starting point should be the reading, however rubbishy, which his scholars are doing for their own amusement out of school. But almost everything that has to be taught can be linked by a skilful teacher with the children's interests and so given value in their eyes. What cannot be so linked had best be omitted. Every step in the teaching of 'knowledge' subjects should be accompanied by practical application or illustration in fields in which the children are at home...." ³²

"The 'three R's' have always been regarded in English schools as the keys to further progress and as requiring the chief share of time and attention. But their over-emphasis at the expense of other natural desires and interests....will defeat its own ends....it is often possible to rouse interest and intelligence which would otherwise remain dormant" (i.e. with "constructive hand-work, painting and drawing, music and dancing, and a study of nature".) ³³

It could be maintained that, in many respects, the 1927 Handbook of suggestions represented the high water mark in the Board of Education's guidance in the task of teaching in the elementary schools of the country. In 1931, the initiative passed on to the Consultative Committee when its report, The Primary School, was published. The next Handbook, published by the Board in 1937, acknowledged the new emphases on child development and on education as preparation for a new and rapidly-changing world in which greater democracy, more leisure, and changing patterns of work would replace the old order. ³⁴ Yet, beneath the rhetoric, the 1937 Handbook was in some ways less "progressive" than its predecessors as if, perhaps, the Consultative Committee had already restated all the best ideas from the 1927 Handbook, leaving no clear way forward:

"In their Report on 'The Primary School' the Consultative Committee sum up their views on the curriculum in the words:

'The curriculum is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than of knowledge to be acquired and facts to be stored'.

These words have been perhaps more frequently quoted than any others in the Report, and their general acceptance by the educational public is a warrant of the soundness of the principles they embody. The rest of the paragraph in which the quotation occurs makes it clear that the choice of activities and experience shall be such as to lead the child to a realisation of the fundamental interests of life in so far as they lie within the compass of childhood, to set him on the way towards self-control and to awaken his imagination and sympathies so that he may be ready to follow in later years the highest examples of excellence in life and conduct." 35

This is in fact a somewhat opaque gloss which bears little relevance to its ostensible subject. In a somewhat similar way, despite the statement that

"There is every reason why the aim of the Junior School should be set out in terms of the nature of its pupils rather than exclusively in terms of subjects and standards of achievement.", 36

the final three quarters of the book is devoted to a consideration of each separate, traditional subject, albeit with a short preamble on the unity of the curriculum!

It may be that the officials of the Board of Education feared that "progressive" education had already gone far enough, and that it was their function to preserve a judicious balance between repression and "an almost unlimited degree of freedom for children.... sometimes advocated nowadays." 37

In fact, it would possibly have been more liberating for the schools if the Board of Education had continued to preach the broad-advantages of "progressive" education in and out of season, for their own researches revealed no Gadarene rush towards freedom over the long period of their recommendations. The Board's General report on the teaching of history in London elementary schools of 1927 reveals, as an example, that of the 41 schools examined: only two had adequate history libraries; only twelve used "the lantern" and those but rarely in spite of collections of slides available from

the Authority; fifteen schools used no pictorial aids whatsoever; most history teachers had abandoned dramatisation and the telling of stories "by acknowledged masters" and left no time at the beginning or the end of each lesson for the children's oral work or questions. Internal examinations required no more than the reproduction of facts rather than training judgement and imagination. The most damning fact of all was that the best school of all was a girls' school in a poor district where its good results were derived, not from good teaching, but from two hours' daily private study! ³⁸

The 1937 Handbook of suggestions, too, admitted that in spite of all efforts, the grip of the past was far from broken:

"It is not to be expected that the Junior School teachers will be able to free themselves at short notice from the external standards to which they have so long been accustomed." ³⁹

"The system of annual examinations was dropped more than forty years ago, but the sort of curriculum formerly imposed on schools is by no means a thing of the past...." ⁴⁰

In simple terms, the New Code of 1904 had not, even by 1937, ousted the spirit of the Revised Code of 1862, with its reliance on "Payment by Results" and imposed "Standards". There is no doubt that the Board of Education itself placed most of the blame not on physical problems within the schools, or lazy habits of teachers, but on the narrowing effects of the "Eleven Plus" or "Free Place" examinations. In almost every major publication from 1927 to 1945 they deplored the examinations' harmful influences. ⁴¹

2. War again: educational catalyst?

Although the effects of the 1939-1945 War will be considered in relation to school development in detail below, it is appropriate at this point to pursue the theme of the Board of Education's attitude to progressive practice in the schools into the 1940's. By this time the Consultative Committee was on the brink of dissolution

with its last notable report behind it,⁴² and the Board was in the process of becoming a Ministry.

During this period, official guidance continued to favour less formal methods in schools and more enjoyable, educational activities for the children, while admitting that changes for the better were slow to receive general acceptance. It is in this context that when the long-dreaded war at last began in 1939 there was not only some release of tension, but also the feeling at the Board of Education that at last the old educational structures, both mental and material, would be destroyed totally and rebuilt anew.

This mood of positive optimism is particularly well caught in Earl De La Warr's introduction to Schooling in an emergency⁴⁴ which was published only four days before war was declared. He saw nothing but good so far as education was concerned. Assuming that all the children from the towns and cities would be evacuated permanently to the countryside and the seaside, he foresaw whole new vistas opening up. There would be more outdoor games and seaside delights, including swimming, week after week; the cinemas would give morning shows for the children; there would be fire stations and harbours to visit; geology and scenery to study, plants and animals to observe, live-stock to keep; leisure activities in school time would include making and playing musical instruments, writing home, attending plays and concerts; there would be more needlework, more drama, more group activities, illustrated talks and radio lessons. In a stroke evacuation would destroy old, outworn educational patterns and bring about the peaceful revolution long advocated by Dewey and summed up long before in a Board of Education report as "Thring's pregnant message, 'Lives, not lessons.'" ⁴³ "An education based on simple needs.... may well both hasten and intensifycertain newer and rather more vital conceptions of education...." ⁴⁴ Intoxicated by the vision he has conjured up, the writer allows himself some humorous asides:

"Birds' nests must be treated with discretion (and so, for different reasons, must those of wasps!)" 45

(Some appreciation of beauty, in these new conditions, must sink in, but) "this is something which cannot be adequately described in words (and especially in the words of an official pamphlet!)" 46

Yet, if we are to judge by later publications of the Board (which had by this time become the Ministry of Education) it was still necessary, even after six years of total war, for official advice to repeat time and time again the tenets - little more than truisms by now - of a more "child-centred", "progressive", "modern" education.

It is incredible to believe that a holiday course organised by the Ministry in 1946 for teachers and including "activity and experience" in the form of visits to nearby woods, a harbour and a farm to open students' eyes "to the excitement of discovery at first hand" could be described as "shock therapy". 47

Three years later the Ministry gave the same advice in a form likely to reach a wider audience. It took the original step of sponsoring the publication of A.L. Stone's The story of a school,⁴⁸ a simple account of Stone's enlightened and moderate efforts to bring movement, art, mime and drama to the dull Birmingham school of which he was headmaster:

"The approach we evolved....had nothing revolutionary in its nature. It was based on two elementary facts reiterated by educationists throughout the ages. We tried to give the children opportunities to move and to express themselves...." 49

but

"I found some difficulty in convincing the staff at our frequent staff meetings that teaching facts was of secondary rather than first importance. I myself considered that the most important thing was to arouse the interest of the children...." 50

The foreword to The story of a school continued the official emphasis on the need for changes in the education of young children,

and regretted that much remained to be done to develop the primary school even to the standard recommended by the Consultative Committee as long ago as 1931 in The Primary School, which had recently been reprinted:

"Unfortunately, the general principles which should underlie the education of children from seven to eleven, which were so admirably defined in that Report, are still far from being universally practised. The White Paper - 'Educational Reconstruction' - published only five years ago, said:

'Instead of the Junior schools performing their proper and highly important function of fostering the potentialities of children at an age when their minds are nimble and receptive, their curiosity strong, their imagination fertile and their spirits high, the curriculum is too often cramped and distorted by over-emphasis on examination subjects and on ways and means of defeating the examiners. The blame for this rests not with the teachers but with the system....' " 51

Now that the Consultative Committee no longer existed as a rival, the Ministry of Education officials could admit that the 1931 report, The Primary School, to the success of which their predecessors at the Board had contributed through their own publications, was the key document of the era on the subject of primary education. The story of a school even carried an advertisement for The Primary School:

"The general principles which underlie the education of children of this age are set out in the Consultative Committee's Report, 'The Primary School' published in 1931 and recently reprinted." 52

The faith of Hadow and the majority of his fellow committee members and witnesses in progressive educational theory had finally received the ultimate commendation.

Notes to Chapter 3.

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3. P.R.O. Ed. 10/148.(S 60 2.) Miss M.G. Clarke, Headmistress, Manchester Grammar School.
4. *ibid.* (S 62) Incorporated Association of Headmasters.
5. *ibid.* (S 77) Association of Headmistresses.
6. *ibid.* (S 12 27) N.U.T.
7. *ibid.* (S 12 18) G.P.Dunn, A.I. on the Nottinghamshire situation.
- 8a. Maclure, J. Stuart, Educational documents, England and Wales 1816-1963. London. Methuen. 1965. p.154. However, see:
- 8b. Handbook of suggestions...(1937) p.8. Here credited to Morant, but in (8a) above authorship assigned to Mackail.
9. Handbook of suggestions...(1937) Quoted on pp. 9, 10.
10. Maclure, J. Stuart, *op.cit.* pp. 160, 161, quoting Handbook of suggestions.....(1905) p.6.
11. *ibid.* p.14.
12. *ibid.* p.14.
13. Handbook of suggestions...(1905) p.6.
14. *ibid.* pp. 5, 6.
15. *ibid.* p.51.
16. *ibid.* p. 52.
17. *ibid.* p. 63.
18. The Board of Education. Suggestions for the teaching of English. (Circular 808) London. H.M.S.O. 1912. pp. 6, 7.
19. The Board of Education, Suggestions for the teaching of arithmetic. (Circular 807) London. H.M.S.O. 1912. pp.10, 11.
20. The Board of Education, Suggestions for the teaching of history. (Circular 833) H.M.S.O. 1914.
21. The Board of Education. Suggestions for the teaching of elementary science including nature study,(Circular 904) London. H.M.S.O. 1915.
22. Mann, Dorothy, 'The influence of progressive ideas on official thinking about education, 1914-1933'. M.Ed. Bristol. 1978.p.44.
23. Selleck, R.J.W. English primary education and the progressives, 1914-1939. London. R.K.P. 1972. pp. 123 - 125.
24. Handbook of suggestions....(1927) p. 4.
25. *ibid.* p.3.
26. *ibid.* p.221.

27. ibid. p.185.
28. ibid. p.17.
29. ibid. p.14.
30. ibid. p.13.
31. ibid. p.51.
32. ibid. p.52.
33. ibid. p.52.
34. The Board of Education. Handbook of suggestions..(1937) p.11.
35. ibid. p.111.
36. ibid. p.102.
37. The Board of Education. Handbook of suggestions..(1927) p.16.
38. The Board of Education. General report on the teaching of history in London elementary schools.London. H.M.S.O. 1927.
39. The Board of Education. Handbook of suggestions...(1937)p.103.
40. ibid. p.31.
41. See Appendix VI for key extracts.
42. Report of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education on secondary education with special reference to grammar schools and technical high schools. (The Spens Report). 1938.
43. The Board of Education. Education in the United States of America, Part I, Special reports on educational subjects. London. H.M.S.O. 1902. Vol. 10. p.45.
44. The Board of Education, Schooling in an emergency. (Circular 1474). London. H.M.S.O. Foreword, pp. 4, 5.
45. ibid. p.15.
46. ibid. p. 16.
47. See Appendix VII. Teaching junior children. New ideas and methods. T.E.S. 21.9.1946.
48. Stone, A.L. The story of a school.London. H.M.S.O. 1949.
49. ibid. p.36.
50. ibid. p.33.
51. ibid. p.5.
52. ibid. p.37.

Section II The theory. (Continued).

Chapter 4 The contemporary trend in educational
literature.

1. Landmarks in the literature of progressive education.
2. Newspapers and journals.

1. Landmarks in the literature of progressive education.

Just as the publications of the Board of Education helped to prepare the way for the Consultative Committ's report in 1931 on The Primary School, so a wider spread of publications across an even longer period of time guided and eased the Board's efforts.

In fact it could be said that most of the well-known and influential educational literature for at least a century, from Arnold's annual reports and Quick's Essays on educational reformers,¹ to the Plowden report, Children and their primary schools,² favoured more humane, liberal and sensitive education. Over the years, of course, the "child-centred" message became stronger and more persuasive, sometimes leading and sometimes following informed public opinion as social and political changes gradually led to smaller families, longer school life, better living conditions and increased opportunities for social, occupational or geographical mobility.

The roots of English progressive educational theory had to a large extent developed in foreign soil, and it was Quick himself who first dealt broadly with enlightened thought and practice from the Continent and the United States.³ Quick's book, which was first published in 1866 and continued to be reprinted well into the present century, set the tone and established the subjects of Twentieth Century progressive educational literature: opposition to rote-learning of mere facts; to examinations of inert knowledge; to dull schools and callous teachers; to instrumentary education (personified, for Quick, by Robert Lowe, founder of "Payment by Results"). Conversely, Quick praises: Pestalozzi, Comenius and Rousseau; learning through

activity; beginning education by engaging the child's interests; above all, treating children as real - not potential - human beings, worthy of love and respect. "Ohne Liebe kein Lehren". ⁴

A brief consideration of the notable milestones on the route leading to the 1931 report, The Primary School, and beyond, ⁵ would begin for the present century with Green and Birchenough's A primer of teaching practice from 1911.⁶ This contains stimulating questions for the reader such as,

"How did you learn that 'All is not gold that glitters'?"
and

"Should a boy who helps another be punished?"

The book contains not only accounts of the relevant philosophers such as Comenius and Pestalozzi and recommendations for "learning by doing" and "the concrete expression of ideas", but also a strikingly apposite verse which could first have appeared in "Punch" fifty years later:

"My little boy is eight years old,
He goes to school each day;
He doesn't mind the tasks they set -
They seem to him but play.
He heads his class at raffia work
And also takes the lead
At making dinky paper boats -
But I wish that he could read."

The authors also show how easily teachers can assume erroneously that what they have taught has been learned, and they emphasise that "Howlers" are not subjects for mirth, derision or despair, but indications of ineffectual, formal teaching leading to faulty concepts which have not been tested by application to real experience.

In that same year E.G.A. Holmes' What is and what might be ⁷ was published and became a great success. No teacher could have failed to be aware of that succès de scandale in which the ex-Inspector passionately condemned everything that he had officially represented!

For Holmes, the "Path of Mechanical Obedience" which he deplored, became the Road to Damascus, and led to Sompting ("Utopia") where the village school was in the charge of Miss Harriet Finlay-Johnson ("Egeria") and education was broad, rich, relaxed and humane.

Kenneth Richmond's The permanent values of education,⁸ published in the First World War after first appearing as a series in The Times Educational Supplement, contained little new but presented in accessible form the full range of educational thought from Jewish, Greek and Roman times to individual philosophers such as Froebel, Herbart, Pestalozzi and Comenius. The preface calls the studies:

"....hors d'oeuvres for the neglected feast of educational history.....many teachers have never opened a book that tells any part of the inspiring story...." ⁹

In 1920 came Nunn's Education: its data and first principles ¹⁰ with the express purpose of reasserting the claims of individuality. This book was enormously influential, not only in making Nunn's views widely known (for, according to Adams, ¹¹ Nunn had preached individualism from "very early in the present century") but in giving a retrospective cachet of respectability and relevance to some educational mavericks such as Norman MacMunn,¹² Homer Lane and J.H. Simpson. Ballard called Nunn's book "the individualist's Bible" ¹³ and W. Kenneth Richmond referred to Nunn as "That best and wisest advocate of the cause of individualism". ¹⁴

Sir John Adams' Modern developments in educational practice ¹⁵ covered much the same ground as Nunn's book. Adams regretted that in spite of the ferment of new ideas, there was

"...not the slightest danger of our schools going to excess
....in fact, the danger is all in the other direction." ¹⁶

He reluctantly adopted Stanley Hall's term "paidocentric" to embrace all the new tendencies in education. Adam's book is worthy to be

considered "The Teachers' Bible" and teaching methods based exclusively upon its recommendations would be far from unsuccessful. First published in 1922, it had reached its sixteenth impression by 1964.

J.J. Findlay's The foundations of education,¹⁷ Volume I is also somewhat similar in tone and content, giving prominence to the statement that

"Progress in society is only progress so far as actual individuals, one by one, are advanced."¹⁸

Dewey's influence was so long-lasting and pervasive that it is, paradoxically, easy to overlook it in English developments in educational thought. Although all English teachers had heard of Dewey, he was seen as too "modern" and "scientific" yet almost too accessible, too concerned with American preoccupations of social education and nation-building, to have the inspirational value of the more foreign and less logical thinkers such as Pestalozzi and Rousseau. Compared to the "holy fog" through which Pestalozzi groped to reach his ideas and ideals, Dewey's philosophical pragmatism tended to be discounted as an undue stressing of the obvious.

However, Dewey's views of education had a continuing importance and relevance for all reformers, and it was sometimes advantageous for his views to be presented by a disciple rather than by the master himself, whose name no longer had novelty value. Kilpatrick's Education for a changing civilisation¹⁹ was such a book. It commended Harold Rugg's American life and reconstruction of the school; it emphasised the emotional element in learning and remembering; it roundly condemned the old order for the

"...grind of acquiring for 'recitation' purposes, adult formulated statements of race'achieved solutions to past social problems."²⁰

Susan Isaacs's work in developmental psychology was much respected. She concluded The children we teach²¹ with the view that

"....one is brought back to the fundamental conclusion that throughout the Primary School years, no less than in the years under seven, it is the children's activity that is the key to their full development."²²

She was the general editor of a series of books entitled 'Contributions to modern education' of which the first was E.B. Warr's The new era in the junior school²³ in 1937. Most of the titles in the series were useful route markers even if they did not qualify to be considered prominent landmarks on the educational route. In the main they were concerned less with "pure" philosophy, history of education or research than with the practical application in the classroom of the beliefs underlying "child-centred" education:

"What is needed on the part of Junior teachers is a new attitude of interest in our children, a new relationship between teachers and children, where both believe that what they have to do is vital and important. This, indeed, is not new; it is as old as Pestalozzi and Froebel, but we have never learned how to put into practice the principles of these early educators. Our task is no easy one. We must take the trouble to know our children - their characteristics and common interests as Junior children, as well as their individual needs and requirements.

Education should, above all, be joyous; the healthy, vigorous school life of the Junior should be happy. That does not mean that all the processes of education are necessarily joyous:- they are often arduous; without the trouble of learning a poem we cannot possess it. But children should learn to know early in life that hard work in the things that matter does lead to a great deal of joy.

Why not, then, use these four precious years in the Junior School for giving vivid experiences and helping children to gain as much as possible from these? It will be argued that such a scheme leaves many gaps. I would reply that in any case there will be gaps, but if a child arrives at the age of eleven with a background of knowledge gained by first-hand experience, an inquiring mind and some idea of the way in which to set about solving a problem, he has been given the best possible preparation for the Senior School."²³

Or, as Olive Wheeler had put it more succinctly:

"....appreciate the present; respect the individual."²⁴

Nancy Catty's Learning and teaching in the junior school²⁵ was published in 1941, but clearly belonged to the pre-war progressive tradition. In it she urged teachers to watch children's behaviour out of school to see what their interests and characteristics really were. She also emphasised the importance of social growth, the great variability of attention spans and rates of learning, and the wide variety of natural interests. Puzzled by the apparent lack of influence of the 1931 Hadow Report, she supported her case for changes in the schools by quoting Böhler, Isaacs, Dewey, Piaget, Lowenfeld's Play in childhood, Con's and Fletcher's Actuality in schools, Pekin's Progressive schools, and Rugg's and Shumaker's Child centred school.

Books published on education during the Second World War were similar in philosophy, but contained a stronger note of social concern. In A new order in English education²⁶ H.C. Dent called for the reform and democratisation of education as the fundamental step towards a mutually sympathetic and classless society.

Fred Clarke's Education and social change²⁷ was even more sociologically informed and many of its strictures would now be classified as Marxist. He was not puzzled, as Nancy Catty apparently was, by the slow pace of educational change; he blamed the teachers who were, he asserted, social conformers who accepted that education should be cultural rather than technical, scientific or vocational. The teachers had "a marked disposition to ally themselves with the ruling order"; to provide education to make the poor useful; to devise a "manageably inanimate curriculum"; to pander to the desire of the parents for their children to "get on" and have status, even though "getting on" is "half-sister to servility".

Immediately after the war concluded, when material resources were limited but hopes and ideals were high, a wealth of small, cheap and inspiring books on the education of young children appeared. Among

others, ²⁸ Raymont's Seven to eleven; some problems of the junior school, ²⁹ is a worthy companion to his unsurpassed A history of the education of young children ³⁰ and W. Kenneth Richmond's Purpose in the junior school ³¹ is so apposite that it is impossible to summarise.

All of the books referred to above, plus many more which it is not possible even to list, responded to, and reinforced the dominant orthodoxy of child-centred education, which received general assent at a theoretical level, even if it was not put into practice. The prevalence of such views made the doubters sound narrow and old-fashioned:

".....there had been a swing of the pendulum towards a theory that all the hardness should be taken out of hard work; that we had made work in the schools too easy. In following that line of educational theory which said that the interest factor was the most important thing in lessons, it was as though we had cut all the crusts off the bread before we gave it to our children to eat, forgetting that the crust was a wholesome part of the meal, and that its chewing was a very necessary exercise. Work for work's sake might sound dull, but there was more danger from a surfeit of strawberries and cream than from a surfeit of bread and butter. There was a good deal of plain, even dull, routine work attached to most ways of earning a living, and we should have failed our children if we did not send them out into the world capable of tackling a job and of doing it thoroughly, however uninteresting it might be...." ³²

The "dominant orthodoxy" was strong enough to draw all things to itself: A.S. Neill, whose books and lectures were popular - or notorious - over a long period and whose educationalism radicalism might have been expected to give "progressive education" a bad name,

"...has done much in general to swing teachers' opinion in this country from its old reliance on authority and the cane to hesitant recognition that the child's first need is love, and with love, respect for the free growth of his personality...." ³³

During the period between the wars, the popular newspapers gave a considerable amount of favourable publicity to educational innovation and development. Naturally, A.S. Neill was frequently in the news. The News Chronicle ran a serialised digest of That dreadful school, and the Daily Herald gave the book a long review, naturally concentrating on the more sensational aspects of Summerhill.

Then, as now, events connected with education were considered of general interest and were reported widely. There were "Education Weeks" which were popular in some areas, but were rarely repeated. There was the Daily Mail Curriculum Competition which formed the basis of Sir Michael Sadler's book, Our public elementary schools in 1926. An Educational Exhibition organised in Oxford in 1935 by the Board of Education was well covered in the newspapers.

The News Chronicle organised a "Schools Exhibition" in London in the Christmas Holidays, 1937 - 1938. It showed how widely the concerns and resources of education were expanding with films on nutrition and school swimming classes and talks on such subjects as music and movement in schools, radio in schools, nursery classes, foreign travel for schools, creative education, books in school, modern movement in education and teaching by means of models.

Local newspapers normally confined their coverage to "newsworthy" local school activities such as open days, sports days, camps, sales of work and "scholarship" results and league tables.³⁴ General articles on aspects of education were very rare, and the notable exception being a series published in the Leicester Mercury in 1931.³⁵

Throughout the period between the wars, there was a continuous supply of journals and books capable, among many other things, of informing and encouraging teachers who were discontented with their own traditional methods or who, more positively, wished to become

"progressive".

The most comprehensive journal was The Times educational supplement at threepence per week, with its excellent coverage not only of educational matters but of everything else one would expect to find in an authoritative weekly newspaper. Each week's edition contained enough material on current affairs, the arts, archaeology, exploration, developments in transport, sport and so on, to provide background information sufficient for several inspiring lessons. Often the information was in the form of brief accounts forming captions to the centre double page spread of photographs of superb quality. ³⁶

Other journals active during the period included the N.U.T.'s own The Schoolmaster and Woman Teachers' Chronicle and the National Schoolmasters' Association's The New Schoolmaster. Both covered much the same ground, as might be expected, but the former appears to have been the better paper, full of good teaching ideas, practical and stimulating advice, due emphasis on books and films, and much more open-minded than its dogmatic rival with its anti-woman-teacher stance.

There was also the trusty Teachers' World. Less political and even more practical, it is the only journal to which reference has been discovered in the log books examined:

"Story of St. George and the Dragon told to children today, also talk of Shakespeare. Children did a small piece of group handwork from 'Teachers' World' to represent St. George and the Dragon." ³⁷

Whether practising teachers read educational books and journals once they had completed their studies or not, they could not have failed to be aware of the persuasive claims of progressive education which were all-pervasive as well. The theories had been accepted and propagated by the Consultative Committee and the Board of Education and there had been no concerted or reasoned opposition from any quarter. What practical effects did the theory have inside the schools?

Notes to Chapter 4.

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 10. Nunn, Sir Percy, op.cit. See Note 5 above.

11. Adams, Sir John, Modern developments in educational practice. London. U.L.P. 1922. p.140.
12. Nunn provided the foreword to MacMunn's The child's path to freedom. London. Curwen. 1926 edn. (Previously pub. 1920).
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14. Richmond, W. Kenneth, Purpose in the junior school. London. Alvin Redman. 1949. p.77.
15. Adams, Sir John, Modern developments in educational practice. London. U.L.P. 1922.
16. *ibid.* p.4.
17. Findlay, J.J. The foundations of education. Vol. I, Aims and organisation. London. U.L.P. 1925.
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33. Childs, H.A.T. and Childs, L.A. quoting Pedley, R. in Ash, M. ed. Who are the progressives now? London. R.K.P. 1969.
34. See Appendix VIII. "Newspaper article on local infant school display".
35. See Appendix IX. "Series of newspaper articles on modern education, 1931."
36. The Times educational supplement has no records of the numbers of teachers who read the periodical or of the kinds of schools in which it was seen at the period under consideration. It may be that few elementary teachers read it, for, upon Dent's appointment as acting editor in 1940:
 "...the first task was to make people aware of education; and at the same time the Supplement had to be shaken out of its preoccupation with the private sector. Dent brought in the elementary school and teacher. The two most crucial issues were to get the great public elementary system recognized as at least as important as the selective sector, and to persuade teachers to 'break away from this business of lecturing 30 or 40 immobile children'" (Rowan, Patricia, Out of the shade, in T.E.S. 75th. Anniversary Supplement, 6.9.1985. p.5).
37. S.L.B. (School log book) Swinford C.E. School. 23.4.1928. Leics. C.R.O.

See, also, Appendix X, The Teachers' Encyclopaedia.

Section III The practice.

Chapter 5 The Chief Education Officers.

1. General introduction.
2. The Chief Education Officers of
 the South East Midlands.
3. The lack of local school inspectors.
4. The concerns of the education
 committees in the region.

1. The Chief Education Officers: General introduction.

It might reasonably be assumed, by a complete stranger to the system of English education, that the chief education officer of each local authority would have as his pre-eminent concern the overall development of education in his area, with content coming first, and premises, staffing and organisation dependent upon what was to be taught and the methods which were to be employed.

In fact, schools had been established by the churches, by the school boards and by local philanthropists or employers during the nineteenth century, and chief education officers were imposed upon the system when the 1902 Education Act gave the new local authorities responsibility over elementary education. The chief education officers, otherwise known as "directors of education", "secretaries of education" or "clerks to the education committee", were therefore created as an entirely new profession in the early years of the present century. None could fill all the requirements of the new posts adequately. Those who were graduates, like W.A. Brockington of Leicestershire and J.L. Holland of Northamptonshire, had often been secondary school teachers, but had no training or qualifications in teaching. At the other extreme, Spurley Hay, Manchester's director of education from 1914, had worked in a local mill before becoming a pupil-teacher and certificated teacher. Percival Sharp, who became director in Newcastle in 1914 after Spurley Hay went to Manchester, and A.R. Pickles, director of education in Burnley from 1911, had similar pupil-teacher backgrounds.¹ They were all "amateurs" like the committee members who appointed them:

"...ex-School Board Clerks, amateurs in higher education; ex-Directors or Organising Secretaries of Technical Education, amateurs in elementary education; some new men, amateurs in both. At the centre, in charge of the Board of Education, an inspired amateur - Sir Robert Morant. Amateurs all - even the officers; an army told to go and take over a new country, half colonised, half virgin-forest; an army without instructions, told to do what they thought fit, only to take care of religion and watch those foreigners. Typically British! " ²

It is not surprising that each chief education officer had to develop his own series of priorities with regard to the local pressures acting upon him. It has been said ³ that the profession could be divided into "educators" and "conciliators" (though perhaps the word "facilitators" would be more expressive of this group's true role). Over the years, "educators" have been interested in improving the content and practice of education within their area:

"...They believed it was part of their duty to concern themselves with such issues as the aims and content of education and if need be to defend the education service against its denigrators. Their apparent lack of interest in the techniques of education administration would have shocked their American counterparts...." ⁴

The ranks of the "educators" have included Sir Alec Clegg of the West Riding; C.F. Mott, of Liverpool; P.D. Innes of Birmingham; E Salter Davies of Kent, who was closely associated with the New Education Fellowship; ⁵ Sir Graham Balfour of Staffordshire, who saw the need for teachers to take sabbatical terms or years "to keep their souls alive"; ⁶ H.W. Household of Gloucestershire, the champion of the Parents' National Education Union; ⁷ and H.G. Stead of Chesterfield who believed that the words "activity and experience" should be painted in gold in a prominent place in every Junior School." ⁸

Stead complained that reorganisation of education was seen in terms of school buildings and age-groups, rather than in terms of principles, curricula and methods. ⁹ It was the group of chief education officers who could be termed "conciliators" or "facilitators" who concentrated on buildings and age-groups and whose views of

the content of education were often strictly limited. The Leeds director of education in 1916 belonged to this latter group. In that year he provoked the resignation of the Vice Principal, Winifred Mercier, and eight staff members of Leeds Training College when he lectured them on economy, conduct, and the importance of setting a good example to the students by regular churchgoing.¹⁰ It was Bolton King of Warwickshire who wrote of the junior school age:

"This is the age when a good deal of dour grind is inevitable. Exactness has become a necessity. Spelling must be mastered, the child has to learn to read aloud with fluency, the tables of arithmetic must be conquered. Classes are large and the teacher has little time to devote to the individual.....it may prove necessary to sacrifice some subjects, especially the more complex arithmetic which to most of the children will be useless in after life." ¹¹

Not all of this group, of course, were necessarily narrow in their educational outlook. From the positive point of view, it might be said that they had confidence in their teachers and concentrated in obtaining the best possible conditions of service and accommodation in which to operate. Henry Morris of Cambridgeshire, for instance, worked for a broad vision of education and created the very influential village colleges with which his name is still associated.¹²

Before proceeding to a consideration of the work of the chief education officers of the South East Midlands, it is worth emphasising the fact that their responsibilities were almost infinite, and their resources limited. It would be reasonable to assume that many directors of education began their work as idealists but soon became pragmatists and opportunists, attempting to steer a straight course in spite of changeable winds, uncertain charts, a lack of equipment and a motley crew! No doubt every education office was like the Board of Education when Fisher was appointed President in 1916 and schemes of reform, according to The Times Educational Supplement poured in from:

"...statesmen and cranks, experts and amateurs, headmasters and assistant masters, directors of education, education committees, associations of teachers and leagues of reformers and reactionaries, humanists and men of science, Montessorists, Froebelians, bishops, priests, and the dwellers in America." ¹³

Throughout the period under review, the educational emphases were constantly changing and broadening. For instance, the provisions of the 1918 Education Act were so complex and far-reaching that at least one elderly director of education resigned because "he could not undertake to grasp so large and difficult a subject." ¹⁴ Once the 1918 Act had been mastered and steps had been taken to begin to implement its requirements, financial stringency became the main pre-occupation. In turn other topics - of which the 1931 Hadow Report was but one - took priority: mental testing and selection of pupils for senior or secondary schools; school reorganisation on the lines of the 1927 Hadow Report; teachers' salaries and the employment of married women; special educational treatment; specialised teaching; youth work; then, once again, air raid precautions, gas masks and evacuation plans. A useful measure of the main preoccupations of directors and secretaries of education can be derived from the subjects which they chose as subjects of major addresses on various occasions to their colleagues. Booth has constructed the following table from the reports appearing in Education over an unspecified period:

General and miscellaneous subjects	34 times	
Administration	10 times.	
Continuation schools	8 times.	
Finance	6 times.	
Teacher Training	5 times.	
Trade Schools	5 times.	
Secondary Education	3 times.	
Elementary education	3 times.	
Juvenile Employment	3 times.	
Special Education	3 times.	
Examinations and Scholarships	3 times.	15.

These were the national concerns. In addition, every education authority had numerous problems which it perceived as peculiarly pressing in its own area, and which seemed to multiply and grow as time went on. Wolverhampton Education Committee Annual Report for

the years 1922 - 1923 listed 59 separate items ranging from "Dull and backward class - experiment in Brickkiln Street School" and "Visit of Prince of Wales - 8000 Children in Market Square" to "Theatrical Children", "Canal Boat Children" and "Tonsils and Adenoids". In the years 1935 - 1938 the list had grown to 126 items, but containing nothing on educational innovation or development. ¹⁶

In addition, committees and chief education officers knew that they would displease a considerable proportion of the ratepayers if they spent money, but that if they tried to economise there would be cries of "Neglect!" Teachers and the education service in general had been the prime target of the "Anti-Waste" Campaigns, and there were always plenty of people eager to point out how much education costs had risen without any apparent improvements in educational standards, and to assert that elementary education had no need for "frills" or "luxuries".

2. The Chief Education Officers of the South East Midlands.

Reference has already been made to the two most notable chief education officers in the South East Midlands during the first half of this century: J.L. Holland, Northamptonshire's first holder of the office from 1904 to 1950, and W.A. Brockington, Leicestershire's director of education from 1903 to 1947. Both can be seen as "facilitators" rather than "educators" even though the latter served for some years on the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education and was a signatory to both the 1931 Hadow Report and the 1938 Spens Report. In fact, the only "educator" in the area was A.C. Boyde, who was approximately the same age as Brockington and Holland, but who unfortunately died in 1930 after only ten years as director of education for Northampton County Borough.

"One of his ideals was that all sections of the community should be educated in one grade of school as in America, and he sent his own small girl to Kingsthorpe Grove School and recommended the school to other people with the result that the Chief Constable sent his child there. 'No one but an arrant snob could object to his children being sent there', he once said...." ¹⁷

He was succeeded by H.C. Perrin, who had been "in the Office" for 27 years..... Thus Northampton resumed the pattern of appointments which was typical of the other small education authorities in the area. They did not seek educational leadership from their officers, but administrative efficiency and "a way with people". Loughborough retained the services of the School Board Clerk, who was also Town Clerk, until he died in 1930 and was succeeded by his assistant.

In Peterborough:

"The City Education Committee had no proper Education Officer for many years. The Clerks to the Committee (the most senior officer?) were solicitors right up until the death of Henry Wilson in September 1928. The acting clerk from September to December 1928 was, I believe, Wilson's senior clerk, L.W. Wood. In January 1929 Wood was appointed Clerk/Education Officer and remained so until March 1943.

The Soke County Council appears to have been even worse off; the post of Clerk to the Council was itself a part-time one right up to 1945 and held 'in plurality' with the ordinary practice of a solicitor." ¹⁸

In Kettering the situation was much the same, with nineteenth century school board practice continuing well into the twentieth:

"The Clerk of the Council became Clerk to the Education Committee and the Accountant handled the finance. In the early years, the day to day administrative work was done by two junior clerks, one from the Clerk's Department and one from the Accountant's Department, at £4.6s.8d. per month each. In later years the clerk from the Clerk's Department became Secretary of the Education Committee in place of the Clerk of the Council and acted as a sort of chief education officer until 1945, when elementary education in Kettering was taken over by the Education Committee of Northamptonshire County Council." ¹⁹

Rutland had always had a chief education officer from the turn of the century when the new education committee had advertised for an "Organising Secretary, Inspector, Clerk and Accountant". It is to

be presumed that one person was to fill all roles, as only one salary (£200 per annum: only 40% of Brockington's salary) was quoted.

The best-remembered of Rutland's directors is Charles Stanley Johnson, who was in the post from 1931 to 1954, and then returned in a caretaker capacity until 1958 when his successor suddenly died soon after his appointment. Although Johnson visited each school termly, and had occasional meetings with his head teachers, "he never told you what to teach."²⁰ There was probably no need to: the head teachers knew that selection for secondary schools was Johnson's main preoccupation and that he personally marked the examination papers, assisted by the head teachers of the four central selective schools of Oakham, Uppingham, Cottesmore and Great Casterton. In the 1940's Johnson told his assembled head teachers that if formal standards did not rise throughout the county, it was in danger of losing its educational autonomy.²¹ Perhaps in retrospect this would have been no bad thing particularly as far as finance was concerned, as limited money, decaying central schools and unmodernised church schools dominated the deliberations of the somewhat aristocratic education committee which seemed both unwilling and unable to take decisive action.

Formal educational standards, the development of senior and secondary schools and selection of the children for them, seemed also to dominate the thinking of the successive directors of education for Leicester City. John Mander, Head of the Schools Branch in the City from the 1940's to the 1970's, saw such preoccupations as deeply rooted in history:

"From the first, the Education Committee sought to ride two popular educational horses and the divergence of their courses was perhaps not apparent at that time. The report for the years 1903 - 1912 records 'the efforts made to break away from the rigid methods of the past and to bring the scholars more in touch with everyday life.' But, continues the report, 'the policy of the Education Committee has always been to see that in all changes the fundamental work in Reading, Writing and Arithmetic is not allowed to deteriorate or to become of only secondary importance!'"²²

Mander was of the opinion that the economic depressions between the wars affected Leicester only very slightly and cites as evidence the facts that in 1931 the education committee put new maple wood floors in some school halls and bought 397 pictures for schools. ²³ The City director of education at that time was working in a veritable land of opportunity compared with Johnson in Rutland a few miles to the east, but there is no evidence that he felt that the style and content of education needed improvement. He was one of the members of the Junior Schools Committee which introduced a new syllabus in May, 1934 to establish

"....the broad lines upon which....the teaching in the Junior Schools should proceed in order that the children, on attaining the age of 11 may be best fitted to proceed either to Senior, Intermediate or Secondary Schools according to their individual circumstances and ability."

It may be that the importance traditionally attached to grammar schools and charitable foundations for the advancement of poor but intelligent boys impeded the development of a broader education for all in a city like Leicester.

In the surrounding county, however, the traditions were less binding and an "educationist" director could have had a great effect on the speed of educational progress. William Brockington facilitated educational change by beginning the process of establishing senior schools several years before the term "Hadowisation" had been coined. He made Leicestershire's reputation for being a go-ahead county educationally through such reorganisation alone, but there is no evidence that he contributed anything to the development of educational thought or practice even after considering the evidence of over 500 witnesses and helping to draft the resulting report, The Primary School. There is no indication that he ever spoke about the report, either to education committees or to teachers; neither did he take the advice proffered by his own professional journal, Education:

"We plead for reliance to be placedon those books which stimulate individual thinking and encourage personal enterprise. Among such we give a prominent place to the new Hadow Report- every primary school teacher should be afforded the opportunity not only of reading it, but of having it by him as a reference book." 24

Perhaps Brockington felt that it would have been presumptuous for him to tell the teachers their own professional business, but with his national status and experience his views would have been assured of receptive audiences. As it was, he went through his career with one consistent belief:

"Thirty two years ago I was the new boy - one of the first of the new boys to be faced with the whole problem of education. The business of education in those days, as it seemed to me then, and as it seems to me now, was mainly a matter of teachers and classrooms." 25

On another occasion Brockington spoke like a latter-day Polonius on the art of being all things to all men:

"The actual business of educational administration was however specially distinguished by its variety of human relationships and the personality of the director was in the end the most important thing about him....He would meet people anxious to display what was possibly a personal experience of great significance to them; he had to project his mind into that experience, however meaningless it might be to him, and sympathise with it....the successful administrator must be prepared to talk beautifully on any topic...." 26

Strangely enough, Holland spoke on one occasion in a similar vein:

"The course of education depended more upon the thoughts, ideas and aspirations of adult society than it did upon the ideals of any educationist. Its progress was conditioned, first and last, by public opinion, and this required that the administrator should be of supple mind, persuasive, and able to mould public opinion unobtrusively." 27

There is a lack of clear educational purpose implicit in both of the above statements, as there was in Brockington's and Holland's evidence to the Consultative Committee. Both appeared to wish to facilitate the progress of education without stating their own views as to desirable destinations or routes. Holland was a much-respected visitor at the Board of Education offices, and the officers

knew he brought strong arguments based on a deep knowledge of the law of education,²⁸ yet he did not appear to spend any time moulding public opinion in Northamptonshire towards educational development.

Apart from opportunities afforded by the publication of the Hadow Reports of 1931 and 1933, other earlier educational initiatives were allowed to fall by the wayside. For instance, in 1923 Brockington had provided the education committee with a 'Memorandum on the supply and training of teachers'²⁹ in which he suggested an enquiry into the reasons which deterred capable people from becoming teachers³⁰ and concluding with the proposal that "refresher courses" should be provided to "keep teachers abreast of the latest acquisitions of knowledge and the latest methods of imparting knowledge".³¹ This he hoped to see become national policy and part of the national system of education, but he took no local initiative to set up a pilot scheme in the county, even though his closest educational collaborator, Dr. Herbert Schofield, was principal of Loughborough Technical College which had a teachers' training department and all necessary facilities. Neither was anything more heard of the proposed enquiry into the reasons which deterred prospective teachers. These two failures are all the more remarkable as Brockington enjoyed the support of a sympathetic education committee, and himself believed that worthwhile innovations in education began at the periphery:

"....the practice of decentralising the details of school administration has produced a freedom of thought and of action, one effect of which was that new movements in education had begun in the outer circle, where people came face to face with facts, where experiments were tried out and their practical value was ascertained before they were embodied as an educational policy...."³²

3. The lack of local school inspectors.

Of course, directors of education were extremely busy men whose tasks appeared to have the one characteristic of steadily becoming more demanding as those responsible for dealing with them grew older. Holland and Brockington had been at their respective posts for nearly thirty years when The Primary School was published and neither seemed able to delegate authority, preferring to leave their subordinates as very shadowy figures in the background. It has been noted ³³ that Brockington gave less attention to the development of such school subjects as physical training, science and handicraft in his new senior schools than would have been expected of a younger man.

What is remarkable is the fact that the great majority of chief education officers and education committees were content to appoint no local inspectors or assistant education officers entrusted with educational development. Brockington himself noted that at least 250 out of the 317 local authorities had no local inspectors in 1932. ³⁴ In spite of a long tradition of local school board or diocesan inspectors during the latter part of the nineteenth century, when they were considered indispensable "pollen carriers", organisers, "sounding boards" or custodians of local promotion short-lists, ³⁵ the education authorities which were established in the twentieth century managed without them. Instead, they depended upon increasingly rare visits to the schools by the chief education officer; cries of alarm from school managers; complaints from parents and local employers; questions from the Board of Education; and H.M. Inspectors.

In spite of Selby-Bigge's evidence to the Royal Commission on the Civil Service in 1913 on the growth of local school inspectors' forces which, in some areas, had taken over the routine work of H.M. Inspectors, ³⁶ the Plowden Report suggested that in 1966 only 50 local education authorities had established teams of advisers ³⁷

(or inspectors - the two terms are virtually interchangeable in practice).

This situation did not apparently cause any feelings of anxiety within the education authorities, or any suspicion that there might be better - though admittedly more expensive - ways of supervising and guiding local education than using the eyes and ears of the central government in the persons of H.M. Inspectors. In fact, Brockington went out of his way to praise the part played locally by H.M. Inspectors, and it is evident that he saw local developments in education as coming, not from himself, but from them. They were the force on the circumference which led to new developments:

"....when we spoke of ideas and tendencies in education starting on the circumference rather than the centre of the system, we could not attach too high an importance in the formulation of educational policy and in the focusing and popularising of local experience to these intelligence officers of the Board of Education...." 38

For the first half of the twentieth century, therefore, the education authorities in the South East Midlands, as in most other areas, relied upon H.M. Inspectors to provide detailed supervision of what went on in the schools. This was somewhat less so in the city of Leicester, as will be seen, but even more so in Rutland, where H.M. Inspectors' reports on individual schools form a numbered section of the minutes and make up the bulk of the typescript. Most are recorded without comment, but comments when made are of two predictable forms:

"Resolved,

1) That the attention of the Managers be drawn to this unsatisfactory report, and that they be asked if they have any suggestions to make in order that the children attending the School may receive a more efficient education.

2) That H.M. Inspector be asked to re-inspect the School in July next, and to make a further report on the work."

(Manton C.E. School, 1923)

or,

"Resolved that the congratulations of the Committee be conveyed to Miss Hird and her Assistant on the excellent report of H.M. Inspector on the work of the School."

(Uppingham C.E. School, 1923)

Some reports revealed conditions which should have been brought to light long before almost chance discovery by H.M. Inspector, who could not be relied upon to visit every school in the county with absolute regularity, and whose visits therefore should have been supplemented in some way:

"I am unable to report that this School is efficiently instructed....The new teacher, then a girl of 15 years (now 16 years old) is very inexperienced, her speech is ungrammatical and full of provincialisms, and she appears to be making but little effort to master her duties. On the occasion of this visit the teacher was busy studying for the Preliminary Examination for the Certificate while the children (totalling 7 and all under 10 years of age) occupied themselves by colouring their Reading book illustrations with crayons.

Attention is drawn to the serious character of this Report...."
(Little Casterton C.E. School, 1923)

It is curious that the Education Secretary knew nothing of what was going on in one of the schools under his general supervision, when he was extremely prompt in visiting an inefficient "dame school" in Whissendine and acting to get it closed. This appears to have been the only school which the Education Secretary ever reported on in the minutes: he left his schools to H.M. Inspectors!

"...The number of children on the books was four, two of whom were absent. A register of attendance is kept but is of little value as the attendance columns are neither dated nor totalled.....The Schoolroom is about 12ft. by 9ft. and is situated at the back of a cottage. It is lighted by a window about 2ft. square and there are no means of ventilating it except by opening the door. On the occasion of his visit about 11.40 a.m. there was a little fire at the bottom of the grate. He suggested that the Committee should request him to inspect the School and make a detailed report on the premises and work of the children...." ³⁹

Loughborough Education Committee worked equally closely with Mr. Kerslake and other Inspectors but, mindful of their long traditions of independence as a school board, the members used him and kept him in his place. In June 1922 they asked him to explain the reasons for his advocating a break in schooling at 11+ and the concentration of all senior boys and girls into two schools.

Kerslake favoured the scheme, but was accused of discourtesy by the committee when he attempted to push it on too quickly by having discussions with the town's head teachers without the committee's prior approval.

"Mr. Kerslake informed the Committee that he did not intend the least discourtesy to them or to Mr. Jarratt, the Secretary, in calling the conference with Head Teachers, as it was recognised practice among H.M. Inspectors at intervals to discuss with the Head Teachers as a body certain points of weakness existing in the Schools as a whole...."

It is apparent from the above that Kerslake was certainly not acting as "a pollen carrier" for the local authority or the Board of Education, but was indicating where failures to reach the traditional standards of formal education were occurring.

The same minutes reveal another shortcoming in the arrangement whereby the national inspector was expected to do the local committee's bidding, for no man can serve two masters:

"....asked by the Committee whether he (Mr. Kerslake) would definitely name the Teachers referred to in the following paragraph:

'At present it is to be feared that there are on the Staffs of both Senior and Junior Schools some Teachers not fully competent to handle the work entrusted to them.'

Mr. Kerslake informed the Committee that it was not the custom of H.M. Inspectors to mention Teachers by name, but he would at an early opportunity send in a Report on the work of the Schools in which the Teachers referred to are employed, and that it would not be difficult when the reports are received, for the Committee themselves to gain the information required...." 40

And so, even in a very small authority, time would be wasted on protocol because there was no inbuilt provision for the guidance or assistance of individual teachers, who could not even be named!

Kerslake often had a similarly difficult situation to deal with in Leicester City, where unwelcome suggestions or criticisms were promptly condemned as "interference". When he suggested certain special text books for King Richard's Road Girls' School, he was told that the ones in use were quite suitable and no change was considered necessary.⁴¹

When he pressed head teachers to frame personal timetables showing that they would be teaching definite classes definite subjects for at least a clearly defined third of the week;

"...The Director explains that this detailed Prescriptionis not laid down by the Code....and is calculated to hamper the efficiency of the Head Teachers and destroy the confidence reposed in them by the Committee.

Resolved

That the attention of Head Teachers be drawn to the requirements as laid down in the Code and that H.M. Inspector be informed that this is being done but that the Committee are not prepared to instruct the Head Teachers to carry out the further detailed arrangements outlined in his communication." ⁴²

Then, in 1927, the managers of Belgrave Road Mixed School complained that H.M. Inspector's report on the junior section of the school was "ungenerous, unjustified, and not in accord with the facts." The education committee supported the complaint and asked the Board to reconsider their report. When the revised version was received, both reports were read out, and the latter one accepted. ⁴³

It was perhaps not entirely coincidental that very soon afterwards, Mr. Kerslake made a gift of six dozen books to Hazel Street Council School! ⁴⁴

The point is, not that the relationship between local education authorities and H.M. Inspectors often led to conflict, for on the whole there was much mutual respect and co-operation between the parties, but that always the latter body was concerned with inspection and control and not educational development or teacher support or numerous other aspects of education which should have been the direct concern of the chief education officer and his committees.

One ex-H.M. Inspector was given a free hand in Leicester: Miss Ethel Miller, H.M.I. who had formerly been a teacher and then a lecturer in history at Norwich Training College, became the city's "Inspectress of Infants" in 1928. It was mainly due to Miss Miller's initiatives that Leicester enjoyed a high reputation for nursery and infant education during the subsequent decade. ⁴⁵

Northampton County Borough Education Committee used H.M. Inspectors somewhat similarly, asking them to report on the educational value of certain temperance lectures in 1932, and seeking their advice on matters of school reorganisation. In 1927 another inspector, W.J. Hands, provided "the names of three Teachers who might be considered for service in Infants' Departments".⁴⁶ However, when nine or ten teachers were called to "The Office" to account for adverse Inspectors' reports, the local newspapers came out strongly on the side of the teachers; the general feeling was that they should have been warned sooner and that they should have had "a friend" at the hearing.⁴⁷

This indicates the power which was wielded over the teachers through H.M. Inspectors by the local education authorities: power which could have been used far more positively to encourage curriculum development and changes in educational methodology if desired. As it is, teachers' names in the committee minutes of the period referred only to negative events, particular professional or moral lapses. Detailed considerations of the awarding, withholding or restoring of teachers' increments of salary frequently occupied the attention of the Northamptonshire Education Committee, and Rutland could be even more autocratic:

"Ryhall C.E. School.

Resolved that the Managers be informed that having considered the full circumstances of the case, the Committee is of the opinion that Mr. Handford should be informed that unless a much more satisfactory report is received from H.M. Inspector before October 1st. 1930, his services will be dispensed with."

4. The concerns of the education committees of the area.

If the respective chief education officers were too preoccupied with the minutiae of their daily professional lives to give thought to the relevance for their schools of the predominantly progressive educational advice emanating from the Board, the Consult-

ative Committee, the New Education Fellowship, and a wealth of books and journals, and if they failed to appoint advisers or local inspectors to do the thinking for them, then there was no one else at the local education offices on whom the task could fall. The education committees in whose name the chief education officers took decisions, contained a wealth of experience, common sense and practical abilities, but they were not equipped to give leadership on matters of what was to be taught or how, why, or in what order. The committee members left such concerns—which often appeared to them somewhat trivial or esoteric - to their chief education officer, to the local H.M. Inspector, to the head teachers, or to the class teachers.

Education committee minutes reveal the main preoccupations to have been coping with ageing, inadequate or inappropriate buildings; accommodating growing or declining populations of schoolchildren; adapting unsuitable buildings for changed organisational patterns; and, above all, periodical demands for economies from systems already under-funded.

Every separate demand on the system tended to bring most, if not all, of the above aspects of policy into play, as in the following letter to the Rutland Committee from the ubiquitous Kerslake:

"Thistleton School

The numbers on the roll at this school have shown a tendency to rise, and with 25 children of all ages from 5 to 14, many of them migrants, and such varying standards of attainment, the teacher is faced with a task which would test the capacity of the most competent Certificated Teacher.

The Uncertificated Teacher in charge here does her best, but the standard of work among the older scholars is rather low and they are not receiving an education comparable with that obtainable by other and more fortunately situated children.

The removal of the older children to a Central School would perhaps render the position easier, but in default of this a fully qualified teacher must be appointed. (I understand that while the children are willing and indeed anxious, some of them, to go to the Central School, the parents object).

I should like your Committee to know that it is the top part of the School which is in such bad condition, and that Miss Watson, though unable to cope with present conditions, would

probably do quite well with a Junior School and smaller numbers. She came here a very inexperienced teacher 4 years ago and has had no opportunity of improving her technique or her knowledge except through her own native wit in dealing with the difficulties of this school." (1927)

Kerslake's letter alludes to some of the problems the committee faced. There were central schools at Uppingham, Oakham, Great Casterton and Cottesmore, but being selective, they could not relieve teachers like Miss Watson entirely of their senior pupils. In addition, parents were reluctant to send their children away to school each day, and the committee, fearing increasing rural depopulation,⁴⁸ hesitated to "decapitate" all all-age village schools. Yet something had to be done. The four central schools had seemed a good idea when first established. They had been German prisoner of war huts during the 1914-1918 War, and were purchased afterwards and re-erected⁴⁹ as schools, giving Rutland a momentary lead in national educational advance. But the buildings were by their very nature temporary, and the Board's architect reported in 1932 that they had nothing left to commend them except their attractive sites.⁵⁰

Not surprisingly there was no enthusiasm for new initiatives and whether the Board outlined proposals for increased nursery school provision or the raising of the school-leaving age the response from the committee was the same: "no suitable accommodation"; "expenditure not warranted"; "need not evident"; "extremely problematic". And when Sunderland County Borough sought Rutland's support in pressing the Board of Education to consider reducing all classes in schools to a maximum of thirty pupils, it was resolved "that the letter lie on the table."⁵¹ The trouble with all good educational ideas was that they were too expensive!⁵²

At times Rutland flirted with the idea of closer links with neighbouring authorities and some small advantages accrued for the teachers. In 1924 Rutland had adopted Leicestershire's "Ideas boxes" by which means small schools were kept in touch with the art,

craft, poetry, etc. produced in larger schools. In 1934 a Head Teachers' Refresher Course was held in Oakham, with classes being taken by H.M. Inspectors and by Miss Sack, Leicestershire's Inspectress of Needlework. The Inspectors followed up the success of this course by suggesting that Rutland teachers should be permitted to attend courses organised for Leicestershire teachers where such classes were accessible, but the opportunities were few and far between. 53

A larger initiative appeared briefly in 1939 when the Soke of Peterborough Education Committee proposed that Rutland's education secretary should become director of education for the Soke as well. Negotiations began, but came to an abrupt end when vetoed by the Soke County Council. 54.

By comparison with Rutland, Loughborough Education Committee had a tightly-organised, adequately financed organisation, with a good stock of church- and board-school buildings. Visiting committees of councillors, who were no doubt also often school managers, kept a close eye on the schools themselves.

The continuity between school board days and the education committee era which followed consisted of much more than the continued presence of Mr. Jarratt, the secretary. Letters of thanks from retiring head teachers, assistant teachers and caretakers abound in the minutes, each one expressed in the formal yet felicitous terms which seemed to come naturally to letter writers of those days:

"The Secretary read a letter from Mr. T. Cartlidge sincerely thanking the Committee for their kind wishes conveyed to him on his resignation. Mr. Cartlidge in his letter stated that when selected for preferment from Cobden Street Boys' School to be first Headmaster of the Rendall Street School in 1903, he promised he would make it his endeavour to do his best for the school. He added he would also be able to look back with pride upon the happy relations that always existed between the Old School Board, the Education Committee, the Secretary and himself for the past forty years...." 55

Yet, even in this compact little education authority, assistant teachers were floundering without guidance in the comparatively new junior departments:

"Since the date of the last report numerous changes in staff have taken place. Twelve new teachers have been appointed at various times, many of these lacking in experience and, of these, six have already left. The present staff of eight assistants contain only two who have been here more than 29 months....

