AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EXPRESSED ATTITUDES AND POLICIES TOWARDS SECONDARY EDUCATION AND RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE 1944 EDUCATION ACT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS 1945-1955

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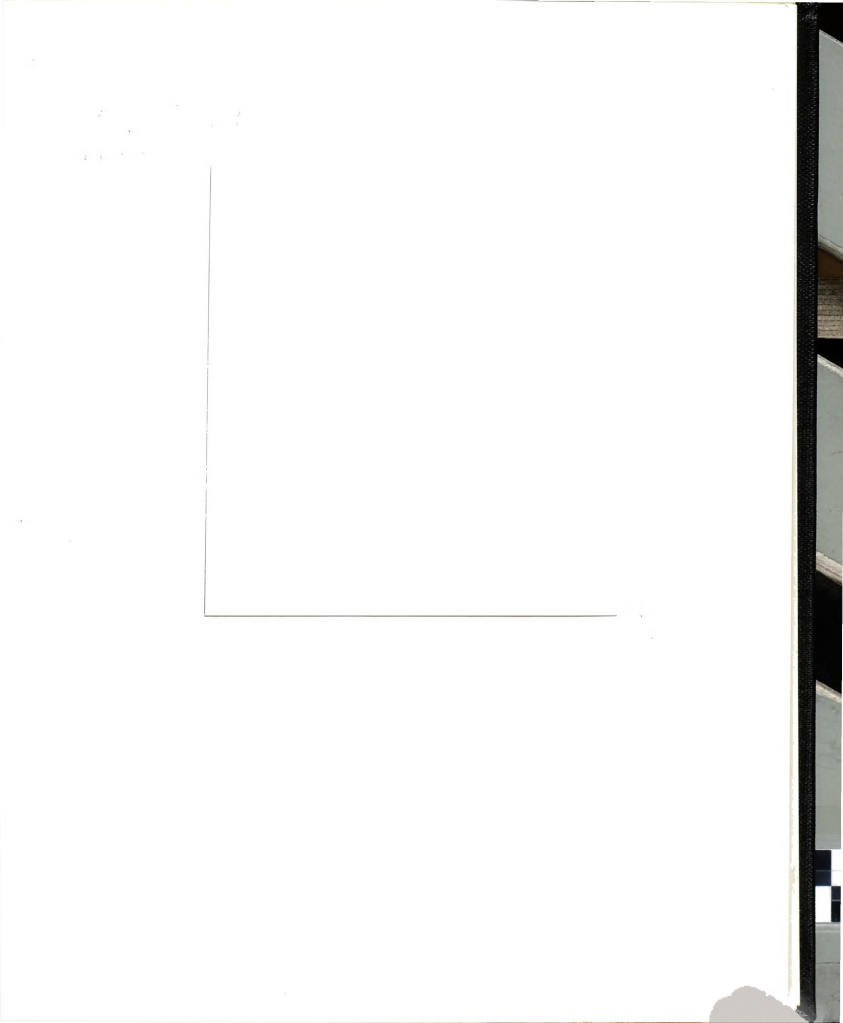

ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EXPRESSED ATTITUDES AND POLICIES TOWARDS SECONDARY EDUCATION AND RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE 1944 EDUCATION ACT IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS 1945-1955

By

Brian Mervyn Keefe

The purpose of the study was to examine the expressed attitudes towards secondary education and relevant sections of the 1944 Education Act in the House of Commons 1945-1955.

The scope of the investigation is confined purely to secondary education, and is not concerned with the numerous minor clauses of the Act which are concerned with purely local or sectional aspects, and have no bearing on the principal clauses of this piece of legislation. This work is not intended to be a study of the progress and consequences of the Act in the nation's schools, but rather an examination of the legislators' reactions. In the first instance this entailed an examination of the legislators' views during the passage of the Act and later a study of their reactions to the way it developed.

The Parliamentary debates of the House of Commons are the principal sources of information but reference has

been made to various journals, governmental papers and other contemporary materials.

On May 12, 1944 the Education Act was passed by the House of Commons. It contained a number of clauses concerning secondary education, which was to be almost completely reconstructed. The speed, method and philosophy of this reconstruction form the basis of the discussion and controversy which are the concern of this study.

The provision of the necessary teachers and new buildings to make the Act a reality; the problems and challenges in raising the school leaving age; and the emergence of a tripartite system of secondary education, emerge as the distinct issues of the 1945-1951 period.

With the change in government in 1951 there was a clear polarization on educational issues within the House of Commons.