During these visits tests were given to about 75% of the children who are due to proceed shortly to the Senior School. The children excluded comprised the lower half of Class 2 and were admittedly so backward that it was considered useless to subject them to a test.

Of the 50 Class 1 children tested in Arithmetic some dozen did creditably, but half the class did not get a single sum right. The average mark was 20%....

In Class 2, 27 children were tested out of a total of 54. A few of them did fairly well in mechanical arithmetic but their attempts to deal with easy questions in problem form were extremely poor. Very few appeared able to interpret the questions and their calculations generally had no relation to the wording....

In history, two or three did fairly well but there was much vagueness and confusion while the answers to questions in geography revealed, with few exceptions, ignorance and carelessness...." ⁵⁶

It is clear that an education authority without professional advisers is virtually unable to assist such teachers even to survive, and thoughts of "activity and interest" must have been very remote indeed.

In the City of Leicester the problems were on a larger scale, and organisation and selection claimed most of the available time, money and attention. Educational initiatives were mainly concerned with providing extra facilities for the delicate, the dull and backward, and, later, the nursery school children. Courses for teachers were very few and far between, but small groups were sent to London for nine week periods to attend 'Courses of training for teachers of mentally defective and of dull and backward children' arranged by the Board of Education and the Central Association for Mental Welfare. ⁵⁷

In June, 1931, the director presented a memorandum on The Primary School and in view of the importance of the subject it was decided that the committee should examine it and decide how best to bring it to the attention of the public. ⁵⁸ However, three months

later a special meeting was called to discuss "the position created by the Government proposals in regard to National Economy and Education" ⁵⁹ and no more was heard of The Primary School.

Early in the following year the director decided to set up his own consultative committee consisting of himself, his own three inspectors, the one psychologist, eight head teachers and one teacher of handicrafts "to review the various problems connected with the organisation of classes, curricula, etc. in the elementary schools and to submit recommendations thereon to this committee...."⁶⁰ A somewhat traditional and prescriptive junior school syllabus was produced, possibly because the majority of the committee consisted of older and more senior local teachers.⁶¹

Unlike Loughborough, Leicester's Education Committee did not appear to retain strong links with the past, except in one small detail:

"The Chairman states further that the majority of Council Schools in the City still bear name plates describing them as Board Schools....." ⁶²

The minutes of Northampton County Borough Education Committee are chiefly notable for the 1925 memorandum of the director, A.C. Boyde, prepared in response to Board of Education Circular 1358 requesting a forecast of the next five years' educational programmes.⁶³ As might be expected from an "educationist" director of education, Boyde's memorandum gives evidence of a deep consideration of the ideals of education as well as of the practical curriculum. Yet even as he wrote, the national economic climate was growing cooler and he concluded with a querulous postscript:

"PS.....There are indications that the Programmes are now to be used for decisions in the direction of economy. Much time and energy might have been saved if the Authorities had been informed as to what attitude the Board would be compelled to take up on the financial side before the work of preparing the programme had been started....."

However, Boyde was not long discouraged, and after publication of

the 1927 Hadow Report, The education of the adolescent, reported to his committee that

"It is within my knowledge that the Northampton experiment has had a considerable influence in the Hadow report...that all scholars over 11 years of age are to be placed in schools organised on similar lines to those adopted in our four intermediate schools...." ⁶⁴

Kettering U.D.C. Education Committee had only a clerk, and though the members jealously guarded its independence, they tended to respond to events rather than shape them. For instance, they valued the holiday home for delicate and handicapped children near Norwich which they owned, but it had been presented to them after purchase through a voluntary fund set up by the head teacher of the local open-air school. However, they were alert to the welfare of the children in small ways, and stood up for the right of pupils to use whichever hand they preferred when writing.⁶⁵ They also insisted that every pupil should receive at least one school report each year, though the head teachers had wished the matter to be left to their discretion, and quoted The Primary School in support:

"...The Consultative Committee of the Board of Education, in their Report on the Primary School, issued in 1931, had recommended that in order to enlist the interest of the parents in the progress of their children, a terminal or annual report should be sent to them." ⁶⁶

They examined all school punishment books regularly and closely. They also sometimes did their best to stand up to Northamptonshire in which they were little more than an enclave. They let it be known that they could not always guarantee ten places in their secondary schools for county children, and they observed somewhat wistfully that it would be nice to have a Kettering teacher on the Northamptonshire panel which devised selection tests and marked the papers. On the whole, however, their concerns were not on the subject of educational innovation, but were similar to the preoccupations which their chairman

listed as the main subjects debated at the 1936 annual meeting of the Association of Education Committees. They were, in order of importance:

- "1. Grants.
2. Free Secondary Education.
3. Technical Education.
4. Retarded Children.
5. Footwear.
6. School Buildings.
7. Apprenticeships to Skilled Crafts.
8. Unemployment.
9. Air Raid Precautions.
10. Compensation for Accidents."

Peterborough City Council Education Committee was content to leave matters of syllabus and curriculum to individual head and assistant teachers and to the incidental effects of having a training college and a practising school within the boundaries. The main concern of the committee was to provide accommodation for increasing numbers of children. The building programme was most impressive: twelve schools had been taken over in 1903 but by 1924 another ten had been provided. In 1929 the boundary was extended and the city took in another six schools. In 1931 a junior school for 300 pupils was built. In 1935 two schools were extensively enlarged and a new primary school for 650 pupils was erected. In 1939 a senior department was added to one school and in 1940 a new 600 place primary school was built. Between 1930 and 1940 £100,000 had been spent on new and additional accommodation. ⁶⁷

In comparison with the other education authorities in the area, the Leicestershire Education Committee minutes reveal the chief education officer's presence to a notable degree. Unfortunately, William Brockington, having been appointed in 1903, was somewhat set in his ways by the time The Primary School was published in 1931, and he never discussed it with his committee, even though he had helped to produce it. In fact, he tended to side with the critics of modern educational developments rather than lead them to a more enlightened

viewpoint:

"In recording any general impressions of the curricula of public elementary schools, one is tempted to emphasise afresh the importance of the 'foundation subjects' and to deplore any tendency to neglect these subjects in favour of more conspicuous 'accomplishments'. In a highly civilised community there are other fundamentally useful methods of self-expression than the dexterous manipulation of clay or the colouring of pretty flowers. That school is best which does not supersede, but properly co-ordinates, (or, we may say, subordinates) such studies to the more solid parts of learning.

In schools where 'show work' is apt to be over-emphasised, one frequently observes that the ordinary teaching methods are wanting in strenuousness. It must not be supposed that the teachers themselves are wanting in effort, but so great is their desire to make everything pleasant and plain for the child that serious mental effort on the part of the child is not required, and the amount of real knowledge acquired in a given time is consequently small. Especially is there an insufficient appeal to the faculty of memory, which is most active at an age when the judicial and reasoning faculties are comparatively dormant. A healthy child of school age has an exceptional capacity for the acquisition of facts. I believe that more teachers err by under-estimating than over-estimating this capacity in their pupils." ⁶⁸

On another occasion he reported to his committee certain school managers' views which he had obviously not attempted to counter in any way:

"The Director called attention to the discussions which have arisen in the course of his Conferences with School Managers regarding the curriculum of small schools and in particular to a resolution adopted at one meeting 'that instead of the boys' handwork for which no really adequate facilities are available, more topography, mensuration and practical arithmetic should be taken, that so-called organised games should be abolished, and that physical training should be limited to essential corrective movements; further that the time allotted to the singing of hymns should be included in the period allotted to the singing lesson proper.' At other conferences objection has been taken to the time allotted to ornamental instruction in painting and raffia work." ⁶⁹

On some occasions it seemed that economy, not education, was the object of the committee's existence. The members conferred long and earnestly on ways of recovering the cost of needlework materials from schoolgirls. They agreed to pay for the wood for a fowl pen at Sapcote School, but not for the stereoscopic slides requested at Somerby.

In 1923 there was a dilemma: economy or loyalty to the crown? The Board of Education had offered gramophone records containing a message for Empire Day from the King and Queen "in their Majesties' own voices" but there would be a small charge. Ultimately a compromise was reached: "the small expense involved to be met by local voluntary contributions".

Other concerns were: the closure of small schools; increasing numbers of children to be "bussed" to senior schools, with problems of behaviour on school buses arising as early as 1931;⁷⁰ teachers' pay scales before national rates of pay were established; holiday patterns for schools; ⁷¹ gradual reductions in the size of classes.

Northamptonshire Education Committee minutes reveal the same preoccupations and an even closer reliance upon the advice and approval of H.M. Inspector:

"Submitted list of teachers who would attain 60 years of age at their next birthday, or who had already passed that age. From the educational point of view H.M. Inspector saw no reason to suggest action in any of the cases." ⁷²

"....at the suggestion of H.M. Inspector, arrangements had been made for two Uncertificated Assistant Teachers ...to receive one week's training in Infant methods at approved schools." ⁷³

"Two nominations were made for short Board of Education Courses on Infant Teaching, to be held in London, after consultation with the Inspector." ⁷⁴

Northamptonshire provided more courses for teachers, and encouraged their attendance more generously than was the case in Leicestershire where, it was maintained,

"....the teachers...improved qualifications and prospects of advancement, so could contribute to the cost." ⁷⁵

Northamptonshire teachers could attend short courses as early as 1927 on such subjects as gardening, arithmetic, geography, P.T. and "sewing machine care and manipulation". In 1935, nearly thirty schools were closed for one and a half days so that the teachers could attend a week end course at Peterborough Training College.

However, Leicestershire gradually caught up in this respect. The committee invited twenty uncertificated teachers to attend a course in infant and junior school methods at Derby Training College in 1936, with travelling expenses, tuition, and half the hostel charges paid. By 1939 the availability of courses for teachers appears to have been adequate, and in July of that year two teachers were nominated to attend a fortnight's Board of Education course at Oxford on "The Junior School Curriculum".

The two largest education authorities had, it can be seen, finally accepted the idea that teachers needed guidance and new inspiration occasionally if the schools were not to stagnate. Probably the smaller authorities also accepted the idea, but lacked the funds to implement it.

What is clear from an examination of all the minutes of each education committee is the fact that none of them was equipped to provide leadership for educational innovation in schools and none wished to attain anything more than a more efficient traditional education for each child. None was concerned with the implications of a curriculum "thought of in terms of activity and experience". None encouraged educational experiments. None, apparently, was ever forced to debate the problem which some writers had claimed was reaching epidemic proportions: the "progressive" school which "had gone too far". Yet there had been one case which was not to be found in the respective minutes, the one exception which was soon suppressed:

"Harold Collett Dent had been a reformer from the start... The first radical idea he tried out was to make children participants in their own schooling, rather than just recipients. It caused some alarm at Brighton and Hove Grammar School when he started to free them 'from sitting like little models'.....

In Leicester the education committee was impressed. At the

age of 33 (i.e. in 1927 KJF) they made him head of Gateway School, which was to provide a new alternative for 11-plus failures. In the first progressive, chaotic term it must have been the Countesthorpe of its time. The director of education found it all too radical for his own stomach, and Dent was sacked after three years." 76

Notes to Chapter 5.

1. Greenhalgh, V.C. 'Local educational administrators, 1870-1974; the emergence and growth of a profession'. Ph.D. Leeds. 1974. pp. 63, 76.
2. C.F. Mott, director of education, Liverpool; presidential address to the Association of Directors and Secretaries for Education, 1934. Quoted in Booth, H. 'The chief officer in English education, 1870 - 1968'. M.Ed. Manchester. 1971. p.340.
3. Hird, W.N. 'A study comparing chief education officers in 1938 and 1968'. M.Ed. Hull. 1972. p.31 et seq. based on David, M. Your C.E.O. - is he a pioneer or a prisoner? in Education Vol. 137, pp. 272 - 274.
4. Greenhalgh, V.C. op.cit. pp. 211, 212.
5. See Davies, E. Salter, Presidential address to the English section of the New Education Fellowship in Education? 29.1.1932.
6. Booth, H. op.cit. pp. 349 et seq.
7. Household was a great champion of the Parents' National Educational Union, which embodied the ideas of Charlotte Mason. He introduced her ideas of individual study based on good art and literature into the schools of Gloucestershire and was personally responsible for advocating, encouraging and assessing this form of study. It reached its peak during the 1930's but continued in over 100 Gloucestershire schools as late as 1948.
8. Stead, H.G. Full stature: education and tomorrow. London. Nisbet. 1936. p.2.
9. ibid. p.19.
10. Greenhalgh, V.C. op.cit. pp. 110, 111.
11. King, Bolton, Schools of today. London. Dent. 1929. p.63.
12. See Ree, Harry, Educator extraordinary: the life and achievements of Henry Morris. London. Peter Owen. 1985.
13. T.E.S. 4.1.1917. quoted in Greenhalgh, V.C. op.cit. p.127.
14. Booth, H. op.cit. p.78.
15. ibid. p. 106.
16. ibid. pp. 385 - 390.
17. Undated newspaper obituary from scrapbook, Northants. C.R.O.
18. Personal letter from R.W.E. Hillier, Assistant Librarian (Local Studies) Peterborough, 23.11.1983.
19. Lilley, R.C. 'How legislation and policy on elementary education was implemented in a locality 1870 - 1903 with special reference to the work of the Kettering School Board'. M.Ed. Manchester. 1967. Appendix 16.
20. Personal account of Mr. L.H. Hall.

21. ibid.
22. Mander, John, Education in Leicester, 1944 - 1974.
Leicester. Leicester City Council. 1980. p.10.
23. ibid. p.13.
24. P.R.O. Ed. 24/1226. Reprint from Education. n.d.
25. Brockington, W.A. Address to the executive committee of the
A.E.C. March, 1935. Quoted in Greenhalgh, V.C. op.cit.p.160.
26. Booth, H. op.cit. pp. 357 et seq. Extracts from reports
on educational administration by William Brockington,
Director of Education for Leicestershire to the
Incorporated Secretaries' Association. Education.
4.3.1932, pp. 268, 269 and 11.3.1932, pp. 296, 297.
27. ibid. Education. 7.9.1935. p.202.
28. Obituary notice by the Bishop of Peterborough, Northampton
Independent. 21.1.1952. The Bishop wrote:
"During my time at the Board of Education, we
used to say that if Mr. Holland was coming to the
office on a deputation it would be necessary for
all of us to know our case...."
29. Leics. Ed. Comm. Mins. 8.6.1923. Leics. C.R.O.
30. The reasons Brockington suggested included:
low salaries; lack of suitable accommodation in
the villages; classes of unmanageable size; lack
of washing facilities for the children; "the
restriction of initiative through over-regulation
and interference"; lack of adequate differentials
between men's and women's salaries.
31. Leics. Ed. Comm. Mins. 8.6.1923. Leics. C.R.O.
32. Booth, H. op.cit. pp. 357, 358.
33. Seaborne, Malcolm, William Brockington, director of
education for Leicestershire in Simon, Brian, ed.
Education in Leicestershire, 1540 - 1940. Leicester
Leicester University Press. 1968. p.219.
34. Brockington, W.A. Education. 4.3.1932. pp. 268, 269.
See Note 26 above.
35. See Winkley, D.A. L.E.A. Inspectors and advisers: a
developmental analysis in Oxford review of education,
Vol. 8. No. 2. 1982. pp. 121-137. Also Edmonds, E.L.
'Local inspection of schools'. Ph.D. Leeds. 1960.
36. Edmonds, E.L. op.cit. pp. 409, 410.
37. Winkley, D. op.cit. p.125.
38. Brockington, W.A. As for Note 34 above.
39. Rutland Ed. Comm. Mins. Nov. 1925. Leics. C.R.O.
40. Loughborough Ed. Comm. Mins. 18.6.1925. Leics. C.R.O.
41. Leicester City Ed. Comm. Mins. 27.11.1922. Leics. C.R.O.
42. ibid. 16.6.1924.

43. *ibid.* 30.5.1927 and 5.9.1927.
44. *ibid.* 5.12.1927.
45. See Miller, E. Winifred, Room to grow, development of the nursery and infant school. London. Harrap. 1944.
46. Northampton C.B. Ed. Comm. Mins. 11.10.1927. Northants. C.R.O.
47. Undated newspaper cuttings for the 'Twenties. Northants. C.R.O.
48. Report of discussion on the migration of boys and girls to towns, submitted by the secretary to the Rutland Ed. Comm. Central Schools Sub. Comm. May, 1927. The headmaster of Oakham, with his colleagues from Uppingham and Cottesmore concurring, said that in his experience most boys wanted to be mechanics/artisans, a few wanted to be clerks, and hardly any desired to work on the land. Leics. C.R.O.
49. The Uppingham huts remained on the same site and the prisoners' camp became a central school. One hut was still in use in 1983 as an indoor bowls hall. (Mr. L.H. Hall).
50. "...the huts have served their useful life, they are now uneconomical to maintain and will become increasingly so. The quality of the teaching accommodation is poor, the internal appearance of the rooms is dingy and uninspiring, the floors are decidedly dirty, worn, and some rooms giving away...."
Report of the architect of the Board of Education, Rutland Ed. Comm. Mins. Report of visit. April, 1932. Leics. C.R.O.
51. Rutland Ed. Comm. Mins. 26.10.1937. Leics. C.R.O.
52. When the Board of Education complained about the condition of Oakham Central School in 1929, the reply did not defend the situation or deny it existed, but concentrated on the economics of the case, including the loss of revenue from declining rates and from the method of calculating school grants. (Draft reply to the Board of Education, Elem. Ed. Sub. Comm. Mins. 28.5.1929). Leics. C.R.O.
53. Rutland Ed. Comm. Mins. 3.5.1934 and 11.10.1934. Leics. C.R.O.
54. *ibid.* 20.7.1939.
55. Loughborough Ed. Comm. Mins. 30.11.1930. Leics. C.R.O.
56. *ibid.* Report of the General Purposes Sub-Committee Interview with A.T. Kerslake, H.M.I. and the Head Teacher of the Shakespeare Street Junior Mixed School. 21.5.1931. Leics. C.R.O.
57. Leicester Ed. Comm. Mins. 18.1.1926. Leics. C.R.O.
58. *ibid.* 15.6.1931.
59. *ibid.* 21.9.1931.
60. *ibid.* 18.1.1932.
61. The local H.M.I.'s also attended "in an advisory capacity".
62. Leicester City Ed. Comm. Mins. 18.9.1933. Leics. C.R.O.
63. Memorandum on five years' programme of work for the consideration of the Education Committee of the County Borough of Northampton arising out of the Board's Circular 1358. 1925. Northants. C.R.O.

64. Northampton C.B. Ed. Comm. Mins. 12.10.1928. Northants. C.R.O.
65. Kettering U.D.C. Ed. Comm. Mins. 21.3.1933. Kettering Public Library.
66. *ibid.* 20.9.1932.
67. Harding, R.G. A brief outline of the growth of elementary education in England and the City of Peterborough since 1800. City of Peterborough. Typescript. Issued 1962. Revised 1972. (Harding was Education Officer, Peterborough) (Kindly supplied by Mr. R.W.E. Hillier. See Note 18 above).
68. Leics. Ed. Comm. Mins. 12.10.1928. Leics. C.R.O.
69. Leics. Ed. Accounts and General Purposes Comm. 29.9.1922. Leics. C.R.O.
70. Leics. Ed. Comm. Mins. 16.11.1931, Circular N.S. 51:
 "It will be found in the end that the most powerful
 factor for ensuring seemly behaviour is the pupil's
 own conviction that the good fame of the school is
 in his keeping..."
 Leics. C.R.O.
71. As late as 1929, 38 schools were found to take "excessive holidays".
72. Northants. Ed. Comm. Mins. 19.3.1932. Northants. C.R.O.
73. *ibid.* 16.11.1935.
74. *ibid.* 16.3.1935.
75. Leics. Ed. Comm. Mins. Staffing Comm. 9.4.1932. Leics. C.R.O.
76. Rowan, Patricia, Out of the shade, T.E.S. 6.9.1985.
 75th. Anniversary Supplement. 6.9.1985. p.5.

Section III The practice. (Continued).

Chapter 6. H.M. Inspectors and the South
 East Midlands.

1. H.M. Inspectors: general introduction, local examples.
2. H.M. Inspectors and the infant schools of the region.
3. H.M. Inspectors and the emerging junior schools of the region.
4. An exceptional inspector:
 R.D. Salter Davies.

1. H.M. Inspectors: general introduction, local examples.

How was the "progressive" message of the successive Handbooks of suggestions and of the 1931 Hadow Report, The primary School, to be disseminated to the vast army of teachers if no one took responsibility for the task at local education authority level?

The obvious "pollen carriers" were H.M. Inspectors who, as early as 1895, had been urged by the Education Department to

"....aim at being the helpful and sympathising friend of all concerned in the work; and that without dictating to teachers or managers they should throw out suggestions whether towards greater freedom of organisation, or in the direction of more effective educational work...." ¹

Yet educational advice and encouragement for individual teachers and schools tended to be provided only incidentally and negatively by indicating what was considered displeasing or unsatisfactory: H.M. Inspectors were primarily concerned with ensuring that public monies were not wasted or misused. They were "highly qualified snoopers" ² by definition and by tradition from the appointment of John Allen and Hugh Tremenhare as the first Inspectors of Schools in 1839 until the present day: a 1982 Department of Education and Science Study of H.M. Inspectorate in England and Wales lists the principal elements of the Inspectors' work in the following order:

- " i. a check on the use of public funds....
- ii. provision of information to central government....
- iii. provision of advice to those responsible for₃ the running of educational establishments...."

It is remarkable that, for the first half century of their existence at least, most local education authorities were, nonetheless, content to use the Board of Education's eyes and ears as their own. In this manner they avoided the difficulties of appointing suitable local people to act as their own inspectors, and they avoided the cost of employing an Oxford or Cambridge man to do the work; in fact they avoided all the costs and responsibilities of establishing and maintain-

ing a general advisory and inspectorial service of their own altogether.⁴ Yet it could be argued that H.M. Inspectors were, in their own way, also limited in outlook and not the ideal people to help develop a comparatively new education system in which they had never taught as assistant teachers or taken responsibility as head teachers, particularly as such development and guidance was not one of their main functions.

H.M. Inspectors were not only limited by their own social and educational backgrounds so that they remained "outsiders" - albeit influential ones - with regard to elementary education, but they were to a large extent prisoners of the system they had helped to maintain for so long. They had to spend so much of their time checking attendance and examining registers; listening to the repetitive results of rote learning; administering tests to see if the syllabus had been efficiently adhered to; reading log books, timetables and schemes of work; attending meetings to solve local difficulties of school organisation; writing their reports; travelling from school to school. Those essentials completed, there was an infinity of details to consider: were the gardening tools clean?; were the lavatory buckets emptied frequently?; if so, were they still being emptied in a corner of the playground?; what was the state of the playground?; had "the lewd writings" been effaced from the "office" walls?⁵

H.M. Inspectors, far more than the local vicars or school managers, or, even, directors of education who rarely visited, were adamant that timetables should be strictly adhered to, thus inhibiting the grasping of educational opportunities and unexpected interests. Partly, of course, and with some justification, the Inspectors feared that remote schools could become very lax without the ever-present threat of a "V.W.N" - "Visit Without Notice", and that in some church schools

religious education and hymn singing would expand to swallow up some of the daily arithmetic time. The Inspectors also approved of rigid timetables so that they could plan ahead: educational considerations became subsidiary to external organisational pressures exerted by a visitor who might appear only once or twice a year in each school. This meant that any slight deviation in the timetable had to be recorded even if it was nearly Christmas and there was a war on:

"Several wounded soldiers who are staying at the Convalescent Home came into school this afternoon. The History Lesson was curtailed by ten minutes so that the children might sing a few songs including one or two National Anthems to them." 6

The Inspector arrived, watched with Olympian detachment a tiny fragment of the daily struggles to educate very mixed groups of children under difficult conditions, and departed:

"He never said anything to me, and he listened to my lesson with his back to the class, just looking at a picture on the wall." 7

But within a few months the report would arrive and the head teacher had the pleasure or the penance of copying it into the school log book. Then often there would be special managers' meetings to apportion praise or blame, rebukes, exhortations, or even retribution in the form of dismissal.

"We were held in our tracks by the H.M.I.; they made it very clear what was expected of us." 8

The Inspector could always find something of which he did not approve: there is no doubt a law which states that whenever an Inspector visits a school he will be able to catch someone or other doing the wrong thing. In one Northamptonshire school he arrived just in time to catch two boys returning from the railway station, where they had been to collect school supplies on behalf of the headmaster! 9 In another village in that county, the children and teachers returned to school

after morning service in the church to find the Inspector already waiting for them. No doubt he was standing ominously silent beside the timetable over the fireplace and looking at the clock, for the arithmetic lesson should have already begun.¹⁰ In one small school a boy was rude to the Inspector, Mr. Woodhead, not only taking his name in vain but taking it literally, and the teacher's anguish is apparent in every word of the log book entry.¹¹ Most biographies of Inspectors and teachers bear witness to the profound effect of the former group upon the latter,¹² and in the nineteenth century there were frequent tales of teachers driven to suicide and madness by the "payment by results" method of school assessment. Yet, far more recently, a retired headmaster has written of the 1930's :

"We were never told when they were coming - they would sit outside the School until 9.45 a.m. when R.I. finished and then would enter. The first thing they would ask for would be the registers to see if they had been marked and closed at the proper time, 9.45 a.m. They would ask for the major schemes of work for the School and all teachers' Records of Work Books.

They would have all pupils' Exercise Books and go through them and any member of the Staff who had missed a mistake was in trouble. You dare not leave one set of marking until the next day in case we got the 'invasion'. If a teacher was found wanting it either meant dismissal or losing one year's increment. Personally I got on very well with them....
...Some of the Heads had a rough time and two of my neighbouring Heads committed suicide after inspection...." ¹³

In fact, as has already been shown, H.M. Inspectors were not in as strong a position over schools and local education authorities as they were perceived to be unless there were serious misdemeanours or breaches of the regulations. This point was well made in the 1933

Year book of education:

"...comparatively few teachers will make any decision before consulting the wishes of the H.M.I. responsible for the district. Thus the influence of the Board's inspectorate, owing to the lack of initiative on the part of the teacher, is out of all proportion to the actual powers which its members possess. Progressive experimentation will tend to be held up until teachers realise that it is results which will be judged, and not the methods by which they are attained...." ¹⁴

Although school inspections were always a cause of anxiety, some teachers developed happy relationships with the individual members of the inspectorate. There is, for instance, a pressed flower in the Brackley Girls' School log book at the page where Edmond Holmes signed on a "Visit Without Notice" in 1903, suggesting that he may have had more than one "Egeria"! ¹⁵

The local H.M.I.'s seemed to be particularly constructive in Northamptonshire compared with their counterparts in other parts of the South East Midlands. Mr. Woodhead made numerous informal visits to the local schools in the 'Thirties with advice, examples of work from other schools, and just plain encouragement:

"His visit was most helpful, and we are continuing our work with renewed energy". ¹⁶

In the previous decade, Mr. Sweeting had encouraged astronomy in the schools of the same county, and Mr. Hands had specialised in arranging talks for teachers on such subjects as "The Future of Education" at Wellingborough in 1920; on "Criticism and Expression" at Wellingborough in 1922; and on general topics at Rushden at around the same time. One of his colleagues, Mr. Burns, encouraged the collection and identification of wild flowers. Up to 29 schools took part, collecting as many as 450 varieties annually. In 1930 Burns published Flora of Northamptonshire and the Education Committee purchased 24 copies at 21 shillings each for use in schools, plus a presentation copy for the author himself. ¹⁷

Yet the encouraging of such interests in the schools, though much appreciated at local and county level, was merely a small bonus which the inspectors permitted themselves; almost all of their time continued to be devoted to the maintenance of the "classical humanist" tradition in education. They continued to commend "tone" and discip-

line; to enforce strictness and devotion to objective standards of learning and behaviour in the teachers; silence and neatness in pupils; formal and didactic methods in teaching.

The Inspectors' concerns were so different from those of the teachers that it is no wonder that the latter often felt a sense of grievance because they believed the former group had no real conception of the strains inherent in daily school life. A draft report reveals the petty preoccupations of the official mind and supports the teachers' view:

H.N. Parker, H.M.I.: "...some pleasing specimens of drawing were seen but it is a pity that the Art teaching is not more closely related to the handwork lessons where Book-crafts are taught to a respectable degree of technical skill."

A certain Mr. Monk: "Might 'respectable' in the last line be altered to 'satisfactory'?"

H.N. Parker: "Thank you, but I think 'respectable' can stand. It is stronger than 'satisfactory', as it was meant to be. Perhaps it is an unusual way of using the word, but James Joyce goes to far greater lengths." ¹⁸

Even the effects of total war were not allowed to interfere with the Inspectors' olympian detachment, nor to temper their judgement:

"A report on the work of this small rural school issued in 1938 recorded that pleasing progress had been made in most subjects and held out the promise of still further improvement. This promise has not been fulfilled"(1944) ¹⁹

One of the main difficulties in schools, making the task of each assistant and head teacher harder, and the scope for inspectorial criticism correspondingly greater, was caused by the gradual growth of the curriculum by a process of accretion. Particularly from the time when the conditions of the Revised Code were relaxed and right up to the present, everyone has been able to make a case for including additional subjects in the curriculum, but hardly anyone has agreed on what could safely be discarded to make the necessary space.

Within twenty years of the publication of Blakiston's The teacher: hints on school management in 1879,²⁰ his ideal curriculum had expanded to include handwork for the lower standards of mixed schools; gardening; a new emphasis on oral English; nature study based on real objects or nature walks. Another ten years or so brought demands for more individual study; the encouragement of historical visits, drama and pageants; further emphasis on collecting and constructing in science and nature study.²¹ Changes in the form of liberation of the schools were resisted: the somewhat heretical views propounded in the 1918 Handbook of suggestions that written composition should be free and that silence in schools was undesirable were not taken up and popularised by an Inspectorate still dedicated to maintaining high standards of accuracy in written work and the prevention of "unregulated conversation".

For the Inspectors worked by some kind of dialectical intellectual process which enabled them to introduce new checks and balances as older ones were discarded - but they tended to advise greater control and efficiency rather than the relaxation of rules.²² Thus the successive forms of school examinations for young children:- "payment by results"; head teachers' examinations; area examinations of attainment (as favoured in Leicester in the 1920's); and the Annual Schools Examination, Free Place Examination or Eleven-Plus, as it was variously known - were all preceded and followed by periods when rules were eased and the individual school, teacher and child given a little more freedom and autonomy, but each of those periods gave rise to new anxieties about standards, or about "correlation".

"Correlation" was the illuminating of one subject by its application to another: good artistic design in woodwork or bookcrafts; good notebooks and diagrams in woodwork and needlework; scientific

background work to gardening. Thus, when an inspector found each subject taught well but as a separate entity, he could impose demands for "correlation." Some inspectors encouraged individual work as a way to cope with a wide age- or ability-range in one class or school, but when the Dalton Plan and P.N.E.U. work became very popular in a comparatively large number of schools, H.M. Inspectors did their best to cast doubt upon the efficacy of such methods, mainly because they feared a deterioration in oral English standards, which in any case had never been very high and had rarely been encouraged in practice by them. Demands for higher standards of oral English, when so often children were merely asked to speak on the subjects of half-remembered or half-understood lessons, and not on things which they enjoyed, understood or had experienced, continued throughout the period unchecked by Hadow's plea for "activity and interest".²³

In fact the Hadow Reports appeared to have had little effect on the thinking of the Inspectors. They continued to commend high formal standards as the one true criterion of excellence. They praised "getting on" for its own sake, never asking what had been sacrificed in the rush for higher standards:

"Standard I has advanced to Standard II work".²⁴

Failure to reach the standards arbitrarily required by the Inspector indicated to him, not the need for methods encouraging true understanding, but the need "to return to first principles", meaning "more chalk and talk" and written exercises.²⁵

"The two backward classes, especially 4S, need incessant revision in elementary Arithmetical processes....In History too wide a range is attempted: the children appear interested but are not clear on fact..."²⁶

H.M. Inspectors praised "cordial and easy relations" but always feared the worst:

"The Mistress is on good terms with her scholars and endeavours to secure their obedience and effort by putting them

under very little restraint. In many ways this is good, but there is a danger lest it lead to undisciplined action and thought and so in the end hinder the children's progress. Their impetuous answers and their free conversation when left to themselves indicate a tendency in this direction which it would be well for the Mistress to watch with care." ²⁷

Where the Inspectors found organisation, "tone and discipline", and "the fundamental subjects" in good order, they were prepared to countenance more varied and interesting developments, but only in very limited ways: "more connected oral narration" and "linking up the Art teaching with the handwork"; ²⁸ more practical arithmetic and reasoning and observation in history and geography; ²⁹ more stimulation of mental activity; ³⁰ more practical and active participation by the children in nature study; ³¹ more gardening and handwork. ³²

Much of their advice was sound, though firmly within the "classical humanist" tradition, or even within the commonsense conclusions based on the experience of the ordinary, thoughtful teacher. At different times, for example, Inspectors pointed out: that excessive concentration on spelling and grammar did nothing for good composition; ³³ that the termly displaying of marks would encourage some children; ³⁴ that exceptionally neat work could be obtained only at the cost of things of greater educational value; ³⁵ that too much re-copying of work was unproductive; ³⁶ that the duller parts of the arithmetic syllabus should be dropped. ³⁷ Much of the above advice came during one of the reactions which periodically occurred against excessive formality and discipline, in this case soon after the First Great War. In fact, two reports of this period, both for Leicestershire schools, represent a kind of high water mark in the mixed elementary school:

"Except in the two lowest classes, which are very backward owing to the previous preparation not having been very thorough, the work reaches a commendable level of accuracy and

neatness....In Handwork a special course of lessons is being given to Stds. I to IV in clay modelling by the L.E.A.'s Superintendent of Manual Instruction. Some of the modelling is used to illustrate various lessons in Geography and other subjects, and the children take much interest in the subject. The practical and experimental work done in Science, Dramatization of Poetry and Historical Stories, and the fluid system of intermediate promotion, deserve mention." 38

"Among other instances of a progressive and experimental spirit (i.e. good relationships; the fostering of a love of literature and evidence of good general knowledge KJF) may be cited the skill with which the 'New Writing' has been cultivated and the comprehensive and searching quality of the internal examinations." 39

As can be seen, "prgressive and experimental" were words used by the Inspectors for very moderate developments, and it is doubtful whether searching internal examinations represented educational progress at all.

In the following years the growing emphasis on the reorganisation of the elementary school into "senior" and "junior" departments or separate establishments directed attention away from the education of the individual and towards streaming by ability (believed in most instances to be commensurate with attainment in the basic skills) and more accurate selection procedures for secondary and selective central schools. Perhaps the general feeling was that with more attention paid to methods of organisation, differentiation and selection, more desirable educational results would occur automatically. What is certain is that H.M. Inspectors were not prepared for the emergence of the primary schools as a separate and valuable stage of education.

Only rarely, and almost in passing, during the 1930's some Inspectors noted a few small developments in some schools: more art work; more illustrations in children's notebooks; more country dancing and physical training; the use of plimsoles for such activities; more practical work in history, though for 'B' streams only in some cases; more excursions and nature walks; schemes which appealed to children's interests; a happy atmosphere; games, sports days, plays and carol concerts, parents' afternoons; "lecturettes" and "project models".

Yet rarely indeed did the Inspectors commend such practices to neighbouring schools or seek to widen their adoption. Even more rarely did they recommend their own Board's Handbook of suggestions or, during and after 1931, the Consultative Committee's The Primary School.⁴⁰ Had they done so, the isolated developments listed above as noteworthy and somewhat rare might have been far more commonplace.

The maintenance of standards of work and presentation, of morals and discipline, remained as all-important to H.M. Inspectors as in Blakiston's days, and their reports very similar to those he would have written in similar circumstances:

"The children in Standard I are accustomed occasionally to set their own subjects for composition, to draw what they like. They seem almost invariably to choose well...This freedom has not been allowed either to lower the standard of neatness and accuracy nor to retard the progress of the children...." ⁴¹

"....in Mental Arithmetic....the children, rather than use their own brains, are astute enough to vary the answers given by their classmates, by so little as 1d. or ½d. in order to appear to have thought it out for themselves.... the moral dangers of this kind of thinking cannot be too highly stressed,..." ⁴²

Idealism was not encouraged:

"In October 1934 the present Head Master who is earnestly trying to make a success of his first charge, succeeded a Head Master who had firmly controlled the school for 35 years. At first the new Head Master experienced some trouble with discipline but he is becoming more of a realist than he formerly was...." ⁴³

On the whole, reports for the period neither recorded nor recommended a very rich diet of education. From summaries and selections of H.M. Inspectors' reports for Leicestershire schools bound into the county staffing committee minutes, it is possible to compile a profile of the Inspectors' ideal school:

"The Headmistress is to be congratulated on having well maintained the high traditions of tone, order and discipline. The encouragement given to private study is a valuable aid to promoting individual effort though in certain cases it would appear that more discussion and exposition are needed.

44

45

The children are well-mannered, industrious and obedient.	46
They take obvious pleasure in their school life.	47
It is worthy of note that five children were presented for the Annual Schools Examination and achieved considerable success.	48
The Infants' division is handled in a kindly and sympathetic manner and good progress is being made. The little ones do very good work on modern lines.	49

The composite picture of a poor school, as judged by Inspectors' reports is as follows:

"The condition of this school is not satisfactory. The older children are generally unresponsive, somewhat lethargic in manner and indistinct in speech.	50
They do not appear to take much pride or pleasure in their work and they are generally unwilling to tackle any question that requires a little thought.	51
The practice of grouping Standards III to VII for certain oral lessons in history and geography appears to have somewhat impaired the interest of the older children.	52
The children's written work is still characterised by neatness and correctness, but too much of the English in their exercise books is 'Fair Copy'. In Arithmetic the children have yet to learn to think about what they are doing and not to rest satisfied so long as they do not understand.	53
Although accommodation is now somewhat easier, the Headmaster's troubles are by no means over, since all three of his assistants, though very willing, are young and lacking in experience, while the male assistant is weak in discipline and control of his class.	54
The Student Teacher is leaving at the end of this term, when an additional teacher will be required, preferably one accustomed to teaching infants."	55

2. H.M. Inspectors and the infant schools of the region.

It will be seen from the Leicestershire school reports drawn upon above that the majority of references to infant classes were favourable. To some extent this is merely coincidental: the total picture was continually changing with conditions improving or deteriorating as teachers resigned, aged, or grew in wisdom and experience. Yet on the whole the Inspectors appeared to be agreed on the most desirable attributes of a good infant class as a bright place where the children learned happily. As early as 1912 F.B. Lott had written of one infant school:

"...a spirit of cheerfulness and encouragement....children bright, happy and responsive....The methods of teaching are thoughtful....The children learn largely by 'doing' and they show much interest and diligence in the various activities of the school....the occupations are varied and instructive." ⁵⁶

This was not the situation everywhere, by any means; the following extracts are all from reports made in 1923:

"The training of infants in particular should proceed on less formal lines.....it is essential that the natural activities of young children should be more fully utilised...." ⁵⁷

"There is no guidance for the Infant Mistress who gives Standard I arithmetic to five year olds." ⁵⁸

"The young Supplementary teacher has had 75 children in her class for the year. They are poorly prepared for Standard I." ⁵⁹

(The infant teacher) "who, it is understood, was temporarily appointed in 1917 after having given up teaching for 19 years, is fond of children and, in her haphazard way, teaches them a certain amount." ⁶⁰

"....apparatus made by the teachers....has not been graded with quite sufficient care, and in number the pace has sometimes been that of the teacher rather than of the individual child." ⁶¹

On the whole, at that time, at least in Leicestershire and Rutland, the larger the infant department, the more progressive the teaching within it, with Melton Mowbray, ⁶² Oakham ⁶³ and Uppingham ⁶⁴ in particular at times approaching the standards set in the City of Leicester, and being used as demonstration schools for teachers from outlying districts.

The outstanding City report is that of Hinckley Road Council Infant School, as early as 1919:

"The work of this division deserves special commendation. The methods employed by the Teacher in Charge are based on a sympathetic understanding of the needs and powers of little children, while the quality of the work produced and the delight which the children take in their lessons, testify to the soundness of the scheme. The children to a great extent teach themselves with the aid of many little devices and pieces of equipment, which capture and retain interest, awaken intelligence and call forth effort. The work is so graded that each child has a chance to develop at his own pace in practically all subjects. The bright child is not held back, nor is the weak one unduly taxed, but as all the children take a keen pleasure in trying to solve the various little difficulties presented to them, the habit of concentration

is early inculcated and an excellent foundation is laid for the work of the Mixed Department. Many people interested in educational experiment have visited this division and have found much to help, stimulate and encourage them." 65

It is interesting to note that such infant teaching, though based on long and respected pedagogical traditions, was typified as an "educational experiment". However, it was accepted and approved of by the Inspectors, the more readily as the males deferred to the surer instincts of their female colleagues. Therefore in the early 1920's the adoption of such methods was being recommended for the lowest of the junior classes as well, that is, Standard I and the weaker section of Standard II. Occasionally it was even recommended that the youngest juniors should be retained longer in the infant department on educational - not organisational - grounds:

"A noticeable feature is the success which has attended the effort to carry the Infants' School atmosphere into the lowest class, and the brightness and gaiety of the children in that class show how it is appreciated." 66

"In the lower classes there might well be more co-ordination with the methods and syllabus of the Infants' Department. At present the Teachers hardly realise what is being done in the Infants' School, and a good deal of efficiency is lost because the methods are not continuous...." 67

"...During the last year a commendable effort has been made to attain wider aims. A beginning, small but welcome, has been made in the direction of lessening the gap between the methods and principles current in the Infants' Department and in this respectively, for the Class of Standard I boys who with their teacher came into this Department at the beginning of May are, it is understood, to carry on for the remainder of this year in the manner customarily followed in the Infants'". 68

"The teacher of the lowest class has not during working hours visited the Infants' Department from which her children come, and there is a marked difference of procedure in her class as compared with that in the highest class of infants...." 69

There were very real limits to the extension of freedom either within the infant departments or the junior classes to which the children were promoted, mainly through the expectation of continued high standards in the basic skills with respect to every child who could not be labelled "backward". However, by the mid-1920's the emphasis had swung back quite strongly towards seeing the infant teachers' role as prep-

aratory and subsidiary rather than, as had previously been the case, progressive and exemplary. Instead of infant methods of teaching spreading upwards into the junior age-range, the influence of the junior school or the mixed department of the elementary school began once again to spread downwards. There is no doubt that the direct cause was the desire to grade children more accurately upon their leaving the infant departments so as to fit them into the schemes of work which had recently been devised for Leicester area by area, and to create a more homogeneous "product" for the senior departments and schools. Tests and examinations, selection and allocation, became the fashionable topics and one surely unforeseen result was that infant "expression work" soon began to be done in a regimented way by numbers and "activity" became limited, cheerless, and discarded as soon as the child had been school for one term or so. The city lost its leadership in the enlightened education of young children and, with the explicit approval of H.M. Inspectors, concentrated instead on efficiency:

"The children are extremely happy, not because they are being taught on any 'play-way' methods but because they are learning busily all day...." ⁷⁰

"By the time the children leave this school they have received a sound training and have been well-prepared for Standard III in all essentials." ⁷¹

".....reading is satisfactory though not above average." ⁷²

"Recent drafts passing up to the Junior Dept. are doing work at least a year behind that which is normally expected from children of that age." ⁷³

By the end of the decade there was the hint of a swing back to regard the infant school, class or department as representing a stage of education in its own right, but only A.T. Kerslake's 1929 report on Hazel Street Council Infant School⁷⁴ stands out as the exception to what had become the predominant tone of the Inspectors not only in the City, but in rural areas as well; where current attitudes were clearly shown:

"The infants are good material to transfer to the juniors." 75 .

"Junior Classes There is a marked improvement and development in the children's work during their progress through this part of the school: there is, moreover, reason to believe that their progress would be even more marked were they more sure of fundamentals when they come to this department. At present much time has to be spent on the development of good habits, neat arrangement, clear speech, ready response and so forth during their first year of work here...." 76

The publication of the 1933 Hadow Report, Infant and Nursery Schools, passed unnoticed in log books, education committee minutes and H.M. Inspectors' reports. Nursery classes gradually developed, most particularly in Leicester itself, and it became fashionable to commend "a happy family atmosphere" in infant schools and classes, but there was certainly no new inspiration apparent in the Inspectors' thinking. In fact, in some cases the institution of nursery classes worked against the development of progressive infant education because children who had been in school from the age of three or four were considered "ready" for formal work as soon as they began to attend the infant school at the age of five:

"The two remaining classes in the school are for children under five. One is a Nursery Class, taking children of three years old...and the other class is of four-year-olds, where the training in habits and manners begun in the Nursery Class is continued, and the children prepared, through games, sense-training and other activities, for the work they will do in the other classes..." 77

"The Nursery Classes have proved a great help and generally the children who have passed through them are more efficient than those who enter the school at five years of age." 78

The infant schools in Northampton had, on the whole, never been as forward-looking as those in Leicester so they did not experience the same swings back and forth in the "guidance" given by H.M. Inspectors through their reports. What is more apparent there is the Inspectors' consistent pressure for more freedom and spontaneity in the town's infant schools and classes. Often, however, the strong tradition of earnest work and high formal standards defeated them. Although

W.J. Parker was himself something of a traditionalist, his concern for the children is apparent in spite of the careful wording of his 1938 and 1939 reports for schools in that area:

"Little change has occurred in this well-ordered school during the past five years.... Careful grading of work supported by methodical use of apparatus in the teaching of the Three R's still constitutes the chief feature....

Though anxiously encouraged from an early age to make industrious, efficient effort and expected, in the top classes, to achieve a high level of attainment, the children appear to be happy in their environment. Their friendly desire to please could not fail to introduce a pleasant note throughout the inspection." 79

"Number work based on a system of graded exercises compiled by the Head Teacher is carefully taught but at the moment is tending to produce mechanical Arithmetic rather than a ready understanding of number." 80

"The good training given to the youngest children is largely informal; formal instruction beginning when the children reach the age of five years...." 81

"Schemes of work are carefully planned on intelligent lines and on the whole teaching methods are enlightened." 82

Preceding copies of the above reports in the Northampton C.B. Primary Sub-Committee Minutes is the summary of an address by Kenneth Lindsay, Parliamentary Secretary to the Board of Education, to the Conference of Education Committees, Bournemouth, 1938. His speech contained the following passage:

"There can be no doubt that the most successful product of our present-day education is the Nursery and Infant School (in which) we find children undergoing free discipline, learning to find their own feet without treading on other people's toes, and developing their own peculiar gifts by methods appropriate to each stage of development"

In fact, the satisfaction was somewhat premature:

"The present Head Mistress was appointed three months ago... Though a good foundation in fundamentals has been laid, the Head Mistress has much with which to contend to break down the old tradition of rigidity and to introduce more modern methods." 83

Although H.M. Inspectors, by offering another point of view, could often inhibit changes by hinting at the excesses which might ensue, they seemed to have little success in Northampton in encouraging even a modicum of progress in the infant schools. The 1929 report on

St. James' Temporary C.E. Infant School referred to the enlightened ideas of the headmistress; the 1935 report urged the teachers to remember that small children should be allowed to walk before being expected to run; the 1938 report stated that children began formal work at the age of five.

Far Cotton Infant School was so overcrowded in 1927 that the children began school when they were 5½ years of age to be rushed through the basics and sent to the mixed school one term earlier than normal! Ten years later, when the accommodation problem had been solved, the newly-appointed headmistress

"...found much to be done, not only in the general work of the school, but in the recreative side of the curriculum. It may be noted that a happier spirit exists among the children who enjoy a reasonable amount of freedom. A fairly high standard is reached in number, but it is possible that the time has now arrived when the introduction of more attractive methods might be considered.... Handwork and Drawing are still in the experimental stage..." 84

3. H.M. Inspectors and the emerging junior schools of the region.

A close examination has been made of the inspectors' attitudes towards infant schools and departments because the latter had long enjoyed an identity and ethos of their own comparatively untrammelled by periodical demands for reorganisation, examinations or selection procedures. The junior school, on the other hand, arrived late and almost by accident as the senior pupils were transferred to their own schools or departments. Even before the two age groups were separated into different buildings (usually to the advantage of the senior pupils and their teachers in terms of accommodation and facilities) it was Board of Education practice to urge separate treatment for the two groups, and a clear break in teaching methods at the age of eleven. In the smaller schools this meant, as a rule, a more interesting life for the older children: the exclusive attention of the head teacher; the provision of practical subjects with the opportunity to leave the confines of the school behind for the garden, work-

shop or domestic science centre; the more interesting applications of the basic skills which the juniors spent most of their time struggling to acquire.

It was certainly true of H.M. Inspectors' reports that the junior classes were "the neglected middle". A cursory reading of so many reports suggests happy, active infancy leading to interesting, varied and practical work for the older children, but it was usually only the seniors who had the opportunities for art, craft, needlework, gardening and cookery. The juniors were excluded: too old for some kinds of activity and experience, and too young for others! The juniors were treated in practice - whatever the rhetoric - as the least important group in the school: theirs was the age-group which could best survive the problems created by young, inexperienced or inefficient teachers; by weak disciplinarians; by the old, failing, tradition-bound teachers who would at least "give them a good grounding in the basics"; by being given the worst accommodation.

In one Leicester school, H.M. Inspectors found the top classes well taught, but the younger boys totally dependent upon the collective teaching of their class teachers.⁸⁵ Numerous examples can be found to confirm the suspicion that the juniors came off worst:

"Classes (containing Standards I, II and III) are taught on the first floor, two in the main room and the other in a small, badly-ventilated class room. The desk supply is quite inadequate in the latter and the children have to sit on forms without backrests and to write on pads placed on knees for support. The children consequently sit in a cramped and unhealthy position at all times...."⁸⁶

By contrast, the senior boys were "well-behaved, alert and industrious".

In the urban areas of the South East Midlands, in the early 1920's, there developed new syllabuses and related tests, on the results of which children were allocated to different senior schools

or departments. Once again, the older teachers "knew where they were". Memories of the old "Standards" were still very much alive, and all concerned in the formulation of the new requirements knew exactly what was meant by "a good Standard IVA" or "IIC Average". They were somewhat reassured when new clearly-defined standards were set, often with their personal help, but opportunities for experiment and originality in education were greatly curtailed and the desire for efficiency and co-ordination, though respectable guides in themselves as far as they went, put the educational clock back and reasserted the views of the traditionalists among the senior teaching staff.

The local H.M.I's were pleased to be invited to give advice on devising syllabuses and tests - and then used them to judge the efficiency of the teachers themselves in their own schools, who were thus neatly hoist with their own petard!

Three local H.M.I's, Mr. Clague, Mr. Kerslake and Miss Wix all descended on Belgrave C.E. Mixed School, Leicester, in 1926 and tested all the juniors eligible for the A.S.E. examination in arithmetic, mental arithmetic, English grammar and composition, history, geography, reading and recitation - and found them wanting. An additional irony lies in the fact that Belgrave C.E. School was not even a part of the area scheme, but it was tested nonetheless, as were several other schools in similar positions. All were declared, on the results of the tests - which must have obviously been quite fair, for had not the teachers themselves devised them? - inferior to Mellor Street, Slater Street and Syston Street Council Schools. The battle between the Board Schools and the Church Schools was once again joined!

The H.M.I's themselves never appeared at that time to think of the junior school years as anything but preparatory. Of course, as with the Revised Code long before, the framers and users of the local

tests and Schedules would have protested that they sought only a minimum standard beyond which each school and every teacher was free to develop in any desired direction. However, as C.H. Alderson, H.M.I. said of the earlier system:

"Experience shows that he (the teacher) will not spend much time over branches of instruction which are ignored or unremunerative. He thinks he has done quite enough when he offers the State its pound of flesh in the shape of so much reading, writing and ciphering." 87

So teachers would have concentrated on formal aspects of education: the training, instructional, instrumental, preparatory aspects only. Emphasis would remain on accurate notebooks neatly arranged; the basic skills taught didactically; good order and mass discipline; inspired "chalk and talk" to arouse interest if possible, or at least to instil knowledge; efforts to encourage correct oral responses, which the Inspectors were still seeking in the form demanded: answers in complete sentences free from dialect and "provincialisms" and totally unlike the speech of lively natural children speaking from interest, enthusiasm and personal experience. That was deplorable and led to "unregulated and promiscuous answering". 88

Around the middle of the period under review, that is, about 1930, everything seems to have settled to a rather stereotyped pattern of limited activity and movement, with close and authoritarian control by the teacher, and little recognition of the challenge and opportunity offered in the new emphasis on the primary and junior schools and departments. It was a particularly opportune time for H.M. Inspectors to offer new inspiration on the lines of the 1927 Handbook of suggestions and, later, The Primary School. They could have thus inspired the teachers who were naturally disorientated for a while after their schools had been "decapitated" and they had lost their senior pupils. Some heads, it is true, were greatly relieved when their disciplinary problems were removed at a stroke, but most

regretted the loss of their sports teams and choirs, their actors and singers, their special children who had enriched the school life through their grasping of opportunities in "grown up" subjects like gardening, cookery, woodwork, art and general science; civic studies and debates; visits to farms and factories.

The Inspectors showed neither sympathy nor real understanding of what were in some cases traumatic changes. References to "recent decapitation" were usually made only in passing, and often with the further comment that "Standards are as high as ever" or that it was now easier for the mistress to keep order. The most informative report containing references to the subject of school reorganisation was the following:

"When a visit was paid last Autumn soon after the reorganisation the general condition of the Mixed Division was inert and depressing, the Head Teacher was but newly appointed and matters were at a standstill. Since then the atmosphere has brightened and much more purpose appears in the work..."⁸⁹

The ultimate stage of development at that time in the junior school or department is recorded in Kerslake's report on Slater Street Council Junior Mixed Department, Leicester, in 1930:

"This school is efficiently organised and controlled by a very capable and energetic Head Master. His efforts are well supported by those of a keen and industrious staff. Great pains have been taken to ensure appropriate classification and, in addition to attainment and chronological age, the child's 'mental age' is an important factor in determining position. There is also close co-operation with the Head Teachers of the three contributing Infants' schools, which simplifies the problem of correctly placing the children on entry. The children generally are somewhat below the average in intelligence, but they are interested and responsive and there is an atmosphere of cheerful industry throughout. Arithmetic is well taught on modern lines. Independent attack in problems is encouraged and Practical Arithmetic is well organised... Increased attention has been paid to Oral Composition with encouraging results.... In teaching Geography, good use is made of local maps, which in the early stages are roughly built up by the children from their own observation. Very useful meteorological records are kept. History is well taught and the children's note

books contain many interesting pictures collected by their respective owners.