The 1944 Education Act provided for universal secondary education. This was largely interpreted as a tripartite system, but during the course of this study, there emerged on the Socialist side a growing disenchantment with its operation and an increasing demand for a comprehensive system.

The Independent schools became increasingly under attack and it was evident that there existed a direct philosophical difference between the parties.

Education could not be divorced from the serious economic difficulties facing the country. Government

economies in educational spending developed a series of conflicts between government and opposition.

A number of conclusions can be made on the changes in attitudes and policies by parliamentarians in the period of this study.

It is clear that there had been a considerable underestimation of the complexity and difficulties of implementing the Act speedily.

The not inconsiderable successes of raising the school leaving age and the Emergency Training Scheme are balanced by the lack of suitable buildings for secondary moderns, the absence of the new technical schools and the imbalance in provision of grammar school education from place to place.

"Parity of esteem," if it ever had a chance, depended upon acceptance of a concept of different, separate but equal. In ordinary times a massive building programme of emergency proportions may have brought some degree of esteem, but in the necessarily limited way secondary schools were constructed, little of the impetus of change reached the mass of schools quickly enough. Consequently, long before the new schools came into being, there had grown up an agitation for alternative schemes of a radical nature.

The presence of all-age schools in such large numbers delayed universal secondary education for some years beyond the period of this study while the

dissatisfaction with selective methods and selection itself came under increasing fire.

During the period of the Labour government education had been largely outside the political arena but the last years covered by this study show an obvious movement towards political contention.

Within the study are found the embryo of future parliamentary strife that has divided the parties so deeply up to the present.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Scope, Limitation and Method

The purpose of this investigation is to examine the expressed attitudes and policies towards secondary education and relevant sections of the 1944 Education Act in the House of Commons 1945-1955.

The scope of this work is confined purely to secondary education and makes no attempt to deal with the numerous minor clauses of the Act which are concerned with purely local or sectional aspects and have no bearing on the principal implementations of this piece of legislation. This work is not intended to be a study of the progress and consequences of the Act in the nation's schools, but rather an examination of the reactions of legislators. In the first instance this entailed examination of legislators' views during the passage of the Act and later a study of their reactions to the way it developed.

The Parliamentary debates of the House of Commons are the principal sources of information but reference has been made to various journals and other contemporary materials.

The 1944 Education Act

In England, prior to 1918 there had developed a public system of education which clearly reflected the social forces of the time. The mass of children attended elementary schools up to the age of 13 or 14. These schools had been established by the 1870 (Forster) Education Act.

By 1914 there were two distinct branches of the public system of education. The majority of children attended elementary schools which had limited, basic aims and presented very restricted opportunities while a small minority progressed on to secondary education. The opportunity for such a progression was largely based on the occupation, social position and finances of their parents.

The 1914-1918 war highlighted many of the shortcomings of such a system and consequently these problems were subjected to close scrutiny. Naturally the war aggravated many of the problems such as staff shortage, poor facilities, part-time schooling and physical deficiencies of the children.

The Education Bill of 1918 represented, in part, the results of the pressures crystallized by the turmoil of war. The aim was to provide a more uniform educational system throughout the country. This was to a large degree resented by local authorities who suspected tendencies to centralization. Eventually through compromise, the Bill was amended to strengthen the local authorities while at

the same time reforming the grant system so that not less than half of the costs of education were met from central government funds. Various other clauses dealt with the abolition of elementary school fees, an extension of ancillary services, the abolition of all exemptions from the school leaving age of 14 and provision for continuing part-time education up to 18.

Seven years later in 1926 the report of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education was published and is popularly known as the Hadow Report. The Labour Party's Programme of "Secondary Education for All"[1] clearly expressed the demand for improved opportunities. Similarly the Conservative Party Manifesto[2] in 1924 advocated a policy for educational reform at the post-primary stage.

In England and Wales the Hadow Report was to become the basis for educational reform at the post-primary stage for over a quarter of a century. Its terms of reference were simply:

> I. To consider and report upon the Organization, objective and curriculum of courses of study available for children who will remain in full-time attendance at schools, other than secondary schools, up to the age of 15,

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[1] Labour Party, Secondary Education for All (London: Allen and Unwin, Ltd., 1923).

[2] Conservative Party Manifesto (London: Smith Square, 1924).

regard being held on the one hand to the requirements of a good general education and the desirability of providing a reasonable variety of curriculum, so far as is practicable, for children of varying tasks and abilities, and on the other to the probable occupations of the pupils in commerce, industry and agriculture.