Nature study is sensibly treated. The aim is mainly to interest the children and to encourage observation rather than the acquisition of information. Specimens of plants, insects, etc. are placed in each classroom and careful notes of growth and progress are made. The spirit shown throughout this school is all the more to be commended when the extremely inconvenient nature of the premises is taken into consideration." 90

In 1932 A.T. Kerslake moved on and another inspector, K.J. Ritchie, began visiting schools in Leicester and Leicestershire. He wrote more positive, encouraging reports, of the kind which had been only rarely received in the schools for the previous ten years or so, with a real attempt to define the intangible qualities as well as the formal attainments within each establishment. He praised one infant school for the delightful, unforced manners of the children; 91 another for aiming to lay a solid foundation of understanding rather than merely pushing the children on; another for "affording to each child the best opportunities for the right development of character and personality". 93 Not only in infant schools, but also in junior and intermediate schools, Ritchie sought to encourage the children's active participation in their own learning:

"....for the Junior Classes the Head Mistress has worked out sensible, interesting and suggestive schemes which aim at consolidating the foundation laid in the Infants' classes, preparing the children for the Senior School and at the same time leaving the teachers free to develop along their own lines. Unfortunately the teachers have not taken advantage of the opportunity and some of the criticisms of the last report still hold good: not because the standard of work is low but because the methods are somewhat old-fashioned, the lessons dull and the children rather dragooned than developed. The impression given is that the teachers, instead of educating the children in the widest sense of the word, are content with imparting knowledge and reaching a certain fixed standard." 94

"It is somewhat regrettable that the wider aspects of form, imaginative and expressionistic art cannot enter into the later work. Very evidently there will be a place for this when the speech, deportment, and the instructional study of costume and materials have reached the stage when they can best be brought into harmony in the communal work of the drama or some such composite effort which draws on so many aspects of the school work." 95

In the above report, it can be seen that Ritchie was ahead of the school in his concern for the development of education and it was the teachers who lacked the conception of the wholeness of knowledge, the broad applicability of skills, and the value of "learning by doing". Would the skills ever be of sufficiently high standard to permit the performance of a play, and if it were finally performed would it retain any life or spontaneity after such an earnest preparation? Yet even Ritchie was inconsistent and for one infant school recommended that:

"The increased use of graded exercises in written English would be of benefit to those children who have difficulty in expressing themselves clearly and grammatically." ⁹⁶

Sometimes both H.M. Inspector and head teacher seemed woefully insensitive:

"...The disturbing element of bricklayers on the premises has been persistent now for many months but it speaks well for the conduct of the school and the able organisation of the Head Mistress that this has had no adverse effect on the work or the tone of the school. On the contrary, work was going on admirably and smoothly in all the classrooms, even in a temperature of 90°." ⁹⁷

Yet in that same hot summer of 1934, the children who attended an old church school in the same city spent much of their time in the vicarage garden enjoying themselves.... ⁹⁸

The reports of H.M. Inspectors alluded to above ⁹⁹ were not typical of the large majority of reports issued for schools in the South East Midlands between the wars: Kerslake's 1930 report for Slater Street Council Junior Mixed School, although only moderately "progressive", was exceptional. The vast majority of reports merely detailed the state of the school as perceived through formal attainments in the classrooms; the state of the school fabric, decoration and furnishing; and the children's behaviour; descriptions of improvements, if any, observed in organisation, discipline and

lesson content since the last report was issued, and prescriptions for future improvements. In very many cases each report was quickly rendered obsolete by changes of staff, fluctuating numbers of children in the school or in particular age groups within the school, and consequent changes of organisation and deployment of resources. This meant that on the H.M.I.'s' terms little consistent improvement was feasible, whereas had they concerned themselves less with concrete details and more with encouraging developments in relationships, attitudes and educational philosophy some consistent progress might have been sustained. However, the typical report continued to be cast in the following mould:

"Following a succession of teachers the present Head Mistress was appointed to this School early in 1934 when the attainments of the scholars were much below the desired level. With steady and purposeful perseverance a change well deserving of praise has been wrought not only in the general standard of scholastic achievement but in the environmental and social life of the children....." 100

"History does not appear to be a popular subject, and the children possess little definite information. Nature study, however, makes a strong appeal and the children are also interested in their Geography lessons.....
It should be possible for the Head Mistress, while retaining the pleasant atmosphere, to lay greater stress than hitherto on neatness, accuracy and the memorisation of facts." 101

4. An exceptional inspector: R.D. Salter Davies. 102

In 1937 a new H.M.I. arrived in the area, R.D. Salter Davies.

He was the son of E. Salter Davies, the director of education for Kent whose name was closely associated with the ideals of progressive education and the New Education Fellowship. The son proved the exception to the rule that the Inspectorate was dedicated to maintaining the "classical humanist" tradition and also showed that each Inspector was to some extent free to guide schools according to his own views of the priorities to be sought. In his reports each school was valued for its contribution to a child's growth and development. This had sometimes been an element in Ritchie's and Kerslake's reports, but often it became the principal feature in Salter Davies'.

He praised "purposeful occupation with no over-emphasis on formal discipline";¹⁰³ he approved of the unity of treatment in recreative work, with class centres of interest linking formal work, creative activities, speech and drama; ¹⁰⁴ he recommended the extension of the use of number apparatus to junior classes "where abstract number is a problem"; ¹⁰⁵ and he wanted more games and large toys in infant schools.¹⁰⁶ He not only suggested more games and large toys, but wanted them to be put in an unused hall in one school for the enjoyment of all the children and not just the nursery classes. Similarly he praised the percussion band and asked why it should not be enjoyed by the older classes as well.¹⁰⁷

During the years 1937 - 1939 Salter Davies praised and encouraged freer handwork with scope for experiment and experience; "pleasing spontaneity"; bright classrooms; responsibilities within the classroom and the school for each child; "Safety First" lessons; classroom pets; the development of each child's self-respect and self-reliance; more number games; more large toys; more bright and interesting wall illustrations; "self-expression" with adult sympathy and encouragement; the relating of school work to the children's interests and natural curiosity; longer periods for handwork and dramatisation; teaching which was "practical, interesting and effective"; ¹⁰⁸ the greater "study of the locality". ¹⁰⁹

Alone among his colleagues, Salter Davies appreciated the social value of a school as something distinct from educational attainments:

"The school should not, however, be judged on academic results alone. It plays an important part in the social structure of the neighbourhood." ¹¹⁰

"In a difficult neighbourhood the school exerts a civilising influence of considerable value. It is a pleasant place to visit: classrooms are attractively decorated, flowers and pictures are carefully chosen and well arranged and the general effect is one of space and ordered harmony. Such surroundings are of undoubted benefit to the children and help to broaden their experience." ¹¹¹

He saw that the best "training" for oral English was provided by encouraging children to talk, argue, discuss, guide each other, and generally to speak freely:

"Regular speech training exercises....are supplemented with good effect by Dramatization, varied and interesting poetry lessons, and general discussions arising naturally and freely in connection with the planning and use of the co-operative models which are made, and frequently renewed, in every class." 112

Salter Davies had the knack of writing positive reports which indicated how the schools could build on their strengths:

"....the combined work of the older boys in preparing models of ships through the ages is most creditable and merits special praise. It is hoped that this type of work will be extended and the Project approach developed still further." 113

"It should be possible to maintain these standards and at the same time give further encouragement to activities which develop self-reliance and freedom of expression." 114

"The nature of the premises imposes a strain on the teachers and limitations on the work....It is greatly to the credit of the Head Mistress and her staff that freedom and activity are encouraged as far as conditions allow...." 115

He gave praise and encouragement freely when deserved:

"In essentials the best characteristics of a village school are still retained. The children are treated as individuals and are allowed pleasing freedom of movement, speech and thought. As a result the oral response is ready, natural, fluent, and much of the work is refreshingly original." 116

However, he was not afraid to criticise when he felt it justified, and he was prepared to state his educational beliefs succinctly when the occasion arose:

"It is arguable that a formal approach in basic subjects has disciplinary merits and gives balance to the curriculum. The methods adopted here are successful in obtaining neat accurate written work and control in response but they do not give much encouragement to experiment along practical and individual lines. In several classes they also tend to check spontaneity of oral expression. This is not so in the special class. Here the work is live and stimulating and there is an abundance of apparatus and illustrative material." 117

Salter Davies seemed to find most to commend at that time in a minority of schools in Leicester and Leicestershire, but in Rutland it was a different story. There he merely commended teachers for their

vigour (meaning that they did everything for the children instead of helping them to educate themselves), for their high formal standards and their dedication. At the same time he gently suggested amelioration in various attainable directions: removing surplus furniture, backless desks and the infant galleries which still survived. He recommended more individual apparatus, more physical training dancing and drama, freer art and craft. Yet, compared with gradual developments in Liecester and Leicestershire schools - which owed very little to H.M. Inspectors - even Oakham C.E. Infant Department had fallen behind:

"This continues to be a good school. The majority of the children achieve a high standard of attainment in Reading, Writing and Number. Credit for this is due to the enthusiastic and unremitting efforts of the Head Mistress and her staff, who spare no pains in the preparation and presentation of their work.

....New developments in the teaching of Art, Handwork and Music are contemplated. These experiments will be watched with interest. The treatment of the very young and the more backward children was discussed with the Head Mistress. In some cases advanced work is attempted before fundamental processes are mastered and there is a tendency to expect more from these children than is natural to their years. Neatness and manual skill are admirable qualities but should not be acquired at the expense of spontaneity and freedom of expression." 118

It is interesting to note that the schools which Salter Davies commended were on the whole the smaller City schools, some infant schools and a good proportion of church schools, a group distinguished by being neither too big nor too small, neither too urban nor too rural, and able to attract and keep good staff. Yet considered in the context of the entire region they were but a small section, and in the light of the recommendations of the 1927 Handbook of suggestions and the 1931 Hadow Report, The Primary School, their educational developments were quite modest and cautious. It was fortunate that Salter Davies was able to recognise and encourage such progress as there was, for he was obviously prepared to lead schools

in a "progressive" educational direction where his colleagues were content with making the traditional school a little more humane and efficient, as it undoubtedly became during the 1930's. Yet, even then, war was threatening, and soon H.M. Inspectors would be diverted to other tasks: encouraging war savings; urging the keeping of rabbits and the digging up of school lawns to grow vegetables; negotiating the use of church halls and chapels for evacuees' classes; seeking information on the local assimilation of evacuees, on teacher morale, and on any other topic thought relevant by the Board of Education.

They had maintained the "classical humanist" educational tradition between the wars and they had applied steady hands as the system gradually and erratically responded to the increased respect for the child as evinced by society at large during those years. They did not take the progressive educational theories of the Board of Education's writers and the Consultative Committee and show teachers how they could be applied in the schools. They preferred maintaining a balance rather than choosing a direction in which to move. With most schools bound by tradition, H.M. Inspectors could most frequently maintain balance by suggesting a little more freedom for the children, a few more practical activities. Experiments were not recommended because of the risks posed to the traditional virtues of neatness, accuracy, the command of facts, good order and discipline, and so on.

It is surely significant that no single report over the whole period and the entire region reveals even one school where "activity and experience" were the basis of the curriculum, or a single classroom in which even one teacher was caught trying to emulate any of the luminaries of progressive education. When Salter Davies recommended changes, there was no danger that they would go too far.

Notes to Chapter 6.

1. Harwood, T. 'The development and achievements of the inspectorate of the Education Department and the Board of Education, 1860 - 1920' M.Ed. Durham. 1969. pp. 150, 151.
2. Edmonds, E.L. 'Local inspection of schools'. Ph.D. Leeds. 1960. Edmonds quotes (pp. 301, 302) A.P. Graves' comments to the Cross Commission (Third Report, Q. 57252):
"Our occasional visits now are what you may also call spying visits, at least they are visits without notice - they are visits paid in order to make sure that the registers are being properly kept and the schools worked according to the timetable...."
See also Edmonds, E.L. The school inspector. London. R.K.P. 1962.
The thesis and the book differ greatly in their respective emphases and need to be read in conjunction with one another. Both, however, concentrate on the large school boards and the later urban L.E.A.'s and therefore give an unbalanced impression of a strong, nation-wide local inspectorate developing between 1870 and 1920.
3. Department of Education and Science. A study of H.M. Inspectorate in England and Wales. London. H.M.S.O. 1982. pp. 7, 8.
4. E.G.A. Holmes, in his notorious circular to Morant, had condemned local inspectors as creatures of habit and limited outlook, and poor value for money compared with Oxford or Cambridge men.
See Gordon, Peter, Journal of educational administration and history, Leeds University. Vol. X. No. 1. January, 1978. pp. 36 - 40. This article contains the full text of the circular, dated 6th. January, 1910, which led ultimately to Morant's resignation.
5. S.L.B. (School Log Book) Chelveston cum Caldecott. Northants. C.R.O.
6. S.L.B. Nanpantan Council School, Loughborough, 31.12.1914. Leics. C.R.O.
7. Personal account of Mr. Herbert Norton, pupil-teacher at a Wellingborough school in the early 1920's.
8. Personal account of a local teacher in Reader, E.S. 'Towards progressivism'. M.Ed. Nottingham. 1983. p.47.
9. S.L.B. Ashley School, 1927. Northants. C.R.O.
10. S.L.B. Holdenby School. 1920. Northants. C.R.O.
11. S.L.B. Great Oakley School. 1937. Northants. C.R.O.
12. See Gould, Sir Ronald, Chalk up the memory. London. George Philip Alexander. 1976. p.44:
A small boy from a neighbouring school rushed into Gould's classroom with a warning of an imminent visit from H.M.I.: "'Please Sir', said the small boy, 'my headmaster has asked me to tell your headmaster that the cuckoo is coming early this year'.
I was dumbfounded. It was September."

13. Personal letter from Mr. George Dodson, assistant teacher, Daventry, 1930-1938; headmaster, Flore, 1938-1952; headmaster, Abbey J.M. School, Daventry, 1952-1966.
14. Percy, Lord Eustace, ed. Year book of education. London. Evans. 1933. p.151. Article attributed to Harley V. Usill.
15. S.L.B. Brackley Girls' School. 1903. Northants. C.R.O.
16. S.L.B. Dingley School. 1936. Northants. C.R.O.
17. Northants. Ed. Comm. Mins. Northants. C.R.O.
18. Twywell, Northants. school file, 1939 report. P.R.O. Ed/21/58644.
19. Rockingham, Northants. school file, 1944 report. P.R.O. Ed/21/58611.
20. Blakiston, the Rev. J.R. The teacher: hints on school management. London. Macmillan. 1879.
21. See Bramwell, R.D. Elementary school work. 1900-1925. Durham. Durham University. 1961.
22. See Edmonds, E.L.- thesis and book - Note 2 above.
23. Demands for higher standards in oral English were made in many school reports including: Oundle (1934); Newbottle and Charlton (1936); Benefield; Irthlingborough; Rushden; Tiffield; Wood Norton (1937); Broughton; Wappenham; Weston Favell (1938); Gayton; Stanwick; Titchmarsh; Little Addington (1939); Naseby (1944).
24. S.L.B. Cosby School. 1932. Leics. C.R.O.
25. S.L.B. Belton School. 1933. Leics. C.R.O.
26. S.L.B. Melbourne Rd. C.J. School, Leicester. 1933. Leics. C.R.O.
27. S.L.B. Holdenby School. 1923. Northants. C.R.O.
28. S.L.B. Titchmarsh School. 1939. Northants. C.R.O.
29. e.g. S.L.B. Peatling Parva. 1919. Leics. C.R.O.
30. e.g. S.L.B. Castle Ashby School. 1913. Northants. C.R.O.
31. e.g. S.L.B. Nanpantan School. 1912. Leics. C.R.O.
32. e.g. S.L.B. Theddingworth School. 1919. Leics. C.R.O.
33. Uppingham C.E. School, Rutland. H.M.I. Report 1920. Rutland Ed. Comm. Mins. Leics. C.R.O.
34. Langham School. H.M.I. Report 1920. Rutland Ed. Comm. Mins. Leics. C.R.O.
35. S.L.B. All Saints School, Leicester. 1923. Leics. C.R.O.
36. S.L.B. Narborough Road School, Leicester, 1921. Leics. C.R.O.
37. S.L.B. Frisby on the Wreake School, 1923. Leics. C.R.O.
38. S.L.B. Overton Road School, Leicester, 1921. Leics. C.R.O.
39. S.L.B. King Richard's Road Boys' School, Leicester, 1919. Leics. C.R.O.
40. See Appendix XI for the full list of references and recommendations made by H.M. Inspectors on the subject of the

Handbook of suggestions.... and The Primary School.

It is, in fact, difficult to believe that H.M. Inspectors were closely involved in planning the final form and contents of successive Handbooks of suggestions. They rarely referred to, or recommended, their use and on the whole appeared by the tone of their reports not to be in sympathy with them.

The view of Becher and Maclure that the Inspectors wrote the Handbooks of suggestions which teachers then assiduously studied in order to know how to please the joint authors on future inspections does not appear to reflect the true situation.

Becher, T. and Maclure, S. The politics of curriculum change. London. Hutchinson. 1978. p.56.

41. S.L.B. Shepshed Infants' School. 1925. Leics. C.R.O.
42. S.L.B. Bagworth Council School. 1934. Leics. C.R.O.
43. Brafield on the Green, Northants. school file, 1936. P.R.O. Ed/21/58480.
44. e.g. Ashby Magna, Nanpantan, Sheepy Magna, Stoney Stanton, Barsby, Newton Burgoland and Scalford.
45. e.g. Gaulby.
46. e.g. St. Joseph's R.C. School, Market Harborough.
47. e.g. Swithland and Belvoir Road School, Coalville.
48. e.g. Cranoe.
49. e.g. Croxton Kerrial, Newton Burgoland, Glen Magna (Great Glen), Scalford, Thurcaston, Sheepy Magna, Witherley, Barsby, Halstead and Tilton on the Hill.
50. e.g. Fenny Drayton.
51. e.g. Thurcaston, Hugglescote.
52. (Illegible name in duplicated minutes).
53. e.g. Ab Kettleby.
54. e.g. Moira.
55. e.g. Croxton Kerrial.
(Notes 44 - 55 inclusive based on Extracts from recent government reports in Leics. Ed. Comm. Staffing Comm. Mins. 29.9.23 and 26.9.25. Leics. C.R.O.)
56. S.L.B. Barwell School.(Infants) 1912. Leics. C.R.O.
57. S.L.B. Winwick School, 1923. Leics. C.R.O.
58. S.L.B. Manton School, Rutland. 1923. Leics. C.R.O.
59. S.L.B. Bagworth School. 1923. Leics. C.R.O.
60. S.L.B. Burton Overy School. 1923. Leics. C.R.O.
61. S.L.B. Hugglescote School. 1923. Leics. C.R.O.
62. S.L.B. Melton Mowbray Infant School. 1923. Leics. C.R.O. (See
63. S.L.B. Oakham C.E. School, Rutland. 1923. Leics. C.R.O. App.VIII)
64. S.L.B. Uppingham C.E. School, Rutland. 1923. Leics. C.R.O.

65. Other reports for Leicester schools, all by H.M.I.'s Jones and Kerslake, and similar in tone and content to the Hinckley Road Council Infant School report are:
 1919: King Richard's Road Council Infant; Avenue Rd. Council Infant; Belgrave C.E. School; Belper Street Council Infant;
 1920: Catherine Street Council Infant; Ellis Avenue Council Infant; Harrison Road Council Infant; Mantle Road Council Infant;
 1921: Lansdowne Road Council Infant;
 1922: Hazel Street Council Infant;
 1923: Belper Street Council Infant; Bridge Road Council Infant; Mellor Street Council Infant; Medway Street Council Infant;
 1924: Granby Road Council Infant.
 (Leicester City Council: H.M.I.'s reports. Leics. C.R.O. 19/D59/VII/157 and VII/158.

{66 - 74: H.M.I.'s reports for Leicester City Schools. Leics. C.R.O.
 {77 - 78: 19/D59/VII/157 -/158, -/159):

66. Belper Street Council School, 1920.
 67. Catherine Street Council School, 1919.
 68. Ingle Street Council School, 1920.
 69. St. John Baptist C.E. School, 1921.
 70. Coleman Road Council Infant School, 1926.
 71. Ellis Avenue Council Infant School, 1928.

(Leicester infant schools traditionally contained a large age-span of children. Arguments over dates of transfer to junior schools went on until 1946. At that time some "infants" were aged 8 years 8 months on transfer).

(Mander, John, Leicester schools, 1944-1974. Leicester. Leicester City Council. 1980. p.31.)

72. Belgrave C.E. Infants School, 1926.
 73. Harrison Road Council Infant School, 1930.
 74. Hazel Street Council School, 1929.
 75. Cottesmore, Rutland, School report. 1930. Rutland Ed. Comm. Mins. Leics. C.R.O.
 76. S.L.B. Barwell Wesleyan Day School. 1934. Leics. C.R.O.
 77. Catherine Street Council Infant School report, 1932.
 78. Ingle Street Council School, 1934.
 79-82: Northampton C.B. Ed. Comm. Mins., Northants. C.R.O.
 79. Cedar Road Council Infant. 1938.
 80. Stimpson Avenue Council Infant. 1939.
 81. St. James C.E. Infant School. 1938. Emphasis added.
 82. Barry Road Council J.M.I. School, 1938.
 83. Irchester County Infant School, Northants. report. 1938. P.R.O. Ed/21/58564.

84. Far Cotton infant school reports, 1927 and 1937.
Northampton C.B. Ed. Comm. Mins. Northants. C.R.O.
85. Elbow Lane Boys' School, Leicester, report, 1923. Leics. C.R.O.
86. St. Margaret's C.E. Boys' School, Leicester, report, 1923.
Leics. C.R.O.
87. Johnson, Hazel T. 'The new education: influences and trends in
English elementary schools 1918 - 1933'. M.A. Keele. 1971.
88. S.L.B. Sheepy Magna School. 1928. Leics. C.R.O.
89. S.L.B. Norton School. 1928. Leics. C.R.O.
90. Slater Street Council J.M. School report, 1930. Leics. C.R.O.
91. Leicester, Christow Street Council Infant School report, 1934.
92. Leicester, Granby Road Council Infant School report, 1935.
93. Leicester, Melbourne Road Council Infant School report, 1935.
94. Leicester, St. Margaret's C.E. J.M.I. School report, 1935.
95. Leicester, Moat Road Girls' Intermediate School report, 1934.
96. Leicester, St. Mark's C.E. Infant School report, 1935.
97. Leicester, Overton Road Council Infant School report, 1934.
(Notes 91 - 97 inclusive based on 19/D59/VII/434, Leics.C.R.O.)
98. S.L.B. St. Matthew's Brunswick Street C.E. School, Leicester.
Leics. C.R.O.
99. Ref. Notes 91 - 95 inclusive.
100. S.L.B. Lutton School. 1936. Northants. C.R.O.
101. S.L.B. Illston and Carlton School. 1933. Leics. C.R.O.
102. R.D. Salter Davies was the son of E. Salter Davies, Director
of Education for Kent. The father was also, in the late 1920's
Vice President of the English Section of the New Education
Fellowship. (Other Vice Presidents were J.H. Badley of
Bedales, Edmond Holmes, Cyril Burt, Lilian de Lissa, Percy
Nunn, R.H. Tawney and H.C. Dent).
The son was born in 1906 and educated at Tonbridge and Mag-
dalen College. He then went on to the London Day Train-
ing College, presumably during the period when Nunn was
influential there. According to Mr. D.C. Roland of the
Records Dept. of the D.E.S., Salter Davies was active in
Leicester and its surrounding area from 1936 to 1939, when
he became "Inspector, Leicester University College, T.E."
He retired as Chief Inspector in 1968. He was awarded the
C.B.E. as was his father. He died in May, 1984.
103. Leicester, King Richard's Road Council Infant School report, 1938.
104. Leicester, Mantle Road Council Infant School report, 1937,
105. Leicester, Belper Street Council Infant School report, 1938.
106. Leicester, Caldecote Road Council Infant School report, 1938.
107. ibid.
108. Evington C.E. J.M.I. School report, 1938.
(Notes 103 - 108 inclusive based on 19/D59/VII/434, Leics.C.R.O.)

109. Barrowden School, Rutland, report, 1938. Rutland Ed. Comm. Mins. Leics. C.R.O.
110. Leicester, Christow Street Council Infant School report, 1938.
111. Leicester, Newry Council Junior School report, 1939.
112. Leicester, Narborough Road Council Infant School report, 1937.
113. Leicester, All Saints C.E. J.M.I. School report, 1938.
114. Leicester, Belgrave C.E. J.M.I. School report, 1939.
115. Leicester, St. Andrew's Laxton Street C.E. School report, 1938.
116. Leicester, Evington C.E. J.M.I. School report, 1938.
117. Leicester, Newry Council Junior School report, 1939.
(Notes 110-117 based on 19/D59/VII/434, Leics. C.R.O.)
118. S.L.B. Oakham C.E. School, Rutland. 1938. Leics. C.R.O.
119. Other notable reports by Salter Davies were:
 - Barton in the Beans, 1937. (S.L.B. Leics. C.R.O.)
 - Husbands Bosworth, 1937. (S.L.B. Leics. C.R.O.)
 - St. Andrew's C.E. Laxton Street, Leicester
(Infant and Std. I) (19/D59/VII/434, Leics. C.R.O.)

Section III The practice. (Continued).

Chapter 7 Other school visitors.

1. Introduction.
2. The parents.
3. Clergy and other school managers.
4. Diocesan Inspectors of
 Religious Instruction.

1. Introduction.

It is, upon consideration, incredible that it is only within the past twenty years that an earnest attempt has been made to provide practising teachers with opportunities with in-service training and education. For all preceding generations of teachers, whether certificated after a training college course or after attendance at a pupil-teacher centre, or uncertificated or merely a supplementary teacher possessing a vaccination certificate, the opportunities for professional development were extremely limited. In most cases, even as late as the 1930's and the 1950's, the most valuable courses which were run by the Board of Education and its successor, the Ministry of Education, and which lasted for a week or so at a university or college, were reserved for senior staff with prospects of promotion ahead.

It is therefore even more incredible that in most local education authorities between the wars, and certainly in the South East Midlands, the teachers were given hardly any guidance from the day they completed their training, if any, until the day they retired apart, no doubt, from a few tips on class management and motivation when first appointed from their older and wiser colleagues.

As has been shown, neither directors of education nor their subordinates appeared to feel that any guidance or support, beyond what each head teacher could give, was necessary. If they were at all concerned, then they apparently believed that the periodical incursions of H.M. Inspectors like educational comets were adequate guidance, direction and supervision.

Adult visitors to the schools were somewhat rare when in most instances every teacher in the school was teaching full-time; when there was rarely a staff room or other social area; when timetables

were sacred; when travel was more difficult than it is today; when telephones were a rarity; and when parents were welcomed only on special occasions such as Christmas concerts and open afternoons.

Of the groups of adults who did succeed in crossing the threshold, parents tended to inhibit educational development; managers (who were predominantly the clergy in church schools) often helped to make school life more enjoyable than it would have otherwise been but in general preferred schools to remain rooted in the past; and diocesan inspectors, in spite of their forbidding title, encouraged small but distinctly progressive educational improvements.

2. The parents

If parents came unannounced they were almost invariably seeking satisfaction for some wrong, real or greatly exaggerated, suffered by one of their own children. When so many teachers lived nearby, often in school houses adjacent or attached to the schools themselves, they were never safe from verbal, and occasionally, even physical, attack.

"A woman named Mrs. Ratcliffe came to school this morning using insulting language and threatening to do violence towards the new Assistant Teacher and myself because I had punished her boy for misbehaviour and disobedience towards his teacher and inciting other children to do likewise." 1

Mrs. Ratcliffe's disapproval had direct educational consequences and may well have restricted educational development, for in the following year the young assistant was eased out of her post by H.M. Inspector and the local education authority and replaced by "an older and more staid woman."

In another village the Holman family protested when a more interesting and less Victorian curriculum was introduced: they objected to the teaching of print writing, "drill" and handwork, and kept the children at home working on the farm on the pretext that parents could teach all that needed to be known. The children returned to school

under protest but the son was persistently rude to the teachers because he wished to provoke them to expel him.²

The humane and liberal headmaster, William Watts, also found parents an irksome restraint. He wrote:

"....as an example of the pettifogging interference of the parents a mother called at dinner time because I had spoken to her daughter during the morning for talking and inattention."

Six months later he returned to the subject in his log book:

"In spite of my thirty years' service in the school, during which time the most considerate discipline has been maintained, it is still almost impossible to inflict the most moderate of deserved corporal punishment without ensuring trouble with the parents. A boy was punished today for a flagrant breach of conduct and later I had to submit to an interview with the mother who disputed my judgment in the matter."³

At Charwelton in 1927 a mother complained because her daughter had been given six spellings to learn. She also insisted that the girl was not capable of composition, but only copy-writing. She "could not be reasoned with."⁴

The Norton Juxta Twycross log book contains a brief but graphic entry:

"The Pupil Teacher and monitress both absent this morning, having had to attend the police court at Market Bosworth. (The pupil teacher was assaulted in the road by the mother of one of the infants, and her father prosecuted the woman, the monitress being called as witness....)"⁵

At Everdon in 1932 the headmaster was troubled by a sudden spate of rudeness, gross disobedience and time wasting. He moved certain children into new places, with the following results:

First child: "Mother says I am not to sit next to Marjory Smith because her breath smells."

Second child: "Mother says that Vincent is not to sit next to Marjory Smith because she has lice in her hair."

Third child: "Mother says that John is not to sit next to Bernard Isham: if he does she will keep him away from school."⁶

Much of the tension between teachers and parents arose through a differing order of priorities. The following two entries, both for the year 1917 and both from the log book of Shakespeare Street Girls' School,

Loughborough, show a lack of understanding on the part of the teachers:

"There are certainly a few genuine cases of illness but the majority are simply cases of defiance. One case especially, where the girl has been absent for a full fortnight simply because her father has been home from France."

"The attendance this morning is wretched. Many of the mothers are standing in a queue of about 400 persons, trying to secure a bit of margarine, the girls being kept at home to mind the babies." ⁷

During the 1930's the amount of friction between parents and teachers seems to have declined from its earlier level, which had apparently been almost constant since the first log book evidence of the 1860's. The removal of older children from many local schools not only caused disciplinary problems and consequent punishment and recrimination to decrease, but limited the parents' opportunities for hot-blooded assaults on the citadels of education. They had, on the whole, more respect for the teachers in the senior schools, who were in any case more remote from them than the teachers in the village schools who often were members of local families, a situation rich with opportunities for jealousy, suspicion and dark murmurings of "Who does she think she is?"

But the risk of "unpleasant scenes" could never be entirely removed:

"Miss B. was waylaid by Mrs. Smith on her way home last night, who alleged among other things that she was 'no good as a teacher and should not be in this school'."

"Miss B. canes a girl for running home. Later mother rushes into school and removes daughter. I warned her that her mark would be cancelled, upon which she called me, among other things, a 'bloody sod'".⁸

There is no evidence to suggest that parents were ever encouraged to become more knowledgeable partners in the education of their children. Their rare efforts to support the local schools were almost always in the face of a proposed change affecting the children, something which was presented to them as a new opportunity but was seen as a threat:

"The parents came today at different times to express their disapproval of advice concerning scholars and every one of them refuses to let them walk the distance (to senior departments at Syston or Sileby). Their excuses are many and varied but they argue that they are quite pleased with the instruction given at the village school and the scholars themselves are so happy⁹ in their school hours that they wish them to remain."

3. Clergy and other school managers

It has been customary to see the church school as the poor and unfortunate relative when compared with the nineteenth century board schools and the later county schools, and in many material respects such a view can be easily defended. However, the majority of church schools enjoyed one great advantage, namely, the local clergy. For the fortunate church school, the vicar was the one and only person who could be relied upon to give aid, support and comfort in innumerable ways particularly in helping with the scripture teaching and in maintaining the building and supporting the staff as chairman of the managers. He could ease the onerous responsibilities of the isolated head teacher by being a kind of joint leader in the school, as some examples can show: the Vicar of Carlton helped the boys dig a trench to drain the playground;¹⁰ the Rector of Ashley gave prizes for the best-grown hyacinths, having no doubt provided the bulbs as well;¹¹ the Vicar of Moreton Pinkney also gave hyacinth bulbs, and his wife invigilated at the "Bird and Tree" competition;¹² the Vicar of Kilby not only taught twice a week, thus providing welcome relief for the teacher and a different voice for the children to listen to, but often took apples and other garden produce for them.¹³

Notable examples also include: Frisby on the Wreake, where the vicar was able to take over all the teaching when the teacher was ill;¹⁴ Gumley, where the Rector contributed to a fund so that all the children could go to the seaside;¹⁵ Burton Overy; Gaulby; Illston and Carlton; Queniborough, visited regularly by one vicar from 1920 until 1946; Stoney Stanton; Sweptstone; Ratcliffe on the Wreake; Lilford and

Thorpe Mandeville. The following tribute is from the Newton Broms-wold log book:

"The Rector also generously distributed sweets on Friday morning last to celebrate his birthday amongst them....

He leaves the Parish on Monday next to take up an appointment at Bethnal Green, London.

He has shown the keenest possible interest in the workings of the school throughout his residence amongst us; and his departure is causing very sincere regret. He has been a welcome visitor in every home." ¹⁶

Some clergymen introduced interesting visitors to their schools, particularly missionaries home on leave, but it was their own presence which was the greatest asset to the school. The Vicar of Kilby taught from around 1898 until 1945;¹⁷ the Vicar of Sheepy Magna sometimes taught three times a week;¹⁸ at Fotheringay successive vicars, the Revs. Croyden-Burton, father and son, gave excellent help and a lady of the same name was always prepared to act as supply-teacher in an emergency.¹⁹

Some schools were lucky enough to have additional patrons who made school life a little more varied and interesting and by their very presence must have had a beneficial effect on school morale. Examples include Captain Everard at Ratcliffe on the Wreake; Captain Bellville at Sudborough, who arrived as Father Christmas in 1923 - covered in real snow!; Col. Reid at Thorpe Mandeville, who visited the school regularly from 1922 to 1964; Commander Hunt at Wadenhoe, who paid for all the children to attend the amateur theatricals; Lady Braye of Stanford Hall who helped the Swinford school with regular and generous donations.

Perhaps it is fitting that of all the authorities in the region, Northamptonshire should have had the most generous school patrons, being renowned for the wealth and number of its country seats. At Hinton in the Hedges, Mrs. Norris of Steane Park took Parrish's Chemical Food to the pale children;²⁰ Lady Beatrice Thynne gave ordnance survey maps to the Norton schoolchildren and "offered to give all the help she can in the compiling of a map of the village";²¹ Miss Barbara

Stanley, of Sibbertoft Manor, sometimes went to London Zoo with the children and on another occasion gave prizes for essays on the subject of her beautiful garden.²²

On the whole, the great majority of council schools had no similar advantage, and their corporate lives and log books were therefore correspondingly duller. There was only one notable exception: Lord Henley kept a close and helpful watch on Watford Council School and introduced a family friend, Miss Houghton of the Dalcroze School of Eurhythmics in 1933. She gave a demonstration lesson for the children, and evening classes for the teachers every night for a week.²³

By contrast, Blatherwyke Council School had no visitors at all for many years, apart from the attendance officer.

4. Diocesan Inspectors of Religious Instruction.

In spite of their title, the diocesan inspectors were in fact the true "pollen carriers" in the elementary schools between the wars. They were senior local clergymen, usually with school responsibilities of their own in their home parishes, and often personal friends of the clergymen whose schools they visited, so that each visit marked a "red letter day". The diocesan inspectors were the only group to visit the schools with progressive educational views on the place of drama, art, model making and plasticine work in the learning of young children. They were prepared to give specific advice, unlike H.M. Inspectors, whose criticism was rarely constructive and detailed.

The diocesan inspectors had the knack of appealing to the children's interests and eliciting good responses, cheerful alertness and enthusiasm:

"Only a few children, but quite wide awake even on a hot afternoon and at once on friendly footing with a stranger; so my questions produced ready answers." ²⁴

Unlike H.M. Inspector, the diocesan inspectors often taught a lesson themselves first, and then tested the results, or they would ask the

children to write their own prayers or illustrate their favourite hymns. Above all, they established a good relationship with the children. There is therefore often a great divergence between the two sets of reports, with the religious one affectionate and approving, and the secular one damning with faint praise:

"....the interest and attention given us and the teachers.... were delightfully invigorating and we all felt throughout our inspection how keen the teachers and children were...."

"...the children appear to be naturally somewhat apathetic."

Both of the above reports refer to Hugglescote Infant School in the same year, 1923. The same log book contains further illuminating examples:

"....it was a joy to be with the children. Their singing of hymns....their happy response and keen answering, their delight in their lessons, were all so real. They knew their stories, applied principles and said their texts thoroughly well."

(Diocesan report, 1925)

"There is reason to hope that the very backward 'streak' of children in Standard I may not recur in the future..."

(H.M.I.'s report, 1926)

"Many of the older children in Class I appear slow mentally and unable to concentrate for any length of time."

(H.M.I.'s report, 1929)

Similar contrasts can be multiplied: at Dodford a poor H.M.I.'s report is followed by a diocesan report stating, "It is as good a school as any I have visited in the country;"²⁵ at Congerstone the H.M.I.'s report asserted that "the children are slow and not very responsive" and in the same year the diocesan inspector found them "bright, interested and attentive."²⁶

The diocesan inspector recommended pictures and interesting activities, and was willing to discuss any point of doctrine or pedagogy after the children had left:

"I am glad the children are allowed to express themselves in Clay Modelling and Crayon Drawing."²⁷

"I was particularly pleased with their knowledge of the interior of their parish church and the use of its furniture."²⁸

"The little ones were most keen to answer. They had an excellent model of a desert scene which they took great delight in pointing out to me. Also a missionary model. Such apparatus does help in the teaching of scripture."²⁹

"I would advise the constant use of Bible Pictures, also that the children be allowed to express themselves in crayon drawing or other modern handwork methods." ³⁰

Diocesan inspectors recommended the use of individual Bibles and prayer books in schools where every lesson had apparently been entirely oral, with no printed words at all in front of each child to aid understanding. Frequently, too, the point was made that no teacher could successfully interest an entire all-age school, or even a primary school with children aged from four to eleven, and that "sectional methods" involving practical, absorbing work for the youngest groups was essential. Frequently, phrases in the reports showed that real contact had been made with the pupils and the teachers: "We discussed..."; "I drew on the blackboard...."; "After a lesson on angels, I asked.."; "We had a very useful conference on the principles of the presentation of lessons and on the method of inspection, which, as conducted this morning, was approved," ³¹

"I was particularly charmed with the hymn which they sang: 'Wise men seeking Jesus'. It was good to know that they owe this hymn to a past inspection and that it has become a favourite.....I promised to ³²take the hymn to the children of All Saints Parish there as a gift from Sibson children..."

I gave the upper and middle group a lesson on Leaders.... their interest was delightful....Not only is excellent teaching being given to these children but sound character training as well..." ³³

No council school children and teachers ever received that kind of praise and encouragement, which must have meant a great deal to someone working in a small school in conditions of remarkable isolation when compared with other groups of adult workers.

Diocesan reports often paid tribute to the work of the incumbent of the parish. This was well-deserved, for not only did he sustain the teachers and maintain the fabric of the school, but he also appointed the staff. Clergy who took a close interest in their schools seemed to have the knack of selecting and retaining good teachers.

In conclusion, it must be admitted that there is no indication whatsoever that the progressive, fruitful teaching methods praised and recommended by the diocesan inspectors were ever extended as a matter of policy into other school subjects. It seems that scripture was free to develop because it was protected from being examined by H.M. Inspector and because it was not used as a subject to be tested in connection with secondary school selection.

Ironically, the one subject which the early elementary schools had seen as essential, and for which reading was at first taught, was no longer included among the "fundamental", "basic", "essential" elements of the curriculum. Reading, writing and arithmetic were no longer the tools of education and enlightenment, but had become ends in themselves.

Notes to Chapter 7.

1. S.L.B. Stoke Golding School. 1928. Leics. C.R.O.
2. S.L.B. Burton Overy School. 1920. Leics. C.R.O.
3. S.L.B. Somerby School. 1924. Leics. C.R.O.
4. S.L.B. Charwelton School. 1927. Northants. C.R.O.
5. S.L.B. Norton Juxta Twycross School. 1926. Leics. C.R.O.
6. S.L.B. Everdon School. 1932. Northants. C.R.O.
7. S.L.B. Shakespeare Street Girls' School, Loughborough, 1917. Leics. C.R.O.
8. S.L.B. Swinford School. 1943 and 1945 respectively. Leics.C.R.O.
9. S.L.B. Ratcliffe on the Wreake School, 1923. Leics. C.R.O.
Parental support was a notable feature of this school. It had been encouraged by Louisa Burrows in the years 1909 and 1910. She is best remembered as one of D.H. Lawrence's fiancées. His letters to her over this period contrast her life as the sole teacher of a village school with his drudgery in a large school in Croydon.
(Boulton, J.T. ed. Lawrence in love: letters to Louie Burrows. University of Nottingham. 1968).
10. S.L.B. Carlton School. 1921. Leics. C.R.O.
11. S.L.B. Ashley School. 1927. Northants. C.R.O.
12. S.L.B. Moreton Pinkney School. 1926. Northants. C.R.O.
13. S.L.B. Kilby School. Leics. C.R.O.
14. S.L.B. Frisby on the Wreake. 1926. Leics. C.R.O.
15. S.L.B. Gumley School. 1923. Leics. C.R.O.
16. S.L.B. Newton Bromswold School. 1934. Northants. C.R.O.
17. S.L.B. Kilby School. The year 1898 is assumed from references in the log book which commenced in 1912. No earlier volume is extant. Leics. C.R.O.
18. S.L.B. Sheepy Magna School. Leics. C.R.O.
19. S.L.B. Fotheringay School. Northants. C.R.O.
20. S.L.B. Hinton in the Hedges School. 1925. Northants. C.R.O.
21. S.L.B. Norton School. 1932. Northants. C.R.O.
22. S.L.B. Sibbertoft School. 1926, 1935, etc. Northants. C.R.O.
23. S.L.B. Watford Council School. 1933. Northants. C.R.O.
24. S.L.B. Charwelton School. 1927. Northants. C.R.O.
25. S.L.B. Dodford School. 1923. Northants. C.R.O.
26. S.L.B. Congerstone School. 1926. Leics. C.R.O.
27. S.L.B. Charwelton School. 1924. Northants. C.R.O.
28. S.L.B. Arthingworth School. 1930. Northants. C.R.O.

29. S.L.B. Abthorpe School. 1930. Northants. C.R.O.
30. S.L.B. Tilton on the Hill School. 1923. Leics. C.R.O.
31. The final quotation is from Burton Overy S.L.B. 1923. Leics. C.R.O.
32. i.e., in Northampton.
33. S.L.B. Sibson School. 1923. In this case, as occurred in a minority of inspections, the inspector (never "inspectress") was Miss M. Robinson. Leics. C.R.O.

Further points of interest.

- a. There were other minor groups of visitors to schools, but they tended to go to the successful schools only, so they probably only reinforced current practice but did not encourage it to develop further:

inexperienced or old-fashioned teachers were sent to the better schools for a week or a fortnight in order to receive a "crash course" in more modern methods;

Taylor County Infant School, Leicester, attracted notable visitors: in 1936 Ald. Sir William Williams, Cardiff's director of education; in 1937, head teachers from Luton, Hayes, Melton Mowbray, Oxford and Auckland, New Zealand; students from Cheltenham (who sometimes sent boxes of flowers) and Miss Freda Hawtrey, principal, Avery Hill Training College, who came to see the mealtimes.
(S.L.B., Leics. C.R.O.).

- b. Not every clergyman cared for his school, but only one provoked a question in the House of Commons:

"Question in the House, 6th. May, 1936:

Mr. Robert Morrison - To ask the President of the Board of Education if he will ascertain whether the School Managers of Naseby, Northampton, have held any meetings since the year 1931, and if so, what was the date of the last meeting, and for what reasons are regular meetings not held.

Mr. Oliver Stanley - I have ascertained that no meetings.... have been held since 1931. I am unaware of the reasons...."

Parker, H.M.I. to Birch-Jones, Board of Education:

"...(the vicar) quite freely admitted himself to be in the wrong, and added that there has been nothing vital to discuss....The vicar is a very pleasant man of the 'hunting parson' type, but he is too easy-going and I think rather lazy...."

(P.R.O. Ed/21/58591.)

Section III The practice. (Continued).

Chapter 8 Developments in educational practice.

1. Introduction.
2. More activities; broader experience.
3. Active and interested teachers.
4. Conclusion.

1. Introduction.

An examination of school log books, H.M. Inspectors' reports, school histories and personal accounts relating to the elementary and primary schools of the South-East Midlands between the wars of 1914-1918 and 1939-1945 reveals no direct links between "official" progressive recommendations and changes in educational priorities and practices.

Yet in spite of the apparent indifference of H.M. Inspectors and the local chief education officers to "the new orthodoxy" of child-centred education and to its propagation and encouragement, it is apparent that changes did occur in many schools during that period in the directions recommended by The handbooks of suggestions and the 1931 Hadow Report, The Primary School.

However, when placed in the context of a longer time-span, it can be seen that the changes observed are not attributable to either of the publications referred to above, but to two processes which began even before the first Handbook of suggestions was published in 1904, namely the infant school tradition of Froebel and the kindergarten, and the "special subjects" tradition of the late Victorian elementary school. The former developed steadily over a long period; the latter expanded and burgeoned rapidly as relaxations in successive Codes encouraged the teaching of a wider range of subjects and as larger school boards in their brief life brought new thinking, adequate finance, civic pride and well-equipped buildings into competition with the church schools, and led forward to the Higher Grade types of schools. Indeed, some writers would place the foundations of the "progressive school" and "new education" movements in the late nineteenth century, citing as evidence the founding of a Child Study Society in London in 1894 and the opinion found in a handbook of 1899 that

"It is difficult to believe that there ever existed a

prejudice against play as a waste of time." ¹

It is certainly true that most of the interesting events and lessons discovered in school log books and histories were encouraged by changes in society between the wars, but they were not brought into existence by such changes, any more than they were brought into existence by changes in educational thought on a wide and profound scale. Improvements in radio and the beginning of schools broadcasting helped to broaden children's horizons - but the headmaster of Bugbrooke School was using "wireless" educationally before the First World War. Better transport encouraged more school visits between the wars - but children and their teachers had always found ways to travel on Sunday School "outings" and Chapel "treats", even if, as at Thurmaston, it was on a coal barge to Mountsorrel Lock. Northampton teachers made good use of the "Bird and Tree" competition of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds - but that had been instituted in 1903 after two years of preparation. Some schools made an educational "topic" from May Day revels - but, if anything, May Day celebrations were declining in popularity throughout the present century and "topics" certainly were not new: by 1909 James Welton had become heartily weary of such "cores" and "concentrations of studies" as Robinson Crusoe.²

There was a steadily growing intrusion of the larger world into the life of small towns and villages, and school log books are a very mine of information on that aspect of the present century. The process was not a new one: turnpike roads, canals, railways, preachers, circuses, royal progresses, cheap magazines and newspapers, bicycles, all had their effect, but in the early Twentieth Century new inventions appear to have had an immediacy and an impact on rural and provincial life greater than in earlier periods. The time lag between what the cities and the villages experienced became reduced to nothing by the radio and the telephone; the Northamptonshire children and their teachers saw

the ill-fated R.101 begin its voyage and knew of its destruction at Beauvais as soon as the rest of the nation.

It can be said, therefore, that opportunities existed in many ways for school life to become broader and more truly educational; that traditions had already been developed to encourage the grasping of such opportunities; and that almost all current educational thought was in favour. Teachers with lively, enquiring minds, delighting in pushing the bounds of education beyond the humdrum routine, and enjoying the confidence of their pupils, were able to use their opportunities to educate through experiences which also had an emotional impact; not the negative emotions of fear and anxiety but positive feelings of excitement, enthusiasm and mutual affection between teacher and pupils.

Not every teacher wished his professional life to be a voyage of discovery, preferring an existence in which H.M. Inspector was a painful intrusion even on his rare visits:

"I agree that the correction of books and entering up of records should be done daily and weekly respectively, and I am sorry that such has not been the case. However, the like will not occur again.

With regard to the Scheme it is exactly on the same lines as it has been drawn up for the last 21 years - that is the whole time I have been in charge here, and no Inspector has ever grumbled about inadequacy before.³.."

Finally, before considering some educational developments between the wars in some detail, it must be emphasised that the great majority of the interesting events recorded were for the benefit of the senior pupils, and the juniors were either excluded entirely or, in small schools, included in activities which were not entirely appropriate, leading to their often marginal involvement. This must also be borne in mind in the subsequent consideration of the educational methods of some notable headteachers in the area, for they almost invariably limited their main sphere of influence to "the top class". It is also apparent that the approved forms of "activity and experience" involved few opportunities for the children to exercise choice: the enjoyable events were organised for them, not by them.

We therefore have the curious situation in which the school life of the junior children became in many schools markedly duller at the very time when more "activity and experience" were being recommended for them, because of the effects of the previous Hadow Report of 1927 on the separation of seniors and juniors into different schools or departments. It is noticeable, too, that the schools where interesting things went on were the smaller ones where the head teachers had the advantage of a degree of freedom in which to pursue their enthusiasms. Very little of a comparable nature occurred in the larger schools of the towns and city of the South East Midlands: junior schools emerged sooner in such areas and soon became virtually ossified in their preparatory, formal role by a rigid organisation of which even the head teachers were prisoners. They were extremely busy whether they taught or not, and matters of organisation and discipline, timetable and syllabus, gave them little opportunity for enlightened educational practices, and there is no evidence whatsoever to indicate that their assistant teachers either sought such opportunities as some of their colleagues in the country districts were enjoying, or were directed towards them by their head teachers. Even infant schools in the city apparently allowed the old "nature walk" tradition to lapse, to judge by the following quotation :

"In September 1946 a party of children took a picnic to Bondman Hayes Farm at Ratby and spent an exciting and valuable day watching all that was involved in farm life, and were especially interested in the animals....
This was the first of many rewarding expeditions children were to undertake in the future." 4

2. More activities; broader experience

One valuable teaching aid unforeseen by the writers of the first versions of the Handbook of suggestions was in the realm of radio (or "wireless") and the gramophone (sometimes spelt "gramaphone" at that time). Both enabled children to hear speakers and musicians and to feel part of a wider world. The headmaster of Thurmaston School, in 1926, was

delighted when he could first hear the chimes of Big Ben in the classroom, and thus synchronise the school's two minutes' silence on Armistice Day with the ceremony at the Cenotaph. ⁵

Numerous schools listened to the King's Naval Review in 1935, and to the accession of Edward VIII in 1936. In that same year the launching of the "Queen Mary" was equally popular, and teachers commented on the reality of the sounds on the slipway. In 1937 the University Boat Race was so much enjoyed at Moreton Pinkney School that the Vicar suggested listening to the Grand National as well - but on mature reflection the Headmistress declined the opportunity! ⁶

As one might expect, enthusiasm for the new medium sometimes got out of hand, even though listening was often attended with difficulties such as poor reception or uncomfortable, crowded listening conditions in the head teacher's private sitting room next door to the school:

"1938 - From January 24th. (Monday next) a temporary timetable will be tried out as alterations in the existing timetable are necessary because certain School Broadcasts will be heard, viz, Regional Geography, World History, Nature Study, Our Village and Topical Talks, also Music and Movement." ⁷

H.M. Inspectors, always somewhat suspicious of new developments, were soon asking for discretion and judicious selection in the choice of programmes, but there is no doubt that school broadcasts introduced a new dimension into school life and helped to open up cracks in the traditionally monolithic timetable. The following log book entry captures something of the excitement brought by the new experience, in spite of technical difficulties:

"Dec. 19, 1923. Wireless Concert. An Up To Date Christmas Treat. The elder scholars (21) were entertained to a wireless concert at Thrapston,....They had the marvellous experience of listening to concerts being performed in London, Birmingham, Glasgow - even Paris! Though the latter was not very clear as the music was constantly interrupted by morse signals from ships passing up and down the English Channel." ⁸

The gramophone not only made country dancing lessons more popular, but encouraged music appreciation lessons in many schools. Around 1930 Mr. W.J. Hands, formerly a local H.M.I., became the representative of

the Columbia Gramophone Company, and was given somewhat grudging permission by Northamptonshire Education Committee to visit the schools he had previously called on in his former capacity. He offered a gramophone and some Beethoven records in an essay competition and a considerable number of schools took part.

The gradual development of motor transport not only permitted the expansion of centralised secondary and senior schooling, but also provided more opportunities for school journeys like the following:

"Last Saturday I took 16 of the older scholars to Leicester. We first visited the fire station and were shown round. The children were most interested; many of them had never before seen a fire engine. We afterwards proceeded to the Museum where the Roman remains, the living creatures and the stuffed animals claimed chief attention. From there to a children's Country Dance Festival, and to end the day we visited the 'Scouts' Jamboree, where some of the older brothers were camping." ⁹

An entry for June, 1934, in the Keyham log book, shows how much of an educational nature could be crammed into a school half day with the aid of a bus:

"Friday....We set out at 1.30 by bus for an out-door Geography Lesson passing through Beeby, Barkby, Syston (Fosse Road) to Cossington, saw Lord Kitchener's house - through Sileby to Mountsorrel Granite Quarries - round Swithland Reservoir - on through Woodhouse to Beacon Hill - climbed it - noting surroundings - through Charnwood Forest to the Monastery - saw 6 brothers at work - the church ; their garden - the bee hives - cows - cemetery. Returned to Bradgate Park, arriving 5.30," ¹⁰

At Whilton School special arrangements were made for the younger children in 1933: they went to Stratford upon Avon with their mothers, while the seniors visited Liverpool, Port Sunlight and New Brighton and saw the White Star liner, "Britannia", ¹¹ Holdenby School children had quite frequent "outings" to Hunstanton, Cleethorpes, Skegness, Portsmouth and Yarmouth, ¹² The Fotheringay headmistress conducted tours with small groups of children who saved up their money so that they could take part in visits to London in 1934 and 1935, ¹³ The headmistress of Cold Ashby ran a cycling club, and the young members cycled as far as Stratford upon Avon in 1932. Three years later she took four of the older girls on a short tour of Belgium. ¹⁴

However, the prize for school journeys must surely be awarded to the head teacher of Newton Bromswold School. She succeeded in fitting 21 consecutive annual excursions into the period between the wars, 1919 to 1939. She, the rector and numerous parents accompanied the children to such destinations as St. Neots, Woburn, Bedford, London Zoo, Wembley, Skegness, Clacton, Oxford, Felixstowe, Lillieshall Hall, Hunstanton, Southend, Great Yarmouth, Portsmouth and, finally, Brighton:

"1939. This journey completed the 21st. outing in succession. Many places of interest and many seaside towns have been visited during that period. The char-a-banc of Mr. Harry Scropton of Rushden has been responsible for the journeys from the first one." ¹⁵

Another example of the broadening curriculum aided by motor transport was the establishing of a school camp at Castle Ashby for Northamptonshire boys. H.M. Inspector insisted that the camp would have to be run "on educational lines and not merely be of a recreational character" if it were to be used in term time, ¹⁶ and the superintendent responded magnificently to the challenge, reporting in 1928 that:

"...in all cases visits have been paid to a farm, Earls Barton Church, Clay Pit and Brickworks, and the Upper Valley...The entries in the Log Book by the teachers in charge show how they value the educational side of such a school camp. Boys see School Subjects in a new light and their interest is greatly quickened by dealing with realities. They see Hygiene in practice - science applied to Machinery - Nature knowledge in its proper setting and Geography and History as subjects affecting daily life....Teachers and boys in a camp are living in open light and they see and learn far more of each other....one has ample opportunities of observing their limits and noting how cheerfully work is done when prompted by desire, which desire can be stimulated...." ¹⁷

By 1931 there was a similar camp at Muscott Hill for girls. They made expeditions to Brockhall, Flore, Whilton Locks and Brington. They observed butter-making, sheep-washing, sheep-shearing, haymaking and stacking, and milking. A special bus brought parents to visit on Thursday evenings: "there was general surprise at finding the children housed in a substantial hut". ¹⁸

Related interests for the senior pupils in Northamptonshire were the Land Utilisation Survey of 1929 and the Place Names Survey of 1932.

In contrast to Leicestershire, Northamptonshire education committee encouraged such participation wholeheartedly. It also supported the annual "Bird and Tree" competition of the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, paying a retired Assistant Secretary to read and select the scripts submitted by the schools of the county. When the selector commented adversely on some of the work submitted in 1926, a circular was sent to each participating school, leading to a marked improvement in the following year. In addition, the chief education officer wrote personally to congratulate the most successful schools each year. There were prizes and medals from the R.S.P.B. for the best entries, and long constructive criticisms were included:

"This is a welcome new competitor, but it is stated that nature-study has been seriously interrupted by the illness of the Head Teacher. This is where Bird and Tree work should have a special advantage, for boys and girls can go on watching for themselves out of doors for a while even without the Teacher's aid. This, the Judges think, is what must have happened at Lowick Charity, for the essays are quite well done....and a good deal of original observation is indicated. The best is Norah Tooley's account of the Hazel.....
Of the bird papers Jack Homewood's wren is conspicuously the best. It is good to hear that in this village the Wren is very tame; it is so generally described as very shy, and this often tells a story as to whether the birds are persecuted or not....." 19

Such encouraging commentaries are to be found copied into many log books with H.M. Inspectors' reports and Diocesan Inspectors' reports including Cold Higham (1915), Holdenby (1924), Clapton, Maidford, Fotheringay and Ashby St. Ledgers (all taking part regularly) and Sibbertoft. The "decapitation" of a school was no handicap, and the last-named school, having lost its seniors in 1928, won two medals in 1931 for studies of the thrush and the lime tree by pupils who were "the next to youngest in the county". 20

The competition was last reported to the Northamptonshire Education Committee in 1938, and after that date preoccupation with such matters as air raid precautions appeared to force it out. However, by then the competition had shown what children could do on their own with

a little encouragement, leading to:

"...a marked and continuous advance in the quality of Northamptonshire papers, outdoor observations taking the place of bookwork, or results derived from lessons." ²¹

In spite of the Bird and Tree Competition, star study and flower collecting, school visits and journeys, and a practical, lively approach to religious education, the compartmentalised, traditional timetable seemed to dominate daily routines in most schools in the South East Midlands between the wars. The interesting events were treats, or exceptions to the trivial round, the common task (in the sense of being the same for every pupil regardless of individual differences), and remained isolated from the curriculum.