II. Incidentally thereto, to advise as to the arrangements which should be made:

(a) for testing the pupils at the end of their course.

(b) for facilitating in suitable cases the transfer of individual pupils at secondary schools at an age above the normal age of admission.

After completing its review the Hadow Committee recommended that primary education should be regarded as ending at about 11+, and that it should be followed by "post-primary" education, which they hoped would end at 16+ for some pupils, for a few at 18 or 19 but for the majority at 14+ or 15+.

In detail the Hadow Committee envisaged the following types of schools in the post-primary field.

(a) Traditional Secondary Schools, i.e. Grammar.

(b) Selective Central Schools with a 4-year course.

(c) Non-selective Central Schools.

(d) Senior Classes, central departments, etc., for providing more advanced instruction for those over 11+ for whom, owing to local conditions, it is impossible to make provision in one or other of the types of school mentioned above.

In the years that followed, the Hadow Report was a focus for reformers, but with the effects of the economic depression and with the collapse of the Labour Government in 1931 all plans for the full implementation of Hadow, particularly for raising the school leaving age, were temporarily shelved.

In September 1939 the outbreak of the Second World War made progress even more difficult. Nevertheless there had been a limited measure of progress, particularly in regard to reorganization. In 1931 there were still 8751 classes containing over 50 children and only about one third of the children over the age of eleven were in reorganized departments. Seven years later, however, 63.5 percent of such children were in reorganized schools and the number of classes exceeding 50 had been reduced to 2,100.

The 1944 Education Act is probably the one legislative act which most influences education in Britain today. Consequently the affairs of education in the House of Commons since 1944 show a direct relation to the effect and interpretation of the Act. This Act was conceived

nder a Coalition Government during a period of chaos and
ncertainty and was designed as a new foundation for
nglish education.

By 1944 the war had taken a more favorable turn
nd the various ideas had been framed into a Bill.

Britain emerged from World War II weakened and
poverished. Her place and function in the world was
longer assured and reconstruction and revolution were
eded if a new society was to emerge from the ruins. It
s fortunate that amidst the distractions of a terrible
nflagration, men could formulate an Act which would
rm the master plan on which the reconstruction of the
st-war years took its directive.

Even in April, 1970, the 1944 Act has not been
pletely implemented but many of its recommendations
e introduced in the period covered by this study.
1944 Act and, generally speaking, post-war educational
elopment and legislation have reflected an effort of
British to equalize educational opportunity for all.

The Act abolished the old system of "elementary"
"higher" education and in its place distinguished
e separate stages: primary, secondary and further
ation which were to be looked upon as a "continuous
ess." The County and County Borough Councils were
responsible for the provision of these educational
ities and also for the planned establishment of
ry and special schools. The Board of Education became

full Ministry. Tuition fees at all maintained schools ere to be abolished. The raising of the school leaving ge to 15 was to take place in 1947, it having been agreed hat this would be raised later to 16.

The Act provided for the provision of County Colges, the extension of ancillary services and more favorle grants to religious organized schools.

By its organization of the statutory system of blic education in three progressive stages, and requirg that the first, the primary stage, be concluded not ter than the twelfth birthday, the Education Act made period of full-time secondary education compulsory for l children. By raising the leaving age it ensured that period of secondary education should not be less than ee years.

In Section 8, after laying upon the local educan authorities the duty to see that in their areas there e "sufficient" schools, it went on to instruct that:

> The schools available for an area shall not be deemed sufficient in number, character and equipment unless they afford for all pupils opportunities for education offering such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable in view of their different ages, abilities and aptitudes, and of the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school, including practical instruction appropriate to their respective needs.[3]

This definition imposed upon the local education orities a statutory obligation to secure the provision

[3]Great Britain, Education Act, 1944, George VI 4).

of different kinds of secondary education. It follows that they must devise means of discovering, as far as possible, towards the end of the primary stage, what particular kinds of secondary education children seem most suited for. Acting on the recommendation of the Spens Report[4] and the Report of a Committee set up in 1941 by the President of the Board of Education (Norwood Report)[5] the government accepted the idea of a tripartite organization of secondary education; in grammar, technical and modern schools. In doing so, however, the Government emphasized that they did not regard the arrangements as a rigid and inflexible one.

The Grammar schools were those which had previously been officially recognized "Secondary" schools. The Secondary Technical schools comprised the schools previously known as Junior Technical, Junior Art, Central and Commercial Schools. The Secondary Modern Schools were to be the promoted Elementary schools.