Similarly, with most entries in school log books which throw a sudden brightness across the dull routine: they are of historical or sociological significance and are therefore almost exclusively the items selected by compilers of school histories, scrapbooks and exhibitions, but their effect on changes and developments in education is slight. Some of the most interesting entries to be found in the local log books for the period between the wars could just as easily refer to the previous century: nature walks on mild winter days; attending meets of the local hounds; watching the lead being re-cast for the church roof; visiting a new dam; watching a man take a swarm of bees; rising at 5 a.m. to see an eclipse of the sun.

Some entries are irrelevant but irresistible: in 1934 the Ashley children were weighed in the local bakehouse to check the benefit of free milk; ²² at Sproxton the children made interesting models, including a working tortoise; ²³ Stoke Doyle school received a reprieve from permanent closure in 1920 when it was pointed out that ten men had gone from the village to fight in the Great War and only two had returned. ²⁴

3. Active and interested teachers

The activity and interest encountered in school life between the wars was derived almost exclusively from the work of teachers who had a broad view of the scope and content of education. They were not typical of any particular time and place, but were of a kind with Richard Dawes of Kings Somborne, whose study of Rousseau encouraged him to develop his own "project methods" and practical approach to learning in the 1840's.²⁵ They were men and women who went beyond the assertion of authority and the inculcation of facts and attempted to provide an education which encouraged emotional, social and physical development in their pupils. They avoided "inert knowledge", dullness, excessive punishment and monotony not only for the children's sakes, but because they derived pleasure from exercising a wider role with deeper relationships.

The obvious point has already been made that not all teachers craved excitement, enthusiasm and variety in their daily work. Attitudes varied greatly from teacher to teacher and from school to school, as can be seen from a brief examination of four aspects of school life: punishment; sport in school time; May Day festivals; and the treatment of backward children.

Punishment certainly seems more directly to relate to the teacher's attitude and ability than to the children's behaviour. At Cransley, for example, the punishment book and school log book show steady caning for minor offences from 1907 to 1947 unaffected by "decapitation" (of the school!) or even by changes of head teacher, suggesting that the managers selected a certain kind of head teacher each time a vacancy arose.²⁶ Other schools never recorded any punishments, and although that in itself proves nothing, the tone of the log books, especially the final entries of retiring or resigning head teachers, shows how strong the positive relationships were:

"After working at Holdenby Council School for more than 16 years I relinquish my duties here today.

For my part I have only pleasure upon which to look back. The managers, parents, and all who have in any way been associated with the school have been wonderful - just kindness itself - and with the co-operation of them all the children and I have had indeed a very happy time. Ruth Leadbetter. May 18th, 1945." ²⁷

Hemington C.E. School punishment book contains accounts of slaps given in 1932 to girls for "carelessness and disobedience" and "stubbornness" which indicate in their long justificatory entries that the girls concerned were quite incapable of learning or remembering because of their limited mental ability. Nine further punishments are recorded in the following year, but on the following page a new teacher has written:

"No punishments given. None needed. Feb.1934-Sept.1936" ²⁸

The same divergence of attitudes in teachers can be illustrated by the responses of various Northampton head teachers when they were asked by the education committee in 1931 to give their views on the place of organised games in school time. Answers ranged from:

"....it causes too much pressure on the ordinary school subjects. Children have many opportunities out of school for organised games, etc. there is no need for the extra demands made..."

to

"I think in years past the children's work in school was too dull and cheerless and Organised Games have brought the desirable change. The boys like them and if they are not overdone they are beneficial...."

and

"If the whole of the Senior Scholars were allowed one afternoon a week as in Secondary Schools the value would be inestimable..." ²⁹

Head teachers' views on the nature and scope of education showed no sign of becoming less divergent. Absences for May Day revels often led to angry comments in the log books of Northamptonshire schools, while other head teachers either avoided conflict by officially closing the school for the day, or even organised and assisted the revellers. Comparatively recent research shows the extent of the missed educational opportunities ³⁰ with only very few schools in the county making use

of the festival as a link with history or geography, art poetry or music. Nature study was incorporated at only one school,³¹ even though in every one of the 77 schools taking part, the gathering and display of living material was always a conspicuous feature. Head teachers were found to lack real understanding of the history and significance of May Festivals and therefore did not feel competent to offer opinions on their educational value. Many were indifferent or cynical, possibly jealous of other teachers or adjacent villages. Many were at loggerheads with the parents who "merely want to dress up their children" in a "glamorous function so-called". Others resented the day lost from school, or deprecated the begging element present in house-to-house or street collections.

With a brave indiscretion the researcher identifies his sources for such comments as:

"I am wondering what educational purposes would be served if I were to inform you of the May Day activities of the above school."

"...it is necessary to apologise to the parents for ordinary school work 'going a little by the board' "

"This school is now a one-teacher school so I have to do all the work myself. When I came two of these children could read passably, so I have concentrated on the 3 R's." ³²

The writer concludes with the recommendation that the education committee should actively encourage May Festivals as a legitimate part of the curriculum, bringing joy and emotional content to the school work which conspicuously lacked such qualities:

"It is surprising how many teachers have confided to the writer that they are hesitant to organise May Ceremonies in case they are accused of not 'working' by parents, managers and officialsIn other instances, a smugness in insisting that the school concentrates on the 3 R's is used as an excuse to deprive the pupils of all emotional satisfaction in their education." ³³

Finally, the treatment of children in "backward classes" can be particularly revealing of teachers' attitudes, for in that situation the class teachers had a degree of freedom unguessed at by their colleagues who taught the 'A' and 'B' streams. The extracts which follow are both

written by the same H.M.I. in the same year about two classes within the same city:

"Green Lane Council School. Special Class (Senior Boys)"

This class is far and away the best in Leicester. The reason for this is to be found in the peculiar ability shewn by the teacher in dealing with the backward and retarded boy. He has developed, and continues to develop, many new lines of approach by means of which to draw out the latent intelligence of each of the boys; his knowledge of their past, their conditions and their present, long after they have left school, is quite exceptional. It can be said that without doubt, any backward or retarded boy who passes through this teacher's hands could not possibly be looked after better. The school and the district on which it draws are indeed fortunate in having this Master on the staff."

"Harrison Road Council Senior Girls' School Special Class"

The classroom in which these girls spend nearly all their time is the barest in the school; this appears regrettable in view of the large part that can well be played in the education of these girls by the use of illustrative material....there is certainly a lack of interest in the teaching". 34

A brief account of what went on in the livelier schools of the South East Midlands must begin with the work of William Watts in the dull, north-facing village school building standing in Somerby's narrow main street, where he was headmaster from 1897 to 1933. Watts emphasised the importance of "concrete experiences" in arithmetic and commended his new infant teacher whose lessons had become "more varied and interesting". He joined in the playground games and kept in touch with the youths who had left school through the Young Men's Institute. When in 1920 a youth came into the playground and put a live rat down a child's back, the culprit turned to Watts himself for help in writing a letter to forestall legal proceedings. From 1923 onwards Watts did his best to obtain more freedom of expression and independent work from his older pupils, and to make school life brighter and richer. In a way his success brought additional problems: Somerby became a kind of "central school" for the senior pupils from smaller neighbouring schools and some of them were not accustomed to doing as they were told or asked. Watts tried to provide some form of handwork by lending his own meagre toolset and by encouraging the boys to bring their own fret-

work and Meccano to school, when he was impressed by their unexpected ability and the interest shown by the rest of the class. By 1925 Watts was noting increased co-operation and consultation with parents and prospective employers, and numerous visits from old scholars. He attributed the lack of friction to the daily talks he gave in time he could hardly spare on all kinds of topics of concern and interest to children soon to leave school for good.

"Although no immediate results appeared to be forthcoming, 'I have kept the flag flying'".³⁵

Miss Cawood, headmistress of Hemington School from 1922 to 1931 encouraged her senior pupils to follow their own interests, even if it meant permitting them to spend days at a time on fretwork or making boys' suits.³⁶ Successive head teachers at Fotheringay made concerts, dancing displays and prize givings, (which rewarded almost every pupil for something he or she could do well), a central part of education. The girls danced in tunics which they had made, decorated with tudor roses which they had embroidered, and refreshments for the guests were cooked by the girls in the kitchen of the school house.³⁷

Clapton had a similar tradition. The children performed extracts from "A Midsummer Night's Dream", "Little Women", "A Christmas Carol" and Murray's translation of Hippolytus to H.M. Inspector in 1927. Open days were arranged annually and performances of singing games, morris dancing, sword dancing and country dancing were given at local fetes, the music being provided by a school band of piper, drummer and accordionist. Girls who had recently left school returned voluntarily to help with dressing and make-up. At the 1931 open day:

"All items presented were drawn from the ordinary work of the children and included songs, country dances, drill, boxing displays by the boys and an original play, 'Ancient and Modern' (1831 and 1931) written and produced by Doris Farrington aged 11 with the collaboration of Daisy Carter aged 13. The two girls had no assistance of any kind in the production and their presentation of Great Aunt Anne criticising the modern girl was most convincing...."³⁸

Lowick Charity School enjoyed somewhat similar activities as Fotheringay, but the former was also renowned for its "Bird and Tree" entries with their first-hand, well informed contents. Developments were cut short with the sudden death in 1932 of the headmistress, Miss N. Jervis. 39

Good teachers could not be distinguished as young or newly-trained or appointed. Miss S.M. King was headmistress of Ashby St. Ledgers School from 1915 to 1946. Excellent May Day celebrations, and annual open days from 1922 had a good effect on the whole curriculum and were advantageous in "securing the interest and co-operation of the parents." 40 No complaints by parents or punishments were ever recorded - all seemed to go along happily all the time, though no doubt sometimes the idyll was interrupted by short and sudden storms. The children entered sports competitions, music festivals and the "Bird and Tree" competition, and Miss King saw that the library boxes delivered to the village were well used and changed periodically.

Newton Bromswold School had its own unique and valuable features, including lace making, and woodwork lessons given in his barn by the headmistress's husband with the reluctant and anxious permission of the chief education officer and H.M. Inspector. 41

Abthorpe's J.W.Y. Bannard devised a "project" around Shakespeare's tercentenary in April 1916. Two months later a short school journey was used as the stimulus for a week's work and the production of booklets. The journey included church visits and talks on architecture; an organ recital by Bannard himself; a picnic meal in a forest; a ramble by the Grand Junction Canal; tea and entertainment at Passenham Rectory and boating on the river. Nature Study in 1917 - 1918 was taken out of doors in the school garden, in the fields and by the brook. A book of local trees was made, with pairs of children each studying one species. Bannard encouraged visiting speakers; letter writing to other schools;

the full "project" treatment of Ascension Days, Armistice Days, Empire Days. A reading of "Ivanhoe" followed a history lesson and was itself followed by an art lesson in which the children painted the dress of Gurth the swineherd as they imagined it. ⁴²

During his years at Abthorpe, Bannard secured remarkably high attendance: 5000 out of a possible 5054 in the Summer Quarter of 1917. Unfortunately for the village, he left in 1919 with a week-end case

"as a token of affection and a slight recognition of his work during the five years in which he has been Master."

His successor continued to maintain a good school, but with less originality, though the 1928 H.M.I. report stated that

"Good standards and happy spirits encouraged good attendance"

Some schools were permitted pleasurable and educational activities only at the end of the year, or after "the scholarship", but even such entries as the following for such a period of relaxation were rare:

"July 25. As the boys had been given many fine perch caught in the lake at Fawsley the Nature Lesson was taken for drawing these and discussion followed in the afternoon by notes on fish....

August 1. As this is the last day of school I have brought into school my Florence stove and oven also an oil boiling ring. The children brought ingredients and between us we provided bowls, spoons, pans etc. Every child made scones, cakes or jam tarts....They stayed over lunch in relays in order to get their turn cooking. Some did girdle cakes in the frying pan. The whole village seemed thrilled. The children rose to the occasion splendidly and were anxious to help one another in every way..." ⁴³

H.M. Inspector was of the opinion, after his visit to Broughton C.E. School in 1931, that conditions were likely to "endanger health and hamper progress" with four teachers in three rooms and the children in obsolete backless desks. Yet the young and vigorous headmaster made a bench and began to teach woodwork. Art, lettering, raffia work, gardening, bookbinding, wool dyeing, spinning and weaving were introduced. ⁴⁴

Other Northampton schools which fit Seaman's description of "small rural schools" which "could be extremely amiable" ⁴⁵ were Aynhoe,

Cold Ashby, Holdenby, Sibbertoft, East Haddon, Marston St. Lawrence, Whilton and Castle Ashby. H.M. Inspector visited the last-named in 1938 and commended the friendly and natural attitude of the teacher and the children, the cheerfulness and diligence, the zeal and joyous industry, the "friendly assistance given by the older girls to the infants." 46

Gertrude Foster, headmistress of Braybrooke School, who gave evidence in favour of active and lively schools to the Consultative Committee 46 had the kind of establishment which gave H.M. Inspector some qualms. He objected to the lack of records and schemes and wrote that "the school is brightly if not purposefully conducted" in 1924 — whereupon Mrs. Foster in turn objected to his report. May Festivals were regularly celebrated; radio programmes were followed from 1924 onwards and lively contacts made by letter with the broadcasters. The arrival of two epileptic pupils in 1926 gave the opportunity for a lesson on "First Aid in Epilepsy" and the collapse of the General Strike in that same year encouraged every child to celebrate by going into the playground to shout "Hurrah":

"It is most gratifying to feel that every child old enough to understand felt that this had been a terrible piece of history."
(May 12th. 1926)

Mrs. Foster did one thing recommended long before by the Rev. J.R. Blakiston, H.M.I. but rarely put into practice: she exchanged 18 copies of The Water Babies for 18 Swiss Family Robinson from Desborough School, and her children were so pleased to obtain new books that they suggested writing "thank you" letters. 47

A successful school depended so much on the qualities of its head teacher and could not often survive a change of leadership or of organisation. A few lively schools continued successfully after "decapitation", for example, Cold Ashby which maintained a good school choir and dramatic tradition; 48 Holdenby, "a well-conducted little junior school" and Ashley. In the last-named school the headmistress contin-

ued to do all the interesting things associated with the best all-age schools even when she was left with juniors only. H.M. Inspector confirmed in 1932 that all were "unquestionably happy" and he gave "unqualified praise" for the practical nature study work of rooting cuttings of various kinds of plants, and noted "unusual enterprise" in handwork, in which subject the children made cane trays and linen baskets, first cutting their own bases from plywood. ⁴⁹

The head teacher whose work extended over the entire period of the present study and beyond and who came nearest in spirit to educators like Dawes and Pestalozzi was undoubtedly Ellen Jones, headmistress of Wadenhoe School from 1915 to 1950. In favourable weather she took lessons in the playground. Experiments were conducted on heat and a boy made a successful hot air balloon. Flower drawings were encouraged and the art was commended by H.M. Inspectors. The log book abounds in such references as:

"Willie Wagstaff good at drawing flowers in colour".

"Willie Lewis is trying to overcome his stuttering".

"Children bring a penny each and have hot coca (sic) at 10.45 a.m."

"Willie Briggs has finished his engine".

"Evelyn Letts has finished her overall and is embroidering a butterfly on it."

H.M. Inspector noted in 1929, after "decapitation" that the headmistress was "zealously anxious to keep abreast of the times" so that she could "define more clearly the aims and purpose of a rural Junior school". She encouraged the children to write letters and to bring interesting pictures from the daily newspapers. The school was prompt to use the new wireless programmes and its name was announced in one programme as one of the schools which had written a good tune for a music series. The children studied caterpillars, moths, wasps and spiders in "glass homes", and watched butterflies emerge from chrysalises. They had a puppet theatre and gave shows. They did excellent work in the "Bird and Tree" competition to which Ellen Jones introduced the evacuees:

"Fred Burnell, an evacuee from Leyton, won a medal from the R.S.P.B. for his essay on the moorhen...." (1944)

Successive rectors gave unstinted assistance, and a farewell letter to Ellen Jones from "the Office" on her retirement in 1950 referred to her "unsparing and long-continued service", "the respect and affection of your old scholars" and the cordial relations always existing between all parties. 50

Successful head teachers could rarely repeat their success in a different situation. The headmaster of Waltham on the Wolds C.E. School was, according to H.M. Inspector in 1930, an outstanding teacher of senior children. They spent half of the school week on beekeeping, poultry keeping, gardening, woodwork and needlework and the time was "very well spent indeed". Bee keeping particularly was of "a standard seldom approached in any kind of school" amounting as it did to "a small scale honey factory". "Few children have the privilege of such an excellent curriculum as this."

The report hinted broadly that the headmaster deserved a larger school and more pupils and he was consequently promoted from the wolds of north east Leicestershire to the coalmining village of Bagworth in the north west of the county. The move was not a success, possibly because his new staff were not providing the early education which was required to produce the kind of senior class to which he was accustomed. The Bagworth infants were disorganised and untrained, and the juniors received a dull, formal education incapable of providing real understanding and scope for initiative.

"It is illogical of the Headmaster to maintain that the children are of a poor mental type, and therefore to keep them on a strictly regimented curriculum in the Junior classes, and yet, when they come into the Senior classes, to expect them to work on a system which can only produce satisfactory results in the upper classes of Selective Central Schools, if there

If he will only rid himself of the belief that the Bagworth children are essentially worse behaved and lower in mental ability than those of any other school..." 51

Local school histories clearly reveal the importance of the personality and interests of the teacher in the conduct of the school and the contents of the curriculum, and the transitory and changing nature of the school successes which depend on nothing but a succession of individuals who retire or resign, deteriorate or die, and "leave not a wrack behind".

"Mr. Elden....was a stern man....woe betide the boy who blotted his copy book....(his old pupils) take immense pride in their beautiful handwriting. He it was who started the school garden that Mr. Janes, his successor, brought to perfection, winning the County Gardening Shield seven times between 1923 and 1930. ...In 1934 when Mr. Maxwell became headmaster it was Music Certificates that were won, and honour was brought to the school in the Singing Festivals; and now, under Mr. Harper, the Sports Shield hangs proudly in the Senior classroom." 52

Kingsthorpe Grove School, Northampton, benefited from the presence of E.F. Leach, who led excursions and visits from before the First World War. The pupils cycled; fished; spent entire nights on "fox watches"; sang "Rock of Ages" round a cave at Matlock; frequently walked to Danes Camp, and filled the school with fossils, old books, flowers, rocks, snakes and bats. Successive head teachers appear to have preferred "highly organised whistle-stop tours" of London. 53

The history of All Saint's School, Wellingborough, details the broad curriculum for the seniors encouraged by Mr. Morris, headmaster from 1909 to 1936. 54

The consuming interest of the headmaster of Bugbrooke School, Mr. F.H. Wright, was "wireless". He fitted up his apparatus in 1909 and was able to communicate in morse with other parts of England and even with Paris, where he visited "The Eiffel Tower Wireless" as guest of honour in 1914. His senior pupils were as interested as he was, and wrote accounts of their wireless "conversations" in the school magazine, which was copied by hand and circulated not only round the village but also to relatives living in the colonies and later to local men fighting in the Great War. 55

Mr. Scattergood, headmaster of St. John the Baptist Schools, Leicester from 1890 to 1925, was especially interested in the development of "inventive handwork". When the Director of Education called in 1922, he found every child in the class working on a different project, a notable occurrence at that time. However, Mr. Scattergood retired in 1925 and his successor "was a more conventional figure" "and certainly more interested in purely academic attainments", ⁵⁶

None of the respondents to the questionnaire associated with the present study appear to have encountered interesting or inspiring teachers in their school days. They emphasise in contrast the formality, the regimentation and the monotony of their schools and the welcome interruptions provided by later wartime events. Only one writer had anything positive to record on the subject of interesting school activities:

"....in the senior master's class we were sometimes allowed to join the duffers and paint pictures and make model aeroplanes. The top class, that is, was split in two - the twenty who were to take the Annual School Examination and the twenty who did more sensible things. For the former twenty, teaching was directly to the ASE - 'intelligence' and mental arithmetic - and still only three of us passed." ⁵⁷

4. Conclusion.

The above pages have referred particularly to the talented and inspiring teachers who turned traditional schooling into a memorable and positive education and have suggested that it has always been virtually a matter of sheer luck as to whether particular children in particular schools have ever encountered that kind of teacher during the vital and formative years. Children have always been aware that "going up" to a new teacher is a matter for anxious speculation, and school managers and parents are equally concerned as they watch for signs as to whether a newly-appointed teacher is "the right sort"

The most vivid account of the harmful effects of "the wrong sort" is contained in S.J.Tyrrell's manuscript history of the village

of Eydon in Northamptonshire. Tyrrell was a local preacher and school manager, who was greatly relieved when Mr. Simcoe came back safely from the Great War, because he was a well liked and respected teacher with a penchant for operettas:

"The singers and actors in those plays are now middleaged folk; they look back on those days when they were fairies, or angels or soldiers, among their happy memories of school life."

However, Simcoe moved on and the anxious search for a good replacement ensued:

"Very seldom have I been in full accord with my co-managers. I should like to have had one teacher straight from college with ideas and the ardour of youth as an experiment. Suggest that to the Managers and they say 'But she wouldn't stay, and we must have one with experience'. Well, we had one stay 28 years.....Mrs. Evans."

According to Tyrrell, Mrs. Evans was spiteful, embittered, ungrateful, and totally dedicated to making life unhappy for her pupils, many of whom were moved to private or neighbouring village schools. The managers were so unhappy over the situation that they went to the chief education officer to see if they had grounds for dismissing Mrs. Evans because a tradesman stayed longer at her house than the time required to transact business.

"It was a fatheaded idea to begin with, but drowning men clutch at a straw they say...."

Mrs. Evans remained to dominate and depress Eydon village school until after she retired after the Second World War.

Tyrrell's description of the transformation wrought by young supply teachers who came in her place clearly shows that all the somewhat trivial aspects of school life detailed above are not peripheral but central to the wellbeing, happiness, self-confidence and progress of schoolchildren. It also shows the informed and thoughtful layman's insight into those things which make a school successful:

"What a blessing it was for the children, they will never forget Mr. Mayoe and Mr. Beech as long as they live. They went to school early, mothers couldn't keep them at home, and they did not rush home the minute they were dismissed. Their radiant faces brightened up the village street as they went

to and from school....While Mr. Beech was here I met Sarah the caretaker in the street and asked her 'How are you getting on with Mr. Beech?' 'Oh, he's topping', she said,..... 'Do you know, if I do anything for him he thanks me'.To the youngsters' astonishment he played with them in the playground and it was no trouble to get them back to their desks, for learning was fun too while Mr. Beech was here. What a demonstration there was in School Lane the day he left, the youngsters brought him presents and flowers, they surrounded his car, they laughed and they cheered, it was not easy for him to get away from his juvenile admirers....I doubt if the old school had ever seen such a spontaneous demonstration...." 58

Though few teachers were as venomous as Mrs. Evans (H.M. Inspectors wrote little about her, but praised her supplementary teacher assistant warmly for her lively manner and good relationships) a considerable number presided over dull and rigidly-organised little schools. Dingley's log book records nothing of interest from 1925 to 1953;⁵⁹ at Cransley there was steady caning from 1907 to 1947,(the record being as late as 1945 with one teacher recording some 55 punishments inflicted on a total roll of only 18 children in only eight months and her successor achieving 32 attacks in 14 months);⁶⁰ Nothing ever happened at Hargrave.⁶¹ Lilbourne became very dull as a junior school. H.M. Inspector said that the village was not interesting, but it is obvious that it was the teacher who was at fault.⁶²

Moreton Pinkney remained rigid in spite of everything, including total war. In 1939 it was recorded that "Arithmetic was deranged" when the librarian called. In 1940 it was noted more in sorrow than in anger that a boy had missed an internal examination because the vicar asked him to help mend the organ; in 1942 there was "a slight deviation from the timetable" so that some boys could carry the dentist's chair into the school. ⁶³

Would even German soldiers at the door and tanks in the playground have caused "a major deviation" from that time-honoured, impregnable timetable?

Notes to Chapter 8.

1. Lawson, John, and Silver, Harold, A social history of education in England. London. Methuen. 1973. pp. 353 - 355.
2. Welton, James, Principles and methods of teaching. 1909. Quoted in Sadler, John E. Concepts in primary education. London. Unwin. 1974. p. 138.
3. S.L.B. Marholm School. (The Soke). Cambs. C.R.O. Huntingdon. 1933.
4. 1933 - 1983. Imperial Avenue Infant School. 50 years. The school. 1983. p. 7. Emphasis added.
5. S.L.B. Thurmaston School, Leics. 1926. by kind permission of the present headmaster, Church Hill Junior School, Thurmaston.
6. S.L.B. Moreton Pinkney School. Northants. C.R.O.
7. S.L.B. Duddington School. Northants. C.R.O.
8. S.L.B. Lowick Charity School. Northants. C.R.O.
9. S.L.B. Kilby School. 1931. Leics. C.R.O.
10. S.L.B. Keyham School. 1934. Leics. C.R.O.
11. S.L.B. Whilton School. 1933. Northants. C.R.O.
12. S.L.B. Holdenby School. Northants. C.R.O.
13. S.L.B. Fotheringay School. 1934 and 1935. Northants. C.R.O.
14. S.L.B. Cold Ashby School. 1932 and 1935. Northants. C.R.O.
15. S.L.B. Newton Bromswold School. 1939. Northants. C.R.O.
16. Northants. Primary Ed. Sub. Comm. Mins. 1928. Northants. C.R.O.
17. *ibid.*
18. *ibid.*
19. The competition was first proposed in 1901, and introduced in 1903 after pilot studies in East Yorkshire and Berkshire. It was finally discontinued in 1964 on the grounds that "an essay competition had become out of date". (Annual Report, 1964, p.6) Northamptonshire always supported the competition; Leicestershire and Rutland never. Northamptonshire schools sometimes gained national awards, e.g. Victoria Council School, Wellingborough, in 1914, 1936 and 1945. Leaflet 44a (R.S.P.B. n.d.) warns against looking upon the competition as "a new task added to the over-burdened teacher and the over-taught child; something to be worked up from books for the sake of hoped-for prizes, and got rid of by an examination....take the matter as much as possible outside school walls and familiar school methods, and try what the boys and girls, with a little helpful guidance, can learn and notice for themselves." (Information kindly provided by the R.S.P.B. librarian, Mr. Ian K. Dawson).

The "long constructive criticism" is to be found copied into the log book of Lowick Charity School, 1922. Northants. C.R.O.

20. S.L.B. Sibbertoft School. 1931. Northants. C.R.O.
21. Report of the 1924 competition. S.L.B. Holdenby Parochial School. Northants. C.R.O.
22. S.L.B. Ashley School. 1934. Northants. C.R.O.
23. S.L.B. Sproxton School. Leics. C.R.O.
24. Northants. Ed. Comm. Mins. 1920. Northants. C.R.O.
25. For a brief account of Dawes' work see Curtis, S.J. and Boulwood, M.E.A. An introductory history of English education since 1800. London. University Tutorial Press. 1960. pp. 63 - 68.
26. S.L.B. and Punishment Book. Cransley School. Northants.C.R.O.
27. S.L.B. Holdenby School. 1945. Northants. C.R.O.
28. School Punishment Book. Hemington School. Northants. C.R.O.
29. Northampton C.B. Primary Ed. Sub. Comm. Mins. 1931. Northants. C.R.O.
30. Teall, D.G. 'May festivals in Northamptonshire schools'. M.Ed. Leicester. 1963.
31. Braybrooke, under a head teacher who had succeeded Gertrude Foster.
32. Teall, D.G. op.cit. pp. 218 - 220.
33. ibid. p.272.
34. Leicester City H.M.I.'s' reports. (K.J. Ritchie) 1936. Leics. C.R.O.
35. See also Appendix XII for further details of Watts' life.
36. S.L.B. Hemington School. Northants. C.R.O.
37. S.L.B. Fotheringay School. Northants. C.R.O.
38. S.L.B. Clapton School. Northants. C.R.O. Clapton is often found to be written "Clopton" just as "Wolds" and "Olds" appear to be interchangeable in what is claimed to be a local and traditional indifference to such niceties first attributable to the Anglo-Saxons.
39. S.L.B. Lowick Charity School. Northants. C.R.O.
40. S.L.B. Ashby St. Ledgers School. Quotation from H.M.I.'s report. Northants. C.R.O.
41. S.L.B. Newton Bromswold School. Northants. C.R.O.
42. S.L.B. Abthorpe School. Northants. C.R.O. See Appendix XIII for copies of some of Bannard's entries.
43. S.L.B. Everdon School. 1940. Northants. C.R.O.
44. S.L.B. Broughton School. Northants. C.R.O.
45. Seaman, L.C.B. Life in Britain between the wars. London. Batsford. 1970. p. 101.
46. S.L.B. Castle Ashby School. 1938. Northants. C.R.O.
47. S.L.B. Braybrooke School, by kind permission of the headmaster.

48. S.L.B. Cold Ashby School. Northants. C.R.O.
49. S.L.B. Ashley School. Northants. C.R.O.
50. S.L.B. Wadenhoe School. Northants. C.R.O.
- 51.. S.L.B. Bagworth School. Report of K.J. Ritchie, 1934.
Salter Davies' report of 1938 showed that nothing had
been achieved in the intervening four years.
S.L.B. Waltham on the Wolds School. Both in Leics. C.R.O.
52. Malin, E.M. Secretary, Committee of W.I. and Parish
Council. Roade: a village scrapbook. 1953. p.17. Northants.
C.R.O.
53. Edwards, S.W. compiler Kingsthorpe Grove School memoirs.
Northampton. The school. 1981. pp. 59 - 62.
54. All Saints School, Wellingborough: one hundred years, 1880-
1980. No details. Typescript.
55. Extracts from these letters, with details of local events
which show that to Wright and his pupils there was always
something of interest going on in Bugbrooke, have been
republished in an illustrated booklet by the school:
And the king passed by. n.d.(1979?)
Wright had to dismantle his wireless equipment when war
was declared in 1914.
56. Martin, Janet, A history of ST. John the Baptist Church of
England Schools, Leicester. 1881 - 1974. The school
managers. 1974. pp. 10, 11.
57. Personal letter from Mr. J.S. Dodge, who attended St. Mary's
C.E. School, Kettering, from 1935 to 1939.
58. Tyrell, S.J. unpub. typescript account of Eydon village life.
Northants. C.R.O. ZB 103/33.
59. S.L.B. Dingley School. Northants. C.R.O.
60. S.L.B. Cransley School. School Punishment Book. Northants. C.R.O.
61. S.L.B. Hargrave School. Northants. C.R.O.
62. S.L.B. Lilbourne School. Northants. C.R.O.
63. S.L.B. Moreton Pinkney School. Northants. C.R.O.

Section III The practice. (Continued).

Chapter 9 Practical restraints on
 educational development.

1. Introduction.
2. The school buildings.
3. The school organisation.
4. "Isolated and misunderstood".
5. "The Scholarship" and its effects.
6. Class size and staffing problems.

1. Introduction.

Neither the writers of the successive editions of the Handbook of suggestions nor the compilers of the 1931 Hadow Report, The Primary School, appeared to concern themselves with the practical difficulties of dissemination and implementation. They appear to have taken the view implicitly that their work had been completed before publication of their respective advisory documents. Perhaps they felt that the truths they propounded were self-evident and were bound to prevail so long as they were given the support of H.M. Inspectors, chief education officers and head teachers.

It has been shown that almost all of the H.M.I.'s and chief education officers whose sphere of influence was within the South East Midlands were much more concerned with refining existing traditional school practice rather than encouraging radical changes in line with the new orthodoxies of progressive educational thought

Could, or would, head teachers themselves assume the direct responsibility of implementing a more "child-centred" approach based on "activity and interest" in their schools - even with the written support of the Board of Education and its Consultative Committee?

All the evidence gathered from, and relating to, the local schools supports the belief that the head teachers of almost all of the larger schools, whether all-age elementary or only junior, had no desire to make great changes in the system of which they themselves had been a part since early childhood. Like the inspectors and chief education officers, and the school managers and parents, they wished only to polish and perfect the great brass-bound nineteenth-century basic elementary education machine and to drive it along "the old grooves in which they worked for so many years" without any interference from passengers suggesting new routes, vague destinations, and fun en route.

Edmond Holmes' strictures on local school inspectors who had been drawn from the ranks of local head teachers aptly describe the head teachers of most of the larger local schools between the wars and even more recently:

"... it is not to be wondered at that those of them who survive should still be wedded to the old grooves in which they worked for so many years; that they should look back with fond regret to the days of schedules, percentages, uniform syllabuses, cast-iron methods, and the rest; that they should do their best to keep the teachers in their areas from straying out of the paths of strict routine; and that they should regard any criticism of the existing order of things, and any suggestion that there was room for improvement in the aims and methods of their schools, in the light of a personal affront."

The head teachers' concerns were with such aspects of schooling as: high standards in the "Three R's"; neat notebooks and a command of facts in geography and history; good organisation and discipline in every classroom, corridor, cloakroom and staircase; homogeneous classes which permitted effective class teaching and uniform progress like an army on the march; consistently good results in "the scholarship" every year.

Head teachers seem to have been selected, or to have made their own way, on the qualities known as "officer material" in the army: qualities of leadership, authority and self-discipline. Most, except in all-girls' schools, were men and very few displayed the qualities associated with "child-centred" education and which could be referred to as "feminine" or "caring"; even the women teachers tended to adopt the same role model as the men:

"Mrs. Hawkins - the name even now has power over me - was a sharp-featured harri¹dan of a woman with a biting² scornful manner and a pronounced antipathy to boys..."

However, most accounts of school life concentrate on the fears engendered in staff and pupils by male head teachers:

"The new Head of this school had been assistant master there before the 1914-1918 war and had returned after the war and was appointed Head in 1930. He was a strict disciplinarian both with Staff and Pupils. We had to be on the premises by 8.45 a.m. and could not leave before 4.15 p.m. He had the idea that a School was judged on the number of pupils who passed to the Grammar School. I was put in

charge of what he called the 'Scholarship Class' a class of 45. The Head constantly came to my room to see what I was doing and checking up on my marking and inspecting my progress charts. He had a great fear of H.M.I.'s, always putting fear into the Staff of the great effect they had on a teacher's life and livelihood..."³

"Mr. Preston was the head-master and we were all terrified of him, I never once saw him smile, and when he asked questions we were too afraid to answer him."⁴

It would not be wise, of course, to carry such generalisations too far, but it does seem broadly true that during the first half of the present century the larger schools appear to have continued to employ organisational patterns reminiscent of the nineteenth century army or factory and with appropriate people in charge.

In the smaller schools, which could be found in virtually every village or hamlet or existed as church schools in the back streets of town and city centres, head teachers had fewer teachers and children to direct, but were fully occupied as class teachers. They tended to adopt a "defensive" approach to education designed to avoid risks and mistakes rather than to exploit their comparative freedom from close supervision and control. Just as children at that time were prevented as far as possible from learning by trial and error, or from learning by experience, which could be an untidy affair,⁵ so head teachers also feared "blotting their copybooks" though in a more metaphorical sense.

Those who had "got to the top" as head teachers, like Holmes' local inspectors, tended to value those assistants with the same qualities as their own, and young teachers' suggestions for alterations in existing practice would no doubt be seen as "a personal affront." It is perhaps for this somewhat trivial reason that young teachers tended to be laughed or bullied out of their "airy-fairy college ideas" and not fully accepted until they had become as cynical and realistic as their older colleagues. The Times Educational Supplement, which should have known better, but which often spoke for the secondary school teachers

who were graduates but not certificated teachers, often belittled the educational theorists and idealists:

"The young teacher makes a start

There are many schools in England now (both State and private) in which a misguided enthusiasm for reformed methods is actually cloaking most uneducational methods of work....The great majority of children are normal, neither backward nor progressive but content and happy to plod along old established routes and....they have neither the ability nor the inclination to follow pioneer tracks..."⁶

"...Many headmasters and some headmistresses attach little or no importance to the present system of training. Most of them would see real value in a scheme of training service which would encourage recruits from the beginning to make a serious effort to acquire technical skill in class management and in the presentation of subjects, even though they remained comparatively ignorant of the educational theories of Plato, Locke and Rousseau..."⁷

Almost every aspect of school life between the wars contributed to the maintenance of the classical humanist tradition in elementary education, and each aspect is linked inextricably with others. For instance, smaller classes would have led in many cases to more personal relationships and appropriate teaching within each room but financial stringency prevented the recruitment of sufficient numbers of teachers even when some of them were unemployed. Yet if the money for additional salaries had been forthcoming so that classes of fifty or more children could be reduced in size, there were numerous obstacles in the way of school managers looking for the best person available. Married women teachers could not be appointed (and those about to be married were expected to resign, thus compounding the difficulties); single women teachers often found no suitable accommodation in rural areas and would not apply for such posts; men could not be appointed if a woman could be found to do the same work for a lower salary; certificated women were sometimes passed over in favour of cheaper uncertificated teachers; and church schools usually sought communicant members of the church, preferably with irrelevant qualifications such as the ability to play the organ and train the choir.

Had these obstacles been overcome, the solid nineteenth century

schools built like churches by the Church, like chapels by the small school boards and like factories by the larger boards,⁸ presented enormous difficulties to the formation of extra classes. In the former groups of schools, it meant an extra teacher in the same room teaching against his or her colleagues, for co-operative teaching was never considered; in the latter group of schools the only feasible solution was to put small classes for "the dull and backward" into storage rooms, corridors or staff rooms, or to condemn them to a nomadic existence using the classroom of whichever class was in the hall for P.T. or music at the time.

Had sufficient rooms existed, leading to smaller classes and the amelioration of class teaching conditions, it is unlikely that the buildings in themselves would have encouraged progressive educational development. The classrooms lacked space for drama; benches for practical work; shelves for display; boards and panels for art work; libraries; moveable furniture; outdoor activity areas which could be effectively supervised from indoors,

It may be that even if staffing and accommodation had improved in some miraculous way, that teachers would still have preferred "old established routes" to "pioneer tracks". Although the numbers of certificated teachers were growing as a proportion of the entire teaching force⁹ most of them had merely returned to the system which had moulded them as children, after a brief period at a training college in which they had been treated like wayward youths rather than as young adults undergoing professional training. It is remarkable that so many teachers saw their college days as the best years of their lives: perhaps it was only in comparison with what came later.

"To the end of my career I had no trouble with Inspectors, I had had a thorough lesson in Culham College, in Knowledge, Discipline, Dignity and Respect. (1925-1927)"¹⁰

Back in school again, under the eye of an authoritarian head teacher who was as intimidating to the young teacher as he was to the young child, directed by timetables and schemes of work, surrounded by more experienced colleagues, occupied each weary evening with marking piles of books, there was little scope for initiative or innovation or for further thought or study on the subject of education in general.

The old "Standards" which had grouped children by attainment, almost regardless of age, were given new life between the wars in the larger schools as "Streams" in which children were grouped also by attainment but with the additional assumption that attainment and innate ability were virtually mirror-images of one another. It was normal to work up through the standards, but there were few opportunities for children to change streams. They were trapped by educational determinism which claimed with increasing confidence that intelligence was inborn, unchangeable and capable of accurate measurement. This attitude to children's abilities perpetuated rigid forms of classification in schools not just in terms of ability or attainment, but worth as well, and inevitably teachers were similarly graded according to the class to which they were assigned.

The greatest prestige was enjoyed by the teachers who had access to what was traditionally the head teacher's main task in smaller schools: the training of the "top" or "scholarship" class. The basic subjects which made up the diet of such classes tended to be over-valued, as did the children themselves; "B" and "C" children and their teachers and all kinds of practical and artistic subjects were by the same token devalued. 11

In spite of a steady stream of deprecatory pronouncements from the Board of Education, the Consultative Committee, various H.M.I.'s, teachers' unions and local education authorities ¹²the "scholarship" continued to absorb the attention, not only of the schools but also of the entire British public, including members of those

bodies which officially disapproved. It could hardly be otherwise. It was the first rung of the only ladder leading to secondary and higher education for the children of the working classes. Its names were legion - "The Scholarship", "The Eleven Plus", "The Selection Examination", "The Free Place Examination" - and its use was long established. Selection for the higher grade schools resulting indirectly from the 1870 Act and aided by grants from the Science and Art Department was by a similar process. Provision for the admission of poor scholars was reformed under the 1869 Act and more scholarships became available. After the Technical Instruction Act of 1889 county and county borough councils were empowered to make grants to secondary schools and to provide scholarships.

On the one hand, it was clearly understood by all concerned that "a scholarship" was the key to upward social mobility and enhanced life-chances for the "winners" and on the other hand, the providers had no intention of making the ladder into a broad highway:

"Every boy and girl showing capacities above the average should be caught and given the best opportunities for developing these capacities" (but it is not right to) "scatter broadcast a huge system of higher instruction for any one who chooses to take advantage of it, however unfit to receive it." ¹³

In addition, it was recognised that the whole system was something of a lottery, with "winning" and "losing" bearing as much relation to one's sex and place of residence as to one's presumed ability.

However, as with any competitive sport, winning was what counted with spectators, competitors and trainers alike, and schools and the senior teachers were frequently assessed merely on "scholarship results" and school "league tables" were published.¹⁴

It seems likely that many of the teachers involved were not constrained by the situation, but positively excited and highly motivated, particularly if they were members of "a self-perpetuating body of teachers" ¹⁵ which helped to set papers and adjudicate. The simple teaching and testing involved in the preparation of the candidates

was straightforward and rewarding in small ways. Teachers were doing what they could do well and easily, and what they had done well and easily, in many cases, as children themselves. That is how they became teachers. For the older teachers who had had no such opportunities but had succeeded by years of grind, the opportunities available to any child who could "win the scholarship" were "glittering prizes" indeed.

Very few young and newly-qualified teachers appear to have taken up posts in country districts where they may possibly have had more scope for innovation and fewer organisational pressures to bear. In the smaller schools it was customary for the head teacher to be assisted by uncertificated or supplementary teachers:

"Many of the assistant teachers in the village schools of the time had never tried to pass the exam and become an uncertified teacher. Any girl with the knack of handling children could get a start in a C of E school if she was well in with the Parson. Teaching in the Sunday School and singing in the church choir, helped many a girl start teaching in the village school. There she had to prove her ability to teach infants, and keep them in fairly good order....They were paid £60 a year at the time, and if we ratepayers ever had value for our money, I'm quite sure it was when the Supplementary teachers taught in the village schools...." 16

Sometimes uncertificated teachers succeeded to the senior post in small schools after "decapitation", though Gertrude Foster's chairman was going beyond the bounds of the permissible:

"My own Chairman, suggested recently to me, that if, and when, my school was decapitated, my Supplementary Teacher could quite well take my place - as there would be no Upper Standard to teach." 17

The general picture of the elementary school between the wars, making due allowances for exceptional teachers, for school size, situation and design, is of a late nineteenth century system of formal, sedentary, authoritarian education concerned not with the full development of the individual so much as with the priorities of an earlier factory age: the control, grading, measuring and polishing

of "products" or "units". This view of the school's function was sustained by certain conditions which tended to maintain traditions rather than encourage progress and change. Inertia or "drag" exists in every human organisation, but in the school system it was increased by:

the school buildings;

the school organisation;

the "scholarship";

the lack of contact, consistency and mutual respect existing between successive stages of education;

the size or heterogeneity of many classes;

the difficulties encountered by, or caused by, the teachers.

2. The school buildings.

From an examination of local records it is obvious that, in general, many village schools - and some of the smaller, mainly church-town schools - were in the parlous physical condition described by Marjorie Wise in English village schools in 1931. The Times Educational Supplement reviewer considered her views intemperate, unbalanced and unnecessarily depressing.¹⁸ His opinion was that if village schools lacked basic amenities, they were no worse in that respect than many of the village homes in which the pupils lived, and urban ideals were not appropriate. Moreover, he continued, schools had improved enormously over the preceding 25 or 50 years, the blacklisted buildings were being replaced, but with over 20,000 elementary schools in the country, progress would of course be slow....

It would have been less easy for the reviewer to maintain an air of judicious detachment if he had been condemned to spend his working life in cramped, gloomy, squalid surroundings containing Victorian relics in the form of infant galleries or backless desks.

Ryhall's premises were described as "cramped and squalid"; Shenton's as "cramped and gloomy"; Queniborough's as "ill-ventilat-

ed" and "uncomfortably full", with the original diamond panes making the rooms dark, and with no space for exercise but "the dead end of the lane". Ratcliffe Culey Council School was in "temporary" premises from 1920 to 1937:

"The small room is rather dark and stone-floored. There is no playground at all: the children play in the lane or on the village green....The boys' offices, recently repaired, are a wooden erection across the road..."²⁰

Rothwell C.E. School was "difficult and depressing" with lighting, heating and ventilation poor; classes sharing rooms through which other classes had to pass to reach the playground.²¹

The situation at Finedon Girls' Junior School: three rooms with only one entrance between them and two classes sharing the middle room with no kind of partition at all.²²

Swinford C.E. School

"...presents a forlorn appearance from outside. It stands in a field which is used as a playground, not only by the children but also by the village generally...No attempt is made to keep this tidy; it is unkempt with clumps of nettles, and a portion is used as an ash pit. It is unfenced from the road. The playground....is discreditable to those responsible."²³

On the whole, conditions improved as far as accommodation was concerned when schools were "decapitated" - an expedient urged continually by H.M. Inspectors:

"The small room, which is quite unfit for teaching purposes, continues to be used for the lowest class. It might be possible if all the Seniors were transferred to another school, to accommodate the remainder in the large room alone!"²⁴

However, in Rutland it was the senior children in the selective central schools who suffered. In Cottesmore, Uppingham, Oakham and Great Casterton they were accommodated in ex-German prisoners of war huts, which were decaying to the point of collapse.²⁵

The physical conditions in Great Casterton Mixed School were probably even more difficult:

"...the First and Second Classes, numbering 31 and 29 respectively, have been taught simultaneously in the main room, which, on a ten feet basis, will hold only 50 children. Two teachers' desks, a table, a piano and two cupboards are also

housed in this room, which is, Moreover, poorly ventilated and the conditions towards the end of a session, when the two teachers are beginning to flag after teaching against each other for 2½ hours or so, can be better imagined than described." 26

Conditions in some Leicester schools were no better: at St. Barnabas C.E. School in 1939 two classes of 48 children each shared one room with only a low partition between them; Mellor Street Junior School had two halls, and in 1936 each of them contained two classes.²⁷ Two years earlier, it was reported that King Richard's Road Council Intermediate Boys' School had nine classes in a building containing four classrooms, a laboratory and a library; four washbasins for 300 boys; an inadequate playground; "two exiguous rooms for Head and staff - the latter a stockroom". There were enough coat pegs - but only by having the lowest row just two feet from the floor! ²⁸

At St. John's C.E. Infant School, the Inspector reported that the building was dingy and unpainted, stained and disfigured from past roof leaks, with a playground so small as to be useless, and such a noise from passing traffic that it drowned the children's voices. ²⁹ The adjoining Mixed School building had been left to the Juniors when the Seniors moved out. The Juniors were:

"...housed in dark and sunless buildings; all the classrooms look north west- except that one also has a north east window, while another, not used during the winter owing to its inadequate heating, has a small south west window. Lighting and ventilation are very poor...." ³⁰

In another part of the city, periodical migrations took place in Summer:

"There is still the difficulty of three classes in the main room, but this is rendered less pressing during fine weather (in the Summer) by the use of the Vicarage garden which has kindly been placed at the disposal of the school. Frequently two and occasionally three classes are working in the open air..." ³¹

Elsewhere, 22 four year olds occupied a room sixteen feet square and "it is difficult to develop fully the type of experience appropriate". ³² Surely a classic understatement!

For the many schools which had been surviving on promises of improvements for years, if not decades, the Second World War destroyed all prospects of amelioration for a further ten or twenty years, as H.M. Inspectors' reports from the 1950's reveal:

"The loose shale and earth surface of the playgrounds is unsuitable for Physical Education and during wet weather the outside offices are practically isolated by flooded areas." 33

The playgrounds at Lowick Charity School and Holcot School could have been enlarged and improved by removing the dividing fences that had traditionally separated the boys' and girls' playgrounds with their outside lavatories, but nothing had been done. 34

Similar examples can be found from Leicestershire: Kirkby Mallory C.E. School was found in 1953 still to have the defects noted sixteen years earlier: classes separated by an inadequate curtain; semi-opaque window glass; heavy, outdated desks. 35

Measham County Infant School had, by 1952, occupied "temporary" premises attached to the Baptist Church for half a century. This led to a unique situation: a county school with premises overseen by a clergyman, hence the log book entry, "The Revd. J.S. Swain and two mouse catchers arrived," 36

Wartime measures, such as the building of air raid shelters and blast walls, and the taping up of windows, helped to make most buildings even less satisfactory as educational environments. At Chelveston Cum Caldecott Endowed School relics of the past, found in 1948, must have been nearly overpowering:

"The objectionable practice of emptying lavatory buckets into a heap of ashes in the school's playground is contrary to all hygienic principles and is a menace to the health of the children. The playground is small and badly surfaced.... Space is further restricted by the Air Raid Shelters and the storage of coke..." 37

Yet a few schools succeeded in spite of their surroundings: the 1936 report for Rothwell C.E. Mixed School, after deploring the physical conditions under which the staff and children worked, went

on to praise the up-to-date syllabuses, the broad outlook of the children, their keenness to talk of the books they had read, and their ability to write grammatically.³⁸ Conversely, good modern buildings did not always make for a less formal education. Leicester's Coleman Road Infant School had been adapted from farm buildings and inspired by open-air school design with its veranda-connected classrooms leading to a hall and double classroom made from the original farm barn. Yet one person who was there as an infant in the early 1930's remembers it as a school where almost all the time was spent at formal work in long desks with 'A' infants and 'B' infants on opposite sides of the room.³⁹ Sometimes opportunities were missed as in the designing of Imperial Avenue Infant School, Leicester. Opened in 1934 as "the most modern in the Midlands", photographs show a hall with high windows, separate classrooms "with a seating capacity for 48 children" and classroom doors opening on to unsheltered slabbed areas. The veranda surrounding the central courtyard offered little protection for children who could otherwise have gone outside the classroom for sand and water play and so on.⁴⁰

Even for those classes fortunate enough to have rooms of their own, heavy iron framed double - or even longer - desks occupied much of the space and made movement and activity difficult. Numerous correspondents have referred to this immovable aspect of school life

"Each classroom had highly polished double desks (which) were always kept strictly in rows and, apart from Christmas party time I can never recall them being moved at all."⁴¹

The arrangement of the furniture and the seating of the children was not a matter of convenience or individual choice: it served a symbolic purpose:

"Within each class children sat according to academic prowess in rows on raised tiers..."⁴²

"The top class, containing the 11+ hopefuls were segregated onto two separate benches - one for girls and one for boys. Any misdemeanours of either work or discipline were threatened with removal from the top bench to the main body of the room."⁴³

Such arrangements also suited school caretakers, who have a considerable effect upon the conduct of schools. Like many head teachers, they too prefer clean, quiet, traditional school work to "activity and interest":

"As there is no playground, after considerable thought I arranged the desks on a three-sided plan to leave a space in the centre for games, physical exercises, etc. If my successor prefers this arrangement she will have to insist upon it as the caretaker has decided objections to innovations." 44

"I regret I am compelled to make the following report. This morning after the opening of school my attention was called by Miss Fewkes to a message written on the blackboard of her room, a copy of which I append,

'This room is very nice. It would look better at the zoo. Signed E.B. and you can show Mr. Garratt and then I shall not trouble about it.'

This message evidently refers to a plan of the district marked out in chalk on the floor and placed there on my instructions in connection with the teaching of geographyit is not the caretaker's work to interfere with the working of the school....This message was, I am afraid, read by the Class when they assembled and without doubt has lost nothing in the retelling to their people at home." 45

School lettings, too, caused endless friction. Log books abound with complaints about the state of the school after use by outsiders who frequently had no village hall or other meeting place to use. Head teachers returned to find that dancers had spread soap or candlewax on the floors; that books, pictures and nature displays had been damaged; that were beer bottles and worse in the corners of playgrounds; cigarettes in inkwells and crusts of bread in desks:

"It seems useless for teachers to decorate the walls with children's work, knowing well that the specimens would be interfered with and damaged." 46

"School keepers found the 'Co-op' guild had evidently locked the cat in the building last night....another objectionable mess in the usual place...." 47

There is no doubt that school buildings themselves have a profound effect upon the teachers and children who are virtually imprisoned in them at all times and seasons. Correspondents have been able to conjure up the usual school images with no difficulty:

"Red brick, high windows, hot water pipes around walls..." 48

"Seemed enormous. Red brick and dark. Classroom for 52 children divided by heavy curtain from next door class." 49

"No staff room. Headmistress' room was a small area of corridor blocked off at the end, with a door, which staff could use. As this was so narrow staff sat facing one another....

No stock room....

No hall....

Outside toilets

No shelter on the way to them...." 50

3. The school organisation

Close and detailed school organisation, strict discipline and an authoritarian ethos in the great majority of the schools of the region obviously stood in opposition to the development of "child-centred" or "progressive" approaches to the education of young children. Without exception correspondents have returned to the former group of attributes as dominating their school days:

"Ethos of school - very formal. ...Children sitting in desks in rows and not allowed to move from their seats without teacher's permission, i.e. for toilet or marking of work. Time tables - Staff stuck rigidly to them throughout the school...." 51

"The ethos of the school was certainly authoritarian - it had to be with classes of 40 in number and was quite definitely subject centred..." 52

"On the day that he (i.e. Mr. Woodhead, H.M.I.) arrived I quite enjoyed the unaccustomed friendliness of the teachers and the general sense of occasion...." 53

"I do not recall having any 'choice' about anything - all the work done was rigidly directed by the teacher, who, no doubt, was equally being rigidly directed by the Headmistress." 54

"Activity and experience were obviously not held in high esteem as the odd sessions stand out vividly in my mind, i.e. a trip to Whipsnade Zoo followed by painstaking but enjoyable attempts to make a 'real' book about it..." 55

"It was a very traditional, subject centred, authoritarian establishment, and there was no sign of Hadow Report implementation. The cane was the usual form of punishment and every teacher had a cane on his desk. Wrong sums, dropped blots, low marks, all resulted in a stroke of the cane..." 56

Even the head teachers of small schools who had a certain freedom of action whatever regulations from "the Office" or "the Board" may have said, frequently treated their own time tables and

schemes of work as if they had the force of Holy Writ. When Miss Thraves, Remedial Adviser, visited Ratcliffe Culey to discuss a child's progress and afternoon playtime went on too long as a result, the head teacher recorded in her log book that

"a few minutes will be deducted from each successive playtime until the surplus is reduced to nil." 57

At Croxton Kerrial the timetable used by Mr. Prowse from 1880 to 1920 was copied exactly by his successor, Mr. Mansell, as were the schemes of work. Mr. Mansell gave himself away when he entitled his 1927 scheme of work "Allocation of Teachers' Duties for School Year Ending March 31, 1908". In 1936 another head teacher, Mrs. Gilbert, was appointed, and she produced an identical timetable to Mansell's of 1927 - which was Prowse's of 1908 - and reproduced it annually until the log book ceased in 1942! A draft letter from Mrs. Gilbert to the vicar in answer to the unfavourable report of H.M. Inspector in 1937 is not therefore without irony:

"....I have had much more work to do than Mr. Mansell did as I take needlework and have not an assistant for the lower classes as he had. His wife always attended to the dramatic work. In addition to teaching all subjects I have also to attend to all clerical work making schemes and timetables..." 58

Apart from the effect of timetables, schemes of work and curricula, educational development was impeded in the smaller schools by the observation of obsolete "Standards". At Ashby Magna in 1937 there were only 18 infant and junior children altogether, but they were disposed in five standards with two in IVA and two in IVB. This method of organisation, based on the requirements of the 1862 Revised Code was to be found in almost all small schools, and it led to an unnecessary rigidity combined often with frequent and arbitrary internal promotions. In Blaby and Wigston H.M. Inspector noted in 1930 that the infants were promoted termly, either because they had reached a certain formal standard or new arrivals needed their desks. 59

In the larger schools rigid streaming was the rule. Often infants were judged and streamed even before they reached the junior classes, and a seven year old non-reader was almost automatically seen as a problem by the junior class teachers. Once streamed, there was little opportunity for individual children to change or for 'B' stream children to show that they had valuable skills and abilities undiscerned by the crude attainment tests by which they were judged.

In the City of Leicester H.M. Inspectors' reports from the mid-1920's to the mid-1930's are full of concern for rigid classification, preferring it to be based on attainment in English, with separate sets for children whose arithmetical prowess was stronger, or weaker, comparatively, than their English.

It is apparent that the Inspectors expected specialisation in the streamed schools so that, for example, a good history teacher could spread his benign influence over the entire ability range, though with subtle and effective variations according to the abilities of his listeners. In fact, it is equally apparent that the 'B' and 'C' streams had the weaker teachers and the least experienced teachers, often probationers, and that poetry, art, drama and the other "expressive" subjects, which should have been the medium of learning for the dull children even more than for their more fortunate peers, were regarded as "frills" which could not be permitted until the "basics" were of a higher standard. For such children, who tended to learn slowly and forget readily when taught formally, it was a case of "jam tomorrow". "Incessant revision"⁶⁰ was seen as the key to progress, not "activity and interest",

A Leicester junior school head wrote in 1957:

"I have taught in Junior Schools for over twenty years. These have all been streamed schools, indeed this method appears to have been automatically accepted by teachers as the only possible form of school organisation without any real questioning.." ⁶¹

Concern with classification, "Hadowisation", reorganisation, was a keynote of the elementary education system between the wars, but usually from the point of view of providing better opportunities for the seniors or of improving the neatness of the system itself, rarely with the express purpose of making life better for the juniors or their teachers. The constant suggestion was that with accurate selection for each class, combined with detailed planning, good education would almost automatically follow. The desirable end result was never specified, but seems to have been a compound of the traditional virtues of good discipline and neat notebooks confirming high standards in the basic skills. "Activity and experience" were hardly ever mentioned either as ends or as means to make the dour grind more effective and enjoyable:

"Now a compact, single stream Junior School...the Head Master should not be obsessed with the difficulties....removable by steady and systematic attention to detail in all fundamental subjects, combined with regular revision and close co-operation between teachers. It is his duty to see this is done..." 62

This view of the simple and obvious role of the junior school had been previously expressed by H.M. Inspectors in reports for Leicester as early as 1924:

"It is just as important...to have really able teachers.... in the Junior Schools....but several of them seem to think that they are thereby condemned to inferior work. Their lot, however, in certain respects, is better than that of those in Senior Schools, since their classes have not been 'creamed' of all the bright children and their objective is clear and easy of attainment...." 63

The Director of Education added a petulant note of his own to the above report:

"Such teachers as feel condemned have their eyes on the subjects taught rather than on the child. The word 'creamed' suggests a better and a worse, rather than a difference in interests and in some cases powers which gives reason to the re-organisation." 64

This comment, it should be noted, is not aimed at the Inspectors' views of the "easily-attained objectives" of the junior school, but at their daring to suggest that all senior pupils were not equal. "Teachers with their eyes on the child" has a fine ring about it but, in view of the educational priorities within the city, is but empty rhetoric. The system was designed merely to select the most

able, and on very narrow criteria:

"The Director of Education states that there is now an opportunity for the establishment of an 'Express Class' at Ingle Street School for the benefit of selected children in that and other schools of the district...Certain childrensuitable for inclusion in this Express Class are delicate and unable to walk the long distance to Ingle Street; they can however walk to their present schools and it is suggested that the Committee's motor van should call there morning and afternoon and convey them to Ingle Street School." 65

It is far easier to produce a curriculum than to take an entirely new look at one's assumptions regarding the aims and objects of any system of education. The "Report of the Junior Schools Committee" of Leicester City, May 1934, contained details which

"..are intended to indicate the broad lines upon which..the teaching in Junior Schools should proceed in order that the childrenmay be best fitted to proceed either to Senior, Intermediate or Secondary Schools according to their individual circumstances and ability...."

This document, produced by the Director of Education, the Educational Psychologist, the local inspectors, certain head teachers and assistant teachers with specialist skills and H.M. Inspectors ("in an advisory capacity") set the seal of approval on the traditional style and content of education with no hint that "activity and experience" had been suggested by certain well-informed sources. Art was to include scale drawings of doors and windows with rulers, and the study of "rectilinear and cylindrical objects in horizontal position"; the geography scheme made no mention of local visits or model making; history lessons were to be similarly static and were to deal with nothing more recent than a famous local event which had taken place in 1485. The abilities and potentialities of the children placed in different streams were seen as separated in kind as well as in degree:

"The 'C' child will know of Harold and William, the fight at Hastings and the arrow in Harold's eye....His castles will be of stone, while the 'A' child will realise the castle as the source of law and order, and, as time passed on, of oppression." 66

Specimen timetables were equally detailed: the 'A' children had more

arithmetic than the 'C's' but less English language, and the 'C's' had less history, geography and science.

Like the Norman castle, school organisation, the source of law and order, so easily becomes oppressive.

4. "Isolated and misunderstood."

It has already been seen that infant schools and classes were frequently restricted in their "child-centred" developments by the demands of the junior schools or departments for high standards in the "Three R's" to have been attained by the seven-year-old entrants. Similarly, the junior school or department was seen as merely preparatory for the following stage of education. As there was rarely any fruitful contact between successive departments - even when they shared the same building or establishment - there was clearly ample scope for interference and recrimination based on a complete disregard for the intrinsic worth of each stage.

"The work in the 'B' divisions is somewhat disappointing even when allowances are made for the rather low mentality of many of the children....Some measure of the weakness observed must, however, be ascribed to the rather low level of attainment, considering their ages, of many of the children on entry from the contributory Infants' Department". 67

"Two seven year old children are quite unable to read, and there are seven or eight more of about the same age who are well below average attainment. It would be a great help in calculating the causes of this retardation if the Head Mistress would keep full records of those she believes to be mentally retarded....Without such records it appears that the fault lies in their earlier training." 68

In their turn, junior school teachers were frequently treated with similar condescension by their senior school colleagues, with H.M. Inspectors' requests for "close co-operation" being interpreted as "We will tell you what your children should be able to do by the time they come to us". Most attempted to get their own way nicely, but not Mr. Leicester, Headmaster of Brackley Senior School when he was visited by the new Headmistress of Hinton in the Hedges Primary School

in 1928 at the urging of H.M. Inspector:

"I asked for leave of absence for the afternoon of August 2nd. and went to see Mr. Leicester...He was apparently busy, did not invite me in, but informed me that he would send a scheme on to me during the Summer Holidays..."

The scheme finally arrived on October 12th. after a personal letter to Mr. Leicester from the Rector of Hinton in the Hedges. ⁶⁹

Attempts to provide continuity between the stages of education were sufficiently rare to attract the attention of the Inspectors. A real effort was made by the Headmistress of Anstey Council School. She visited the infants in their own department before they moved to her part of the building, and then spent much time with them for the first few days after the move. Occasionally, too, it was noted that in a very few Leicester schools an infant teacher would "move up" with her class and continue to teach them in her accustomed way, but such a fruitful mingling rarely occurred and never developed into normal good practice.

Attitudes changed very slowly and the lack of team spirit evinced during the First World War in Thurmaston was typical of educational attitudes during the first half of the present century:

"...during a very cold February, Ward's teachers went on strike. They had been accustomed to eat their midday sandwiches around a good open fire upstairs, but the managers resolved 'that the teachers remaining for dinner be asked to have their meals in the room with a fire in the infant school'....Ward's assistants went to the Vicar and asked if a fire could be lighted upstairs. When he refused to give permission, the assistants went straight to the Education Office in Leicester to see the Director. He was out, so they waited for him. Ward asked the Vicar to help teach, and he telegraphed the Office for help - but all in vain - he had over 200 children to himself that afternoon." ⁷⁰

There is no doubt that schools could have gained a great deal by encouraging more co-operation and understanding between stages and departments but history and tradition, firmly expressed in bricks and mortar, made mutual isolation simpler:

"...the school was in three parts, nursery, infants (on ground floor) and juniors upstairs. The infant head had

a ground floor office and the junior head was hidden up at the top of a narrow flight of stairs, inaccessible. Even irate parents had no breath left to complain with by the time they'd reached his eyrie!" 71

5. "The scholarship" and its effects.

No aspect of English education has had more effect upon the entire system over a long period than "the scholarship". The ladder erected to assist poor but bright children (especially boys!) to leave the elementary school for higher realms of learning has had a detrimental effect upon all educational development by over-valuing those formal subjects used as test subjects. This situation has, in turn, led to an over-valuing of "white collar" work as opposed to engineering and technology. The result for junior schools and classes has been that those abilities deemed desirable in grammar school pupils have been given excessive attention, to the disadvantage of all pupils, and children labelled "successes" or "failures". Parents have not been slow to see the advantages for the present and the future of winning a scholarship, with the result that the last year in the junior classes has been, for many children, clouded in anxiety when it should mark a happy and self-confident period between early childhood and adolescence.

The scholarship system and the conventional streaming organisation supported and justified one another, leading to understandable indignation on the part of the "have nots":

"'A' stream always had the privileges of being in the choir or acting in the school play at Christmas. It was elitist and great store was set by the 11+ examination results. I was in the 'B' stream and had great satisfaction in beating some of the 'A' stream in the 11+. Better equipment and more books were given to the abler children and the 'best' teachers in terms of setting work standards taught the top streams. There was great resentment by many of my contemporaries at this basic unfairness of treatment which produced an arrogant snobbery in certain 'A' stream individuals and a deep cynicism in those in lower streams. I still meet former schoolmates and it is remarkable how the pattern of those early years is reflected in their lives today. The resentment remains and one totally illiterate boy is proud

that he has become a millionaire in the scrap business.....

The elitism went over into sports and games, the 'A' stream being picked for most of the school teams. Even when I began teaching in 1960 one other local junior school with streamed two-form entry had the abler stream sitting on chairs in assembly and the least able sitting on the floor! I had a hand in changing this iniquity!" 72

Other correspondents have written to the effect that they found the "scholarship group" which suffered "pressure and tension" to be the object of sympathy rather than resentment; 73 or have accepted the situation as socially determined: 'At nine I was well aware of the social division between the 'Grammar bugs' and others". 74

Parents had no doubt that the "pressure and tension" were worth it:

"Parents vied to send their children to this school due to the outstanding results in the A.S.E. and in the Foundation Scholarship exam. to Wellingborough School (Public School H.M.C.) In Standards 3,4 and 5 great emphasis was placed on preparation for these exams." 75

Progressive and active schools were considered too "free and easy" by such parents: one correspondent's mother took him from Avondale Raod School, Kettering, which had recently been built with light and airy classrooms, french windows opening on to play areas and a large playing fields, and which was considered "advanced". At seven he went to "a two-storey 19th century building", St. Mary's, where the teaching was directed to the A.S.E. - "Annual Schools Examination". 76

Almost every school history uses "scholarship successes" as the one true yardstick of a school's worth, regardless of its size, social composition or educational philosophy. 77

The above comments on the effects of the examination have been provided by those teachers who were children at the time. Responses from older people who were teaching between the wars confirm the facts of the situation:

"The curriculum was geared at the age of 7 to the dreaded Annual Schools Examination, later the 11+...feelings ran

pretty high over this and competition was keen." 78

"The 11+ was the important thing....As long as we have an exam it is my job to get as many through as we can, and we had a good result." 79

When "intelligence tests" were added to the arithmetic and English tests, the school (Uppingham C.E.) "success rate" fell from eight to two (out of a county total of thirty for the whole of Rutland):

"I was ashamed and trained for intelligence tests with books bought from private funds." 79

The "scholarship classes" not only enjoyed the attentions of the best teachers and the prestige attached to certain benches and desks in the classroom, but in at least one school they were literally "kings of the castle"; Coleman Road Junior School, Leicester, is a solid, two-storey building extending to three storeys at each end, and in those high classrooms, insulated from all distractions and unnecessary contacts with the less gifted, resided the ten- and eleven-year olds of 3A and 4A. This tradition persisted for at least thirty years, and probably longer. 80

Many head teachers recorded scholarship successes in capital letters, or underlined the entries in red, 81 while others were able to convey their enthusiasm without the need for calligraphic embellishments:

"Although ill, Keith attended the A.S.E. held at Sulgrave today. Having been motored to and fro by the Revd. Pakenham Walsh." 82

"Mrs. G. Belville sent for Clarence Lee to offer him her congratulations and to present him with £1 as a reward for his efforts. On Tuesday next she proposes to give a tea party in his honour, to which he may invite all his school friends. He and I greatly appreciate this kindness, as do all the children." 83

"Dorothy Ethel Warrington has been awarded a Special Place at the Wellingborough High School. The recreation during the afternoon session was extended to one hour in Dorothy's honour." 84

Even if the favoured candidates were accepted for the neighbouring grammar school, there was no guarantee that parents would permit their children to go. Some were merely suspicious while others were

unable to face the financial implications of having a child dependent upon them beyond compulsory school age. The feelings of the teachers in the face of such wilful rejection of a unique opportunity can be imagined. Many of them had had no secondary education themselves and had reached a position of some local eminence and authority by the drudgery of a pupil-teachership - and here was a child who not only declined the opportunity his teacher had never had, but then remained in that same teacher's class in the village school up to the age of fourteen as a permanent irritant!

Hence the complex of emotions clustered around Examination Day, when its importance became readily apparent. It was the one day of the year when head teachers visited neighbouring schools-as invigilators; when directors, education secretaries and their assistants, school managers and county councillors crept into schools and spoke in hushed tones while surveying the candidates; when schools were officially closed "in the interest of the candidates" ⁸⁵ to provide "seclusion and quiet".⁸⁶

If success ensued, the managers recorded their appreciation, often with a special letter to the teaching staff to be copied into the log book: "The Managers desire to express their approbation...." ⁸⁷ "The Managers,....deeply gratified..." ⁸⁸ If success was not forthcoming, excuses had to be found:

"...No child from this school has qualified for entry to a Grammar School. No child has qualified for an interview. An exceedingly disappointing result which reflects the effect of overcrowding and understaffing of recent years," ⁸⁹

While officially deploring the harmful effects on the entire school curriculum of concentration on the selection examination, H.M. Inspectors tended to judge a school by the results which only single-minded concentration could achieve:

"...the school continues to distinguish itself in the Annual Schools Examination..." ⁹⁰

"...the work is of a good standard, as proved by the Annual

"During the past two years some of the parents have taken their children away from the school before the normal age of transference to the Senior School apparently with a view to improving their chances of success in the Annual Schools Examination.

In view of this action it is interesting to note that of the three children in the normal age group who sat last March, one was awarded a scholarship,...and another reached the promotion mark. This creditable result should allay the fears of those parents who fear that the school cannot provide adequately for their children's needs." 92

"That the Scholarship successes have not been continued of late is due to the fact that none of the present children is fit for Secondary Education, and not to any lack of preparation." 93

Even when a school unashamedly used its "preparatory" successes as a magnet to draw talent from outlying districts, and specialised in sending "under age" pupils to secondary schools (9 out of 12 in 1930) thus depriving certain eleven year old candidates of their final opportunity, H.M. Inspector had nothing but praise for the headmaster and his class of 35 children of "picked mental ability":

"The children come from a widely scattered district and the continued rise in numbers is evidence that the school possesses a more than local reputation....The school continues to distinguish itself in the Annual Schools Examination to such an extent that the majority of the older children are recruited from other schools." 94

After using examination results as a yardstick of a school's success, it was somewhat naive for another Inspector to write:

"As a Junior School, the aim must be mainly to prepare for the Senior School and yet the schemes should in no way be limited by the supposed requirements of the Annual Schools Examination. This latter danger has not been entirely avoided in the top class." 95

It was many years later when another Inspector saw through the entire sham and asked his senior colleagues to follow up the progress of the children who had been "crammed" in order to "get them in" to the secondary schools:

"The very high proportion of children who go to Secondary School from this school calls for special notice and I attach a detailed list which my 'S' colleagues in Northants. and the Soke of Peterborough may be glad to see if they care to follow up the progress made by these children. I have

no doubt that the 45% mentioned ...is the result not of the exceptional ability of the children from this village but the cuteness of the headmaster in coaching children for an examination in which English and Arithmetic are the dominant subjects." 96

A resolution of the N.U.T. Easter Conference of 1931 expressed the same point of view, which was fair and reasonable, but was not in accord with the popular conception of how success could be measured in the schools. The resolution stated that the number of scholarships won by the pupils of a school was no criterion whatsoever of the efficiency of the teaching or organisation in that school, and that the teaching of so-called scholarship classes was educationally unsound and that the formation of such classes should be forbidden. 97

Such protests were common, but the educational world went on in its old, unreformed way and, indeed, it is difficult to suggest how such a fundamentally unfair system of selection could have been improved. For most critics, the only hope lay in refined techniques and "more discriminating and accurate" procedures. 98

Even Leicester's Director of Education preached equality while in control of an authority in which selection was a sine qua non, and it was disingenuous of him to protest that "All have been successful" in reply to H.M. Inspector's suggestion that Ellis Avenue Intermediate School was "made up of the unsuccessful". He knew, as well as the man on the Leicester omnibus, what was meant by success: 99 it was having one's name painted on the school honours board or inscribed in gothic lettering and hung in a prominent place in an oak frame. 100 Pound notes, sovereigns, watches and bicycles, a new uniform and a 'bus or train ticket in a new satchel - this was success.

The local newspapers knew what the readers meant by success: in the Sudborough log book are two newspaper cuttings. The first shows a row of photographs under the caption "Three Promising Lads from Sudborough" followed by an account beginning,

"These three boys from the small village of Sudborough have

gained Scholarships...."

The second cutting is headed "NOT ONE FOR RUSHDEN" and begins:

"Although several children from Rushden entered for the County Council Scholarships to Secondary Schools, not one was successful in satisfying the examiners."

Then follows a list of the successful children and their schools arranged, somewhat like football leagues, in divisions according to the sizes of the respective populations. ¹⁰¹

In Northamptonshire, Northampton and Kettering jointly administered selection examinations, the contents of which seem far removed from the real interests of all but very precocious children, were followed by a report in the form of a memorandum. More in sorrow than anger it showed how few children had achieved high marks after so much grind. Out of 1032 candidates in 1929, only 37 gained full marks in mental arithmetic, perhaps because by the rules of the game they were not allowed to write anything but the answer to such questions as "I buy 144 oranges and one out of every 9 is bad. How many are good?" ¹⁰² Attempts to name the past tense of the verbs corresponding to the nouns "death", "choice", "division" were "very disappointing". Then the candidates had to imagine they were a certain pilot officer writing to his mother about a forced landing on Portmadoc football ground.

"Out of 1024 children, 28 boys and 17 girls began and ended the letter correctly,"

In 1936 letters were again required, this time on an even more esoteric subject. Young children of both sexes from the midland lowlands were to imagine that they were Napoleon writing to his mother in Corsica about his success when "we French stormed Ratisbon". This was something of a comprehension test as well, as several verses of the poem were provided to form a basis for the letter.

The intelligence tests introduced gradually were by no means likely to extract "pure intelligence" - if such a thing exists - but were perfectly designed to eliminate those children, whatever their

own individual qualities, who would not be apt learners in the grammar schools. In 1935 an instant Spanish lesson (on paper, not spoken) was followed by sentences for translation :

"I speak and you teach.
Habla y dejan.
Espera y compro.
They visit and I leave,"

It is no wonder that teachers tried to by all means possible to anticipate the examiners' annual whims even if it meant a diet of English and arithmetic added to later by a new subject called "Intelligence"; even if the younger and weaker children were neglected and the ultimately unsuccessful felt themselves to be "failures" for ever more. Behind the arbitrary selection process was an even more capricious allocation process which meant that children of a certain area had a better chance of success than children in neighbouring areas; or places available varied from year to year; or one sex had more opportunities than the other to obtain a place. All these variables can be seen at work over a very short period in Rutland in the years 1938 and 1939:

<u>Admission to:</u>	<u>1938</u>	<u>1939</u>
Cottesmore Central School		
Boys	85 marks and over.	As for 1938.
Girls	85 marks and over.	As for 1938.
Oakham Central School		
Boys	All boys in the area.	78 marks or over.
Girls	67 marks or over.	67 marks or over.
Uppingham Central School		
Boys	109 marks or over.	All boys in the area.
Girls	109 marks or over.	69 marks or over.

103

There was one more decisive variable that made the entire selection process even more of a lottery for the children from working class homes who formed the mass of the elementary school population: those whose parents could afford to pay could by-pass most of the

selection procedures to take a grossly unfair proportion of the available secondary school places at a fraction of their true cost. This was common knowledge - one of the facts of life which distinguished "them" from "us", but in 1935 Gray and Moshinsky showed the full extent of the bias: .

"...on the highest criterion of ability 45% and on the lowest one, 49% of the total number of gifted children (*) in the school population do not enjoy the opportunity of a higher education (but) taking children of equally high ability, seven fee-paying pupils will receive a higher education for every one free pupil."

"In the whole school population, more than 50% of the able pupils are without the opportunity of higher education (while) if we consider children who fall below the selected level of ability, for every one free pupil who is afforded an opportunity of a higher education, there are 162 fee-paying pupils who enjoy the same advantage." 104

Two studies concerned with the effects of the "Free Place Examination" on the development of English primary education show that the situation became even worse as time went on. The 1939 study ¹⁰⁵ listed the disadvantages of such a selection system but concluded that it was a spur to efficiency. By the time the second study ¹⁰⁶ was written twenty years later, the disadvantages were even more apparent and the competition more intense, for the abolition of fee-paying places in the secondary schools and the growing popularity of the primary schools with middle-class parents markedly increased the competition:

"....some parents have come to regard the main function of the primary primary school as getting their child into a Grammar School" 107

He concludes:

"...there is no doubt that in the case of many primary schools today, closer adherence to the aims and ideals of the Hadow Report on the Primary School and less to the number of children entering the Grammar School would establish a healthier atmosphere in the schools and might also reduce the number of semi-literate children, or even illiterate children, passing into the Secondary Modern School." 108

Given the growing pressure of expectations exerted by parents and the public at large, who concentrated all their attention on what went on in each school on one day a year, it is perhaps remarkable that

Some teachers succeeded in making the schools as tolerable as they did. Perhaps the time after "the scholarship examination" helped to make up for all that had gone on before in its name:

"....we did wonderful things after the exam - gathering wild flowers; singing; fancy needlework; enormous pantomimes which filled the hall for five consecutive nights; bike rides, which were the best school trips of all, to Deene Park, the Bede House, to beauty spots for picnics, and so on....." 109

6. Class size and staffing problems.

There is little doubt that the size of many classes between the wars acted as a further brake on the development of a more individualised education within each room, but in addition many rooms contained more than one class. The solution might have been some form of what has later come to be known as "team teaching", or an extension of the private study methods associated with the P.N.E.U., but mutual toleration and the suppression of most speech and movement on the part of the children seem to have been the rule:

"The Infants are happy and busy, but for the sake of the other scholars a certain measure of silence should be demanded." 110

By our standards, the tasks of some teachers were truly Herculean. At Bagworth in 1923 a young supplementary teacher taught 75 infants throughout the year.¹¹¹ In the same year the headmaster of Glenfield Council School was personally responsible for 70 children.¹¹² The headmaster of Oadby Council School had a class of 61 children early in the school year in 1920, and later, when his numbers increased to 86, he managed "with the help of Mr. Stacey."¹¹³ At Sheepy Magna there were fewer children but a tremendous range of ability in the head teacher's class of 51 children, who were distributed in Standards II to VII inclusive. In the year 1923 - 1924 his class contained 58 children, and in 1926 he was found to be keeping 62 children working "steadily and quietly busy in four sections" because a teacher

was absent. 114

Some classes were deliberately made extra large because it was felt that the more capable children required less teaching and supervision than their weaker brethren, This arrangement is apparent from the Anstey Latimer school log book entries of 1924 and again in 1926:

"Classes	A.	Boys	50	
	A.	Girls	48	
	B.	Boys	24	
	B.	Girls	31	
	V.		45	
	IV.		50	
	III.		48"	115

In other schools it was customary to reverse the priorities and provide the better pupil-teacher ratios for the "scholarship class" rather than for the "backward class".

H.M. Inspectors were not apparently concerned over class size so long as each room was not overcrowded according to the standards demanded by the Board in terms of floor-area per child:

"This year an additional teacher has not been granted (i.e. after a new intake of children at Easter) and the Class of 60 (about 20 of whom are under five) are accommodated in a room with a recognised accommodation of 38 only." 116

In fact, accommodation tended to decide staffing levels as well - there was no suggestion at that time that mobile classrooms or temporary accommodation could be provided:

"At present the school is heavily staffed. There are 584 children on the books, arranged in 14 classes. There are 15 assistant teachers - 14 of whom are certificated - and a Head Master, the average number on the books of each class being less than 42. It appears that a smaller staff would suffice....(as) there are only 11 rooms." 117

Although average class size gradually decreased, mainly because of determined attempts of most local education authorities to eliminate classes containing more than 50 children, numbers remained high in the large urban schools and in the county schools near to town and city boundaries where population was increasing. In 1938 the

classes in Taylor Junior School, Leicester, were :

"Std.	5	50	
	4A	46	
	4B	43	
	4C	40	
	3A	47	
	3B	47	
	3C	37	
	2A	42	
	2B	40	
	2C	40	
Remove		29	
Special	18	"	118

In that year, throughout the country, some 55,000 classes, or more than one-third of all classes in public elementary schools, contained over 40 children, and there were still about 4,000 classes with more than 50 children in them.

"In schools built by the School Board for London, and by School Boards in large provincial towns, the standard of accommodation in classrooms provided for 60 pupils. Many of these buildings remain and expensive structural alterations will be required if the size of classes is to be brought down to 40. Primary teachers urge that it should be brought down to 30, but this is a somewhat remote prospect in these days of financial stringency. Three months ago Mr. Kenneth Lindsay, in reply to a question in the House of Commons, said that the Board's policy was to secure the reduction of the size of all classes for older children to a maximum of 40 on the books, and of all classes for infants and juniors to a maximum of 50. Asked whether he thought it easier to teach 50 infants or juniors than 50 older children, Mr. Lindsay was candid enough to say that he did not think so....It is in the early stages of schooling that individual attention is most required...." 119

On the whole, teachers appear to have accepted large classes as a fact of school life, but to have been much more troubled by a wide age or ability range within the class:

"As head teacher I taught a class of some 40 pupils age range 11 - 14 it meant very hard work running a school and teaching such an age range. The teaching throughout the school - just plain basics - no frills...." 120

This suggests that teachers saw their role as active, and their ideal class a homogeneous one to which they could lecture. When children were not trained to work co-operatively or individually, or to be "agents in their own learning", they were totally dependent upon their class teacher, or - an unknown quantity even if obtainable - a supply teacher.

In village schools, the Head Teachers were never absent from school if they could drag themselves in. Often they lived in adjacent school houses and could not be isolated from school problems even when ill:

"There is a small matter which causes me some anxiety - the absence of any arrangement for a relief teacher to come in in case of the temporary indisposition of the Head Teacher... The Junior Teacher cannot be expected to have 30 or 40 extra scholars suddenly added to their class without some disorganisation of work and - what is more important - discipline. Some excitement and 'trouble' is always apparent here when I am laid aside by a cold or other slight ailment. I want the Doctor's advice now about a trifling matter but I dare not go to him, because I am afraid he will order me to bed...." 121

The difficulties of teaching children assembled in large classes as individuals was a subject to which The Times Educational Supplement quite often returned. In 1932 a front page review of H.S. Wyndham's Class grouping in the primary school quoted the author's view that in the schools he had tested, the degree of heterogeneity in each class was too great even for "the most earnest teacher". The reviewer goes on:

"This is the rock upon which so many well-meant endeavours to give 'individual attention' to each child in a class have foundered: it is most acutely realised in the elementary school where, thanks to the spread of perfectly sound modern ideas of respecting and catering for individual differences, teachers are daily being set the impossible and heartbreaking task of trying to carry out individualistic methods of teaching with huge classes of 40, 50 or even 60 children..." 122

A later article, written when large classes were still in the news, ended with the assertion that the demand for smaller classes would come from the teachers themselves, no longer ex-pupil teachers accustomed to learning and teaching in undesirable conditions, but men and women who had spent at least four years in secondary schools as pupils in classes containing no more than 30 pupils. 123

Perhaps this is what H.M. Inspector had in mind, writing of Ratby school in 1929:

"The Headmistress, who is about to retire....is to be most heartily congratulated and commended on the excellent work she has done here....It is extremely unlikely that any new head teacher will prove competent to handle so big a task..." 124

It is true that during the 'Thirties the teachers in the elementary schools were becoming better qualified, but they were hardly likely to influence staffing policy: most who were certificated had proceeded from schools, where they had been treated like children even in sixth forms, to training colleges with

"...a strenuous timetable, and, in most colleges (especially for girls) ..a rigorous, highly supervised social situation"; 125

to authoritarian, hierarchically-organised schools.

The main problem, after class size, was the difficulty of obtaining and retaining suitable staff, while at the same time the difficulties were compounded by considerations only remotely relevant to the main task. While teachers were unemployed, economies prevented their being appointed to schools which desperately needed teachers; good, experienced women teachers were forced to resign upon marriage; rural schools could not offer inducements to attract staff; when each school was allowed a fixed number of certificated, uncertificated and supplementary teachers, there was often a mis-match between the vacancies and the available applicants; Anglican schools would accept only Anglican staff, and so on. 126

At Burrough on the Hill, there were new teachers in charge in 1918, 1919, 1921, 1921 again, 1924, 1926 and 1927. 127

At Burton Overy H.M. Inspector noted in 1929 that he had seen four different assistants in the space of four visits - and none of them was any use! 128

At Frisby on the Wreake the Inspector noted that there had been three infant teachers since the previous year, and that the children had done little but copy from books and the blackboard. 129

In 1931 the new head teacher at Huncote wrote in her log book:

"There have been so many changes in the school, and I should imagine the new teachers have seen the state of the work and have felt unable to grapple with it, and so let things slide, especially as most of them have only been doing temporary work....Should I remain here, I shall do my utmost to attain a much higher standard of work as I am far from satisfied." ¹³⁰

The headmaster had "a distinctly uphill task" at Stoney Stanton where he alone stood firm while assistants came and went with great rapidity. There were three classes including his own, and the other two classes had been taught by ten different teachers in two years! That was in 1923, but after some improvements over the years, the 1937 report again referred to "many changes of staff". ¹³¹

The above examples were drawn from Leicestershire schools, but the situation was similar in Northamptonshire. At Arthingworth there had been four head teachers in as many years up to 1920, when a new man came and improved the school tone through a judicious use of the cane. He left in 1924 and even nearly two years later no permanent successor had been appointed. The replacement who arrived in 1927 was deemed unsatisfactory, but stayed until 1931 although "adversely commented upon" by the Inspector. ¹³²

Cold Higham had three head teachers between 1916 and 1920; ¹³³Deene's head teacher retired in 1921 to be followed by seven temporary teachers in the space of three months, and a permanent appointee who remained only until 1924; ¹³⁴in the same school, and at the same time, the post of the assistant teacher had four holders between September 1922 and April 1923. At Duddington the managers struggled endlessly to appoint and retain staff, but the one applicant who was duly appointed remained only three months because she found she did not like the country! To confound confusion further, Duddington, like many villages, had a fluctuating child population, and in 1926 only 57% of the children had been at the school for more than two years. ¹³⁵

Maidford had three head teachers between 1928 and 1934; ¹³⁶Great Oxendon had no permanent head teacher for the whole of 1929, and the

young teacher in charge during that year had spent her entire probationary year in casual employment. 137

At Thornby C.E. School, a good head teacher who had introduced the Dalton Plan and was beginning to receive favourable reports from H.M. Inspector, had to resign for an educationally irrelevant reason:

"Very regretfully I resign my post as Head Mistress of this school today. In order that the outbuildings may be done the Managers demand a C. of E. member as Head. As I cannot comply with this request I resign.
Doris E. Smith" 138

It is difficult to think of any other so-called profession in which a successful member would be sacrificed for a lavatory! However, poetic justice prevailed: numerous changes during the 'Twenties led to a long series of uncertificated teachers throughout the 'Thirties, not one of whom left a beneficial trace behind. The school managers should have borne in mind the continuing difficulties of replacing good staff: at Asfordby in 1931 only one applicant came forward. She was offered the post but declined it, and no one else was to be found.

Often the contrast when long-serving teachers retired must have caused the respective local communities to lose all confidence in their schools: the Tansor head teacher retired "after forty years' steady work" to be replaced by a series of uncertificated, unskilled, inexperienced women for the next fifteen years.¹³⁹ Hinton in the Hedges had nine or ten teachers in charge between 1928 and 1930 and of the tenth the Inspector wrote:

"The present teacher works hard in spite of much personal ill-health." 140

The Northamptonshire Education Committee reported

"...considerable difficultyin filling vacancies for certificated Assistant Teachers. One existing vacancy for a man was first on 24th. July last (1930) and one for a woman on 7th. August. In neither case had any applications been received since October. Six other posts which had been advertised since November or December had resulted in only two applications each for three of them, one from a married woman in respect of another, and no applications in respect of the other two..." 141

The Committee had no explanation or solution, except to attempt to induce local youths at Training Colleges to return to the county to teach by offering guaranteed employment conditional only upon a successful interview.

The situation was no better in the Soke of Peterborough. The local H.M.I. reported in 1928 that the school serving the villages of Bainton, Ashton and Ufford

"....has been unfortunate in the matter of staffing for some time past. There have been three successive Head Teachers in a short time, the last having to retire on account of ill-health 16 months ago. Since then there have been 4 different teachers in charge temporarily...." 142

A new head teacher arrived in 1928, but frequent trouble with her motorcycle added to the "uphill task" foretold by the Inspector, and she soon gave up the unequal struggle. Her successor remained from 1930 to 1935, something of a record, for which feat she received "a handsome clock" at a farewell tea.

The town and city schools did not present prospective teachers with the travelling difficulties and shortages of local accommodation encountered in rural areas, but they were apparently in the same situation. At a Leicester school in 1925, of the seven assistants, five had been appointed within the previous nine months and at Loughborough one school had had twelve new teachers in 1931 alone, and six left during the same year. 143

Everywhere in the area similar examples can be found: Cottesmore, Rutland, had suffered "frequent changes of teacher"; Bagworth, Leicestershire, had an establishment of four assistant teachers, and three planned to leave in 1934; Finedon Girls' School in Northamptonshire had four head teachers in six years. 144

At the other extreme were teachers who had given a lifetime's service to one school, inevitably becoming "old fashioned" over the years. The headmaster of Eaton School had spent 38 years there by 1923; a similar situation existed at Glenfield where

"Arthur Green spent nearly forty years up to 1931"; Twycross, where the headmistress muddled along from 1903 to 1933; Asfordby, where the headmaster retired in 1937 after 40 years, and Desford, where the head retired in 1927 after being first appointed in the previous century. 145

In Northamptonshire similar examples abound: Evenley, which the headmaster left in 1920 "after 45 years in this most depressing school"; Brafield on the Green where the headmaster retired in 1934 after 35 years; Stoke Doyle, which had the same head teacher from 1905 to 1947; Stowe Nine Churches, which had the same head teacher from 1914 to 1947; Watford Council School, where one head teacher spent "37 happy years" from 1928 to 1965. 146

In fact, it was still possible for teachers to spend over sixty years in one building as pupil, pupil teacher and teacher, particularly as many children began school at three or four years of age, and retirement ages were similarly flexible at that time.

Every school history contains details of school closures for epidemics and other reasons, and some school log books concentrate on such details more than on educational matters, but it is not always realised that teachers' absences also frequently disrupted school routine. With ageing teachers in many schools, and inexperienced, temporary teachers struggling in others, plus the debilitating effects of the 1914-1918 war and the hazards of travel and the likelihood of infection from the children, teachers' absences were not only far more frequent than they are today, but they often lasted months rather than days or weeks. This was particularly true of respiratory infections and "nervous breakdowns". Other teachers, though in good health themselves, were excluded because of contacts at home with infectious diseases such as chickenpox, diphtheria, measles, mumps and scarlet fever.

The Inspectors often noted that the strain of coping with a large difficult class in a town school, or an enormous spread of age and abil-

ity in a small rural school was too great:

"The Mistress, who has been in charge here for 35 years is about to retire shortly....The task of keeping 27 children ranging from Infants to Standard VII profitably occupied must make too heavy a demand upon the powers of even the most competent teacher, and help of some kind is necessary." 147

In this aspect of their work, the Inspectors were indefatigable in attempting to obtain better conditions for "their" teachers:

"The Mistress was absent ill last year for a period of three months and when she returned was far from being returned to complete health....there are now 27 children in the school. Unless she has help, even inexperienced help, she will in all probability have a still worse breakdown in health." 148

At Croxton Kerrial the head teacher was "far from well" and had nine months off work in 1935; at Melton Council Infants' School the teachers had between them a total of thirty weeks' absence in 1921; at Farthingstone the head mistress retired in 1938 after twenty years, but during that period had had to take two long rests; at Hollowell, in 1939, although there were only 19 children on roll, the four eldest were always difficult, and precipitated the collapse and six months' absence of the headmistress, 149

At times monotony must have contributed to a decline in the health of teachers just as it must have inhibited educational developments:

"In the fourteen schools recently inspected it was found that thirty five teachers had been in the same school for from ten to twenty years, fourteen from twenty to thirty years, and four for over thirty years. There were also a few teachers who had taught the same Standard for as long as nine, twelve, fifteen and even twenty years. It can therefore occasion no surprise to find that far too many teachers have dropped the habit of preparing their work, and few were able to show preparation notes of recently given lessons." 150

Deafness seems to have been another occupational handicap. It certainly caused great difficulties for teachers, even if they were not statistically more prone to the disease than other sections of the community. The headmistress of Helidon School was deaf. At Ryhall the headmistress struggled against increasing deafness during the 'Twenties and the 'Thirties and was most reluctant to deviate from her class teach-

ing methods of "chalk and talk". At Edmondthorpe, too, the Inspector reported in 1925 that a teacher there was "handicapped by poor hearing" - a terrible disability for a teacher, but perhaps especially so in an age which emphasised good oral teaching and high standards of oral response from the children. ¹⁵¹

Travelling to and from work added to teachers' absences, not only because most means of transport during the first half of the present century were unreliable, but also because accidents occurred, and exposure to the elements led to illness. In fact school travel became a major subject on the agendas of education committees as more and more children and teachers were compelled to travel greater distances than ever before. An enquiry in Leicestershire revealed that modes of transport were very varied and often involved more than one form (e.g. bus and bicycle, or bus and train) and that the distances travelled were considerable. ¹⁵² It is therefore surprising that only two head teachers reported adverse effects upon the teachers concerned, particularly as such log book entries as the following were by no means uncommon:

"The delay was due to strong winds, heavy rain, and accident to cycle, on the 9 mile journey." ¹⁵³

"Owing to the bus from Wigston to Leicester being late I missed the 7.53 train to Brooksby and had to come on the 9.5. Most of the children came to meet me, but the two Ragdale children.... went home. As soon as the children saw me in the distance, two of them went to fetch the Ragdale children back, but they had gone too far..." ¹⁵⁴

Bicycle accidents and punctures were very frequent, but serious accidents were quite rare, though the sole teacher at Great Oakley required several months off school after a mishap. ¹⁵⁵ Serious motorcycle accidents were far more common, even for women teachers:

(The head mistress) "met with a serious accident ... She was on her way home for dinner when her motor cycle collided with a motor car," ¹⁵⁶

Most schools were at times distracted from their educational pursuits by serious accidents and tragedies, but Braybrooke Council School had more than its fair share. In 1916 Mr. Curtis was coping

single-handed with the entire school while his wife, who was also the infant teacher, lay dying next door in the school house. In 1920 H.M. Inspector reported, of Mr. Curtis,

"For the two years past, but especially during the last year, the Master's health has been getting worse, and he is now incapable of continuing the strenuous work which he has conscientiously done in the school for sixteen years."

During that year Mr. Curtis was replaced by Mrs. Gertrude Foster, and in the following year her husband was killed on his motorcycle. ¹⁵⁷

If the larger town schools were somewhat regimented through syllabus, curriculum, timetable, streaming and internal and external examinations, yet at least the teachers had a number of colleagues with whom to spend rare moments of relaxation, and conversely, space in which to avoid irritating colleagues. In contrast, in many of the smaller schools there may have been only one teacher isolated from almost all adult contact, oppressed by superiors such as clergymen or managers, or confined with one other teacher with maddening ways.

The headmistress of Burton Latimer Infant School was driven to distraction by an assistant who had been performing obsessive actions since her mother had died. The headmistress had already resigned as the only means of escape, but feared that she would not be able to endure life in the school for the three months' period of her notice because the assistant

"...persists in silly actions to her own person (which) in no small degree hindered the work of the school and impaired my health....Through the silly actions which are carried on my syllabus is not completed....it has been almost impossible for me to remain in school because of the actions...she seems to think of nothing but playing with herself all day...This morning when I was busy with my own class and the parents of the children who were to be examined she deliberately turned her back to myself and the parents, leaving her class to do just what it liked, and was using both hands to her chest This is the conduct that goes on continually...." ¹⁵⁸

The tone of the above entry clearly suggests that neither teacher was capable of putting the education of the children first, and that is

clearly a most undesirable situation.

At the Preston Capes Endowed School the insensitive actions of the managers provoked the headmistress to fury; at Leire it was the vicar who precipitated a resignation.¹⁵⁹ At Sproxton and at Tilton on the Hill unsatisfactory relations between respective head teachers and assistants led in each case to the departure of the former.¹⁶⁰

At times the virtual isolation and the total responsibility which many teachers bore year after year must have undermined mental and physical health and made educational innovation a matter receiving low priority. In the smallest schools the head teacher may have had one young supplementary teacher as sole "adult" company; in the larger schools there was little free time in which teachers could meet, and rarely a staff room or private space except for the one lavatory with a key across the playground. There was no contact with colleagues by telephone, no days off for courses, no "free periods". Phrases like "on duty" and "all teachers were at their posts" are frequent in the log books of the period, and tell their own story.

A short paragraph about school life during the Second World War catches perfectly the essential aloneness of the class teacher:

"I can still vividly remember the Headmistress receiving a telegram telling her that her brother had been lost at sea. The class worked quietly on their own while she wept bitterly all day. The next day she was still at school and indeed I can never remember her having any time off at all." ¹⁶¹

Notes to Chapter 9.

1. Holmes, E.G.A. Memorandum by Mr. E.G.A. Holmes on the Status, Duties &c., of Inspectors employed by Local Education Authorities. 6.10.1910. in Gordon, Peter, The Holmes-Morant Circular of 1911: a Note. Journal of Educational administration and history. Leeds Univ. Vol.X. No. 1. Jan. 1978. pp. 37 - 40.
2. Personal letter from Mr. John Mundy.
3. Personal letter from Mr. G.R. Dodson.
4. Letter from grandfather to a pupil, Wreake Valley College, Syston, provided by Mrs. J. Lindsay.
5. *ibid.* "I either cut myself at woodwork or in science nearly blew the place up with a bunsen burner, for which I got six of the best! "
6. T.E.S. 23.9.1933. } See also below, p.269, Note 45
7. *ibid.* 3.2.1934. } and p. 281.
8. See Seaborne, Malcolm, Primary school design. London. R.K.P. 1971, esp. Ch. 2 The one-room plan and its derivatives and Ch. 3 The central hall plan.
9. The percentage of certificated teachers rose from 65.4 in 1913 to 69.3 in 1923 and 75.4 in 1932. The Board of Education. Educational Pamphlet No. 100. Public education in England and Wales: historical tables reprinted from the statistical abstract for the United Kingdom. London. H.M.S.O. 1934. Table No. 40.
The above figures are lower than those given by Gosden of 71.5% certificated teachers in 1921 rising to 77% by 1931. (Gosden, P.H.J.H. The evolution of a profession. Oxford. Blackwell. 1972. p.280.)
10. Personal letter from Mr. Herbert Norton.
11. This is one of the major themes of writers like Edmond Holmes and A.S. Neill and H.M.I.'s like Christian Schiller: the undervaluing of creativity in practical and artistic forms. It may be that a thorough-going progressive education would have done more for British industry and technology than the favoured basic skills/grammar school subject approach.
12. See Appendix XIV and below, pp. 225 - 234.
13. Sir John Gorst, 1901. Quoted in Lawson, John, and Silver, Harold, A social history of education in England. London. Methuen. 1973. p.340.
14. e.g. "The school was streamed during this period (i.e. 1929 - 1939)....The 11+ examination became prominent and scholarships to the County Secondary School.....were considered to be very important in Kensington School:

(continued)

Year	Scholarships.
1931	2
1932	6
1933	5
1934	8
1935	10
1936	6
1937	16
1938	11

In 1935, the scholarships gained by Ilkeston schools were as follows:

Kensington	10
Chaucer	4
Granby	3
Catholic	1
Hallam Fields	1"

Hodge, P.T. Kensington School. 1886-1957. Ilkeston.
Morley's Bible and Bookshop. n.d. p.42.

15. Mander, John, Education in Leicester, 1944-1974. Leicester. Leicester City Council. 1980. p.16.
16. Tyrrell, S.J. Unpublished account of Eydon village. Typescript. Northants. C.R.O. ZB 103/33. p.8.
17. Mrs. Gertrude Foster, Headmistress, Braybrooke School, Northants. Evidence (S 56) to the Consultative Committee. See Appendix V. P.R.O. ed. 10/148.
18. Wise, Marjorie, English village schools. London. Leonard and Virginia Woolf. 1931 and T.E.S. 10.10.1931.
19. H.M.I.'s reports in Leics. C.R.O. Rutland Ed. Comm. Mins. 1935; Shenton S.L.B. 1933 and Queniborough S.L.B. 1936.
20. H.M.I.'s report, Ratcliffe Culey Temp. Council School. 1934. S.L.B. in Leics. C.R.O.
21. H.M.I.'s report, Rothwell School. 1934. P.R.O. Ed.21/58613. (Northants).
22. H.M.I.'s report, Finedon Girls' Junior School. 1933. S.L.B. in Northants. C.R.O.
23. H.M.I.'s report, Swinford School. S.L.B. in Leics. C.R.O.
24. H.M.I.'s report, Burton Overy School. 1929. S.L.B. in Leics. C.R.O.
25. See above, p. 113 and Notes.
26. H.M.I.'s report, Great Casterton, 1931. Leics. C.R.O.
27. H.M.I.'s reports for the respective schools. Leics. C.R.O.
28. *ibid.*
29. *ibid.* 1922.
30. *ibid.* 1934.
31. *ibid.* St. Matthew's Brunswick Street C.E. School, 1934.
32. St. Andrew's C.E. Laxton Street School (Infant and Std. I), Leicester. H.M.I.'s report. 1938. S.L.B. Leics. C.R.O.
33. H.M.I.'s report, Wadenhoe School. 1951. S.L.B. Northants. C.R.O.
34. H.M.I.'s reports, Lowick Charity School, 1952 and Holcot School, 1953. S.L.B. Northants. C.R.O.

35. H.M.I.'s report, Kirkby Mallory C.E. Junior School. 1953. S.L.B. Leics. C.R.O.
36. S.L.B. Measham County Infant School, 1952. Leics. C.R.O. (Perhaps this was why they had a pet cat which was sometimes accidentally shut in overnight with dire results)
37. H.M.I.'s report. Chelveston cum Caldecott Endowed School. 1948. S.L.B. in Northants. C.R.O.
38. See Note 21 above.
39. Personal letter from Mrs. P.M. Coates.
40. Imperial Avenue Infant School. 50 years. The school. 1983.
41. Personal letter from Mr. C. John Allman.
42. Personal letter from Mr. M.A.W. Deacon.
43. Personal letter from Mr. B.R. Crump.
44. S.L.B. Ratcliffe Culey Council School. 1923. Leics. C.R.O.
45. S.L.B. Worthington School. 1928. Leics. C.R.O.
 *Constraints imposed on educational innovation by caretakers and other non-teaching staff are very real but usually overlooked in educational studies. The notable exception is: Blyth, W.A.L. English primary education. Vol. I. Schools and Vol. II Background. London. R.K.P. 1965. See especially Vol. I. pp. 179 - 180.
46. S.L.B. Stoke Golding School. 1921. Leics. C.R.O.
47. See Note 36 above. The entry was made in 1959.
48. Personal letter from Mrs. M.F.E. Bedford.
49. Personal letter from Mrs. D.M. Hodgkin.
- 50, 51. Personal letter from Mrs. S.R. Wade.
52. Personal letter from Mr. B.R. Crump.
53. Personal letter from Mr. John Mundy.
54. Personal letter from Mr. C. John Allman.
55. Personal letter from Mrs. S.K. Ball.
56. Personal letter from Mr. D.M. Brooks.
 (Other correspondents who remember their primary schools as formal and authoritarian are: Mrs. M.F.E. Bedford; Mrs. A.F. Crump; Mr. M.A.W. Deacon; Mr. J.S. Dodge and Mr. G.J. Fisher).
57. S.L.B. Ratcliffe Culey School. 1938. Leics. C.R.O. (See Appendix XV for a typical timetable of the period).
58. S.L.B. Croxton Kerrial School. Draft letter lies in log book. Leics. C.R.O.
59. From respective H.M.I.'s' reports. Leics. Ed. Comm.Mins. Leics. C.R.O.
60. H.M.I.'s report, Melbourne Road C.J. School, Leicester. City H.M.I.'s' reports. Leics. C.R.O.
61. Freeland, G.C. in Simon, Brian, ed. New trends in English education. London. MacGibbon and Kee. 1957. p.23.

62. H.M.I.'s report, Shakespeare Street Junior School, Loughborough. 1934. Loughborough Ed. Comm. Mins. Leics.C.R.O.
63. Report of eight H.M.I.'s on the Leicester City elementary schools of the northern and western areas. 1924. Leicester Ed. Comm. Mins. Leics. C.R.O.
64. ibid. Printed, annotated edition of the above report.
65. Leicester Ed. Comm. Mins. 1925.
66. Report of the Junior Schools Committee, 1934. Leicester Ed. Comm. Mins.
67. H.M.I.'s report, St. Matthew's Curzon Street C.E. Junior School, Leicester. 1932. Leicester City H.M.I.'s' Reports. Leics. C.R.O.
68. H.M.I.'s report, Milton Street County Infant School, Leicester. 1934. Leicester City H.M.I.'s' Reports. Leics.C.R.O.
69. S.L.B. Hinton in the Hedges School. 1928. Northants. C.R.O.
70. Funnell, K.J. The history of Thurmaston National School, 1844 - 1968. The author. 1979. p.24.
71. Personal letter from Mrs. S.K. Ball, by this time headmistress of the school she is describing, which she attended as a girl.
72. Personal letter from Mr. M.A.W. Deacon.
73. Personal letter from Mr. B.R. Crump.
74. Personal letter from Mrs. D.M. Hodgkin.
75. Personal letter from Mr. G.J. Fisher.
76. Personal letter from Mr. J.S. Dodge.
77. e.g. Kensington School, Ilkeston. (See Note 14 above).

Moreton Pinkney, Northants:

"In 1961, two years after the arrival of the present teacher, H.M. Inspector reported a 'tradition of unusually high academic achievement' and this tradition has been amply maintained."

(Lewis, Kathleen, Moreton Pinkney School, 1822-1972. The school. 1972. p.19. Northants. C.R.O. ROP 709)

"If winning scholarships is the test of a school's efficiency, then indeed is Roade to be commended, for they have done so well that last year there were no Roade boys in the senior class, and Cooper's bus, which takes the children to Towcester Grammar School, is well high filled to capacity...."

Malin, E.M. Sec. Committee of W.I. and Parish Council. Roade: village scrapbook. 1953. p.17.
Northants. C.R.O. ZA 6834.

"The log book records that in Sept. 1921 Daisy Buckley was awarded the scholarship to the Girls High School at Brackley....so began a trek to Brackley that has never ceased....a tremendous advance in social justice for us country people..."

Tyrrell, S.J. Ms. account of Eydon village and school. Northants. C.R.O. ZB 103/33.

78. Personal account of Mr. Herbert Norton.
 79. Personal account of Mr. Leonard Hall.
 80. Personal account of Mrs. P.M. Coates re the 1930's and of Mr. D. Webster who was proud to be selected for one of the upper rooms in the 1960's.
 81. e.g. Carlton (1926 and 1928); Dingley (1937) and Hargrave (1941). S.L.B.'s in Northants. C.R.O.
Nanpantan (1923) S.L.B. in Leics. C.R.O.
Arnesby (1963) S.L.B. kindly lent by present headmistress.
 82. S.L.B. Thorpe Mandeville School. 1937. Northants. C.R.O.
 83. S.L.B. Sudborough School. 1923. Northants. C.R.O.
 84. S.L.B. Newton Bromswold School. 1934. Northants. C.R.O.
 85. S.L.B. Farthingstone School. 1924. Northants. C.R.O.
 86. *ibid.*
 87. S.L.B. Latimer Council School, Anstey. 1932 and 1939. Leics. C.R.O.
 88. S.L.B. Barwell Wesleyan Council School, 1923 and 1927. Leics. C.R.O.
 89. S.L.B. Congerstone School. 1955. Leics. C.R.O.
 90. S.L.B. Barwell Methodist School. (cf. Note 88). 1930. Leics. C.R.O.
 91. S.L.B. Pickwell School. 1929. Leics. C.R.O.
 92. S.L.B. Great Oxendon School. 1932. Northants. C.R.O.
- There is a suggestion that the two lean years had been caused by the departure of a certain teacher, who had then been induced to return. The preceding paragraph reads:
- "After an absence of two years during which she was teaching in a neighbouring county, the present Head Mistress again took charge of the school last November."
93. S.L.B. Farthingstone School. 1931. Northants. C.R.O.
 94. S.L.B. St. Luke's School, Thurnby. 1939. Leics. C.R.O.
 95. S.L.B. Cobden Street Junior Girls' School, Loughborough. 1929. Leics. C.R.O.
 96. On the reverse of the 1943 H.M.I.'s report on Nassington Council Mixed and Infants School, Northants. P.R.O. Ed/21/58592.
 97. The fact that the same arguments had to be repeated in book form eighteen years later indicates that the 1931 resolution had little effect. The book, (Transfer from primary to secondary schools. Evan Bros. for N.U.T. 1949.) repeats all the truisms long acknowledged but rarely observed, e.g. that the last year for children in the Junior School should be one of "joyous expectancy, not anxiety" (p.54); that future success for each pupil depended as much on environment, which included the schools, as on intelligence and attainment as revealed by examination at the age of eleven; (p.56).

that each child and each school should be free to develop in its own way and that narrow harmful concentration on English and Arithmetic limited freedom throughout the curriculum; (p. 58) that practice in such selection tests improves performance, giving a teacher of high educational principles a very difficult choice of action to make:

"We are not prepared in the circumstances which now often obtain, to tell the teacher where his duty lies". (p.58).

"We are satisfied that there are many primary schools in which the work is unduly and harmfully influenced by examinations or attainment tests in English and Arithmetic". (p.59).

98. The Board of Education. Pamphlet 63. Memorandum on examinations for scholarships and free places in secondary schools. London. H.M.S.O. 1928.

The fundamental issues were expressly evaded by the terms of the paper:

"Whether free place examinations are in themselves desirable or whether other and perhaps better methods of selecting pupils for admission to Secondary Schools could be devised - these are questions which are often asked, but they are not here discussed.." (p.1)

99. Leicester City. Director of education's printed report, 1932. Leics. Ed. Comm. Mins. Leics. C.R.O.

100. See Appendix XIV. Newton Bromswold School Honours List. Northants. C.R.O.

101. S.L.B. Sudborough School. Northants. C.R.O.

102. Memorandum on primary schools examination. 1929 etc. Northampton Ed. Comm. Mins. Northants. C.R.O.

Everywhere there were signs of arbitrariness, haste and undue pressure. A retired Leicester teacher, Mrs. Marjorie Hilliard, remembers that she was "selected" for St. John's ("a badge but earth closets") at the age of seven on the strength of correctly spelling the sentence, "I like to hear stories." She was worked very hard: "pushed on to prove something". She and five other girls took the "11+" examination when aged nine and went to Wyggeston's Girls' School at ten "without fractions or decimals". They had obtained lower marks than candidates of the correct age, but the age allowance increased their score. They took School Certificate at 14 and Higher School Certificate at 16. (Personal account).

103. Rutland Ed. Comm. Mins. 1938. Leics. C.R.O.

104. Gray, J.L. and Moshinsky, Pearl, Ability and opportunity in English education. Sociological review. April, 1935. Quoted by Stead, H.G. Full stature: education and tomorrow. London. Nisbet. 1936. pp. 65, 66.