Dent points to the lack of any alternative proposal except to provide secondary education of a comprehensive nature taking children from geographical catchment areas. This he says

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[4] Secondary Education: with Special Reference to Grammar Schools and Technical High Schools, H.M.S.O. 1938).

[5] Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools, H.M.S.O. (1943).

> . . . was distasteful to the majority of professional and public opinion, had never been tried in this country and had been firmly rejected by the 'Spens' Committee--except on an experimental basis in favourable circumstances--and would in any case have demanded a building programme quite beyond the country's capacity at the time.[6]

For many years, however, these various groups had
ry different ratings of esteem by the general public.
e grammar school stood easily highest and universally
nowledged as the gateway to the professions. The
hnical group was clearly thought to be a "second best"
those who had failed to secure one of the coveted
mmar school places. The Senior elementary school was
place in which the residue remained who were either
nterested or incapable of more advanced education.

As there were different kinds of secondary school
ldings available in 1945, so there was a well-estab-
ed method of determining the capacity of children to
fit from a grammar school education.

In 1907 a "free place" system had been introduced,
r which a quarter of the annual entry into maintained
ndary schools was to come from elementary schools.
tuition fees of these children or scholarships were
by the local education authority. The entry standard
ne remaining fee-paying three quarters was lower and
fees within the reach of all middle class parents.
the introduction of this system the authorities had

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[6] H. C. Dent, The Education System for England and , U.L.P. (1961), p. 103.

nstantly attempted to improve their selective techniques
d the product of this was known as the 11+. It con-
sted of tests administered by the various local educa-
on authorities who although varying greatly in detail
re inclined to follow the same broad principles. Dent
sted the techniques as follows:

(a) Standardized objective tests for intelligence (or "verbal reasoning"), as they are now commonly called.
(b) Tests, usually objective and frequently standardized, of attainment in formal English and arithmetic.[7]

Passage of the Bill

On January 19, 1944, R. A. Butler, President of Board of Education, introduced the Second Reading of Education Bill.[8]

> I now commend the Bill to the House as one which is warmly welcomed by the many active partners in the education service. It is they, as a team who have helped to fashion it during the last two years. . . . Let us hope that our work together for the next few weeks, and more perhaps, will carry into the years of victory the thirst for service and advancement, as well as the common sharing of experience and opportunity which we have at present.[9]

The President went on to describe the Bill as a
lete recasting of the existing educational system.
tone of his speech clearly indicated the confidence
President had in the all-party support for the new

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[7] Dent, Ibid., p. 105.

[8] The First Reading of a Bill is a pure formality.

[9] Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), on, Vol. CCCLXLVI, p. 209.

gislation. Such a Bill was naturally extremely compli-
ted and much of his speech was taken up with explanation
the various clauses.

Clause I revised the position and influence of the
ard of Education. The new Minister being charged with
e duty:

> To promote the education of the people of England and Wales and the progressive development of institutions devoted to that purpose, and to secure the effective execution by local authorities, under his control and direction, of the national policy for providing a varied and comprehensive educational service in every area.[10]

Clause VIII made it clear that the central authority
t continue to rely on the educational authorities for the
inistration and the scope of the provision must depend
n local initiative.

A particularly important clause was number XXXIV
ch was basic to the future structure of English secondary
cation. Butler speaking of it said:

> It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsary school age to cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.[11]

It was the words contained in this clause--age,
ity and aptitude and their interpretation in the struc-
ng of secondary education that were to inspire the
ciple controversy of the next two decades.

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[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid., p. 211.

Butler went on to explain that the various clauses ade provision for every child to pass through the primary nd secondary stages. Clause VIII, part one, he explained, ould ensure that the secondary stage would be designed, ot merely to provide an academic training for a select ew but to give equivalent opportunities to all children er 11, of making the most of their natural abilities.

The clause lay down, as mentioned in the Introduc- on,[12] that provision should be made to provide a variety instruction in a variety of schools.

Although the school leaving age was to be raised 15 the President looked ahead to a further increase nen the Minister considers that circumstances permit him lay an Order in Council."[13]

The extension of education provided by the 1944 presented a considerable teacher supply problem. ruitment had been at a standstill for a number of years facilities for training had been curtailed in 1939.

The President outlined the problem facing the ools:

> Taking teachers first, a large proportion of the present teaching staffs are beyond the normal retiring age or are married women who have come in to help us during the war. I hope many of them will go on helping us in the peace. The demands of the forces have brought the normal recruitment of men teachers to a standstill. Apart from the

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[12] see pages 7 and 8.