*"Gifted" is equated by the writers with an I.Q. of 130+. The emphasis on "below" is Stead's.

105. Black, M.M. 'Influence of the "Free Place" scholarship on twentieth century education in England'. M.Ed. Manchester. 1939. pp. 70 - 72.
106. Butler, J.W. 'Some researches into education in Dartford, Kent, with reference to Kentish educational development as a whole from 1902 until the middle of the twentieth century'. Ph.D. London. 1959.
107. ibid. p.233.
108. ibid. p.234.
109. Personal account of Mr. Leonard Hall.
110. H.M.I.'s report, Ryhall School, Rutland. 1929. Rutland Ed. Comm. Mins. Leics. C.R.O.
111. S.L.B. Bagworth School. 1923. Leics. C.R.O.
112. S.L.B. Glenfield School. 1923. Leics. C.R.O.
113. S.L.B. Oadby School. 1920. Leics. C.R.O.
114. S.L.B. Sheepy Magna School. 1923 and 1926. Leics. C.R.O.
115. S.L.B. Latimer School, Anstey. 1924 and 1926. Leics. C.R.O.
116. H.M.I.'s report, Granby Road Council Infant School, Leicester. 1920. Reports for city schools. Leics. C.R.O.
117. H.M.I.'s report, Charnwood Street Council Mixed School, Leicester. Reports for city schools. Leics. C.R.O.
118. S.L.B. Taylor Junior School, Leicester. 1938. Leics. C.R.O.
119. T.E.S. 14.5.1938.
120. Personal letter from Mr. G.R. Dodson.
121. S.L.B. Somerby School. 1925. Leics. C.R.O.
122. T.E.S. 5.11.1932.
123. ibid. 14.5.1938.
124. S.L.B. Ratby (Botcheston) School. 1929. Leics. C.R.O.
125. Lawson, John, and Silver, Harold, A social history of education in England. London. Methuen. 1973. p.388.

By the time a certificated teacher had reached a position of responsibility in a school, he had been rigorously trained in ways of thought and action which took no cognizance of such concepts as "activity", "experience", "freedom" or "individualism". This is evident from Mr. Herbert Norton's personal account.

At Culham College (1925 - 1927) the junior students were ruled very firmly by the seniors and could be beaten for wearing gaudy pullovers or socks, or being seen talking to girls. Mr. Norton was once beaten for "harmony" - for having the effrontery to sing the tenor part instead of the melody of the college grace.

During the General Strike he and a fellow student had to cycle to Oxford for teaching practice. One day they arrived at the school wet through and the headmaster advised them to go back to college early for the sake of their health:

"But we daren't go back. We would have been seen by 'The Old Firm'. We sat in a cinema in our wet clothes. But we had to leave before the end of the film so we could return to college at just the right time."

Before his years at Culham, Mr. Norton was a pupil teacher for four years at a school fifteen miles from his home. He cycled each way, arriving each morning at 7.30 a.m. for a lesson from the headmaster on his own account.

After qualification, he taught a class of 57 children in Kilburn, North London, living in "digs" and saving hard to repay the grant lent to him for his Culham years by the L.E.A.

He returned to Northampton and taught music in several schools before becoming headmaster of All Saints V.P. School. One afternoon he returned home to be told by his wife that his school was to be closed. She had just read about it in the local newspaper, but he had not been consulted or even informed.

126. See e.g. Tyrrell, S.J. op.cit. In Eydon the Church would not permit the appointment of non-Anglican teachers; the L.E.A. would not permit the appointment of men, who required higher salaries than women; and the Managers would not appoint anyone young:

"Very seldom have I been in full accord with my co-managers. I should like to have had one teacher straight from college with ideas and the ardour of youth as an experiment. Suggest that to the managers and they say, 'But she wouldn't stay, and we must have one with experience.' Well, we had one stay 28 years.... Mrs. Evans."

- 127. S.L.B. Burrough on the Hill School. Leics. C.R.O.
- 128. S.L.B. Burton Overy School. Leics. C.R.O.
- 129. S.L.B. Frisby on the Wreake School. Leics. C.R.O.
- 130. S.L.B. Huncote School. Leics. C.R.O.
- 131. S.L.B. Stoney Stanton School. Leics. C.R.O.
- 132. S.L.B. Arthingworth School. Northants. C.R.O.
- 133. S.L.B. Cold Higham School School. Northants. C.R.O.
- 134. S.L.B. Deene School. Northants. C.R.O.
- 135. S.L.B. Duddington School. Northants. C.R.O.

Some schools in Northamptonshire had even greater difficulties with "floating" school populations, literally in the case of Braunstone where canal boat children were coming and going continually. (S.L.B. 1928, H.M.I.'s report. Northants. C.R.O.)

Yardley Gobion School was difficult to organise because, although an all-age elementary school, "a large number of boys from one of Mr. Fagan's Homes in this village leave this school at the age of nine when they are transferred to the Stony Stratford Home..." (H.M.I.'s report, 1943. P.R.O. Ed/21/58682).

Abthorpe C.E. School received a quarter of its children from "a London home for waifs and strays" and their "previous schooling was much neglected." (H.M.I.'s report for 1943. P.R.O. ed/21/58481).

136. S.L.B. Maidford School. Northants. C.R.O.
137. S.L.B. Great Oxendon School. Northants. C.R.O.
138. S.L.B. Thornby School. Northants. C.R.O.
139. S.L.B. Tansor School. Northants. C.R.O.
140. S.L.B. Hinton in the Hedges School. Northants. C.R.O.
141. Northants. Ed. Comm. Mins. 17.1.1931. Northants. C.R.O.
142. S.L.B. Bainton, Ashton and Ufford School. The Soke. Cambs. C.R.O. Huntingdon.
143. S.L.B. St. Matthew's Chester Street C.E. Girls' Intermediate School, Leicester. Leics. C.R.O.
144. From the respective school log books in respective C.R.O.'s.
145. From the respective school log books. Leics. C.R.O.
146. From the respective school log books. Northants. C.R.O.
147. S.L.B. Cranoe School. 1928. Again, by another H.M.I., 1935. Northants. C.R.O.
148. S.L.B. Carlton School. 1929. Northants. C.R.O.
149. From the respective school log books. All Leics. C.R.O. except Farthingstone: Northants. C.R.O.
150. Memorandum submitted to Leicester C.B. on the staff of various schools. 1920. Leicester City Ed. Comm. Mins. Leics. C.R.O.
151. From the respective school log books. Northants. C.R.O.
152. Leics. Ed. Comm. Mins. 4.7.1930. Leics. C.R.O.
153. S.L.B. Desford Council Mixed School. 1927. Leics. C.R.O.
154. S.L.B. Hoby School. 1923. Leics. C.R.O. Ragdale is an outlying hamlet.
155. S.L.B. Great Oakley School. The reporter in this case is the diocesan inspector. Northants. C.R.O.
156. S.L.B. Ashley School. 1924. Northants. C.R.O.
157. S.L.B. Braybrooke School, Northants. Consulted at the school by kind permission of the present headmaster.
158. S.L.B. Burton Latimer Infant School. 1925. Northants. C.R.O.
159. See Appendix XVI. "Log book entries of a personal nature."
160. S.L.B.'s. 1935 and 1929 respectively. Leics. C.R.O.
161. Personal letter from Mr. B.R. Crump.

Section IV The Second World War.

Chapter 10 The educational effects of the Second
World War, and later developments.

1. The Board of Education and the
 Second World War.
2. The national response to wartime
 conditions in schools.
3. The situation in the South East
 Midlands.
4. A brief consideration of school life
 after the war.

1. The Board of Education and the Second World War.

Reference has already been made to the optimistic assessment of wartime educational opportunities as seen by the Board of Education and expressed in Circular 1474, Schooling in an emergency.¹ The opportunities included: the calling forth of teachers' initiative and a return to first principles in education; scope for real local studies; new and vital purposes for gardening and cookery lessons; interchange of educational ideas between host schools and visitors; a strong community spirit revitalised by weekend and evening activities; a broadening of outlook; more oral work as paper became rationed; a wider use of halls rather than classrooms and therefore more practical and expressive activities; real purpose in English as evacuees kept in touch with their families by letter. Evacuation would break the tyranny of the timetable, the closed classroom containing the endlessly active teacher and the excessively passive pupils:

"This picture of an education based on simple needs is further enlivened by the not altogether unwelcome fact that the organisation of a school will not be handicapped by a conventional time-table of set hours and periods."²

(Teachers)"may have a lurking feeling that a full afternoon spent on rambling on a common or in a wood, or along country lanes, is not 'school'. They should get rid of any such feeling if it exists. The acid test will be whether the children are happy and alert during, or as a result of, the experience."³

"Some definite time...should be allocated to every class once a week during which they can write letters home. It goes without saying that such letters should be completely uncensored. The only function of the teacher...would be to keep reasonable order and quiet and to give help to those who ask for it..."⁴

Later, in June 1942, a further blurring of the lines between formal and informal education, between home and school, was encouraged by Circular 1596, Care of children during school holidays. The circular recommended that schools should remain open during the holidays to provide meals, milk and appropriate activities,

Between the publication of the two circulars, in the intervening

period of three years, a regular series of pamphlets entitled Schools in wartime was sent to schools to inform and guide teachers and to enlist their pupils' aid in such ways as collecting acorns, scrap of all kinds, leaves and roots for drugs, wild fruit and rabbit food. ⁵

As the prospects for a successful outcome of the war became more hopeful, so the Board of Education's documents combined the progressive message of the 1931 Hadow Report and the series of Handbooks of suggestions with the spirit of their wartime pamphlets and the growing national desire for greater social justice. Educational reconstruction⁶ was a White Paper which proposed the progressive decrease in class sizes in primary schools, much new school building, and the abolition of the Special Place Examination in order to

"....secure for children a happier childhood and a better start in life...." ⁷

and to put right a system under which junior schools

"...tended to be the 'Cinderellas' of the public system of education". ⁸

The White Paper was followed up in more detail, after the passing of the 1944 Education Act, by The nation's schools; their plan and purpose.⁹ In the latter booklet, the aims of the junior school are unchanged from those formulated in the 1931 Hadow Report, namely, "to make fullest use of the liveliest interest of children at this stage"; to build education on "curiosity and interest"; to devise a curriculum to be thought of "in terms of activity and experience" requiring continual departure from traditional class-instruction; to provide appropriate education in schools which contain every kind of future citizen, and not to base it on the supposed requirements of later stages of schooling. Grading classes according to ability in formal skills may not be so appropriate in the future, when better methods of selection will permit a wider junior education with more stress on physical wellbeing, on developing interest in, and knowledge of, the environment, and on learning how to do things as well as learning about things from books. ¹⁰

2. The national response to wartime conditions in schools.

There is no brief account which can sum up the situation in the nation's schools during the period of the second world war: it is consistent only in its inconsistency. The consistent thinking of the Board of Education writers revealed in the publications examined briefly above is apparently based more on their own liberal traditions in this direction - no doubt further encouraged by their removal, as a body, to Bournemouth - than on actual practical developments within a majority of schools.

An important contemporary study ¹¹ shows how many teachers of a large Liverpool school took their familiar ruts with them to North Wales and spent their time worrying about lower formal standards of work which they sought to remedy by spending every available minute grinding at the "Three R's" in a most Victorian fashion - a comparison further emphasised by the sight of the children hunched on benches writing on slates balanced on their knees.

On the other hand, for the first time it was possible for a head-teacher to seize opportunities for change by inducing teachers to take unaccustomed age-groups; by mixing rigidly-segregated streams of children; by encouraging ingenuity as teachers taught without their accustomed aids and without the usual specialist teachers, especially in P.T. Above all, relationships between teachers and pupils, all strangers in a strange land, grew stronger and deeper:

"This happy spirit was not destroyed when many of the children and their teachers returned to Liverpool. There was ample evidence of its retention in the classroom and playground...(and) by the greatly increased readiness of parents to consult with them (the teachers) on problems relating to the health, conduct and employment of their children." ¹²

A later study, less immediate and personal, but broader and more comprehensively documented shows how erratic the course of evacuation really was. ¹³ Many children drifted home to the large towns even before the war had started in earnest, to find their schools closed and their

erstwhile schoolfellows reverting to the life of Mayhew's urchins of a century earlier;¹⁴ with some towns and villages rejecting the evacuees when they did make the attempt to stay in safe areas;¹⁵ and with some makeshift classrooms being totally unsuitable.¹⁶ The decision that hosts and visitors would keep their separate identities prevented all from uniting in adversity to make the best of available resources and to learn from one another:

"This clinging to identity could be seen in little towns like Alnwick in Northumberland. In March 1940 there were two local class of 50+, one evacuated class (from Wallsend) of 10 and one of 5 (from Byker).¹⁷

The writer concludes that the numerous difficulties encountered by the teachers working in such circumstances led to "a dimming of the spirit of progress and development" and a return to formality,¹⁸ and that by the end of 1940 "formality had won the day" in, for example, Cheshire, Bradford, Birkenhead and Birmingham.¹⁹

These somewhat shaming conclusions are supported by other accounts: the 1940 Fabian Society Evacuation survey detailed "a complete disintegration of the educational system....a moral victory to the enemy."²⁰ A collection of accounts by evacuated children and teachers has few references to schooling and much more about the meanness and lack of sympathy encountered in so many cases. The children found many opportunities for learning through "activity and experience" but often not of the kinds of which parents and teachers would approve!²¹

No clear picture emerges from what few H.M.I.'s' reports were published during the war years. Many Inspectors were in the armed services; the rest had many extraneous duties connected with such items as war savings and school gardens, and "keeping Heads and their staffs in good spirits" was accepted as a legitimate purpose of inspection.²²

There is, however, evidence to suggest that wartime education provided new opportunities of all kinds for those who were prepared to grasp them. A new annual festival of dance, drama and music was established in Cornwall, and in East Anglia the Dean and the organist of Ely

Cathedral produced The Pirates of Penzance with a Jewish school from the East End of London. 23

According to one authoritative account, Doncaster made the most of opportunity during the war.²⁴ Teachers made full use of radio and film; in at least one senior school the younger boys were placed in mixed-ability classes and allowed to choose their own local studies; in another boys' school such subjects as surveying, conjuring and local exploration were given an official place on the timetable. In fact, such experiments in self-government became so popular that a conference on the subject was held in the town in March 1941 and was addressed by A.S. Neill and J.H. Simpson.

The chief education officer of Doncaster invited the staff and students of St. Gabriel's Training College to leave their bombed London buildings for alternative accommodation in Doncaster itself. This done, contact became very fruitful. Local teachers attended college courses and one in particular in music, movement and drama was so successful that Rudolph Laban and Liisa Ullman took part in subsequent events. In turn, teaching practice in the local schools helped to identify and publicise good teachers and progressive schools,²⁵ and visits to the town by the London Philharmonic Orchestra, the Ballet Rambert, and so on, helped to stimulate a lively musical tradition after the war was over.

3. The situation in the South East Midlands.

As might be expected, the South East Midlands experienced most of the difficulties encountered in other areas during the war, with the added problem compared, for example, with Cornwall or North Yorkshire, that it was not always clear whether the region was a haven of refuge or a target for German bombers. Apart from that fact, which led to an abnormal amount of coming and going among evacuated schools, groups, families and individual children, the South East Midlands appear to have coped adequately but with little of heightened awareness regarding the

new educational opportunities which had presented themselves.

Personal accounts and letters from those who were teachers at the time and those who were children differ markedly in their emphasis and suggest that the teachers wished only to maintain their traditional formality of educational organisation and content while the children were delighted with the inevitable interruptions to routine and monotony.

Teachers have written in the following terms:

"The outbreak of war saw the end of my delightful school as I knew it. In Sept. 1939 125 children from Islington descended on me one afternoon. My well mannered well disciplined Flore children looked on with astonishment at the evacuees. They were dirty, ill disciplined and very arrogant, their teachers did not seem to mind what they did. When school re-opened.... we had part-time education....it was not very satisfactory... What had I taken on? The standard of education was so low, children of 14 had a reading age of six years....It was a nightmare....the school was never the same again. I am afraid my Flore children got contaminated...." 26

"The 2nd. World War brought about 60 children from London causing over crowding and confusion." 27

"The more I think of the way we carried on our work with so many upsets, evacuees, shortage of supplies and staff and voluntary civil defence duties, the more I am amazed that we accomplished so much and caused so little interruption in our pupils' schooling." 28

Most school log books of the period concentrate similarly on practical difficulties caused by evacuees when they arrived, during their stay, and at their departure:

"Evacuees have been gradually drifting, either away to join parents or back to London, 9 out of 24 have done this during this term." 29

"The term has been a difficult one owing to continual influx and removal of immigrant children from London etc." 30

The headmistress of Lowick Charity School wrote annual reports on her assistant teacher and from these we can gauge the duration of the difficulties:

1941: "...progress of natives was hindered by immigrants, many of whom had not attended school though of school age. Those who had, very very backward and disinclined to settle.."

1942: "The work of the Infant Room has again been interrupted by the influx of very young evacuees....of a low mental standard, lacking the power to concentrate..."

1943: Disruptions caused to education by "slow, restless, backward" evacuees.³¹

A reasonably comprehensive picture of life in the wartime village school can also be glimpsed from the Evenley log book:

29th. Sept. 1939: "Only 2 now left on the roll. Others have returned to London and Liverpool."

June, 1943. "E. and J. Shakeshaft have returned to Edmonton after 2½ years with us."

August, 1944. "Evacuees attend very badly indeed."

Sept. 1945. "Today started the younger children on new and clean reading books - more up-to-date too. The others, having been in use for 16 years - finished off by our crowds of evacuees (122) were no longer fit for use."³²

The clearest picture of life in an "invaded" school at the outbreak of war is contained in the New Duston log book. It does not suggest that educational opportunities would be grasped very firmly, however long the war continued. Fifty children arrived from London with five teachers, almost equalling the number of "native" pupils and bringing the scourge of "unclean heads". "Preserving identity" meant that no advantage was taken of a combined staffing ratio which was generous to an unheard-of degree. It is true that the school was shared - but the "natives" did a four hour shift in the morning and the "immigrants" used the premises afternoons. New timetables very soon became as sacrosanct as the old ones which they had replaced, and deviations for air-raid-drill and gas-mask-drill were recorded in the log book. When the war was three weeks old it is recorded that:

"Work disorganised in both classrooms from 1 - 2.30 p.m. owing to the fact that the Head Teacher was engaged in making arrangements re stock, registers, etc, with the Evacuated L.C.C. Acting Head Teacher. These items were all satisfactorily arranged on the first day of term but the evacuated teachers are evidently disgruntled at not being allowed access to the stock cupboard."³³

Those correspondents who were school children at the time give little indication that life in schools changed greatly even under the threats of war but their details of new pleasures imply a strong criticism of the old order:

"The war meant that Air Raid Drill brightened our days..." 34

"Part-time schooling suited me as my friends and I roamed wild in the Northamptonshire countryside. The woods and fields and streams seemed to be where I was happiest. My mother and father had themselves been brought in off the fields to sit in school desksbut their heart wasn't in it either." 35

"The war had a marked effect on our lives....evacuees from London ...were many of them a revelation to us, especially the real 'cockneys'....they led us directly to a period of half-time schooling...After a while the L.E.A. arranged for us to go to a local church room for afternoon sessions, where we did drill, singing and humanities lessons. On many fine days we went for quite long walks into the surrounding country." 36

"1939 - 1945 War made little difference to our lives. The evacuees made life more interesting and some still live in the village. We all played truant one day when we thought a plane had come down near to the village.....I can remember gathering rose hips....Going down the shelter was exciting." 37

The positive aspects of wartime education as recorded in local log books are similar in content to the letters quoted above: basic education changed very little and if anything became more limited to paper and pencil work than it had been under easier conditions - but the interruptions and enforced activities at least brought variety for a while. Log books record a multitude of useful activities: collecting scrap; knitting scarves and socks for servicemen; catching cabbage white butterflies; 38 gathering blackberries, nettles, rose hips and horsechestnuts; 39 sorting "salvage into paper, cardboard, bags, books, rags, bones, metals and rubber." 40

Although H.M. Inspectors, on their infrequent visits, continued to recommend oral English, practical nature study and the use of maps when discussing current affairs to some extremely hidebound schools, 41 other schools made full use of the various savings campaigns and developed a form of "project" as at Gaulby in 1941:

"Warships Week. Model of the 'Exeter' visited the village. School children given a ride to Norton. Morning lessons disorganised. Children sang sea-shanties. Promised a framed picture of a warship if they collected £30. Savings stamp prizes for posters, essays, slogans, plasticine models." 42

Perhaps this kind of campaign had more effect on liberalising the curric-

ulum than the diocesan inspectors who were still attempting to induce some teachers to occupy the infants with plasticine or crayons while talking to the older children. ⁴³

4. A brief consideration of school life after the war.

There is no doubt that the war had a profound effect on all, but in the field of education the body which appears to have changed most profoundly and permanently was H.M. Inspectorate. Many schools appear to have returned to pre-war patterns as soon as possible; many teachers no doubt wished to carry on as if nothing had happened; but H.M. Inspectors had had their eyes opened by their experiences on active service or in English schools where old certainties had been disturbed if not destroyed. It is quite noticeable that post-war reports were all of the kind which only R.D. Salter Davies wrote of the East Midland schools before 1939, and that H.M. Inspectors took every opportunity to press home the progressive message when new staff were appointed. They encouraged those trained just before the war, who had perhaps never had the opportunity to teach before being "called up" and those trained just afterwards, to make changes long overdue. Board of Education courses ⁴⁴ and Emergency Training Colleges reinforced the progressive outlook, and it is unlikely that the newly-trained, mature ex-service-man was as easily ridiculed or browbeaten out of his idealism as previous generations of young teachers: ⁴⁵

"For one year's intensive training came young men, not straight from school but who, a few months before, had been fighter pilots, commandos, submarine crew and so on and who one year later brought into the schools a very different outlook on life.

To read the National Press in 1955 you would have supposed that the Primary Teachers of England had gone mad and thrown to the winds discipline, accuracy, care and hard work and were inflicting upon children untried things called 'activity methods'". ⁴⁶

In fact, changes were not made so quickly or simply: 'General and special reports' of H.M. Inspectors, extending from 1938 to 1947 and including the intervening war years show that little of educational progress was being made in Pembroke at the beginning of that period,

or at Blackburn at the end, but that the situation was changing in Sheffield as early as 1941. The Sheffield report shows, too, a new idealism emerging as part of H.M. Inspector's overall assessment of educational worth:

"...it can be said that Home Service generated its liveliest vitality when it discarded time-honoured classroom methods and approaches - which in any case were hardly appropriate - and made first-hand enquiries and investigations. Thus in many cases began the development of new and hitherto untried techniques.....

There was of course an inevitable loss of facility in the essential skills, but there were compensations in other and perhaps less measurable directions which should not be underestimated. ...Moreover, first-hand contact with the world at large vitalised many of the lessons and children became active rather than passive learners. In brief, a new light was thrown on educational method, and the study of the child as a sensitive and growing organism was recognised as a subject of absorbing interest and prime importance to the teacher." 47

In the South East Midlands, the gradual nature of the change can be seen in successive recommendations by H.M. Inspectors which, falling on far more receptive ears than before the war, gradually transformed the schools. 48

At Evenley Council School, for example, the headmistress who had been in charge since 1928 was commended in 1947 for setting high standards and not sparing herself; her successor in 1953 was urged to extend free continuous writing; to develop the individual recording of history and geography lessons; to continue with puppetry and the newly-introduced arts and crafts. In 1959 she was commended for planning the children's work in the form of individual assignments, with "an unusually rich collection of attractively produced books" but

"...the most striking feature of the school is its arts and crafts - bold pictorial work, models in plasticine, paper and papier mâché and puppets - show that the children are being given scope for the exercise of imagination and craftsmanship. Paintings and models are also used to bring colour and life to history and geography..." 49

In the post-war period the Inspectors encouraged more individual, personal writing from children; a wider choice of art materials; a better variety of responses to oral lessons than copying notes from the black-

board; more practical arithmetic; better libraries; "Look and Say" or "Sentence" methods rather than exclusive dependence upon phonics in the earliest stages of reading; "Marion Richardson" handwriting; relevant radio programmes chosen with discrimination; fewer tiny groups working separately; longer periods for sustained work; more books and pictures; the encouragement of initiative; ⁵⁰ the use of the environment not only for nature study and local geography but as the inspiration for art and the writing of prose and poetry. Above all, perhaps, each school was seen in its context as a vital unit in the local community, with social responsibilities in their way as vital as the older tasks of imparting formal skills and directing the intellect. Encouraged by H.M. Inspectors, teachers spent less time and energy doing things to children or for children, and more time on letting children do things for themselves or with their friends. In some cases, as with exceptional teachers from earlier eras, shared interests and concerns united adults and children in a common "we":

"15th. June. The children were refused permission to borrow books as usual from the Mobile Library which visits the village each fortnight. We intend to protest against this decision.

20th. June. The children today wrote letters to the County Librarian explaining why the library facilities are important to them. I shall write a covering letter expressing my own point of view.

6th. July. The County Librarian visited to discuss the children's use of the Mobile Van. He agrees that they should be permitted to borrow books." ⁵¹

Notes to Chapter 10.

1. Board of Education. Schooling in an emergency. London. H.M.S.O. 1939. See above, pp. 77, 78.
2. *ibid.* p.5.
3. *ibid.* p.15.
4. *ibid.* p.20.
5. See Appendix XVII, Schools in wartime pamphlets.
6. Board of Education. Educational reconstruction. London. H.M.S.O. Cmd. 6458. 1943.
7. *ibid.* p.3
8. *ibid.* p.5
9. Board of Education. The nation's schools: their plan and purpose. London. H.M.S.O. 1945.
10. *ibid.* pp. 9, 10.
11. Grant, J.K. 'Some changes brought about by war-time evacuation'. M.A. Liverpool. 1943.
12. *ibid.* p.165.
13. Jones, E.M. 'The evacuation of English schoolchildren during World War Two; an examination of the educational and social aspects of its impact with a case study of a reception area, West Sussex'. M.Phil. Southampton. 1974.

Jones was able to consult the Weitzman papers which were intended to form the basis of an official history of English education which was never completed. The same material was used after Weitzman's death in Middleton, N. and Weitzman, S. A place for everyone. London. Gollancz. 1976.
14. *ibid.* p. 140. 756 children drowned in emergency water tanks.
15. In Oxford the evacuees had to sleep between the rows of seats in the cinemas, and in many "respectable" areas doctors' waiting rooms were full of women seeking certificates to prove their health was not equal to the strain of looking after evacuees. (*ibid.*).
16. *ibid.* p.46. quoting B.Ed. G8R/898 of 12.11.1943:
"A visitor found one classroom occupied by one woman and another by one man whilst at the same time two large classes of children were being taught in the swimming bath covered by a wooden roof serving as a floor for two other classes".
17. *ibid.* p.56.
18. *ibid.* p.58.
19. *ibid.* p.92.
20. Padley, R. and Cole, M. Evacuation survey. (For the Fabian Soc.) 1940. Quoted by Aveyard, J.E. 'The impact of war on elementary and secondary education in Doncaster, 1939-1945'. M.Ed. Sheffield. 1975.
21. Johnson, B.S. ed. The evacuees. London. Gollancz. 1968.

22. Jones, E.M. op.cit. quoting (p. 124) P.R.O. Ed.22/215. (Memo. to Inspectors 'S'. No. 651. 24.6.1940).
23. Jones, E.M. op.cit. p.147.
24. Aveyard, J.E. op.cit. See Note 20 above.
25. With the college's encouragement, a headmistress and her assistant produced a popular book on infant play: Creative play in the infant school, (Misses Simpson and Alderson). Aveyard, J.E. op.cit. p.100.
26. Personal letter from Mr. G.M. Dodson.
27. Personal letter from Mr. John Hall.
28. Personal letter from Mr. W.E. Bramley, 1976.
29. S.L.B. Cold Ashby School. Dec. 1940. Northants. C.R.O.
30. S.L.B. Potterspury School. Dec. 1940. Extracts kindly selected by the present headmaster.
31. S.L.B. Lowick Charity School. Northants. C.R.O.
32. S.L.B. Evenley Council School. Northants. C.R.O.
33. S.L.B. New Duston Council School. Northants. C.R.O.
34. Personal letter from Mrs. S.K. Ball.
35. Personal letter from Mr. John Mundy.
36. Personal letter from Mr. D.M. Brooks.
37. Personal letter from Mrs. M.F.E. Bedford.
38. e.g. S.L.B. Marston St. Lawrence School. Northants. C.R.O.
39. e.g. S.L.B. Milton Parochial School. Extracts kindly selected by the present headmaster.
40. S.L.B. Potterspury School. See Note 30 above.
41. e.g. S.L.B. Maidford School. 1939. Northants. C.R.O.
42. S.L.B. Gaulby School. 1941. Leics. C.R.O.
43. No doubt the new excuse for an old failing was the wartime shortage of materials.
44. See Appendix VII. "An account of a Ministry of Education Course, 1946."
45. Yet one wonders if "progressive" young teachers have ever been really welcomed by their experienced colleagues: see Saraga, Jessica, Catalogues of despair. T.E.S. TT.10.1985. p.26. In this review of accounts of school experiences by and for young teachers, Saraga summarises:

"...almost without exception the new teachers were criticized for their noisy classrooms and their attempts to solve the problems by understanding rather than repression - but (they were) offered very little helpful advice...."

and:

"Finding himself in his probationary year in a school where his values simply didn't fit, he learned to keep

quiet in the staffroom.....His colleagues looked askance at him as one 'having trouble', patronisingly assumed he'd grow out of his idealism, or aggressively sneered at what they called his 'free expression' methods....."

Yet these experiences occurred in the 1970's!

46. Chouler, W.H. The story of Horley's schools; from one in 1835 to eight in 1972. Horley. The author. 1973. p.94.
47. See Appendix XVIII. "'General and special reports' of H.M. Inspectors".
48. See Appendix XIX. "Local post-war reports of H.M. Inspectors"
49. S.L.B. Evenley Council School. Northants. C.R.O.
50. e.g. S.L.B. Lilbourne School. 1949. The H.M. Inspector commended the boy who had made a flower garden in one corner of the playground. Northants. C.R.O.
51. S.L.B. Maidford School. 1966. Northants. C.R.O.

✓ Section V. Conclusion.

✓ Chapter 11.

1. Conclusions.
2. Theory into practice, 1920-1945; a brief review.
3. "The Scholarship".
4. The war and afterwards.

1. Conclusions.

From all the evidence examined and selected in respect of schools in the South East Midlands in the period between the two World Wars and later it can be stated fairly that:

the philosophy of "activity and experience" had very little effect on actual school practices during the following twenty years or so. There was continual slight change in that an enlightened H.M.I. like R.D. Salter Davies could find more schools to commend in 1939 than he would have found in 1919. However, the development could be expressed as a straight line graph with a very shallow angle stretching between those dates and extending into the 1950's. It was certainly not a curve suddenly steepening at 1931 or at any other date before the 1960's;

not a single example has been found to support the quite common assertion that during the 1930's a minority of teachers threw all tradition and convention to the winds, allowing freedom to become licence, and discrediting all steady, sensible educational development. Examples have been given of inspired and inspiring teachers, but they seem to be a gifted minority always present in the teaching profession and working within accepted restraints as opportunists, rather than rejecting traditional educational concerns;

there is no evidence to support another fairly common contention, namely that the younger juniors enjoyed at least a token amount of "activity and experience" while the older juniors concentrated on the basic skills required for "passing the scholarship". If there was any differentiation at all between the treatment of the younger and the older juniors, it was in the other direction, with the latter, older group enjoying slightly more choice of individual work and the attention of the head teacher or a senior assistant, while the former, younger group was given the routine "grind" and the less experienced and capable teachers. In the all-age school all the juniors constituted "the neglected middle" but in the junior school it was the group of younger juniors who earned that dubious title. They were seen as too old to be allowed to continue practical "infant" activities and too young to enjoy the responsibilities and opportunities accorded to some

of the older juniors in some schools;

there is no evidence to support the view that infant school practice spread its benign influence upwards to the junior classes. On balance the pressure for most of the period was in the other direction, with the formal requirements of the junior schools, departments and classes restricting infant education to the production of seven year old children with high attainments in reading, writing and arithmetic;

there is no evidence to show that chief education officers or H.M. Inspectors took any notice of the recommendations of the 1931 Hadow Report, and even The Handbook of Suggestions with its long-repeated pleas for a broadening and liberalising of the curriculum was rarely referred to;

there is no evidence to show that other Board of Education publications, or other books or periodicals, had any marked effect on actual classroom organisation, lesson content or teaching style;

there is no evidence to show that any part of the region which has been designated "the South East Midlands" for the purpose of the present study was more, or less, "progressive" than any other part, or that there were significant differences between urban and rural areas, or between "Church" and "Council" schools. What can be stated unequivocally is that the larger schools which were naturally situated in the more heavily populated areas were dominated by their own organisations, with a hierarchy of streamed classes and graded teachers, and a concern for timetables and curricula, attainments and selection, which effectively prevented educational freedom for any child or adult from the youngest pupil to the head teacher. The class teacher's only choice lay in his deciding to make his didactic approach either more or less interesting by his selection of introductory material and its relationship - or otherwise - to the children's knowledge or out-of-school experiences; by the use of diagrams, pictures, Socratic questioning, humour, sarcasm, or personal reminiscences; in other words, by his relationship to his subject and to his pupils expressed in the sentence "Doctor Keate taught John Latin". The schools which, conversely, were comparatively

the most lively were the small schools in which the head teacher had a class of his or her own and almost total autonomy to follow or stimulate his own and the pupils' interests. Most of this group were church schools, partly because they constituted the majority of village schools, but also because there was a better working relationship, in many cases, between the adults involved (notably the vicar and the head teacher) than in the council (usually ex-board) schools, about which there was often a deadness in every respect. Most examples of lively and active head teachers have been drawn from Northamptonshire, which retained its "all-age" schools longer than Leicestershire and Rutland. The latter county having established its partially selective central schools quite soon after the German prisoners of war had vacated their huts, the village schools were in many cases subsequently left with the least able older children: not so much as "all-age" schools as primary schools with an awkward "rump" of seniors who often did not fit even into the desks, much less the organisation;

it follows, therefore, from the preceding statement, that there is no evidence to support the optimistic view that the junior schools created by "decapitation" suddenly became liberated and "progressive". In fact, the reverse is true, for the resulting junior schools were often left in the charge of the less-well qualified teachers;

there is little evidence that the Second World War, through the upheavals of evacuation and air raids, exerted a liberating effect upon education by breaking down old patterns of schooling. Schools attempted to continue to maintain traditional education in spite of difficulties and the positive attitude of "Keep going at all costs" had its negative corollary in the rejection of most opportunities to unite evacuees and hosts in new social and educational developments ranging across the schools, the church and village halls pressed into use (with stages and floor space lacking in the schools) and the countryside or urban places of interest.

In short, the present study, embracing three counties and their associated towns and one city, supports the conclusion drawn by Reader in her close examination of a small group of schools within, or adjacent to, the same area:

"No evidence emerged during this study to suggest that during the inter-war period pedagogical practice in elementary schools underwent any pronounced or radical change. Such progressive features as were identified seem to have been gradually assimilated to and accommodated by the existing methodology. No particular landmarks appeared to mark any dramatic change in direction...." 1

there is no evidence to show that a sudden change occurred in primary education immediately after the Second World War, but a new awareness of the social context and importance of the school within its neighbourhood was apparent from post-war reports of H.M. Inspectorate;

there is no evidence to suggest that the inter-war period was a golden age of high scholastic attainment for a very large proportion of pupils, from which there has since been a serious decline. Indeed, the complaint with regard to the schools that "things aren't as good as they used to be" was as frequently expressed during the years covered by the present study as it has been ever since.

In the concluding pages of the present study, the reasons why the philosophy of "activity and interest" was not adopted in the elementary and primary schools of the South East Midlands between the wars are briefly reviewed. Then, again only very briefly, some reasons are suggested for the gradual liberalising of the schools after the war. The war cannot on the evidence be itself considered a prime cause of change, in spite of frequently-encountered assertions to that effect.

It is, rather, as if a certain period of time was necessary, of which period the years of the Second World War formed merely a part, for the maturing of all the new educational ideas which had been fermenting for decades. During that time a new stage of compulsory education, which had been almost accidentally formed by "decapitation", became established, accepted and of age; older teachers retired and newly-trained men and women took their places; favourable reports of "modern methods of education" continued to reach the public; economic achievements were slowly permitted to translate the high social and educational aims engendered by war into new purpose-built and adequately-staffed primary schools.

The time required was considerable: the Second World War and the slow recovery from it dominated the 'Forties and the 'Fifties. The writer remembers how, when he went to King Alfred's College, Winchester, in 1952, sugar was still rationed, and the Southampton Woolworth's was in a Nissen hut; how his first school in West Sussex was so overcrowded that there were additional classes in the chapel hall, the town hall and the masonic hall and how even by 1960 the long-promised new school had been only partially completed; yet modern "college methods" were employed whenever feasible. and developments in the new schools of Crawley New Town were eagerly discussed.

If the progressive educational theory of the Consultative Committee were to be translated into action in the schools, it had first of all to reach the teachers, secondly it had to inspire them to desire changes in schools by changing their attitudes, and thirdly it had to lead to actual change rather than to a few new good intentions.

As Becher and Maclure have suggested, the committee of enquiry approach is strong on consultation and the weighing of evidence, even if weak on research, but efficient and comprehensive dissemination is an entirely different matter. It depends upon the capacity of large numbers of teachers and administrators to absorb and internalise changes of emphasis which point the way forward. Even curricular recommendations for modest, incremental, change have to be fed into

"...the system of blurred responsibilities and shared assumptions - a system which produces both the limited autonomy of teachers and the network of restraints which impose a measure of orthodoxy." ²

Within the region of the South East Midlands, and most probably elsewhere, there was no attempt by the Board of Education through local courses or the H.M.I.'s visits to ensure that the 1931 Hadow Report had the maximum impact on each school. Instead, its launching was more like that of a new novel by an already-successful author: a short period of publicity - what would no doubt nowadays be referred to as "extensive media coverage" - after which the book would be left to succeed or fail as the public chose. It is possible that H.M. Inspectors held the Consultative Committee and its members in low regard: their internal minutes discussing suitable subjects to give to the Committee and the evidence concocted by a group of them to present to the Committee ³ suggests that they saw themselves as the professionals and realists while the Committee was composed of amateurs and idealists. Whatever the reasons, H.M. Inspectors themselves seem neither to have approved of progressive education nor to have taken it upon themselves to act as propagandists

for the Committee. Perhaps, like many teachers, they saw teaching as unlikely to be improved by the consideration of new ideas, for they rarely recommended The Handbook of Suggestions either! They appear to have had no desire to introduce changes likely to disturb the even tenor of their ways. It is true that they occasionally recommended more freedom and individual activity in schools, but only when formal attainments were entirely satisfactory. They believed that increased effort and organisation would turn poor schools into better ones, but they did not put their faith into children's activities as a significant part of the learning process.

The chief education officers who enjoyed a more than local reputation, notably Brockington and Holland, did not make specific pronouncements on the content or style of education even though the former was a member of the Consultative Committee which produced The Primary School in 1931. There is no evidence that he ever distributed autographed copies or even recommended it or referred to it in committee meetings. He appeared to overlook the fact that teachers, although valuing their professional freedom and appreciating the efforts of administrators in providing the best possible working conditions, also need the inspiration and guidance of those in responsibility, whose opinions and experience they respect. (As in the classroom, where few children will show enthusiasm for a subject for which the teacher obviously has no feeling). Brockington, like his colleagues in other education authorities, remained at his post, ensuring that his army of teachers was reasonably well equipped for each annual campaign, but he did not appear in person to lead them forward. His strongest pronouncement on the content of education was the negative one that

"To follow one particular method of teaching, however respectable in origin, will cramp the style of a teacher; if indeed it be conceivable that a teacher should, throughout his career, rest content with any single method."⁴

Brockington was referring to P.N.E.U. methods which Household, Gloucestershire's chief education officer, introduced enthusiastically into

his county with excellent results, being worthwhile, attainable, and affordable.

It is difficult to imagine what changes in method would be initiated by the teachers themselves - as Brockington apparently imagined - when there were no courses or meetings, no local advisers (apart from the traditional practical subject specialists) and no provision of suitable pedagogical books. ⁵ However, given the limited opportunities for promotion and the existence of "Promotion registers", ambitious teachers would soon have known if criteria like "progressiveness" or "well read in current educational literature" applied.

Apart from Boyde, Northampton's chief education officer who unfortunately died in his prime, it is doubtful whether any of the chief education officers of the region or their committees were greatly concerned with basing education in primary schools on any criteria different from those adopted by previous generations. A superb "Education Week" held in Northampton in 1920 and combining the resources of Northampton itself, Kettering and Northamptonshire had

"...done much to dispel doubts as to the wisdom of spending so freely upon educational facilities by demonstrating the care taken in organisation and by the sane enthusiasm and clear understanding shown by many of those present."

Exhibitions, displays and models and diagrams covered every conceivable aspect of education. 2000 copies of the official handbook were printed. H.A.L. Fisher spoke to an audience of 1500 but many more had to be turned away. A hospitality sub-committee arranged bed and breakfast for 70 teachers who could not get back to their homes overnight. ⁶

Yet the event was never repeated. Had it become a quinquennial festival of education it could have guided the public in appreciating the work of the schools and could have brought together teachers from all over the county for inspiration and refreshment. Instead, although the provision of short courses gradually developed in Leicestershire and Northamptonshire during the inter-war period, the situation in 1939 was still only a pale shadow of what the West Riding had been accustomed to provide during the first decade of the century. ⁷

There is no doubt that a great educational opportunity was lost, not only in 1931 but throughout the first half of the present century when local education authorities failed to appoint local advisers⁸ with a broad understanding of educational issues to develop feasible approaches to current thought and to encourage judicious experiment, for:

"England ought to be a successful field for experimental progressive methods. It is true that nearly everything is controlled by tradition and unquestioned mores. It must not be forgotten, however, that it is tradition only! The Board of Education and School Authorities lay down very few rules. At this present moment the English school could carry on more experimental work and enter upon untried methods easier than would be the case in France, Germany or the United States. In England it is primarily a question of convincing the headmaster that some changes ought to be allowed. He is in a position to empower his teachers to enter upon any new route that has an appeal in any section of interested and responsible society. It is also true that nothing short of dynamite could ever induce some of them to try out anything new. Their appointment is secure, and they find themselves quite well satisfied with what is being done...." ⁹

Everything, not just head teachers, conspired to maintain the status quo in schools. Although the Consultative Committee argued quite persuasively in favour of "activity and experience" their report neither condemned outright and in unmistakeable terms the older teaching methods, nor did it consider in detail how its progressive advice was to be translated into classroom practice. The judicious, balanced tone must have left many teachers feeling that their usual methods were "not too bad", and they therefore continued

"...to rest upon their oars and go on through life living upon their small paid-up capital of technical skill". ¹⁰

It may well be that had the report been briefer and more "down to earth" it would have achieved more sooner: Sir Alec Clegg wrote somewhat later that changes in West Riding schools

"...owed nothing to educational philosophy and theory but a great deal to the experimental work done by A.L. Stone at Steward Street School in Birmingham ...and published...under the title The Story of a School..." ¹¹

The irrelevance of theory or even specific training to practice has long been a theme in English education, from the "amateurs all"

speech quoted above ¹² to the finding of The Plowden Report that

"...some of the Head Teachers who were considered by H.M. Inspectors to be most successful in practice were least able to formulate their aims clearly and convincingly.." ¹³

In spite of its comprehensive coverage of news items and publication of articles of significance in "progressive" educational terms, ¹⁴ The Times Educational Supplement frequently mocked educational theory and the thoughts of the great educators. Although this attitude must have been reassuring to its secondary school teacher readership, with their lack of professional training, it probably represented the attitude of most practising and experienced teachers:

"Is there any other country in the world in which it would be possible for a young man without a moment's training, to walk into a classroom and immediately to hold to useful purpose the attention of a roomful of children? There is not the slightest doubt that the English teacher, with his disregard for education theory, his ignorance of educational research, and his neglect of professional reading, manages to achieve unique results." ¹⁵

"The new generation of young teachers may come along imbued with ideas about the 'child mind' that do not arise from contact with the living child. After finding how different the children in front of them are from the children of the lecture-room, they may wonder who the child was from whom the deductions about the child mind were drawn. The head teacher has plenty to do without having to teach them what children really are." ¹⁶

If the two quotations above are read in conjunction, it would appear that the untrained teacher is preferable to the trained one who has much to unlearn!

Whether Edmond Holmes was correct or not in his assertion that elementary school teachers were creatures of habit content to remain in secure grooves, it is certain that there was nothing to induce them to risk everything for an educational theory, however alluring and novel. They were given no part in the devising of timetables, the allocation of children to different classes, or the planning of schemes of work. It was therefore expedient for them to continue "to give satisfaction" in the traditional ways of competent classroom control and the transmission of testable knowledge and approved skills. Rule of thumb methods,

tricks and dodges acquired from older colleagues or their own untrained grammar school teachers, hasty improvisation, habit and routine within a rigid framework, all served to make life at least tolerable: as Quick had written long before, our education gives a thirst for facts and not for theory, and familiarity makes us callous and unreforming.¹⁷ This last statement is no doubt true for adults who first encounter their life's work when they leave school or college; how much more true must it be for the teacher who has been introduced to his adult occupation when only five years old! It is all so familiar and comforting to the young teacher that he, who above all should perhaps be the idealist and reformer, is content to be supported and sustained by tradition:

"Most schools are in many ways conservative institutions. In my school in 1924 we occasionally used the Royal Readersstamped 'Radstock School Board....1896....'"

"Worse still.....it was still the practice to assume that every child of a given age should be treated alike, and that everyone was capable of mastering the same knowledge....This was almost exactly the syllabus used more than thirty years before... To my shame, too, I accepted without question a practice that I would now condemn utterly. Each week my class was asked to write an essay on a topic chosen from a dull, uninspiring list...."¹⁸

Even for teachers who were prepared to take account of educational theory, it is probable that the ever-present problems of class-management led almost daily to what Simon has recently defined rather neatly as "Education in theory, schooling in practice".¹⁹ However, the great majority of teachers have apparently never rated the theory of education highly or valued it as a means of improving what is essentially a series of practical social skills in which one's personality and physical appearance are both vital and virtually unalterable.

This must make the task of educational philosophers extremely hard when they try to influence the professional behaviour of other teachers, hence, perhaps, the tone of John Wilson's little fable in which the members of a Nazi gas-chamber construction committee, totally absorbed in practical details, turned with scorn and derision on a colleague who suddenly questioned the morality of killing people because one

disagreed with them. They were not concerned with theory! 20

Deeply embedded in the national consciousness and proof against any "progressive" or "child-centred" educational theory was the opposing belief that Victorian values were under threat and that a national calamity would ensue as a result of "soft" and "new-fangled nonsense". This attitude was - and still is - so prevalent that it has the conviction of Holy Writ and philosophy combined, even though it is little more than prejudice. However, it must always have had a restraining effect on those teachers willing to make changes and to experiment:

"Children are kept chasing shadows instead of being helped to grasp substance, and they reach the office, the factory and the warehouse with an equipment which is often ludicrously insufficient. It is a constant complaint of employers today that the lads they engage can neither read, write, nor figure, and the smatterings of other things they have picked up are of course no practical value whatever in helping them to earn their living." 21

"From psychology we have progressed by easy steps to the pleasant, the easy, the self-expressive...Education has come to mean mere drift, the casual development of instinct or intuition, the expression of a miniature self that has nothing to express... a perfect example of flabby superficiality....What of all this self-expression.....Has it taught the child how to write a letter? how to speak in intelligible sentences? how to spell? how to understand the simplest thing about language? how to read a good book? ...It is doubtful...." 22

"The work of the junior school did not come within the terms of our reference. Certain witnesses, however, ascribed the indifferent progress of some of the senior school pupils to the insecure foundations built in the junior schools, particularly as these are affected by lack of interest, lack of accuracy, and, as a consequence of these, lack of definite knowledge. Your Committee are satisfied that there is some ground for this criticism." 23

There is no doubt that the physical conditions existing in many schools in the South East Midlands in the inter-war period contributed to the monotony of school life. Classrooms were designed for sedentary and passive learning, leaving little space for drama or movement. Desks with sloping tops to facilitate written work made art and craft extremely difficult, as did the lack of proper work areas, sinks, perhaps

even main water. Storage space, display areas and raw materials for art and craft were all very limited. In the larger schools, regardless of the standard of accommodation or degree of crowding, there was always the certainty that a lively class would disturb its neighbours. Yet all these handicaps could have been overcome, as they were by such teachers as A.R. Stone and Sybil Marshall: with a more flexible timetable every opportunity could have been taken for work outdoors, not only painting in the playground during the better weather, but by going out in fog or frost to obtain ideas for poetry, story writing or drama. The traditional nature walk could have been taken far more often and more purposefully in most of the schools whose records have been examined. For the city and town schools there were parks and museums, art galleries and libraries, and numerous opportunities for the absence of one class to provide enlarged opportunities for those left within the school. A form of rudimentary "team teaching" could have developed and would have been far more satisfactory than teachers "teaching against each other" ²⁴ for hours on end in overcrowded rooms. The belief in the class teacher wholly responsible for his class within his own totally enclosed classroom not only prevented much fruitful specialisation, but meant that teachers attempted to work to the same ideal even when separated from their colleagues by a curtain, a glass screen, a row of cupboards, or an imaginary line.

As it was, the sheer amount of drudgery involved in teaching was accepted uncritically, and small developments which would have made life more tolerable for all concerned - and more educational in most cases - were not considered. New teachers came, found much to criticise, determined to do better, though on the lines followed by their predecessors, and soon sank into mediocrity themselves so that, in turn, their work was found wanting by the teachers who succeeded them. Entries in log books such as the following occur so frequently that to the reader the perennial

optimism of the profession becomes quite touching:

"19th. Jan. 1888. Mr. Henry Dibdin, a Certd. Teacher, commenced his duties as Master of this School. He found the children backward in every subject usually taught in Church Schools, particularly in Arithmetic." 25

"Pictures on the walls absolutely lifeless and will shortly be replaced by brighter ones. The reading in Std. I and the Infants is very poor. The room is too noiseless - children must read aloud and talk and ask. Teacher v. willing to work to my ideas." 26

A great deal of evidence could be collected to support the case that teachers were too demoralised to concern themselves with doing more than the basic, traditional teaching task. An entire study could be devoted to the wrongs suffered by women teachers who were paid less than their male colleagues for exactly the same work and were considered to be of no further use to the profession once they married, received no increments for their war service, and were not considered when head teachers to large schools were appointed. The study could then expand to include all teachers whose salaries were cut and pension contributions increased as a penalty for being in work at a time of unemployment; mention could be made of the lower salaries and status of the elementary school teachers as compared to the teachers in secondary schools, and to the frequent attacks of the Tory press on teaching as a "parasitic pursuit". The teachers of young children, in particular, could be shown to have a lower status than the teachers of senior children:

"....A certain number of teachers, including those who may be engaged with infants and junior children and with special branches of teaching - Art, Handicraft, Domestic Subjects, Physical Training - tend to be not very academically minded...." 27

The self-image of the teacher could be examined and put forward as a reason for clinging to old methods as a form of security:

"....(the British teacher) is regarded with very mixed feeling by the public at large and even by individuals: respect is mixed with ridicule, fear with affection, and admiration with contempt. This stereotype has an important influence.... upon the self-image of the teacher - which often appears to have a slight touch of apology..." 28

Yet they did enjoy, on the whole, a reasonable status at a local level and among their pupils, and the broader picture is probably of little

significance, except in regard to the loss of women at marriage.

What was significant in their professional life was "the conditions of peculiar isolation and stagnation" in which they worked, and which were referred to by the press in 1932 when demands for national economy included a call for pupil-teacherships and fewer "extravagant" training college places:

"If we spend too much on them before 20, we certainly spend too little on them after that age (when) they are set on a task which may go on for 40 years and more under conditions of peculiar isolation and stagnation...." 29

3. "The Scholarship".

If, as Simon has recently suggested,³⁰ true progressivism was an ideal, and therefore, by definition unattainable, then by contrast the real and attainable prize for many teachers was success measured in terms of "scholarship results". "The scholarship" was, in Blyth's estimation, both a hard taskmaster and a convenient scapegoat,³¹ for it not only provided purpose of a realistic but educationally spurious character, but provided an excuse for teachers to stick to those things which they themselves had enjoyed success in when they were children. It perpetuated the over-valuation of the cognitive elements of learning as opposed to the emotional and physical and artistic; it led to concentration upon the perceived needs of the well-endowed minority of pupils; it provided a ready-made criterion of success for school, class teacher, pupil and parent, but of little significance for the broad scope of education, and sometimes harmful for the "failures" or those who were neglected so that to them that hath["] could be given more.

"External examinations form the dead hand that tradition places upon all attempts to get out of the rut of established educational custom....It is pitiful that it should be necessary to state in plain words the platitude that schools exist for the purpose of education. In actual practice what the teacher has to keep in the foreground is the external examination....Nothing of vital importance can be done in the way of reforming educational methods till this incubus has been removed...." 32

The above criticism of formal, external competitive examinations appears to have some kind of lasting validity: there does seem to be a causal relationship between the presence of examinations and a limited curriculum:

"Essential skills are generally taught successfully and, in terms of examination success, the Authority's schools meet the needs of the able pupils....For pupils of all abilities the price paid for the concentration on a limited range of educational objectives is that, with notable exceptions, in both primary and secondary schools much of the teaching and learning are characterised by over direction by the teachers and passivity in the pupils...." 33

That judgement was passed by H.M. Inspectors on one of the few authorities retaining some form of selection for all children aged eleven in 1983! Other detailed criticisms could have been written at any time during the present century: "sustained work on the essential skills of literacy and numeracy" led to other parts of the curriculum being "narrowly conceived"; ³⁴ English work for older juniors was limited by "an over concentration on the practice of specific skills"; ³⁵ art was limited, and geography and history "focussed on the accumulation of factual detail at the expense of developing an understanding"; ³⁶ mathematics was limited in most cases to "the appropriate elementary computational skills" and in some schools "the same tasks were set for all children".³⁷

In that same authority, it appears that the demands of the examination for consistently high standards of formal school work influences even the nursery classes: it is difficult to suggest any other reason why the Inspectors should find that, in the classes for those little children not yet of compulsory school age, "better use might be made of the environment", talk could be further encouraged, and where the children might "have more practical experience before, for example, being introduced to mathematical ideas." 38

As in Rutland more than forty years earlier, where a selective system is in operation, it has its arbitrary and mean aspects:

"As the overall number of pupils falls so does the number deemed to be in the top 25% of the ability range. The LEA wishes to maintain the present number of grammar schools but does not wish to widen the ability range of Sutton children offered selective places. Therefore, in 1981 and 1982, it made 60 of its 567 selective entry places available to children from neighbouring authorities who satisfied the Sutton selection procedure. As pupil numbers continue to fall....the number of pupils from outside the Authority offered selective places in Sutton will increase." 39

The pressure on the Sutton teachers to get "their" children into the top 25% by hook or by crook can be imagined - yet it must have been considerably worse in the pre-war days throughout the country when there was only the one route for "getting on" for most children, namely, a free place to the local grammar school. The Hadow Report of 1931, echoing Dewey,⁴⁰ said that we should desire for all children what a wise and good parent would want for his own children, but the fact is that many wise and good parents wanted above all to see their children in the grammar school, and that in itself is enough to explain on its own the limited curriculum and very slow rate of change in primary and elementary schools.

4 The war and afterwards.

The evidence so far examined, including accounts from personal correspondents, suggests that there was no great watershed in primary education either during or immediately after the Second World War. Even in the darkest days of the war, it was apparently difficult to make people see that primary schools did not exist merely to prepare pupils for a traditional way of life which was, in any case, under serious threat:

"I have been asked the question 'Of what use are rural activities in the Junior School? Surely Juniors would be better occupied giving more thought to the subjects necessary to prepare them for the Secondary or the Senior School.'" ⁴¹

One correspondent who replied to the questionnaire, and who was a pupil at his primary school until 1942, referred to it as a "traditional subject-centred, authoritarian establishment";⁴² another, who did not leave her primary school until 1948, stated that "activity and experience were obviously not held in high esteem";⁴³ and a third, upon whom the basic unfairness of the streamed school has clearly left a deep impression, did not leave until 1951.⁴⁴ Yet, clearly, changes were on the way.