[13] Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. CCXCVI, 215.

raising of the leaving age there is likely to be at the end of the war a serious shortage of teachers just at the moment when we most want them. The House will want to know what measures the Government are taking in order to meet this most vital requirement of our reforms. We have, of course, taken special measures and an emergency scheme is already being prepared, which is to be financed wholly from the Exchequer. Its object is to secure that, on demobilisation, premises and training staff will be ready and available for intensive courses for intending teachers.[14]

Many of the existing secondary schools were direct
nt grammar schools and in some areas they constituted
larger part of the grammar school provision.

Ordinary local authority grammar schools were no
ger to take fee-paying pupils and there was come concern
to where the direct grant grammar schools would fit into
post-1944 Act system.

To this concern Mr. Butler answered that the inten-
n was to preserve tradition and variety and allow the
ools to continue providing they were accessible to
larship pupils financed by the local education authori-
.

The Public boarding schools were not directly
uded in the Act and the President told the House that
as awaiting the report of the Fleming Committee, which
been set up to consider the question of associating
more closely with the national system. Independent

[14] Ibid., p. 217.

hools of which the Public boarding schools were a part
re for the first time to be open to inspection and
gistration.[15]

Butler in finishing his presentation of the Bill
ke in idealistic and philosophical terms about its con-
tion and its aims:

> Perhaps the Bill owes its welcome to an appreciation of the synthesis it tries to create between order and liberty, between local initiative and national direction, between the voluntary agencies and the State, between the private life of a school and the public life of the districts which it serves, between manual and intellectual skill and between those better and less well endowed.
>
> Hammered on the anvil of this war, our nation has been shaped to a new unity of pride and purpose. We must preserve this after victory is won, if the fruits of victory are to be fully garnered, and that unity will, by this Bill, be founded in the education and training of youth. But, more than that, as the reforms are made effective--and more effective they must be--we shall develop our most abiding assets and richest resources--the character and competence of a great people and I believe in passing this measure we shall do this in a manner not unworthy of our peoples greatness.[16]

The lauditory phrases and sentiments of the Presi-
t were echoed in the almost unqualified support and
roval he was given from all sides of the House. Mr.
ker (Romford) the Labour spokesman and Mr. Greenwood
efield) pledged official Labour support and the major-
of backbench speakers followed their lead.[17]

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[15] Ibid., p. 219.

[16] Ibid., p. 220.

[17] Ibid., p. 225.

Exceptions to the rule were Ivor Thomas (Keighley, .) who wanted the Bill to go further arguing that:

> The great foundations of Eton and Winchester should be taken out of the old school system and converted into university colleges, but I have no doubt that it will be at least 25 years before that idea is accepted.[18]

Professor Gruffydd (University of Wales, Ind.) ressed reservations on the other side suggesting the ed and extent of the reforms were "simply not within range of practical politics."[19] His concern was that rovement of quality should be preserved with extension opportunity.

Mr. Silkin (Peckham, Soc.) foresaw some of the blems and controversies that would arise in interpre- ion:

> To talk of the three R's is to talk of something concrete. At least you know where you are, but to talk of 'education suited to age, ability and aptitude' may lead to differences of opinion.
> The Bill makes a great flourish about secondary education.--Are we doing anything more than abolishing terms?[20]

Mr. Beavan (Ebbw Vale, Soc.) shared some of his leagues views deploring the lack of what he believed, cational content in the Bill. In his view it was inistrative and full of generalities and should have n only introduced after the various reports had been

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[18] Ibid., p. 227.

[19] Ibid., p. 229.

[20] Ibid., p. 232.

e and more concrete proposals in method and curriculum been revealed.[21]

Much of the debate was concerned with administra- e detail and the effect of the Bill on denominational ools. Apart from the four dissenters quoted the aining speakers advanced no direct criticisms. Mr. alet Keir (Islington East, Soc.) attempted to introduce lause to ensure that in 1951 the school leaving age uld be raised to 16. This amendment was narrowly eated by 172 votes to 137.[22]

On May 12, 1944, the Bill was read and passed a rd time.

Outside Parliament there was a general welcoming he new legislation. The influential journal, The tator, cautiously welcomed the raising of the school ing age but raised the problem of finding teachers accommodation in the short term.[23]

The educational contributor of The New Statesman Nation writing shortly before the introduction of the believed that the Bill would bolster up the "snob" ent of the grammar school and should have tackled the ic and direct grant schools.[24]

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[21] Ibid., p. 234.