The changes which gradually developed and combined to transform the primary school were in mood and spirit as much as - perhaps more than -

content. The growing self-confidence and prestige of the primary school were a vindication of the faith of the Consultative Committee in it as

"....the common school of the whole population so excellent and generally esteemed that all parents will desire their children to attend it. It is in the light of that ideal that we should wish our report to be read. We do not pretend to have made startling discoveries or to have enunciated novel truths. The root of the matter is after all simple. What a wise and good parent would desire for his own children, that a nation must desire for all children." (xxviii - xxix)

This ideal, read in conjunction with the emphasis on "activity and interest" ultimately more than offset the Committee's views on the validity of psychological testing and the desirability of streaming by ability. In a period of expanding provision in the decades after the Second World War convinced educationists, unlike their pre-war colleagues Salter Davies and Stead,⁴⁵ could provide material assistance as well as inspiring words. Administrators like A.R. Clegg in the West Riding, J.H. Newsom in Hertfordshire, and S.C. Mason in Leicestershire had the same ideals as H.M. Inspectors such as Christian Schiller, Edith Biggs, Robin Tanner and John Blackie, and growing resources.

The slow trend towards more informal, child-centred education contained so many interdependent strands: improved buildings and furnishings permitted freedom of movement and activity; smaller classes provided opportunities for more personal understanding between the teacher and the individual child; the growing influence of developmental psychology, particularly that associated with the name of Piaget and the word "readiness" had a real effect on teaching aims; a relaxation of timetables and schemes of work enabled teachers to pursue their own or their pupils' interests, to look at rainbows and talk about them whenever they appeared and not at the time appointed in an ageing schedule of subjects to be studied; the growing popularity of school radio and, later, television, "projects" and visits all gave increased relevance to school work and undermined the tyranny of the timetable; a growing supply of bright, well-designed books, toys and other learning aids;

the presence in schools of a growing army of young, well-educated teachers with a concern for the "all-round development" of each child and a belief, perhaps somewhat naive but nonetheless inspiring, that every child could be artistic, creative and self-motivated; the practical content and humane style of Training College courses; optimism in a future of full employment and expanding opportunities which would favour the self-confident, socially well-adjusted child at least as much as the often narrowly-educated "Grammar School Success"; the growing criticism of streaming and selection as forms of school organisation, combined with the slow growth of comprehensive secondary education and the equally slow retreat of the "eleven plus" examination itself....

All these developments, over which in a sense the 1931 Report presided until the Plowden Report of 1967 absorbed it and succeeded it, gradually transformed the primary school until it achieved a world-wide reputation, perhaps not entirely deserved, as the ultimate in what visitors from the United States referred to as "open education". There was no revolution, but a steady evolution towards "activity and interest" but with the basic subjects occupying as much time as they had always done, and with every teacher still in charge, though exercising control in numerous subtle - and not so subtle! - ways. 46

However, in the realm of human relationships and emotional and social development the primary school has been transformed in a way which is little short of revolutionary when compared to the Victorian past. Nearly every classroom is now a haven of security and mutual respect, understanding and toleration, in an unsettled and uncertain world. 47

The best description of a "child-centred" or "progressive" school encountered in the educational records of the South East Midlands and referring to the inter-war period was in reference to a school which was not in the region at all, and was not for "ordinary" children but for "the delicate":

"The Headmaster held that no standardisation of schemes or methods is either possible or desirable, since each school must adapt its methods to its own peculiar environment. He stressed four main points -

First - that the fullest use of environment be made. To this end, there should be no formal time-table....

Secondly- the Scheme should cater for dull as well as for normal children, and for remedial teaching, especially in Reading and Number for all backward children.

Thirdly - all instruction should be informal and unacademic. The speaker held that practical work was possible and preferable in nearly all subjects. He pointed out that 'Given truly natural surroundings, grass and garden space, trees and flowers, beasts and birds, insects and sunlight, the classroom becomes a playground, the workshop a garden, and life an exploration....'

'Here', he said, 'is a world with few horizons, but abounding with interests, full of things to do, things to see, things to hear, things to grow, things to make, things to tend, things to love'.

Viewed from such an angle, the School becomes a community.....

In conclusion, Mr. Morton made a very significant observation, viz. that the Open Air School is no place for the delicate teacher, since not only friendliness, but enthusiasm, patience, and a keen sense of humour are essential characteristics in a teacher whose aim is to make C.3 children into A.1 citizens." 48

At least to some degree, perhaps in many schools to a large degree, that description of a special school with special teachers for a small minority of children could now apply to the education experienced by most primary school children. In spite of the schools' shortcomings, which vary with the viewpoint of each particular critic, it is probable that Sir Henry Hadow and his fellow committee members would be very pleased with the changes which have occurred since their reports were published.

The primary schools have developed their own ethos; their teachers enjoy a status at least equal to that of any other group of teachers in state education; their methods have been eagerly copied, not only in similar schools overseas but also in English private and preparatory schools and Sunday schools and in other organisations associated with the early years of Scouting.

Above all, the primary schools have kept their identity and original age-range at a time when changes in education; in local government and in national policies; in social, moral and religious experiences and assumptions; in the very currency and units of measurement, have been accomplished with dizzying rapidity.

The primary schools have come a long way since 1931 when they were slowly emerging

"by a series of accidents, mostly unhappy" 49

and were often associated with that ominous word, "decapitation". At that time, great faith was needed even to see them as viable establishments, much less as leaders of educational progress:

"Often this forlorn company of children and teachers who had been left behind reminded me of the remaining spinster daughter of a large Victorian family who had found herself in the old home, parents dead and brothers and sisters married and away in a new home of their own, uncertain how to leave a life that exists no more or how to enter a new life still quite unknown.

Cut off from the Infants by tradition and removed from the Seniors by physical distance, the teachers had only one landmark, the examination for free places in the Secondary School....." 50

When one compares that picture with the reality of the modern primary school, it is difficult to believe that the great changes have been wrought by ideas and ideals rather than by commands and controls. It is an achievement of which the entire nation can be proud.

Notes to Chapter 11.

1. Reader, E.S. 'Towards progressivism'. M.Ed. Nottingham. 1983. pp. 81, 82.
2. Becher, Tony, and Maclure, Stuart, The politics of curriculum change. London. Hutchinson. 1978. p.54.
3. See Appendix V. "Extracts from the evidence...."
4. Brockington, W.A. A short review of education in Leicestershire, 1925 - 1928. Leics. Ed. Comm. Mins. Leics. C.R.O.
5. "The teachers' school book room" in Leicester, maintained by Leicestershire Ed. Comm. for teachers' use, covered only school subjects. With the exception of Isaacs' Psychological aspects of child development and H.K.F. Gull's book on projects, there were no books on the theory or philosophy of education, or any biographies of educators, H.M.I.'s, etc. (Teachers' school book room catalogue. 1937. Leics. C.R.O. DE 2312).
6. Education week in Northampton. Board of Education selected reports. E. 25. ("For the use of office and inspectorate only") P.R.O. Ed. 77/222.
7. Gosden, P.H.J.H. and Sharp, P.R. The development of an educational service. The West Riding, 1889 - 1974. Oxford. Martin Robertson. 1978. p.109.
8. The Plowden Report.
"Authorities are obliged to employ a youth officer and a school meals officer. The Association thinks that not more than 50 out of all local education authorities appoint a range of advisers or inspectors which is significantly larger than this minimum". (para. 947).
9. Roman, F.W. The new education in Europe. London. Routledge. 1930. pp. 86, 87.
10. Adams, Sir John, Modern developments in educational practice. London. U.L.P. 1922. (16th. impression, 1964) pp. 7, 8.
11. Clegg, Sir Alec, Discipline has changed in Jackson, Brian, and McATHone, Beryl, eds. Verdict on the facts. Cambridge. Advisory Centre for Education. n.d. p.23.
12. See above, p.97.
13. See above, Note 8.
14. e.g. J.H. Badley of Bedales, 3.11.34; Froebel, 4.12.37; de Fellenberg, 11.12.37; enormous coverage of Pestalozzi's centenary, 12.2.27; G.A.N. Lowndes' Silent social revolution, 8.12.37; E.B. Warr's The new era in the junior school, 19.6.37; Joyce Kenwrick's Junior school projects, 10.11.35.
15. T.E.S. 2.4.1933.)
16. ibid. 15.1.1938.) See pp. 206, 207 and Note 45, p.269.
17. Storr, F. ed. The life and remains of R.H. Quick. Cambridge. C.U.P. 1899. pp. 75, 76 and 414 respectively.
18. Gould, Sir Ronald, Chalk up the memory. London. George Philip Alexander. 1976. p.51.

19. Simon, Brian, Does education matter? London. Lawrence and Wishart. 1985. Chapter 2, pp. 32 - 53 is entitled, Education in theory, schooling in practice: the experience of the last hundred years.
20. Wilson, John, Letter from Oxford. Harvard Educational Review. Vol. 53. No. 2. May, 1983. p.191.
21. Macara, Sir Charles, chairman, Manchester and District Cotton Employers' Association, A business man's view of education, Education.10.11.1922. p.274. Quoted in Greenhalgh, V.C. 'Local educational administrators, 1870-1974: the emergence and growth of a profession'. Ph.D. Leeds. 1974. p.1. See also Appendix V, p.311.
22. Treble, H.A. Teaching of English in primary schools. 1927. Quoted in Shayer, D. The teaching of English in schools, 1900-1970. London. R.K.P. 1972. p.87.
23. The City of Leicester Consultative Committee. Report on Senior Schools. 1933. Leics. C.R.O.
24. See above, p. 214.
25. S.L.B. Theddingworth School. 1868. Leics. C.R.O.
26. S.L.B. Swinford School. 1925. Leics. C.R.O.
27. Brockington, W.A. The training and supply of teachers. Leics. Ed. Comm. Mins. 1923. Leics. C.R.O.
28. Hoyle, E. The role of the teacher. London. R.K.P. 1969. p.73.
29. T.E.S. 29.10.1932.
30. Simon, Brian, op.cit. p.43.
31. Blyth, W.A.L. English primary education. London. R.K.P. 1965. Vol. I. p.136.
32. Adams, Sir John, op.cit. p.19.
33. The Department of Education and Science. Report by H.M. Inspectors on educational provision in the London Borough of Sutton. 1983.
34. ibid. para. 24.
35. ibid. para. 24.
36. ibid. para. 36.
37. ibid. para. 35.
38. ibid. para. 21.
39. ibid. para. 12.
40. Dewey, John, The school and society. 1899. Boydston, Jo Ann, ed. Southern Illinois University Press. 1976. p.5.
41. East Sussex Education Committee. School farm magazine. October, 1941, p.7.
School Young Farmers' Clubs were very popular during the Second World War but children were not usually admitted to membership until after they had taken the secondary school scholarship examination.

This was certainly the case at Punnetts Town Council School, Heathfield, when I was a pupil there in the early 1940's. I am indebted to my headmaster, Mr. Ernest Booth, for recent information including the magazine quoted above, and for giving me my first insight into "activity and experience in the primary school" over forty years ago.

42. Personal letter from Mr. D.M. Brooks.
43. Personal letter from Mrs. S.K. Ball.
44. Personal letter from Mr. M.A.W. Deacon.
45. See above, p.97.
46. See the very important article by Brian Simon entitled The primary school revolution, myth or reality? in Simon, Brian, and Willcocks, John, Research and practice in the primary classroom. R.K.P. 1981. pp. 7 - 25.
47. It is a matter of regret that the recent pamphlet Better schools (D.E.S. March, 1985) has no word of commendation for the achievements of the primary school beyond the cursory statement that "there is much to admire in our schools" - with an implied "BUT....." This is not an adequate reflection of the findings of H.M. Inspectors, particularly in the field of human relationships and the social and community life of the school:

e.g. "The great majority of these schools show themselves to be stable and well-ordered, with friendly relationships between teachers, non-teaching staff and children. The children are keen to learn - they enjoy their work and are helped to be sensitive to the needs of others and to care for their environment. Visitors are encouraged and parents especially are made welcome. Many schools have developed close links with parents, some of whom share in the work of the school and in fund-raising activities. In a number of reports there is a reference to the valuable contribution to the life of the school made by caretakers and secretaries, and to the assistance given to classrooms by welfare staff."

(D.E.S. Education observed 2. A review of published reports by H.M. Inspectors on primary schools and 11-16 and 12-16 comprehensive schools. 1984. para. 13).
48. Morton, R.C. Headmaster, Wood Lane Open Air School, London. Address to the Special Schools Union Conference, 1937. Bound in the Kettering Education Sub-Committee Minutes because the headmaster of the local open air school had reported back from the conference. Kettering public library.
49. Richmond, W. Kenneth, Purpose in the junior school. London. Alvin Redman. 1949. p.5.
50. Schiller, L.C. in Ash, M. ed. Who are the progressives now? London. R.K.P. 1969. pp. 158, 159.

Appendices.

- I. Questionnaire, Primary Education in the South East Midlands, 1920-1945, and details of respondents.
- II. Details of members of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education.
- III. List of witnesses whose evidence on primary education is extant.
- IV. "Traditional"/"Progressive" bias of extant evidence.
- V. Extracts from the evidence of selected witnesses to the Consultative Committee.
- VI. Official views on the eleven-plus selection examination.
- VII. An account of a Ministry of Education course, 1946.
- VIII. Newspaper article on a local infant school display.
- IX. Series of newspaper articles on modern education, 1931.
- X. The Teachers' Encyclopaedia.
- XI. Local references to official publications.
- XII. William Watts, Headmaster, Somerby School.
- XIII. Log book entries by J.W. Bannard, Headmaster, Abthorpe School.
- XIV. Newton Bromswold Honours List.
- XV. Whilton School Timetable, 1935.
- XVI. Log book entries of a personal nature.
- XVII. Board of Education pamphlets, Schools in Wartime.
- XVIII. "General and Special Reports" of H.M. Inspectors.
- XIX. Local post-war reports of H.M. Inspectors.

Appendix I

(See p.27)

Leicester 694692

Eastfield County Primary School,
Thurmaston.
Leicester LE4 8FP.

January, 1984.

Dear Colleagues,

Primary Education, 1920 - 1945

I am at present working on a Ph.D. study of developments in primary education in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland (including the Boroughs of Kettering and Loughborough; the County Borough of Northampton; the City of Leicester; Peterborough and The Soke) during the period 1920 - 1945 and with particular reference to changes of philosophy and practice over the years.

It is necessary to balance the wealth of documentary evidence by obtaining personal accounts, particularly from teachers who were pupils at school in the region during the period, or from retired teachers or administrators who were working at that time.

If you are able to help, or know of anyone else who can, a brief account on the following lines would be most valuable:

Kind of school (e.g. all-age; primary or junior; size and physical condition; Church or Council)

Dates of attendance.

The ethos of the school (e.g. formal or informal; subject-centred or child-centred; authoritarian or not; whether influenced in favour of "activity and experience" as recommended by the 1931 Hadow Report on "The Primary School").

Noteworthy features of the curriculum, out of school activities, etc..

The effects, if any, of the 11+ Selection Examinations on the curriculum.

The effects of the 1939 - 1945 War.

Noteworthy events or visitors, as recorded in the Log Books or School History.

Thank you for allowing me to trouble you on matters of history when there are no doubt many pressing contemporary concerns demanding your attention. My only excuse is that I believe that the more we know of the educational past, the more we can understand the present; and for even the recent past the witnesses are daily growing fewer.

All replies will be gratefully received and will be acknowledged. Please do not hesitate to get in touch with me if you require further information.

Yours faithfully,

K.J. Funnell

K.J. Funnell.
Headmaster.

Respondents to questionnaire.

Letters from those who were pupils between 1920 and 1950.

Mr. C. John Allman	Earl Shilton Primary School, Leics. c.1945. now Headmaster, Craven Lodge School, Melton Mowbray.
Mrs. S.K. Ball	Slater Street Board School, Leicester, 1940 - 1948. Subsequently Headmistress of the same school. Now Headmistress, Rowlatts Hill C.P. School, Leicester.
Mrs. M.F.E. Bedford B.Ed.	Bugbrooke C.P. School, Northants. 1939-1945. Now Joint Head of Humanities, Emmanuel Church Middle School, Northampton.
Mr. D.M. Brooks, M.Ed.	St. James C.E. Junior Boys' School, Northampton. 1939 - 1942. Now Headmaster, Spencer Middle School, Northampton.
Mrs. P.M. Coates,	Coleman Road Infant School, Leicester, 1933 -1935 Coleman Road Junior School, Leicester, 1935-1939. Now Secretary, Eastfield C.P. School, Thurmaston, Leicester.
Mrs. A.F. Crump	Cobden Infant School and Cobden Junior Schools, Loughborough, Leics. from 1940. Now a teacher at Rawlins Community College, Quorn, Leics.
Mr. B.R. Crump	Warner C.E. School, Loughborough, Leics. 1936-1942. Now Head of Design, Rawlins Community College, Quorn, Leics.
Mr. M.A.W. Deacon, B.A.	Council junior and infant schools, Kettering, from 1945. Now Headmaster, Kingsthorpe Grove Lower School, Northampton.
Mr. J.S. Dodge, M.A., J.P.	Avondale Road County Infant School, Kettering, 1932-1935, and St.Mary's C.E. junior depart- ment, 1935-1939. Recently retired as Principal, Lutterworth Grammar School.
Mr. G.J. Fisher, B.A.	Victoria Mixed School, Wellingborough, 1928-1935. Now Headmaster at the same establishment, known as Victoria County Junior School.
Mrs. D.M. Hodgkin	Albert Road Council School, Hinckley, Leics. 1930-1934. Now Headmistress, Herrick Infant School, Leicester.
Mr. John Mundy, M.Ed., M.A.	St. Luke's C.E. School, Duston, Northants. 1934-1940. Now Lecturer in Education, Loughborough Univ.
Mrs. S.R. Wade	Emmanuel C.E. Primary School, Loughborough. 1935-1941. Now Deputy Headmistress of the same school.

Letters from those who were teaching during the period

Mr. G.R. Dodson	Headmaster, Flore C.E. School, Northants.
Mr. John Hall	Headmaster, Harrowden C.E. School, Welling- borough.
Mr. W.L. Bramley	Headmaster, Thurmaston National School, Leics.
Miss E.V. Spriggs	Headmistress, Burrough on the Hill, Leics.

Personal accounts from those who were teachers between 1920 and 1950.

Mr. L. Hall	Headmaster, Uppingham C.E. School, Rutland.
Mrs. M. Hilliard	Infant teacher, Avenue Infant School, Leicester.
Mr. H.J. Norton	Headmaster, All Saints V.P. School, Northampton.

Log book extracts and other documents supplied in response to the questionnaire.

Mr. N. Bush	Headmaster, Church Hill Junior School, Thurmaston, Leicestershire.
Mr. J.D. Clamp	Potterspury School, Northants.
Mrs. M. Coppin	Headmistress, Church Hill Infant School, Thurmaston, Leicestershire.
Mr. J.M. Downing	Headmaster, Braybrooke C.E. Primary School, Northants.
Mr. H.R. Evans	Milton Parochial School, Northants.
Mr. J.C. Martin	Headmaster, Belgrave C.E. Primary School, Leicester.
Mrs. C. Staples	Headmistress, Arnesby C.E. School, Leicestershire.
Mrs. H. Toynbee	Headmistress, Bugbrooke County Primary School, Northants.

NAMES OF THE MEMBERS OF THE CONSULTATIVE
COMMITTEE.

SIR W. H. HADOW, C.B.E. (*Chairman*)
Mr. J. W. BISPHAM, O.B.E.
Mr. W. A. BROCKINGTON, C.B.E.
Miss E. R. CONWAY, C.B.E.
Dr. H. W. COUSINS
Mr. EVAN T. DAVIS
LADY GALWAY, C.B.E.
Miss LYNDIA GRIER
Miss FRED A. HAWTREY
The REV. SIR EDWYN C. HOSKYN, Bart., M.C.
SIR PERCY R. JACKSON
Mr. R. J. McALPINE
Mr. F. B. MALIM
Dr. A. MANSBRIDGE
Mr. H. J. R. MURRAY
Miss E. M. TANNER
Dr. R. H. TAWNEY
Mr. S. TAYLOR
Mr. W. C. WATKINS
Mr. J. A. WHITE, M.B.E.
Mr. R. F. YOUNG (*Secretary*.)

The late Sir Graham Balfour was also a member of the
Consultative Committee.

(From The Primary School, p. iv.)

"W.H. Hadow (1859-1937) was educated at Malvern and Worcester College, Oxford, where he took a first in Greats. His academic studies were in the history of music and music criticism, and he was himself a composer of chamber music and songs. He became principal of Armstrong College, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, in 1909, being Vice-Chancellor of the University of Durham from 1916-1918 (when he was knighted), and after war service directing army education he became Vice Chancellor of the University of Sheffield, where he remained till 1930...."

Maclure, J. Stuart, Educational documents, England and Wales 1816-1963, London. Methuen. 1967. p. 179.

W.A. Brockington (later knighted) was Director of Education, Leicestershire, from 1903 to 1947.

See Seaborne, Malcolm, William Brockington, in Simon, Brian, ed. Education in Leicestershire, 1540-1940, Leicester Univ. Press. 1968. Chap. 8, pp. 195-224.

Albert Mansbridge was the founder of the Workers' Educational Association.

J.A. White was the Headmaster of a Central School.

Alderman Sir Percy Jackson was Chairman of the West Riding Education Committee.

A.J. Mundella was perhaps known mainly as the nephew of his namesake, the Liberal minister of the 1880's whose Act made the framing of attendance by-laws compulsory for all School Boards and School Attendance Committees.

Emmeline Tanner was Headmistress of Roedean.

Linda Grier was Fellow of an Oxford College, and later the biographer of two liberal and principled educationists, Michael Sadler and Winifred Mercier.

R.H. Tawney's own field was economic history, but he was also a prolific writer on education, continually urging wider and richer provision for all. His articles and leaders in 'The Manchester Guardian' were particularly influential.

Miss Conway was an ex-President of the N.U.T. and an experienced educational administrator.

Miss Freda Hawtrey was Principal, Avery Hill Training College.

List of witnesses whose evidence on primary education is extant.
(P.R.O. Ed.10/148. cf. pp. 207-221 of The Primary School.)

- S 2 Committee of the Board's Inspectors.
- S 3 "Short list of books on courses of study for children under the age of eleven in elementary schools in England and Wales and in Scotland".
- S 6 F.W. Chambers, H.M.I.
- S 7 Wm. Brockington, Director of Education, Leicestershire.
- S 12 1 Dr. P.B. Ballard.
- S 12 2 Miss Grace Owen, Hon.Sec. of the Nursery School Association.
- S 12 3 Miss M.S. Ryan, H.M.I.
- S 12 5 H.M. Richards, C.B.E., Senior Chief Inspector.
- S 12 6 Sir Percy Nunn, Principal of the London Day Training College and Professor of Education, London University.
- S 12 8 Miss E. Davies, Elkstone C.E. School, Glos. on P.N.E.U.
- S 12 10 H. Ward, C.B.E., Dean of the College of Preceptors.
- S 12 9 National Federation of Class Teachers
- S 12 11 N.U.W.T.
- S 12 12 London Association of Head Teachers of Secondary Schools.
- S 12 13 London Teachers' Association.
- S 12 14 National Association of Inspectors of Schools and Educational Organisers.
- S 12 15 Summary of Cyril Burt's evidence.
- S 12 16 Mr. Crocker, Headmaster, Somerset Place J.M. School, Plymouth.
- S 12 17 A.T. Kerslake, H.M.I.
- S 12 18 G.P. Dunn, A.I. on the situation in Nottinghamshire.
- S 12 19 J.A. Barrow, A.I.
- S 12 20 Mrs. N.A. Reed on Handwork.
- S 12 21 Junior Schools in Ipswich. (Number shared by Dr. W.K. Spencer, HMI).
- S 12 22 Miss L. Chapman, Headmistress, North Aston J.S.? Oxo-.
- S 12 23 Mr. E.M. Forrest, Headmaster, Frampton Cotterell C.E.School, Glos., on P.N.E.U.
- S 12 24 Miss E. Fitchett, Headmistress, Balderton C.J. School, Notts.
- S 12 25 T.U.C.
- S 12 26 Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools.
- S 12 27 N.U.T.
- S 12 28 Froebel Society.
- S 12 29 Miss Leonora Malcolm, Headmistress, C.E. Girls' J.S. Dorchester.
- S 12 31 W.E. Urwick, late Inspector of Secondary Schools.
- S 12 34 County Councils Association.(A.R. Clegg and J.L. Holland).
- S 12 35 Executive Committee of the English Section of the New Education Fellowship. (H.C. Dent, Chairman and Headmaster, Gateway School, Leicester, and Miss F. Burridge).
- S 12 38 Training Colleges Association and Principals of Training Colleges.
- S 12 39a Chief Inspector for Wales answering questions based on proof copy of "Suggestions for the consideration of educational authorities and teachers in Wales".
- S 12 39b As above, with two Welsh H.M.I's.
- S 12 40 Association of Education Committees.
- S 12 43 A.R. Florian, Headmaster, Priory School for Boys, Shrewsbury.
- S 12 45 A.H. Cherrill on grammar.
- S 12 47 W.A. Knight, late Headmaster, Sexey's School, Bruton, Som.
- S 12 48 Dr. R.H. Crowley on "Certain Medical and Hygienic Aspects". (Number shared by Education Commission of Bradford I.L.P.)
- S 12 50 G.E. Kendall, Architect to the Board of Education.
- S 15 Miss Grace Hadow, Principal of the Society of Oxford Home Students.
- S 17 Dr. Dorothy Brock on Free Place Pupils who come to the Mary Datchelor School, Camberwell.

- S 18 Nursery School Association.
- S 20 J. Fairgrien, Lecturer at the London Day Training College on geography.
- S 21 Memo. on the teaching of history by J.J. Bell, London Day Training College.
- S 23 Miss Coe, Headmistress, Bradfield St. George C.E. School, West Suffolk.
- S 25 Departmental Committee on the Training of Rural Teachers.
- S 26 W.H. Collins, Headmaster, St. Luke's School, Bath.
- S 27 Bradford I.L.P. Commission on its education booklet.
- S 28 H.A. Hinton, H.M.I.
- S 29 Miss E. Kitching, Director (sic) Parents' Union School, Ambleside.
- S 30 Dr. Godfrey Thomson, Professor of Education, Edinburgh.
- S 31 Committee for Geography in Schools of the Geography Assn.
- S 32 Miss F.M. Handley, Headmistress, Watermoor School, Cirencester. ("Miss Handley teaches on P.N.E.U. lines").
- S 33 Head Teacher, Rougham C.E. School, West Suffolk.
- S 34 Miss N. Sharp, Headmistress, Holy Trinity J.S. Barnstaple.
- S 35 A.E. Lynam, Headmaster, Dragon School, Oxford.
- S 36 Joint Nature Study Union.
- S 37 Miss H.E. Wix, late H.M.I.
- S 38 W.E.A.
- S 39 Education Section of the British Psychological Association.
- S 40 H.H. Sterne, Headmaster, Elmswell Council School, W. Suffolk.
- S 42 F.E. Amos, Headmaster, Badsey Council School, Worcs.
- S 43 N.F.U.
- S 44 A.B. Neal, Headmaster, Sir Henry Fermor's School, Crowborough.
- S 46 Educational Handwork Association.
- S 47 Women's Co-operative Guild.
- S 48 Adult Education Society.
- S 49 The Child Study Society. (Kimmins and Ballard).
- S 50 Joint Committee of the Welsh Branches of the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools.
- S 51 National Union of Farm Workers.
- S 52 Head Teacher, Mavesyn-Ridware Council School, Rugely, Staffs.
- S 53 Historical Association.
- S 54 Educational Institute of Scotland.
- S 55 Independent Schools Association.
- S 56 Mrs. Gertrude Foster, Headmistress, Braybrooke School, Northants.
- S 57 Association of Assistant Mistresses.
- S 58 Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Sec. Schools.
- S 59 Association of Headmistresses of Recognised Private Schools.
- S 60 Three members: Headmasters and Headmistresses of Sec. Schools.
- S 60 1 Headmaster, Bradford Grammar School.
- S 60 2 Miss M.G. Clarke, Headmistress, Manchester High School.
- S 60 4 Headmaster, Bradford Grammar School: notes on "Free Places".
- S 61 Association of Assistant Mistresses in Secondary Schools.
- S 62 Incorporated Association of Headmasters.
- S 63 Headmistress, Infants Dept., Medburn School, St. Pancras, London.
- S 65 Principal and two Lecturers, Bingley Training College.
- S 67 Miss Ellen Healey on "Some of the Essentials of any Adequate Scheme of Education".
- S 68 A.F. Watts, H.M.I.
- S 69 A.S. Bright, H.M.I. (Number shared by T. Holland, Headmaster, Roke Central Council School, Purley).
- S 71 Two lecturers from Whitelands Training College.
- S 72 Prof. R.B. Reuf, Columbia Univ., on "project" theory.
- S 73 N.A.S.

- S 75 Miss E.J. Cook, Headmistress, ST. Martin's Girls' School, Dover.
- S 76 A Welsh headmaster on "Effect of Inadequate Staffing".
- S 77 Association of Headmistresses.
- S 78 Liverpool County Borough.
- S 79 b Grace M. Hobbs, Headmistress, Langford Rd. J. Girls' School, Fulham.
- S 80 Miss M. Storr, Goldsmiths' College.
- S 81 Miss R.K. Polkinghorne.
- S 83 Summary of important points which have emerged from the oral evidence and memoranda.
- S 84 Miss E.E. Kenwick, Lecturer, Maria Grey Training College.
- S 86 Miss L.H. Spalding, Lecturer, Avery Hill Training College.
- S 87 Mr. A.C. Horth on Handwork.
- S 88 T.E. Carr, Headmistress, St. Dominic's R.C. School, Woodchester, Stroud. (Miss).
- S 89 J. Halliday, Handwork Organiser, Oxford Education Committee.
- S 90 National Council of the Evangelical Free Churches.
- S 91 Professor Harris on anatomy and physiology.
- S 92 S.S.G. Leeson on standards of attainment.
- S 93 Miss A.E. Varley, Principal, Saffron Walden Training College, and members of her staff.
- S 96 Information re boys of elementary schools in rural areas remaining on the land.
- S 97 T. Caden, Head Master, Towneley Memorial Intermediate R.C. School, Stanley, Co. Durham.
- S 98 J.T. Tansley, Headmaster, Middle Row Council School, Kensington.
- S 99 Primary Education in Denmark.
- S 100 Miss M.A. Braybrooke, Lecturer, Diocesan Training Coll. Derby.
- S 101 The Board's views on the Question of Reasonable Minimum Attainments for pupils of 11+ at the end of the Junior School Courses are set out on pages 55 and 56 of the latest edition of the Handbook of Suggestions (1927).
- S 103 Deputy Public Librarian, Fulham.
- S 105 Kent Education Gazette.
- S 106 Miss A.S. Cooke on Kent County Library-Director, Leicester City Libraries.
- S 107 Mr. H.M. Collinson, Chairman, Homeland Executive Committee, School Journey Association.
- S 109 Headmaster, The Burghley Junior Girls' School, St. Pancras. (Number shared by: Memo by the Library Association).
- S 112 Medical Branch of the Board of Education on Provision of Meals.
- S 113 Miss M. Steer and Miss M.K. Ashby, Goldsmiths' College.
- S 114 Memo drafted by Miss Maud Bodkin from material provided by members of the Aesthetic and Education Sec-ion of the British Psychological Society.
- S 115 Medical Officers of " Schools Association.
- S 116 Society of Friends.
- S 117 Evidence from Wales on "Education of the Junior Child".
- S 118 Marion Richardson.

C.A. Richardson, H.M.I.
 Joseph Wicksteed, Headmaster, King Alfred School, London.
 R.R. Tomlinson, Special Inspector on Art to the L.C.C.

"Traditional"/"Progressive" bias of extant evidence considered by the Consultative Committee for The Primary School.

"Traditional"

In favour of:

formal work; schemes of work; the primary school as "preparatory":

S.2; S.6; S.7; S 12 1; S 12 3; S 12 10; S 12 11; S 12 12; S 12 13; S 12 14; S 12 16; S 12 20; S 12 24; S 12 40; S 12 43; S 12 57; S 23; S 24; S 26; S 37; S 40; S 42; S 43; S 54; S 55; S 58; S 60 2; S 73; S 77; S 78; S 86; S 89; S 97; S 105; S 109; Richardson.

selection examinations at 11+:

S 12 3; S 12 12; S 12 13; S 23; S 42; S 62.

streaming:

S 78.

subject-based approach:

S 53; S 55; S 65; Tomlinson.

Critical of:

primary schools, their teachers, their standards, and "their products":

S 6; S 12 47; S 60; S 60 1; S 60 2; S 60 3; S 97.

activity and self-expression:

S 97.

stories, drama, etc. in schools:

S 97.

"Progressive"

In favour of:

activity; interest; practical work; real understanding; "needs" of pupils; natural development:

S 11 37; S 12 1; S 12 2; S 12 3; S 12 6; S 12 9; S 2; S 12 10; S 12 11; S 12 14; S 12 16; S 12 18; S 12 19; S 12 21; S 12 22; S 12 25; S 12 27; S 12 28; S 12 31; S 12 35; S 12 38; S 12 45; S 12 48; S 15; S 18; S 20; S 21; S 27; S 34; S 35; S 36; S 38; S 39; S 44; S 46; S 47; S 49; S 50; S 51; S 55; S 56; S 57; S 58; S 59; S 60 1; S 65; S 67; S 68; S 69; S 71; S 72; S 73; S 75; S 76; S 80; S 81; S 84; S 88; S 93; S 98; S 100; S 108; S 113; S 114; S 115; S 116; N.U.T.; Tomlinson, Wicksteed.

Primary Schools' and teachers' efforts; existing standards as already good, perhaps even too high:

S 17; S 12 21; S 12 27; S 12 29; S 12 48; S 18; S 28; S 33; S 52; S 53; S 60 1; S 60 4; S 62; S 76; S 77.

"Progressive" (continued)

In favour of:

stories, drama, self-expression:

S 23; S 42; S 53; S 58; S 63; S 87; S 109.

the 1927 "Handbook of Suggestions":

S 12 8; S 12 16; S 12 38; S 27; S 31; S 33; S 52;
S 56; S 60; S 60 2; S 62; S 77; S 101.

Critical of:

selection examinations at 11+:

S 11 6; S 11 37; S 12 25; S 12 27; S 12 35; S 12 38;
S 12 48; S 18; S 30; S 38; S 57; S 61; S 77; S 80;
S 100.

streaming:

S 109.

Evidence with both "traditional" and "progressive" elements and included in both categories above:

e.g. S 53 Drama recommended for history teaching,
but educational visits not mentioned.
S 12 14 Activity recommended, but specifically
for geography.
S 2; S 12 1; S 12 3; S 12 10; S 12 14; S 23;
S 42; S 55; S 62; S 65; S 77; S 109; S 60;
Richardson, Tomlinson; Wicksteed.

Recommendations by witnesses favouring specific teaching methods, which may be either "traditional" or "progressive" according to the spirit in which they are employed:

In favour of:

Dalton Plan; P.N.E.U.; self-teaching:

S 12 23; S 29; S 31; S 32; S 37; S 48; S 79 b;
S 109.

the greater use of libraries:

S 103; S 106; S 107; S 109.

Extracts from the evidence of selected witnesses to the Consultative Committee.

Joseph Wicksteed, Headmaster, King Alfred School, London, NW 11.
(Unnumbered submission).

Generally speaking, I think the technical side of education has been over-emphasised....We are constantly told in its defence that this or that technique must be learnt early if it is ever to be mastered....What certainly is true - but this rather throws suspicion on the theory than confirms it - is that every kind of drill is relatively easy for the teacher to superintend, and it is much easier for him to attend to it than to attempt to develop original thought or art or moral purpose. It is a solemn thought that for ten generations the young manhood of England (one might almost say of Europe) was instructed almost exclusively in a technique of extreme difficulty never to be used after schooldays except by a few selected to conduct the education of their successors. The composition of Latin and Greek prose and verse is a worthy occupation for those who have the leisure and inclination to pursue it. But even those who would still claim that it is an adequate equipment for life can no longer uphold it as the one sole necessity....

.....When I try to envisage the kind of school and school-life I would wish to organise in a country village for boys and girls from 7 to 11, I picture something like this: in the first place the school should be rather a central bureau and club-house for the organisation of far-spread activities in the district than a pen or fold in which to confine the children for so many hours of the day.

But I would not begin with any drastic innovations. First I would establish a good and orderly school with rather more liberty to talk and make suggestions than the old fashioned school used to permit.

Some day after discussing the matter in conclave (select or general as seemed best) I would conduct or send a select commission of children to investigate some of the most obvious needs of the neighbourhood. Here let us suppose a seat wants repair, there a stile has lost a step, or a footbridge needs mending, and in another place a path needs stones or cinders. Some of these repairs or improvements could be done for nothing, others would require a few shillings which could be collected in sixpences and pennies from the school and district. Occasionally, no doubt, someone would need conciliating; some magnate need approaching; but in time the school would come to be recognised as a beneficent institution and then the grown-up people of the neighbourhood would come to tolerate the presence of children about, even in school hours.

In course of time I should hope to make all the natural events of the year in the neighbourhood interesting. We should study soils and try to analyse and classify them; discover the food of plants; cultivate cereals ourselves, which we should reap, harvest, thresh, grind, bake and eat. The pond and wood life would also be studied and to some extent kept under observation in the schoolroom. The phases of the moon, positions of the planets, the rising and setting of the sun at different times of year and the movements of the principal fixed stars and constellations would be observed and interpreted. Notes and graphs of the weather would be made and drought and flood levels of stream and ponds restored (recorded? KJF). The work of rain and rivers in the formation of country and in the building and unbuilding of fields should be examined. Churches and brasses should be studied and drawn and the history of the region looked up and perhaps dramatised. From time to time we would go farther afield - to the sea or the market town or some place of historic or picturesque

interest. In all our activities I would endeavour to depute single members or groups of the school to do different things so that they should feel their importance to the whole and be recognised as contributors to the general projects of the school.

At Christmas time, on May Day, on Midsummer Day and after harvest I would have plays and pageants and fetes to raise funds for school improvements or enterprises. There would be exhibitions of craft work and drawing and painting and occasional issues of a magazine (ms. or otherwise) with poems and romances and contributions that might be described as philosophical, scientific and historical essays.

After a few years of such a school in a village, life would no longer be dull in the neighbourhood. Old Boys and Girls who were at work would return in the evenings to join something going on at school, and the parents would enlist themselves in the wider activities of the whole. The village would itself become an interesting place to live in and return to. The latest enterprise would itself be a matter of general interest, and the school magazine would find its way to Canada or Queensland or India where old boys and girls were temporarily or permanently settled and whose letters home would be copied out or printed in it. Foreign schools, German, American, Scandinavian, Palestinian, could be corresponded with and small postable objects of interest exchanged.

....The new psychology is working like a ferment through the whole of society. We are turning back to our own childhood and the methods of our parents and teachers, to realise where their mistakes lay, and to think that we can do something better than that with the generation now in our hands. The central authority should be lynx-eyed for originality and public spirit in young teachers and

tolerant even of eccentricity. Its aims should not be to wipe out the adventurous but to nurse them into wisdom and efficiency....

If I were an Inspector in a rural district with a fairly free hand, I think I should say something like this to any ardent spirit I discovered:

'Do what you like with the children, but they must not injure the school buildings or incense the neighbourhood. I shall come from time to time to watch you work and shall always be glad to give you advice if you are in difficulties. At the end of the year I shall need to be satisfied,

- (a) that all your children really know or can really do something;
- (b) that they are really happy, which children at a loose end never are, except for the moment;
- (c) that your respect for them is reciprocated in their respect for you.

At the end of two years I shall need to be satisfied that every child under you is working cheerfully up to the collar and getting as much as it is reasonable to expect when the circumstances of his health and home and natural inheritance are taken into account,

- (a) out of himself;
- (b) out of you;
- (c) out of the earth and sky about him.'

And if I was satisfied that second year more people would be satisfied every following year to the end of the story...."

The Independent Schools Association (S.55)

"....in an important military unit it is found that 10% of the recruits aged 18 or 19 are practically unable to read at all and only 43% are able to pass a reading test taken from a book normally used in the higher forms of a public elementary school. These figures suggest that sufficient attention has not in the past been devoted to this all-important subject.....nearly half of these young men, physically A1, failed to reach a higher standard in arithmetic than children of eight...."

A.B. Neal, M.A., Headmaster, Sir Henry Fermor's School, Crowborough, Sussex. (S.44).

(Neal's submission is extremely long and closely-argued, based on the history of education and invoking the names of Bagley, Nunn, Dewey and Rousseau. Only extracts from Neal's summaries are included here).

"At the Infant Stage, the child is treated as a child, and allowed to develop along the lines of natural activities, uninfluenced by any artificial considerations. Its training with regard to knowledge is regarded as 'whole' training. But at the end of this stage a very distinct break occurs and instead of continuation in development, there is a re-commencement of a new form of training. The child on entering the Junior School stage leaves Education behind and comes under instruction. The abruptness of this break is responsible for much retardation in the mental and physical progress of many children and renders the work of the teacher during this stage increasingly difficult.

A variety of circumstances have contributed toward the change to the instructional atmosphere, among which are:

1. The effect of former Codes of Instruction, whereby 'results' received prominence. That education can be measured is yet a prevailing notion.
2. The tradition that Education is obtained by the study of books, leading to the repression of the child's natural activities, in favour of the attempted development of the mental and memoriter (sic) side of the child's make-up.
3. The wrong perspective taken with regard to the capabilities and activities of the child. The final product, rather than the growing organism, appears to be the guiding principle above the Infant Stage.
4. The tendency to lay emphasis on examinations and scholarships rather than on Education.
5. The lack of practical professional studies in the Teachers' course of training. Knowledge massed is no criterion of a teacher. Too often teachers enter the profession without knowledge of the material on which they are to work.
6. The inadequacy of staffing, a phase of which causes for reasons of 'safety' the weakest teachers to be put in charge of the lowest classes.....

In conclusion the following suggestions are made:

1. That the work of the Infant Stage be carried over into the lower classes of the Junior School, thereby providing an effective link and at the same time a continuation of the education process.
2. That the curriculum be framed with regard to the aims of education, and suited to the child's growth, rather than from the aspect of instruction and examination requirements. The material should be the same for both urban and rural areas, but the approach should be different.
3. That each school should formulate its own curriculum according to its own needs and environment, and this particularly so in schools in rural districts.

4. That the tendency of overweighting a curriculum by literary bias be counteracted by the introduction of more manual activity, especially in regard to method of presentation.
5. That the synthetic arrangement of the curriculum be encouraged, rather than the prevailing analytic procedure, which results in overcrowding and is opposed to child outlook.
6. That administrative supervision be reduced to an absolute minimum so as to foster definite experiment in the interests of the child locally, and education generally....
7. That the adequacy of staffing in all schools be the same, and that more encouragement be given to teachers to take up rural work.
8. That the training of teachers be revised so as to include the study of practical professional problems, in order that the teacher's professional efficiency may be gained at less expense to the developing children put into their charge.
9. That steps be taken to ensure that teachers maintain an up-to-date attitude towards their work, by professional study, organised research, etc., in order that they may be able to deal with the changing needs of life....."

C.A. Richardson, H.M.I.

(Unnumbered submission).

"It is not, I think, putting it too strongly to say that the Free Place Examination has, directly and indirectly, been the curse of schools containing children between 5 and 11 years of age. The intense competition which it has inevitably engendered has led, among other things, to undue interference with the work of the Infants' Departments; to the premature transfer from these to the Mixed (or Boys' or Girls' Departments); to undue acceleration in the latter combined with undue concentration on the formal examination subjects

and intensive coaching of the potential scholarship winners; to a corresponding neglect in ascertaining and providing for the special needs of the unfortunates in the lower half of the scale; and to secrecy, suspicion and general ill-feeling as between school and school and between head teacher and head teacher.

All this sounds very unpleasant, but it is a fact, and it is undoubtedly more widespread than is generally believed. I do not think anyone with inside knowledge of the elementary school would disagree with the statement that, at almost every turn, one is brought up against some undesirable result of the influence of the Free Place Examination. In particular the way which the admirable methods of teaching young children, developed in the Infants' schools during the past twenty years, have been hampered in their growth and restricted in the scope, is little short of a tragedy. These methods, with suitable adaptations, ought by now to have spread upwards into the schools containing children between 7 and 11 to their alsting benefit. Unfortunately the tendency has been the other way. The formal, inelastic methods of the upper department have weighed down upon the Infants' Department and the 'break' at 7 or 8 in atmosphere and methods has been dismal and decisive.

Head teachers both as individuals and the mass are aware of this state of affairs and deplore it. But, with very few exceptions, they are caught in the toils and cannot extricate themselves. With them it has become a matter of survival of the fittest, and the fittest are judged by a criterion inexorably imposed upon them by a tradition and by an uninstructed public opinion (often intense in its local manifestations) which still finds expression in an antiquated and highly unsatisfactory examination system.

Unless, therefore, the Free Place Examination system is radically altered, the new Junior School will never get a fair chance. In areas where they have recently been established the insidious influence of the examination is already perfectly apparent...."

Mrs. Gertrude Foster, Headmistress, Braybrooke School, Northants.(S 56).

"I feel it would be an impertinence on my part to suggest Schemes of Work. A capable Head Teacher should find all she requires in the 'Suggestions' - which leave little room for criticism - and the numerous publications now available, and should be able to draw up a scheme suitable to her own particular circumstances and locality always avoiding overcrowding the timetable.

There is a tendency - among young Head Teachers especially - to do this - often to please Junior H.M.I.'s who I am sorry to say, sometimes discourage these young people by pin-pricking unconstructive criticism.

If their own particular fad or method is not followed, they see no good in another, and cases have repeatedly come to my notice of Head Teachers scrapping their own successful methods, and adopting others, which they do not thoroughly understand, and with which they cannot get satisfactory results.

The general effect has been, that many schools in the area, have become replicas of each other and the individuality of the Head Teacher is lost and her enthusiasm checked.

This accounts in many cases for the frequent change of Headships in our small village schools. One in this area has had at least six changes during the last eight years, as well as 'Supplies'.

Local Education Authorities sometimes appear to believe that

village schools do not need books, apparatus, etc., so much as a larger school. I believe quite the contrary to be true.

A year or two ago, I asked for a set of scales and weights, for use in Arithmetic lessons. The enquiry was made, 'Why were they wanted in this small school?' I was too vexed to reply, and continued using my own - often most inconveniently.

One lesson, e.g. on ounces and pounds with scales is more lasting with young children than a dozen on mere tables.

After having asked for no new books during the past two years, I have today (May 29th. 1929) had my list returned with the request to cut it down from £7.14s.3d. to about £4. (My number on books is 39). Unless I allowed my scholars the use of my own sons' libraries, they would have little opportunity of becoming acquainted with many of the classics - and so be denied one of the greatest delights of childhood.

Though I have twice requisitioned quite a cheap Anthology for class use, they have been disallowed, and the children still have to write out poems and extracts in Memory Books - probably quite useful work - but giving limited opportunities to individual tastes.

Many schools have no globe and few atlases - without which it is impossible to teach geography. Children who can read a map, will spend many odd minutes looking up places connected with interesting topical events, or tracing journeys and routes used in the transit of passengers and goods. An atlas should certainly be provided for each child. If these young children are properly guided - not crammed with facts - they can often usefully employ themselves. Referring again to the false idea that skilled teachers are only necessary for Upper Classes - I have found it quite possible to leave

a young Student Teacher with Stds. V -VI who failed entirely to interest Stds. I - IV, these scholars' lessons are more on a level with her own.

A Head Teacher should feel perfectly free to alter her timetable if necessary, e.g.

The only suitable time to give a lesson on a Rainbow is at the time of actual occurrence, and if possible in the fields. What child would not, almost throughout life, refer to 'The Heaven of Flowers' after such a lesson, and return to an English lesson, with anxiety to discover what other poets and writers said of the Rainbow. So with other topical events, and a Head Teacher should feel perfectly free to act for the good of the children without anxiety about Red Tape Regulations.

One who would allow this liberty to develop into licence - should certainly not be Head of a Village School."

The Education Committee of the Bradford I.L.P., represented by Frank Betts and Walter Hyman. (Evidence: S 12 48. Booklet: S 27).

(The witnesses asked for smaller classes; no artificial divisions between subjects or between children of supposed differing abilities; no concentration upon tangible results like scholarships. They wanted all forms of senior schools to be levelled up to the status of existing secondary schools, thus obviating the need for Free Place Examinations and making all the foregoing desiderata attainable. Their oral evidence was supplemented by a careful study of the primary school, forming one section of a six-part survey of the stages of education.)

Part III, "The Primary School" (August, 1929) demanded "freedom for young children", which depended upon the freedom of teachers "from the rigidity of heads and the ukases of inspectors who never taught in their lives.....this relaxation must go very much further....If the

class teacher fails us, the director of education cannot do his work for him." Formal standards should be realistic; boring methods like "reading round the class" should be abolished; local studies and stories should take great prominence in geography and history.

"The development of methods of this type will no doubt justify the suggestion of Councillor Leach of Bradford, which startled the City in 1920. He advocated the chartering, or by preference, the purchase, by Bradford of an ocean-going steamer, to serve as a travelling school. One would have expected sympathy, especially in Imperialistic quarters; but the suggestion was received with derision. This derision seems to us to show a considerable lack of appreciation of educational values." *

The writers conclude:

"We are convinced that on somewhat the lines we have indicated splendid development is possible; we believe in the outdoor school; the strict limitation of intellectual stress and the development of bodily activity and congenial interest will yield intellectual results. We venture to prophesy a primary school which will rival the Nursery School in its combination of obvious charm with the precise working out of a scientific psychology: an institution at once beautiful, busy, happy and fruitful. We appeal to teachers, corporately and individually, to correct what is defective in our sketch, and to do what they can to bring about the results at which we aim."

*Footnote, p.18.

(I am indebted to Mr. David James, Bradford District Archives for background information on the educational researches of Bradford I.L.P.)

A brief comparison between the submissions of T.H. Kirkham, Headmaster, Westhill Junior School, Torquay. (S 11 37) and a Committee of the Board's Inspectors on the Aims of the Junior School. (S 2).*

(The full title of the Inspectors' submission is:
Report on the Aims of the Junior School prepared by a
Committee of the Board's Inspectors in one of the inspect-
orial divisions of England. (Circulated confidentially to
members of the Consultative Committee by special
permission of the Board).")

External examinations:

Kirkham:

"External Examinations lead to serious distortion of the syllabus of the examination subjects, and to cramming the children on the supposed lines of the examination requirements. The balance of the curriculum is often upset and there is always a real danger of neglect of oral and practical work and of subjects such as Art, Physical Training and Music. It is quite evident that the number of children of ability in any school at any particular time does not depend upon the efforts of the teacher, yet the effect of an external examination is often to set up in the teacher's mind the contrary view, and to lead him to forsake and abandon his conception of what is really needed in the education of children between 8 and 11 years of age. He tends to adopt an attitude antagonistic to any new thing, and the general result may be the deadening of that spirit of enquiry and zeal for experiment which is urgently needed in our new junior schools. How often do keen assistant teachers approach the head teacher with the following request near External Examination time - 'Shall I focus on the 3 R's?'"

The Inspectors:

Attempts have sometimes been made to use this examination of the children at the end of the Junior School stage to assess the value of the teaching in the various schools. This has always proved detrimental and especially so when the examination has been compulsory on children fulfilling certain conditions of age or attainment or both. It leads to serious distortion of the syllabuses of the examination subjects and the cramming of the children on the supposed lines of examination requirements. The balance of the curriculum is often upset and there is a real danger of neglect of oral and practical work and of subjects such as art and music. It is quite evident that the number of children of ability in any school at any particular moment does not depend upon the teachers' efforts, yet the effect of an external examination is often to set up in the teacher's mind the contrary view and to lead him to abandon his conception of what is really needed in the education of young children between 8 and 11 years of age. He tends to adopt an attitude antagonistic to any new thing and the general result may well be the deadening of that spirit of enquiry and zeal for experiment which may evolve a new technique of teaching in Junior Schools."

Nature Study and Science.

Kirkham:

"The child should be given a broad conception of nature study through observation of plants and animals, as far as possible in their natural surroundings... The first aim of the teacher should be to keep alive and quicken the spirit of wonder and enquiry and to direct its activity. The child should observe the main features of the district around the school, and he should be able to assume a definite responsibility in the case of plants and animals. My school does not possess a school garden, but if there is one available then the part allotted to the Juniors should be used for this purpose. Individual note-books are kept in all classes, and practice is given in interpreting structures by means of modelling, sketching and written description."

The aims of the junior school.

Kirkham:

"Whilst providing gradual progress from the training of the Infant School, the junior school should aim at satisfying the special needs of the child from 7 to 11 plus years and at laying a sound foundation for work at a later age. The teacher should attach more and more value to the exactness and accuracy of the knowledge obtained rather than burden the child's mind with knowledge which has no real significance for him. Examinations should not interfere with the balance of the curriculum...as true education is not the perfecting of the 3 R's but the wider outlook, a full preparation for life, and the junior school is the place where the solid foundation of the child's education is laid."

The Inspectors:

"The child should be given a broad conception of nature study through observation of plants and animals, as far as possible in their natural surroundings. The first aim of the teacher should be to keep alive and quicken the spirit of wonder and enquiry and to direct its activity. The child should observe the main features of the district around the school and he should be able to assume definite responsibilities in the care of plants and animals. The part of the school garden allotted to the Junior children should be used for this purpose. Individual note books should be kept and practice given in interpreting structures by means of modelling, sketching with pencil and brush, and in written descriptions."

The Inspectors:

"Whilst providing gradual progress from the training of the Infant School, the Junior School should aim at satisfying the special needs of the child from 7 to 11+ years and at laying a sound foundation for work at a later age, whatever form the work may take. The teacher should not prematurely burden the child's mind with knowledge which can have no real significance for him but should attach more and more value to the exactness and accuracy of the knowledge obtained. The development of the intelligence need not exclude the cultivation of accurate knowledge and examination requirements should not interfere with the balance of the curriculum."

Junior School work.

Kirkham:

"One feels compelled to emphasise very strongly the position of English in the curriculum of the junior school and to be reminded of the opening sentence in the Suggestions: 'on the intellectual side of education the teaching of the mother tongue is the most important work which the elementary school undertakes'...."

The Inspectors:

"In setting out the work of the Junior School, the Committee desire to emphasise strongly the position of English and to draw attention to the opening sentence in the 'Suggestions' - page 65 - 'On the intellectual side of education, the teaching of the mother tongue is the most important work which the Elementary School undertakes..'"

On speech.

Kirkham:

"The goal to be aimed at, is distinct articulation and correct pronunciation. The child should be taught the correct use of the speech organs."..

The Inspectors:

"The goal is distinct articulation and correct pronunciation. The child should definitely be taught the proper use of the organs of speech."

On libraries.

Kirkham:

"...The type of books which I find most suitable are fairy tales, tales of romance, legends and myths, animal stories and stirring accounts of the incidents in the lives of great men."

The Inspectors:

"...The types of books are fairy tales, tales of romance, legends and myths, animal stories and stirring accounts of the incidents in the lives of great men and women."

On reading.

Kirkham:

"By the time a child leaves the junior school he should have come to look upon books as a source of enjoyment and information. He should be able to read aloud in such a way as to command attention and to give pleasure...."

The Inspectors:

"By the time a child leaves the junior school he should have come to look upon books as a source of enjoyment and information. He should be able to read aloud in such a way as to command attention and to give pleasure...."

On arithmetic.

Kirkham :

"By the end of the junior school stage, a child should have a knowledge of Notation, the first four rules as applied to money, and the ordinary English measurements of length, area, capacity, weight, time; simple, vulgar and decimal fractions and simple geometrical forms. He should have done some practical measuring.....In approaching a 'new rule' a child's interest and curiosity should be aroused by relating it to a real problem of a kind which might well come within his experience. Accuracy in simple operations should become automatic. Simplicity of treatment and avoidance of unnecessary rules and dodges should be aimed at...."

"By the end of the junior school stage, a child should have a knowledge of Notation, the first four rules as applied to money, and the ordinary English measurements of length, area, capacity, weight, time; simple, vulgar and decimal fractions and simple geometrical forms. He should have done some practical measuring.....In approaching a new 'rule' (sic) a child's interest and curiosity should be aroused by relating it to a real problem of a kind which might well come within his experience. Accuracy in simple operations should become automatic. Simplicity of treatment and avoidance of unnecessary rules and dodges should be aimed at....."

On the early development of children.

Kirkham:

"By the time the child enters the junior school at the age of 7 or 8 years, home and school have done much to mould his personality. The early years are the truly formative years and the value of the later training is greatly determined by what happens then. The child has been growing rapidly in mind and body, and his powers have continuously developed."

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Official views on the eleven-plus selection examination.

1927 Handbook of Suggestions:

"Towards the end of the Junior stage it is probable that some or all of the children will be taking an external examination designed to test their fitness for transference to Secondary or Central Schools. Every teacher will naturally desire that as many as possible of his pupils should share in the educational advantages of such schools, but it is important that the balance of the curriculum should not be interfered with by examination requirements. There should be no undue concentration on subjects included in the scope of the examination to the detriment of such subjects as music, drawing and nature study, of oral work in English, or of practical work. At this early age the selection of children for special advantages should obviously depend on their natural capacity as evidenced by the whole school career rather than on the results of any premature specialisation." (p. 56)

"The conception of the primary school and its curriculum must not be falsified or distorted by any form of school test whether external or internal. The technique of examination must accordingly be so developed that it keeps abreast of the process of humanising and broadening the course of study in the Primary School...." (p. 69)

"We cannot deprecate too strongly the tendency to base a comparative estimate of the efficiency of schools upon the class lists of a selective 'free place' examination." (p. 70)

1928 The New Prospect in Education (Educational Pamphlet No.60):

"....the demands of the Senior and Secondary Schools should not be allowed in any way to fetter the freedom of the Junior School in working out its own methods. There is, for example, a danger that the imminence of an examination which will determine the type of course to be followed after the age of eleven may be found to have a narrowing effect on the work of the Junior School. The danger exists under any type of organisation, so long as teachers or administrators or the public are content to judge a school by its examination successes." (p. 14)

1933 An Experiment in Rural Reorganisation (Educational Pamphlet No. 93):

"In 1928 the Authority (i.e., in a part of East Anglia KJF) issued a memorandum on the Junior School curriculum in which it was pointed out that under the reorganisation scheme the Junior School would be responsible for the education of the children from the ages of 5 to 11, and that the schools should aim at reaching a standard of attainment equivalent to that reached in Standard IV of a good full-standard school. The memorandum goes on to say that this is approximately the standard required for the Authority's Minor Scholarship Examination, but that it is not the Authority's intention in any way to impose on the Junior School a narrow path of instruction, designed specially to produce successful candidates in the Examination. The strongest emphasis is laid on the undesirability of so narrow a conception of the Junior School curriculum as this would imply."

1936 Supplementary Memorandum on Examinations for Scholarships
and Special Places in Secondary Schools.
(Pamphlet 63 - Supplementary):

"The purpose of the examination is the selection at the age of 11+ of children fit to profit by secondary education. The importance of accurate selection is vital and the main business is to get the right children. At the same time the free development of the Junior School must not be jeopardised and the taking of the examination must not be looked on as the aim and end of the education given there. Accordingly the examination should be so framed as to ensure that every child who has been through the ordinary curriculum of the Junior School shall have a fair and equal chance, as far as this is humanly possible, and that his success shall not depend upon special preparation.

It is also important that the results of the examination should not be used for the purpose of comparing school with school and that an unhappy competitive spirit between schools arising from the anxiety to obtain as great as possible a number of successes should be eliminated. No examination, in fact, can do its work properly unless all those concerned - teachers, parents and Local Authorities - realise the evils of intensive special preparation, and co-operate in eliminating it as far as possible. What is not so generally realised is that the pupil who owes his place to special coaching may not only be a nuisance in his new school but that through failure in a curriculum unsuited to him he may have his confidence in himself destroyed and his career injured."

1937 Handbook of Suggestions:

"....it is natural for teachers in Junior Schools to be concerned that every child who is fit for a Special Place shall have his chance to gain it. But it is not the chief business of the Junior

School to prepare children for the Special Place Examination, and to warp or impoverish the curriculum of the school, as is sometimes done, by giving undue prominence to examination subjects, not only sets up manifestly unfair conditions of competition but is also contrary to the best educational interests of all the children involved, many of whom may not even sit for the examination at all."

(pp. 118-119)

1943 "The Nation's Schools: their Plan and Purpose:

" "It is a mistake to think of the Junior School as primarily a place of preparation.....Children of this age have their special interests and characteristics, and they have a right to an education appropriate to these, irrespective of any claims made by a later stage of their schooling.

The truth of this is being increasingly recognised, and as the present 'special place' examinations are replaced by improved methods of determining for children the kind of secondary education best suited to their aptitudes and abilities, the Junior Schools will be enabled to develop an education at once wider and less formal than it has commonly been hitherto. More stress will be laid on promoting the physical wellbeing of the children, on developing their own interest in, and knowledge of, their environment, and on learning how to do things as well as learning from books."

(pp. 9, 10)

1943 (Reprinted 1947) Educational Reconstruction.

"Another feature common to both infants' and junior schools, and a very serious handicap to their proper function, is that their classes are in many cases far too large. No teacher, however competent, can see to the development of an individual child's innate

potentialities or foster in it a healthy development of mind, body and character, if she has to deal single-handed with a class of 50 small children. That is not education but mass production.

More serious still is the effect on the junior schools and on their pupils of the arrangements for transition from the junior schools to the various types of post-primary education..... There is nothing to be said in favour of a system which subjects children at the age of 11 to the strain of a competitive examination on which, not only their future schooling, but their future careers may depend. Apart from the effect on the children, there is the effect on the curriculum of the schools themselves. Instead of the junior schools performing their proper and highly important function of fostering the potentialities of children at an age when their minds are nimble and receptive, their curiosity strong, their imagination fertile and their spirits high, the curriculum is too often cramped and distorted by over-emphasis on examination subjects and on ways and means of defeating the examiners. The blame for this rests not with the teachers but with the system.

Apart from the method of selecting pupils for the later stages of compulsory education, it is obvious that a final selection at the age of 11 makes no allowance for the child who develops later than the majority of his fellows.....

.....some of those children who do not succeed in obtaining a place in a secondary school on the examination taken at 11 do not even enjoy the advantages of education in a separate senior school, but remain to the end of their school lives in the same building in which they started....

The conditions attending the admission of children to the

various forms of post-primary education present some disquieting features....it remains true that many children get the benefit of secondary education owing to the ability of their parents to pay fees. Seeing that these fees represent only a proportion (on the average about one-third)of the cost of the education given in the secondary schools, it follows that a parent by paying only one-third of the cost of education can buy a place in a secondary school for his child, possibly to the exclusion of an abler child whose parent is not in that position....

Just as the life of a child in a junior school is overshadowed by the examination at 11, so in the secondary school the School Certificate examination....to a large extent determines the curriculum...."

(pp. 6,7)

Appendix VII (See 78, 265)

An account of a Ministry of Education course, 1946.

"TEACHING JUNIOR CHILDREN

NEW IDEAS AND METHODS

New ideas on the teaching of junior children were expressed in theory and practice at a course run by the Ministry of Education at Chichester from September 3 to 13....and was similar....to that given at Bingley earlier in the year.....

Both these courses grew out of a fertile dissatisfaction with the kind of education provided by most junior schools today. It was felt that the Junior stage lacked tradition and individuality, and was not fitted to the needs and potentialities of the children for whom it catered. Why should children between seven and 11 years of age be made to spend a large part of the day indoors, sitting at desks, learning subjects which bear no visible relation either to each other or to the children's own personal experience of life? These two courses were designed to show primary school teachers - and to many the idea was clearly a new one- that it is by activity and experience first and foremost that children should be taught, and that this means a fresh vision of the whole curriculum and method of the junior school.

To point this lesson the course aimed at giving teachers themselves both a personal experience and a chance of learning through activity....

What sense is there in making young children struggle with adult ideas, learning a living language in dead terms of grammar and syntax? This can only result in killing all individuality and self-expression - the two most valuable by-products of the junior

school. Children come into daily, practical contact with words and figures, and so it is on a practical basis that they can best be taught.

'Living and growing up' is a subject of many dimensions, and it was accordingly studied almost entirely out of doors in the locality. Visits to nearby woods, to a harbour, and a mixed farm opened students' eyes to the excitement of discovery at first hand and covered in the field a wide range of interest which would otherwise have been isolated in watertight - and so much less interesting - compartments as geography, nature study, botany, geology, biology, archaeology, history, and others.....

The value of group work was demonstrated in a communal activity each evening, when all members met together to give creative expression to a basic idea - by means of movement, music, art, drama, speaking, and mime.

Part of the value of this course may be described as shock therapy. It is a measure of its success that teachers accepted so many new - and sometimes revolutionary - ideas not, happily, without questioning, but with interest and a zest for experiment."

('The Times Educational Supplement' 21.9.46)

MELTON COUNCIL INFANTS' SCHOOL.

INTERESTING DISPLAY.

A most interesting and enlightening insight into the present-day educational methods, particularly as applied to infants' departments, has been afforded this week at the Council Infants' School at Melton Mowbray, on the occasion of two "open days" (Wednesday and Thursday), on the first of which upwards of two hundred mothers of the children were present, and on the second a considerable number of other visitors attended. Each afternoon, the whole of the scholars in their respective classes took part in a very pleasing programme of drama, country dances, kindergarten games, and singing, and subsequently an inspection was made of a truly wonderful exhibition of articles made by the little ones, which combine training of the hand and mind. Practically everything had been made without initial cost, no new materials being used. Discarded card-board boxes, match boxes, strips of wall paper, with a supply of gum, were utilised in the construction of models of motor cars (with garages), engines, ships, a dairyman's "turn out," even to the tiny measures, etc. Handwork combined with geography was to be seen in figures of Dutch girls, with a short written composition on Holland; of Japanese lanterns, with a suitable lesson on Japan, etc., while an object lesson on wind was learned in various models of windmills and so forth. Free cutting ~~for children under~~ was another interesting feature, various things such as figures and watches being cut out without previous outline tracing, while the watch-chains of wool were neatly made with the fingers. There were numerous pretty specimens of raffia work, while the girls' stitching and knitting section formed an exhibition by itself. Gone are the days of the close, small stitches, often trying to children's eyes; the sewing for the little tots at any rate, is of what may be termed a "big, bold type," but it was all done as neatly as could be, in fact a sale of the articles took place yesterday, and many had been spoken for beforehand. Perhaps the most noticeable of the exhibits was a large doll's house of four rooms, with front and back gardens, the girls being responsible for the bed clothes, carpets, curtains, blinds, etc., while the furniture, which embraced a piano, was the work of the boys. Although the structure was largely composed of match boxes, it had not at all a "jerky built" appearance. Also were shown the many ingenious aids to teaching now employed, which, almost without exception, are made by the teachers themselves, and it is evident that much of their so-called leisure time must be taken up in the preparation of the hundreds of designs and patterns in use. Thousands of pictures are utilised in various ways for teaching reading, while the aids to arithmetic and writing are novel and attractive. Each child takes in hand a particular task and does it—or tries to do so—independent of his fellow, who may be attempting to attain a similar end in quite another way. The new method of educating the young has much that is fascinating about it, and cannot help but be advantageous in every way. Certainly Miss Brown and her assistants at the Melton Council Infant School are to be congratulated upon the excellent results of their work as seen this week. Among those present at Thursday's proceedings were Mrs. Blakeney, Dr. and Mrs. Dixon, Mr. H. C. Holmes, C.C., and Mrs. Holmes, Mr. Ernie Clarke, the Rev. B. E. Johnston, and many others. Collections were taken on both days for the Leicestershire Institution for the Blind, and about £3 was realised; ~~the proceeds of yesterday's sale of articles already referred to were for the same object.~~

Series of articles on modern education, The Leicester Mercury, 1931.

"LIKE A SNAIL UNWILLINGLY TO SCHOOL

No longer applies, says Rita Wakefield.

'Anything is good enough for children'. How often we have heard this said in the past. Modern educationists hold a different point of view. It is that nothing less than the best will do for children.

Old educational methods seemed to strive to stamp certain impressions on the child's mind.

It has been decided that the child must play an important part in the carrying out of his own education. To enable him to do this, his interest has first of all to be stimulated....

It sometimes makes me smile when I hear parents discuss whether Tommy or Joan is old enough to go to school. They will express their fears lest, if the children start too early, their poor little brains should be overtaxed.

Such people cannot understand much about the ideals which govern modern education.

Possibly they also fail to realise sometimes that the home-life should begin what the school-life continues. I mean the early sense-training of a child through his toys and general environment...."

(19.1.1931)

PARENTS ARE PART OF THE SCHOOL

Says Rita Wakefield.

"....The science of education has been so revolutionised lately that teachers cannot expect parents, who have themselves been educated along totally different lines, always to know instinctively what they are 'driving at'.

Surely, also, the parents have a valuable contribution to make, for it is impossible for a teacher to do justice to a child unless she knows something about his home influence and surroundings....Is the time at hand when every school will have its parents' association?

I wonder."

(24.1.1931)

"RITA'S DIARY

The idea that children had their own social outlook on life which needed to be studied by their elders, would have been considered absurd some years ago.

Now children are encouraged to form their own conclusions about things....Instead of being metaphorically 'shut up' until his ideas and judgement have matured, the youngster is helped to express himself.."

(2.2.1931)

"SCHOOL MARMS ARE HUMAN

Suggests Rita Wakefield

Schoolteachers are among the most envied of workers....but it is curious how little people outside the profession appreciate the demands made upon teachers....few seem to realise that teaching, also, is a highly scientific occupation.....

Many of the leisure hours with which teachers are supposed to be peculiarly blessed are spent by the conscientious man or woman in preparing for classwork ahead, or correcting work that has been done.

The teacher, too, has to keep abreast of new methods and in touch with fresh ideas. This necessitates an ample and expensive library and constant study....

Teachers nowadays take a very personal interest in their pupils..... modern methods require the individual study of each child....."

(5.2.1931)

The final article in the series (24.3.1931) was by William Brockington, Director of Education for Leicestershire. He wrote a very lightweight article about some of the silly answers given by children in the Annual Schools Selection Examination, but said nothing about the silly questions!

Appendix X. (See Chapter 4)

The Teachers' Encyclopaedia.

Laurie, A.P. ed. The teachers' encyclopaedia, 7 vols. London. Caxton. 1911 - 1912.

There were several good encyclopaedias for teachers, and they were no doubt widely used in an era which valued such compilations. They would have been particularly useful for teachers who were often uncertificated and therefore had a limited background of formal and professional education, and may have lived far from a good library. Two key passages in Laurie's encyclopaedia could well have originated in The Primary School twenty years later:

".....if the school is really to prepare for social life, there is need for schools of a smaller size especially in our large towns. The corporate life of the school can never be developed as long as we persist in erecting the huge barrack schools to be found in many cities. In the second place, there is need for smaller classes in order that the teacher may become acquainted with the varying individualities of his pupils, and in order that he may introduce active rather than passive or receptive methods of teaching. Lastly, in our school courses greater stress needs to be laid on the practical and constructive arts and co-operative methods in the work of the school. The qualities of initiative, adaptability, and of co-operative action are stunted and repressed by the predominant part which receptive and passive methods play in the school work of the time....." (James Drevør, Vol. III, pp. 203, 204)

"To sum up the main features of a good curriculum, it should in its construction represent the combined interests of the state, the community, the teachers and the pupils; it should be sufficiently varied and flexible to meet the diverse idiosyncracies of the scholars; it should tend to promote, rather than interfere with, sound physical health, and should afford abundant opportunities for play; it should correspond in the sequence of studies with the stages of growth, and of the development of interests in the child's mind; it should throw the emphasis in the infant school mainly on Play, Nature Study, Handwork and the Mother Tongue; it should give more opportunities for developing healthy interests, for direct contact with Nature, for free expression and fruitful growth than for formal drill in the technicalities of spelling, grammar and rule-of-thumb arithmetic....." (Percy Ballard, Vol. V. pp. 65, 66)

Local references to official publications.

In E.S. Reader's examination of five schools on the Nottinghamshire/Leicestershire/Derbyshire border she found two references to official publications in the log books:

"I shall be absent this afternoon to attend a conference to discuss the new edition of the Suggestions for Teachers...."
(Shardlow Parochial School, 1927)

and

"The time is opportune for the Head Mistress and her Assistant to consider anew their aims and their schemes of work in the light of the Board's 'Suggestions'....."
(Lady Belper's School, Kingston upon Soar, 1928)

This is a much larger proportion of references than I have found. The full list of references to official publications discovered in all the log books which I have examined is as follows:

1909	Castle Ashby, Northants.	"Suggestions" recommended by HMI.
1909	Cransley, Northants.	"Suggestions" recommended by HMI.
1914	Sutton Cheney, Northants.	"Suggestions" (esp. needlework) recommended by H.M.I.
1920	Farthinghoe Cl., Northants.	"Suggestions" recommended by HMI.
1920	Morcott Fydell, Northants.	"Suggestions" recommended by HMI.
1920	Barwell Wesleyan, Leics.	"Suggestions" recommended by HMI.
1920-21	Ashley, Northants.	"Physical Exercises based on 'Syllabus of Physical Instruction'"
1921	Ravenstone, Leics.	"Song/dance programme based on 'Syllabus of Physical Instruction'"
1921	Winwick, Northants.	"Suggestions" (esp. Nature Study) recommended by HMI.
1921 - 1937	Pattishall, Northants.	"Physical Exercises based on 'Syllabus of Physical Instruction'"
1922	Hemington, Northants.	"Teaching of English in England" recommended by HMI.

1922	Preston, Northants.	1919 P.E. Syllabus recommended by HMI.
1923	Winwick, Northants.	"Suggestions": strong reminder by HMI.
1923	Dodford, Northants.	P.E. Syllabus suggested by HMI. Ordered by teacher soon afterwards.
1924	Great Oakley, Northants.	"Suggestions" (esp. "First Steps in Arithmetic") recommended by HMI.
1924	Dodford, Northants.	"Physical Exercises based on 'Syllabus of Physical Instruction'"
1924	Lilford, Northants.	"Suggestions" recommended by HMI.
1925	Helidon, Northants.	"Suggestions" recommended by HMI.
1927	Lansdowne Rd., Leicester	HMI reports "Suggestions" in school but unread.
1927	Gaulby, Leics.	"Suggestions" received from Office.
1928	Newark Hamlets, Peterborough	"New Suggestions" recommended by HMI.
1928	Whissendine, Rutland.	HMI reports, "Head has made careful study of 'Suggestions'"
1929	Woodford cum Membris, Northants.	HMI reports, "School organised according to Hadow".
1930	Harringworth, Northants.	HMI advises, "Revise schemes in light of 'Suggestions' and Hadow."
1931	Marholm, The Soke	HMI reports, "Head to draw up syllabus based on 'Suggestions for Health Education' and 'Hygiene of Food and Drink'"
1935	St.James CE Infant, Northampton	County Organiser of P.T. reports, "'1933 Syllabus of Physical Instruction' has had good effect.
1935	Whilton, Northants.	County Organiser of P.T. reports, "'1933 Syllabus of Physical Instruction' has had good effect."

William Watts, Headmaster, Somerby Council School, Leics., 1897-1933.

The most comprehensive and revealing account of the ways in which a school could develop and change under a talented head teacher is to be found in the log book kept by William Watts.

Including his pupil teacher days, Watts' career spanned 48½ years. He had been trained at Westminster College in 1891 and 1892, and was Headmaster at Somerby from 1897 until 1933.

His 1909 Syllabus emphasised practical arithmetic and local history and geography. He developed an excellent school garden which was eligible for a Board of Education grant and was visited by the Director of Education, the County Horticultural Instructor and J.H. Woolley, F.R.H.S. "the expert in gardening at Kingston College". Watts judged the Nature Study entries at the Leicester Agricultural Show in 1911, including, presumably, the 200 pencil, crayon and water colour entries from his own school. These entries had been on display at Somerby School and had been much admired by the many parents who called in to see them

In 1911 Watts recorded that a series of conversational pictures for the use of the infants and younger children had been received, and would be used immediately before being passed to the next school, Burrough on the Hill, in a month's time.

In 1912 he, the Managers, and Russell Monro of Somerby Hall considered the provision and fixing of gymnastic apparatus in the playgrounds: two sets of horizontal bars; a set of parallel bars; a see-saw.

A.T. Kerslake, HMI, reported in 1912 that the school was

"conducted with vigour and good sense", and that the children were

"well trained in habits of industry, concentration and self-reliance.....Experiments are freely attempted and the Head Master shows ingenuity and resource in his work....every effort is made to develop the thinking powers of the childrenthe lessons in History and Geography are largely connected with local matters in which the children show much intelligent interest....the system of individual work in Nature Study is commendable....Drawing is taught on modern lines and the exercises seen were distinctly good...."

An entry in the log book in the year of the above report records:

"Following up H.M. Inspector's suggestion the teachers are spending a good part of every playtime in the playground with the children, helping them with their games."

Perhaps Kerslake had also suggested a School Library and a Savings Scheme, both of which were also begun in 1912.

The 1922 Report turned Watts' renowned virtues into vices.

The Inspector was apparently in favour of more individual study on Dalton or P.N.E.U. lines: Watts' "excess of zeal" must be restrained; he must "impart less pre-digested knowledge" and "demand genuine effort" from his pupils who "are not trained to think for themselves". Although over fifty years of age and greatly experienced, Watts accepted the criticisms with due humility:

"I am trying to get the upper scholars to do more 'expression work' - to write more about what they have heard in class lessons - to pick out items of knowledge from their text-books - to arrange work in their own way in their exercise books, &c., &c.,. In this way I hope to see the children more self-reliant and more interested in their search after knowledge...."

No doubt because of his own abilities and the substantial school premises, Watts was given the dubious honour of a "central" or "senior" class to add to all his other work:

"There are 19 children from 'outside' parishes:- Pickwell 7, Burrough 4, Knossington 1, Cold Overton 5, Owston 2. These children require a good deal of training in the matter of order in spite of their age, and this adds to the work of the Headmaster...."

The new class was acquired in 1923, and gave plenty of material for Watts' reply in the following year to an enquiry from the Director of Education on the difficulties of organising rural. Watts' reply, duly summarised, was as follows:

1. The Head Teacher had at least half the school on his hands full-time when he should be comparatively free.
2. The 'Senior' class was really four classes: Stds. V; VI; VII and ex.VII.
3. Life was even more difficult when seniors were sent from neighbouring schools.
4. A soundproof barrier was needed between juniors and seniors.
5. Class teaching was temporarily discredited and individual independent work had taken its place. The Seniors therefore needed plenty of books, and there were none suitable within the school.
6. There should be opportunities for teachers to examine new books; to meet publishers' representatives at school; to visit a County showroom. There should be a Director's Recommended List.
7. "Technical" lessons were desirable. Needlework and gardening should be supplemented by woodwork (for which a bench was required) and cooking (requiring a Valor "Perfection" Oil Cooking Stove).

During the 'Twenties, Watts became a little disillusioned: mild punishment still called down the parents' wrath, and, in spite of his long experience, teaching became harder, not easier. He also worried about being ill when no supply teachers were available. Yet he continued to follow every suggestion he received and to satisfy every need he perceived:

Oct. 1925. "In accordance with a suggestion from Mr. Miller, P.T. Organiser, L.C.C., a beginning is being made with the 'House' system....The different groups or 'Houses' enter into healthy competition and rivalry, engage in friendly contests, etc., and thus promote efficiency and stimulate interest."

Dec. 1926. "In response to an appeal from the Director to all teachers in Leicestershire, increased attention is being given to supervision of the playground....to prevent accidents wherever possible and to get rid of rough and improper play."

Nov. 1926. "After consultation with the visiting Managers, I have made a small and informal advance towards providing some form of 'technical' or 'handicraft' work for the bigger boys. They have been asked to bring their fretwork or 'Meccano' to school occasionally and to interest themselves and other boys in handwork. I have a few tools of my own...."

Yet in spite of his efforts, the 1929 Report, the last before Watts' retirement, was no different from many other schools': note taking was used, but some children were unable to answer questions based on their own notes, for example, and there was no mention of music or drama.

Some interesting conclusions based on the above account are:

1. Watts must have sometimes felt a forgotten man. He responded to every rare visit and consequent suggestion. By short, informal, frequent visits, H.M. Inspectors could have steered such a school any way they considered desirable. This would have been much more humane and heartening than the rare visit followed by the written judgement - their normal method of control. Alternatively, an L.E.A. Inspector for Rural Schools - not just a Horticultural Adviser, but someone concerned with every aspect of village education - would have been of enormous benefit.
2. Juniors are rarely mentioned. Watts' developments in education were for the senior class, which was obviously a full-time task in itself.
3. Owston, Knossington, Burrough, Cold Overton and Pickwell became Junior Schools, as it were, in passing and almost by accident, when their potentially difficult seniors were sent to Somerby. There is no sign that the schools thus freed of some of their problems initiated any educational developments. The only result was an unworthy one - in small schools without senior pupils cheaper, uncertificated teachers could be employed.
4. Watts perceived the cyclical nature of educational development: "though class teaching is temporarily discredited...."

5. Watts was given much more responsibility in the form of his "central" school without any increase in assistance or resources. This vital fact was not referred to in H.M. Inspectors' reports. Their detachment was selective rather than objective, and tended to avoid reference to the many real difficulties which beset most teachers at that time, and which the L.E.A. could have been induced to alleviate. Inspectors seemed reluctant to acknowledge the presence of great difficulties in such schools, perhaps because they did not wish to give the teachers an excuse for failure.
6. Although in 1909 Watts was not doing anything in advance of Blakiston's advice of thirty years earlier, he was apparently doing it with some style and originality, hence the dubious comments of F.B.Lott, HMI, in that year:

"There are of course, difficulties and dangers in working out what is in effect an experiment in the Scheme and method of education...."

Any teacher willing to experiment responsibly with scheme and method should have been encouraged with every resource available. Did not the 1905 "Suggestions" intimate that reports on experiments would indicate the way ahead in education?

The loneliness and isolation of the village schoolmaster is expressed perfectly in the following letter from Miss E.V. Spriggs, Headmistress of Burrough on the Hill School, 1929 - 1964:

"4.11.84

Dear Mr. Funnell,

Thank you for the notes on Mr. William Watts and Somerby School. I found them interesting reading.

Although I remember him but vaguely, I recall he was a solitary figure - very little understood by those outside school affairs, and ever ploughing a lone furrow. He was a gentleman of scholarly appearance and of singleness of purpose.

I remember him with respect.

Yours sincerely,

(Signed) E.V. Spriggs."

103

1916.

April 4th,

The Quarterly Attendance Return showed an average attendance of 62, a percentage of 86.5. The falling off in attendance is the outcome of the bad weather which has hindered Slapton, Braden + Hanley children on many occasions.

April 5.

Two garden lessons (additional) given today - advantage being taken of a very suitable day.

April 6.

Another additional garden lesson given from 11 - 12. AM. noon.
The school medal - for two years perfect attendance - awarded to Florrie Sears.

April 7.

Average Attendance for week 66.6

April 17.

Shakespeare's Tercentenary.

The ordinary routine of school work will be discontinued during the week and the following programme will be attempted - except on Tuesday, the day set apart for examination in Religious Instruction.

The programme is as follows:-

Religious Instruction: Ecclesiasticus xlv. - "let us now praise famous men."

Music: "Who is Sylvia?" Where the bee sucks.

Geography: "The Shakespearian Country"

History: The life of William Shakespeare.

Drawing: An imaginative scene from the Avon.

Literature: Lamb's Tales on Hamlet, Midsummer Night's Dream.

Recitation: "Shakespeare" - by Matthew Arnold.

Composition: My favourite character from Shakespeare.

Pennmanship: Quotations (selected).

1916.

June 19.

School Journey.

Class I, twenty scholars, made a journey to Passenham via - Greens Norton, Whittlebury Forest, Wicken, and Deanshanger - returning by way of Ruxley, The Duke of Grafton's Estate, The Watling Street, and Towcester. Each scholar paid one shilling towards meeting the expenses of transit.

The programme was as follows :-

A.M.

8.45. Registration

9.0. Special service, with address by the Rector, at Greens Norton Church; followed by an organ recital given by the Head-master.

9.45. Architecture - as seen in Greens Norton Church.

11.0 " " " " Whittlebury Church.

12.0 Dinner - passing through Whittlebury Forest.

12.45 Architecture - as seen in Wicken Church

P.M.

1.30 Ramble (for one and a half miles) along the Grand Junction Canal - the children making notes, inspecting a barge, and collecting wild flowers.

2.45. A walk across the fields to Stony Stratford.

4.0. Tea at Passenham Rectory - generously provided by the Rector of that Parish.

This was followed by

(a) a history of Passenham Church, and the battlefield - given by the Rector

(b) boating on the river

(c) a look through the grounds, gardens & greenhouses

7.0. Left Passenham.

9.30. Arrival at Abthorpe - and dismissal.

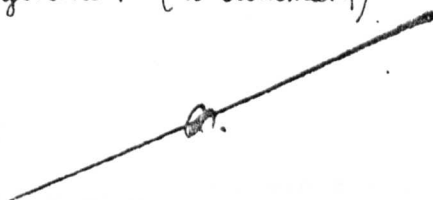
For the remaining part of the week the time^{table} will be changed in order that the scholars may make a record of the outing. The record will include notes and (where possible) sketching on the following subjects.

1. Flowers on the Canal-side.

2. The Churches visited.

3. The organ Recital - & service.

4. Whittlebury Forest - a description.
5. The History of Passenham
6. Boating on the River.
7. A landed estate.
8. The day - in general. (a summary)



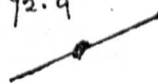
June 20. I am attending a service at Greens Norton - with the managers consent - so shall be absent during a portion of the afternoon.

June 21. The School Attendance Officer called today.

June 23. The records made by the scholars were completed today - each record being marked "School Journey" and kept for future reference.

Std's II - upwards (the senior room) completed a week's perfect attendance and were dismissed at 3.30 p.m. in consequence.

Average Attendance for week 72.9



June 26. Observation lesson and drawing lessons for Senior class - subject "Grasses." an additional garden lesson - morning and afternoon - given, advantage being taken of the dull weather for

Nature
Study.

Class I

The soil ; The beginnings ; The wall-flower ; The sweet-pea family ; The Daisy family ; Two-lipped Flowers ; Cereals - the staff of life ; How plants group their flowers ; Roots - of all sorts ; Tubers and Tubercles ; The Garden & the weather.

The grass of the field ; How to find and name
wild flowers ; How plants protect themselves ; How plants
scatter their seeds.

Riverside Flowers. The life of the river.

- To compare a dry bean seed with one soaked.
- To find out how a seed grows.
- To find out the parts of a plant
- To find out something about the winter twig of a horse-chestnut.
- To find out different sorts of roots
- " " " " " " stems.

- To find out the parts of
- (a) wallflower
 - (b) sweet pea
 - (c) foxglove
 - (d) moon daisy

To put leaves into classes.

To find out how they are arranged on stems

To find out why leaves fall.

To find out (a) how plants protect themselves (b) how they scatter seeds.

To examine grasses.

To find out something about the air - & to make a weather calendar

To put flowers in classes, find names, + make a flower calendar.

To find out something about the spawn of the frog

To find out something about the earthworm.

1918.

11. January

Our school war-savings association is one year old today; during the year £53-9-6. have been paid into it.

A lesson on "The Birthday of Althorpe War-savings Association" was given by the Headmaster in the scripture lesson.

EXPERIMENT.

During the coming fortnight ^{brushwork} observation and composition will be attempted together, and Class I will attempt the writing of a little book by co-operative effort. The scholars will work in pairs as below:-

The trees in winter. (with illustrations).

by.

Class I: Althorpe School.

Foreword - by the Headmaster.

Chapter 1. -	Horse Chestnut	-	by	Connie Billingham + Florrie Sherat.
Chapter 2. -	Oak	.....	by	George Bates + Rose Sherat
Chapter 3. -	Sycamore	.....	by	Gladys Gulliver + Dorothy Billingham.
Chapter 4. -	Elm.	.....	by	Florrie Sears + Charles Tucker.
Chapter 5. -	Ash.	.....	by	Kathleen Henson + Nellie Everett
Chapter 6. -	Apple	.....	by	Clifford Billing + Lily Cator
Chapter 7. -	Willow.	.....	by	Violet Fuller + George Boughton
Chapter 8. -	Fir	.....	by	Reg. Chapman + Harry Salmons.
Chapter 9. -	Plum	.....	by	Marjorie Rush + Iris Gulliver.

Average Attendance for week ending 11. January, 61.6

16+17, Jan.

18 Jan.

Heavy Snow: School Closed.

It was possible to reach school today. Both Mr Barnes + Miss Gilkes away. There were 34 scholars present so decided to carry on school. Only three children present in the infant room.

A poor weekly attendance. Average 51.3

21 Jan.

22. Jan.

Miss Gilkes is away ill - needlework impossible till her return.

School Attendance Officer called today.

25

Several children have been away during the whole of the week - ill.

Newton Bromswold

Church of England School

Honours List.

Year.	Name.	Award.	Place.
1919	Ethel Turner	Studentship	Domestic College, Ballington.
1926	Winifred Mary Moore	Studentship	Domestic College, Ballington.
1929	Douglas Roy Moore	Free Place	Kettering Grammar School.
1934	Dorothy Ethel Warrington	Free Place	Wellingborough High School.
1935	Alan Joseph McCartney	Free Place	Wellingborough Grammar School.
1937	Betty Lucy Warrington	Free Place	Wellingborough High School.
1938	Laurence Matthews	Free Place	Wellingborough Grammar School.
1952	Raymond King Underwood	Free Place	Wellingborough Grammar School.

(Reduced in size)

(Log book entries of a personal nature, strongly discouraged by H.M. Inspectors and school managers and forbidden as "reflections or opinions of a general character" by the 1862 Revised Code of Regulations, often provide not only great illumination but human interest for the researcher)

"My duties as Head Teacher of this school terminate as from today. The educational problems of the village have been most involved and grievous. The children are now becoming more normal and teachable. The Managers ought to have applied for an extreme Catholic to work happily in the midst of this village instead of heaping disregard and contumely upon a sincere Church of England teacher. The Church of Rome has encroached upon the sphere of Scholastic well-being to an abnormal degree and children are upset spiritually and morally in consequence."

(Leire, Leics., School log book, August, 1945. The school closed, never to re-open, in December of that year.)
Leics. C.R.O.

"Aug. 31st. "The Charwelton School is closed and the children there are being transferred to the Preston Capes School on Sep.9th. Miss I. Coles, headmistress of the former school being appointed by the Managers to take the re-organised school - so, Lilian Vernon ceases duty at this school to-day, having been advised from the Office and N.U.T. to hand in her notice her services being no longer required. She has not received any other appointment as to-date, neither has she any written reference from the School Managers it being rather repressed by their resolutions passed at the Meeting of January 29th. 1935.- 'To be acknowledged is o'erpaid'. 'Ingratitude' is a 'marble hearted fiend'. L. Vernon leaves her good will and kind wishes to her adhering school children - and to Nancy Wright who gained a Free Place for the Towcester Grammar School in 1932.
- The Teacher has experienced a hard difficulty in getting needful repairs done. Here are some instances.

1. A pane of the skylight was out, emitting rain to be caught in a bucket and bath in school.
2. Slating and spouting to be attended to - thereby the far end cupboard went mouldy and smelly necessitating the burning and washing of its contents, when the repairs were done.
3. The school house door was fast by old, poor lock and could not be opened.
4. Through No. 3 (above) the house window had to be broken by teacher in order to get in at all. This was exposed to the winter snow, wind and rain from Dec. 17th. 1934 to March 4th. 1935 when Mr. Pile, manager, at last consented for it to be mended. In the mean time the house door lock was patched up but it went wrong again and was replaced by a new one when the old one was admitted to be completely worn out. These are only some of the light annoyances borne by the Teacher. Why!

Remember

'One who never turned his back, but marched breast forward,
Never doubted clouds would break;
Never dreamed though right were worsted, wrong would triumph.
Held we fall to rise, and baffled to fight better.'

The extremity of the hard rebuffs dealt with wanton, heedless, merciless alacrity will be but slightly reflected in this little synopsis. The Woodford Syllabus and outlined helps are left in school for the future teacher's benefit. The Teacher has taken from the school all her pictures, apparatus, number games, football books, mental books, music books and mss. papers etc. An appeal will be sent to J.L. Holland, Esq.,

Sept. 2nd. L Vernon has fetched the requisition from the Woodford Station on her bicycle, has checked it and entered the tiems in the stock-book today.

Sept. 9th. I took charge of this school this morning, having been transferred from Charwelton C.of E. School which has been closed.

Ivy Lilian Coles.
(Uncertificated) Reg.no. 22/2039".

(Preston Capes, Northants. Endowed School log book, 1935.
Northants, C.R.O.)

Board of Education Pamphlets, Schools in Wartime.

- No. 1. Schools and food production.
- No. 2. Precautions anti-epidemic.
- No. 3. Canteen needs for schoolchildren.
- No. 4. Use of museums.
- No. 5. Harvest in the woodlands.
- No. 6. Use of school broadcasting.
- No. 7. Needle subjects.
- No. 8. Winter in the garden.
- No. 9. Use of ordnance survey maps.
- No. 10. Supplies for the woodwork room.
- No. 11. Physical education for reception and evacuation areas.
- No. 12. Community singing.
- No. 13. Poultry keeping.
- No. 14. Spring work in the garden.
- No. 15. Food - how the teachers can help the nation.
- No. 16. Nature study out-of-doors.
- No. 17. Waste, the salvage drive.
- No. 18. France and ourselves.
- No. 19. Food.
- No. 20. Technical Schools and war effort production.
- No. 21. Summer preparation for winter food.
- No. 22. Use of school broadcasts.
- No. 23. P.E.
- No. 24. Stock-keeping.

- No. 25. Collection of leaves and roots.
- No. 26. Teaching of history of USA.
- No. 27. The wild fruit crop.
- No. 28. USA history.
- No. 29. Rabbit keeping.

(From: Jones, E.M. 'The evacuation of English schoolchildren during World War Two: an examination of the educational and social aspects of its impact with a case study of a reception area, West Sussex.'

M.Phil. Southampton. 1974 pp. 117,118).

General and Special Reports of H.M. Inspectors, 1938 - 1947.

(P.R.O. Ed. 77 and Ed. 77/184).

Contents include:

- | | | | |
|----|---|--------------|-------|
| a. | Pembroke | 1938. | |
| b. | Manchester | 1941. | |
| c. | Nelson | 1941. | |
| d. | Sheffield | c. 1941. | |
| e. | Eastleigh | 1945. | |
| f. | East London | 1945. | |
| g. | Stockton on Tees | 1945. | |
| h. | Seventeen Junior Schools in the County
Borough of Blackburn. | (Ed. 77/184) | 1947. |

a. Pembroke, 1938.

H.M. Inspectors find all too formal and urge the value of practical subjects and quote the 1927 Hadow Report at length. Educational visits are merely spasmodic in spite of Pembroke's "historical monuments and features of natural and geographical interest."

"Open days and exhibitions of work, both of which tend to deepen parental interest, are rare."

(For teachers) "opportunities to visit educational exhibitions and attend lectures are infrequent.....
Teachers attend courses entirely at their own expense."

b. Manchester, 1941.

Most teachers are still using their pre-war schemes of work. They have dropped the most difficult aspects of the curriculum in view of lower formal standards brought about by the War, but have not made systematic schemes to suit backward children or mixed-age or -ability classes. H.M. Inspectors' questionnaire reveals very few experiments in methods of instruction, as very few teachers have realised that each is free

"to think for himself and to work out for himself such methods of teaching as may use his powers to the best advantage".

Teachers who have made changes believe they have been for the better:

"Indeed it is surprising that some of their sensible and thoughtful innovations are not more commonly adopted...."

In more than two thirds of the schools, in spite of all difficulties, it was reported that the timetable was unchanged by War:

"....it may be doubted whether this is altogether a matter for congratulation".

Halls were often unused, with still too much emphasis on mechanical arithmetic in the classrooms, instead of practical work and realistic, topical problems. Nearly three quarters of the schools showed no interest in the question of the use of "project" methods. Only a third of schools kept records of weather, nature observations or current affairs. Teachers regarded hobbies with benevolent interest but allowed no school time for them beyond the last period on a Friday afternoon.

c. Nelson, 1941.

This was a report specifically on outdoor activities, which were positively encouraged by the Director of Education, who in the Spring of 1940 asked every Head Teacher to draw up a programme of work which would enable children to spend as much time outdoors as possible, not only for educational reasons but because of "the pallid appearance" of the evacuees after a hard winter.

The report concludes:

"that the increased attention during the past two years to local studies has given vitality and meaning to the more general work and has more than outweighed any seeming loss in other directions....Such training has meant a real gain in power which cannot fail to make a lasting impression."

d. Sheffield, c. 1941.

The preliminary note to the Sheffield report speaks of

"many and varied experiences, favourable as well as adverse....certainly not disheartening."

It goes on to refer to the freedom from traditional routine; the new significance of school subjects when brought into contact with the environment:

"indeed it can be said in truth that Home Service generated its liveliest vitality when it discarded time-honoured classroom methods and approaches - which in any case were hardly appropriate - and made first hand enquiries and investigations. Thus in many cases began the development of new and hitherto untried techniques."

Details are then given of nature walks, visits to museums, art galleries, libraries, factories, canal wharves, railway goods yards and botanical gardens. Contacts with the City Librarian and the Curator of the City Museum were particularly fruitful. The conclusion of the report is of great significance:

"There was of course an inevitable loss of facility in the essential skills, but there were compensations in other and perhaps less measurable directions which should not be underestimated. For instance, the small group allowed individual diagnosis and teaching and the intimate atmosphere encouraged confidence in conversation and bearing. Moreover, first-hand contact with the world at large vitalised many of the lessons and children became active rather than passive learners. In brief, a new light was thrown upon educational method, and the study of the child as a sensitive and growing organism was recognised as a subject of absorbing interest and prime importance to the teacher."

Reports e, f, and g, for Eastleigh, East London and Stockton on Tees respectively, and all from the year 1945, show that traditional methods and assumptions still maintained their hold:

e. Eastleigh, 1945.

Infants still segregated into single-sex schools, "an almost unique and quite undesirable arrangement".*

*Still the case, to my personal knowledge, in 1967.

f. East London, 1945.

"Number work of a genuine kind is regrettably quite uncommon."

"The most important need for the future is for heads and assistants alike to keep clearly in mind the full scope of a school's purpose towards each child....To ensure success, periodical planning is called for as well as a readiness to experiment with new ideas to meet new conditions."

g. Stockton on Tees, 1945.

"Practical activities in number have not been systematically developed so far....the different approach necessary for the 'B' and 'C' type has not been fully and systematically worked out....Such practical activities as there are are incidental and spasmodic....there is need to give the children freedom to experiment.....need to give scope for a wider range of more spontaneous work dealing with subjects of the children's own choosing as they are likely to perfect their knowledge of the tools of writing more quickly if their real interests are aroused."

h. Seventeen Junior Schools in the County Borough of Blackburn.

There were 15 Mixed Departments plus one department for boys only and one for girls only. Of all departments, only the last had a female head teacher. Eight of the 17 head teachers were formerly assistants in the same schools. Eleven of the 55 assistants had spent over 30 years in the same school; six over 20 years, and ten over 10 years. "Honest endeavour" was the keynote and "there is much to be done to develop fully the pupils' interests and activities". Backless desks remained in the buildings, all but one of the buildings being of Nineteenth Century construction, and all preventing free movement and activity. Old books were hoarded; group reading books were dull; reference books were non-existent, unless provided by the teachers themselves.

Contact and continuity of method between Infant and Junior Departments was not "as close as it ought to be." Contact with parents varied

from school to school, from the "casual and incidental" to the "active and organised." Pupils' record cards, when employed, contained little more than records of examination marks even when started in the Infant School.

Use of radio lessons varied greatly:

"Excepting for the valuable use made of the microscope and of hand lenses in one school, visual aids were not seen in any of the schools."

Head Teachers saw the daily Act of Worship as part of religious instruction, which continued in every school quite unnecessarily to occupy the first period of the day.

In arithmetic; the work

".....tends to be based too exclusively on the text book in use and except at one school where the collection of dinner money is made the occasion for some practical work in the subject, very little is done to relate the work to the children's actual experience."

Speech training through dramatic work was rare and "the writing and acting of simple plays at one school is worthy of mention."

Written English

"would be likely to reach a higher standard if the children were given more freedom to write about the things that interest them and not solely confined to the set composition which all in a class must attempt."

Organisation and timetables were found to be on orthodox lines except in one school for two periods each week when children were grouped "according to their interests in certain cultural activities"

A small minority of the schools (i.e. two of the seventeen) made good use of the pupils' interest in living things, with first-hand observations in one of the two. Limited topic work took place in three other schools:

"Such activities have given vitality to the rest of the work which should, at least, dispel the fears of those teachers, who, apparently, still feel that time devoted to interests must lead to a lowering of the standard in the formal subjects. These activities should be incorporated in the schemes of work, which in almost every case are overdue for revision."

Local geography was not well known and history lacked significance for the children, who produced "formal and factual" notebook work, in all but two of the schools.

"Both subjects would benefit if the children were required to translate the new knowledge immediately into some form of activity such as acting, building up a scene in Handwork, or sketching."

Nature Study formed a major part of the work in Science, but all knowledge was secondhand and in the form of notes dictated by the teacher or copied from the blackboard.

Promising art and craft work was found in only two schools and puppetry in two others. Apart from this, art and craft consisted of pastel work, (and not even that for some girls, whose time was occupied solely in such periods with needlework), elementary bookcraft and "paper models of little purpose or interest."

The report ends with twelve recommendations implicit in the above summary.

Appendix XIX. (See pp. 265, 275)

Local post-war reports of H.M. Inspectors. (From the respective log books).

Watford, Northants., 1946.

"....single-teacher school of seventeen children...the work in English is good....Number is sound....Their grasp of physical Geography is no doubt due to the varied class activities which form the approach to the subject....

The creative enjoyment of the children in their school work is demonstrated in Art, simple handwork, choral recitation and singing. An interest in dramatics is a feature of the life of the village, and children are trained to take their share in this activity....there is a zest and happiness as well as a steady purpose in their work....."

Everdon, Northants., 1949.

"Geography, History and Nature Study are closely related to the children's environment, they delight in discussing their work....Three afternoons weekly are devoted to activity work, the hall provides adequate additional space and the two teachers work together as a team, suggesting ways of linking occupations with the more formal work. The children enjoy their school life and already the parents are aware of the new stimulating influence within their community."

Longthorpe, Peterborough, 1951.

"....some free writing with illustrations....The children's lively interest in nature study and their surroundings is fostered by making collections of specimens, tending garden plots and visits to places of interest in the neighbourhood. Art and mime are given a fair share of attention and physical education is not neglected....The children are allowed a great deal of freedom which they do not abuse."

Clopton, Northants., 1951.

"The Head Mistress attended a one-year course of training after several years' teaching. Already she is proving her worth."

Features commended included an attractive library corner; adventurous written work; developments in practical arithmetic; lively art; well-taught physical education; radio lessons in music and history; flower gardens and a lawn.

Burton Overy, Leics., 1951.

"In all aspects of development, care and attention are given to the individual needs of the children....The free writing of the juniors and older infants include accounts of personal interests and experiences and some original verse.... Singing is much enjoyed....The development of individual skills is the main aim of the Physical Education lessons.... and the children work with zest and obvious pleasure....Art. work is lively and carried out in a variety of media..This small school has the atmosphere of a united and happy family...."

Ashley, Northants., 1953.

"....children read well, Number is well taught and the range of work is commendable.....the simple drama is greatly enjoyedchildren are encouraged to take responsibility...."

Stoney Stanton, Leics., 1954.

"...an attractive and stimulating environment for infants.... the work of the juniors in such aspects of the curriculum as History, Geography and Nature Study is determined largely by the day to day interests of the children....On several afternoons the junior children divide into groups according to their own choice and paint, model or search in books. The pictures produced are bold and lively, and in other types of activity chosen the children work well with intent interest."

Stoke Golding, Leics., 1955.

"Free writing on a wide range of topics together with notes on history and geography, playlets and nature diaries give many opportunities for written language. The children speak freely and are encouraged to comment on and criticise poetry reading, compositions and group dramatic work. School library books can be taken home on loan...."

Sutton Cheney, Northants., 1955 and 1957.

"...a complete lack of repression...."

Ravensthorpe, Northants., 1956.

The mistress had been at the school for two years. The children
"enjoy art and craft lessons which stimulate much of their
oral work."

B.B.C. programmes provide

"these rather shy children with topics for free writing and
discussion....Their lessons on painting, modelling and
simple handicraft are greatly enjoyed and are providing
useful opportunities for self-expression."

The above selection of reports, all from small schools in the country,
indicated the way forward for primary education and, no doubt, most
of the schools detailed above were absorbed into the mainstream of
progress in subsequent years. Similar reports could have been found
in the log books of:

Deene, Northants., 1946.

Farthinghoe, Northants, 1947.

Cottesbrooke, Northants., 1953.

Fotheringay, Northants., 1951.

At the other end of the scale, some schools had a curriculum as
antiquated as their physical surroundings, lacking running water,
taking physical exercises in the road or lane outside the school,
and emptying the lavatory buckets into the ash pile in the corner
of the playground, for example:

Dodford, Northants., 1946.

Abthorpe, Northants., 1947.

Eydon, Northants., 1947.

Scaldwell, Northants., 1947.

Fahthingstone, Northants., 1948.

Lowick Charity, Northants., 1948 and no better in 1952.

Lilbourne, Northants., 1949.

Easton Maudit, Northants., 1950.

Great Oakley, Northants., 1950

Blatherwyke, Northants., 1951.

Wadenhoe, Northants., 1951.

Thornby, Northants., 1951.
 Castle Ashby, Northants, 1953.
 Cold Ashby, Northants., 1953.
 Dingley, Northants, 1953.
 Holcot, Northants., 1953.
 Cranoe, Northants., 1954.
 Maidford, Northants., 1954.
 Newark Hamlets, Peterborough, 1963.
 Chelveston-cum-Caldecott, Northants., 1947, 1958, 1965.

The most notable report in respect of a large, urban school was in respect of Taylor Street Infant School, Leicester, 1956:

"This Infant School uses the ground floor of a two-storey building which was originally intended as a factory. The designation of factory could in no way apply here for there is no assembly line or even the expectation of a finished product. The children are taught as individuals and there is sympathetic relationship between the children and the teachers. Though the teaching does not reach any great heights one or two of the staff, benefiting from help and direction, are making headway.....

There are now 175 children on roll and they are grouped according to age in five classes.....

The children are lively, and, on the whole, intelligent. By the time they come to school, some are talking clearly and with confidence and are soon eager to read and write and calculate. Others have more vigour than coherence though they too have a clear idea of the kind of play they want to choose. A few are even bumptious and one or two are very much on their guard. Whatever their home background or temperament, the Nursery teachers (and students) are always ready to listen, to answer questions, to play games, to share stories, pictures, flowers and all those interests that are part of the life of the Nursery Class. In their contact with, and assistance to, the parents who bring their children to and from the Nursery classes - and the infant classes - the Head Mistress and staff do some of their most valuable work.

The Head Mistress takes a substantial share of the teaching and has her own daily teaching time-table. This means that the staff have a free period or two each week for reading and preparation. They receive practical help and encouragement in their daily task of helping the children to progress in spoken and written language, to master the mechanics of reading, and to calculate by way of practical number experience...Throughout the school art and handwork are arranged to give independent group work; much of the work is original and some is demanding...."

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Barnwell; Benefield; Blakesby; Blisworth;
Boughton; Bozeat; Brafild; Braunston; Braybrooke;
Brigstock; Brixworth; Broughton; Bugbrooke; Bulwick;
Burton Latimer; Chacombe; Chapel Brampton;
Chipping Warden; Chelveston; Clipston; Collingtree;
Corby, Rockingham Road; Cosgrove; Cottingham;
Cranford; Crick; DAventry; Deanshanger; East Farndon;
Easton, Garford's Charity; Gayton; Glapthorn;
Geddington; Great Addington; Great Billing;
Great Doddington; Greateon; Greatworth; Grendon;
Gretton; Guilsborough; Hackleton; Harlestone;
Harpole; Helmdon; Higham Ferrers; Irchester;
Irthlingborough; Isham; Kilsby; Kings Cliffe;
Kings Sutton; Kislingbury; Little Addington;
Little Harrowden; Little Houghton; Little Irchester;
Loddington; Long Buckby; Middleton Cheney; Milton;
Moulton; Naseby; Nassington; Newbottle and Charlton;
Norton; Orlingbury; Oundle C.E.; Oundle Council;
Overstone; Passenham Mixed; Passenham Parochial;
Potterspury; Raunds C.E.; Raunds Mixed; Roade;
Ringstead; Rockingham; Rothersthorpe; Rothwell C.E.;
Rothwell Council; Rushden, Alfred Street;
Rushden, Moor Road; Rushden, Newton Road;
Rushden, South End; Rushton; Silverstone; Stanion;
Stanwick; Staverton; SToke Bruerne; Sulgrave;
Syresham; Sywell; Thorpe Malsor; Thrapston; Tiffield;
Titchmarsh; Towcester; Twywell; Upper Boddington;
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Holy Trinity; Lansdowne Road Infant; Milton Street
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St. Andrew's Laxton Street; St. Andrew's Victoria
Street; St. George's; St. John's, Albion Street;
St. Matthew's; St. Margaret's Boys'; St. Margaret's
Girls'; St. Saviour's; Shaftesbury Road; Taylor Street;
Willow Street.

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Anstey Mixed; Anstey Infant; Asfordby C.E.; Ashby de la
Zouch Council; Ashby Magna; Bagworth; Barton in the Beans;
Barwell Wesleyan; Barwell Infant; Branston; Broughton
Astley; Burrough on the Bill; Burton Lazars; Burton
Overy; Carlton; Congerstone; Copt Oak; Cosby; Cranoe;
Croxtton Kerrial; Desford Council; Earl Shilton; Eaton;
Enderby; Edmondthorpe; Fenny Drayton; Frisby on the
Wreake; Gaulby; Glenfield; Goadby Marwood; Grimston;
Gumley; Harston; Hinckley; Hoby; Hugglescote; Husbands
Bosworth; Illston; Ibstock; Keyham; Kibworth Beauchamp;
Kilby; Kimcote and Walton; Kirkby Mallory; Leire;
Lowesby; Loddington; Measham; Melton Infant; Muston;
Nanpantan; Norton juxta Twycross; Oadby Council;
Osgathorpe; Peatling Parva; Pickwell; Queniborough;

Ratby (Botcheston) Council; Ratcliffe Culey;
Ratcliffe on the Wreake; Ravenstone; Scraftoft Willowbrook;
Shawell; Sheepy Magna; Shenton; Shepshed; Sibson;
Smeeton Westerby; Somerby; Sproxton; Stapleton;
Stoke Golding; SToney STanton; Sutton Cheney;
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Brackley; Brington; Broughton; Bugbrooke; Burton
Latimer Infant; Castle Ashby; Chapel Brampton;
Charwelton; Chelveston; Clapton; Cold Ashby;
Cold Higham; Cotterstock; Cottesbrooke; Courteenhall;
Cransley; Culworth; Deene; Denfold; Dingley; Dodford;
Duddington; Easton Maudit; Evenley; Everdon; Eydon;
Farthingstone; Finedon Boys'; Finedon Girls';
Fotheringay; Grafton Regis; Grafton Underwood;
East Haddon; Hargrave; Harrington; Harringworth;
Helidon; Hemington; Hinton in the Hedges; Holcot;
Holdenby; Hollowell; Kelmarsh; Lamport; Lilford;
Lowick; Lutton; Maidford; Marston ST. Lawrence;
Marston Trussell; Moreton Pinkney; New Duston;
Newton Bromswold; Norton; Great Oakley; Old;
Great Oxendon; Pattishall; Preston Capes; Ravensthorpe;
Scaldwell; Sibbertoft; Southwick; Stoke Albany;

Stoke Doyle; Stowe Nine Churches; Sudborough;
Tansor; Thornby; Thorpe Mandeville; Wadenhoe;
Watford; Wellingborough Infant; Weston by Welland;
Whilton; Wicken; Winwick; Woodford Cum Membris.

Northamptonshire School Punishment Books:

Arthingworth; Cold Higham; Cransley; Duddington;
Eydon; Farthingstone; Finedon Girls'; Hemington;
Holcot; Lowick; Lutton; Maidford; Marston Trussell;
Great Oxendon; Stoke Albany; Stowe Nine Churches;
Sudborough; Whilton; Wicken.

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