[22] Ibid., p. 260.

[23] The Spectator, May 19, 1944, No. 6047, p. 443.

[24] The New Statesman and Nation, Dec. 25, 1943, XXVI, 670, pp. 411-412.

Its writer was still lacking in complete enthusiasm ith the passage of the Bill and disturbed that the differ- nt types of school would offer varying opportunities.[25]

The New Government

In June 1945 the Wartime Coalition government came o an end and in the ensuing election[26] the Labour Party Socialists secured an overwhelming victory and formed heir first majority government.[27] They were to remain power for six years.

At this time the existing buildings were, in the in, unsatisfactory. Dr. F. Spender, the distinguished ducator, estimated that four-fifths of the elementary hools[28] were unsuitable. Enemy action had destroyed hool accommodation for 200,000 pupils and the raising the minimum leaving age to 15 called for the immediate ovision of nearly 400,000 additional places.

No new school buildings had been constructed for x years and many had fallen into disrepair. There was dire need for teachers, as well as for buildings, since ere had been no regular teacher recruitment for a number years.

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[25] The New Statesman and Nation, May 20, 1944, l. XXVII, 691, p. 333.

[26] The first since 1935.

[27] Labour won 397 seats, Conservative 213 seats, beral 12 seats.

[28] Non-secondary schools prior to the 1944 Act.

The finances of the country were in a near bankrupt
te and the need for the building of new factories and
ses held first priority. There was a severe shortage
uilding materials and skilled labor; the uncontrolled
lation had spiralled building costs; the marriage and
h rates boomed, creating a bigger demand for houses
eventually schools; and the building of new towns and
ing estates and the greater mobility of labor demanded
siting of schools in new areas.

The Right Honourable Ellen Wilkinson (Jarrow) was
inted Minister of Education and Mr. Arthur Jenkins
typool) was appointed her Parliamentary Secretary.

In the King's speech[29] on August 15, 1945, educa-
was only briefly mentioned but contained a clear
ge on implementing the new Education Act; "It will be
aim of my Ministers to bring into practical effect at
earliest possible date the educational reforms which
already been approved."[30]

Voicing the attitude of the Conservative or Tory
sition, Mr. Butler promised that the function of his
would be to offer constructive suggestions to help
inister. Nevertheless he clearly expressed the

[29]This is a speech, written by the Prime Minister,
ade by the Sovereign at each new parliamentary session.

[30]Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. CDXVIII.

osition view that full and rapid implementation of the he had steered through the Commons was imperative.[31]

During their first year of office the new govern- t were given a period of trust, during which time bers on both sides came to a slow realization that lementing the Act was to prove to be a slow and diffi- t task.

On February 1, 1946, another Education Bill was roduced which was purely of administrative importance, ecting adjustments to the 1944 Act and tying up loose s.[32] There was throughout this period a virtual mora- um on educational controversy and it was not until 1, 1946, that the House held a debate on Education allocated through a Supply Day.[33]

Opening the debate the Minister referred to the lems of the administration's first year and admitted implementing the Act as a whole was a job for a ration rather than for one year.[34]

In order to make progress in implementing the isions of the Act, there was a vital need for teacher uitment and training and the erection of new buildings.

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[31] Ibid., p. 197-198.

[32] Ibid., p. 1250.

[33] A Supply Day is a day allocated for general debate subject.

[34] Parliamentary Debates, Vol. CDXXIV, op. cit., 306.

uccess in these areas would clearly influence the timing
f raising the school leaving age.

CHAPTER II

TEACHERS, BUILDINGS AND RAISING OF THE LEAVING AGE

Even when the 1944 Act was in the embryo stage, ans had been put into operation for a massive recruit- nt and training programme. Premises and personnel had en earmarked for the programme which was designed to ke men on demobilization from the armed services and mit them to an Emergency Training Scheme. Their train- g was to be of an intensive nature and last over one lendar year with provision for various in-service train- g programmes.

In November 1945 Miss Ellen Wilkinson, Minister of ucation, reported that there had been 24,000 applications whom 4500 had already been accepted.[1] One of the diffi- lties was the slow release of intending teachers from the rvices and members were constantly raising this question, l Kenneth Lindsay (Combined English Universities, Con.)

[1]Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), . CDXV, p. 1702.

ent as far as raising the issue in an Adjournment ebate.[2]

Lindsay raised the matter again on October 21, 946, by asking the Minister how many students there were ndergoing training in emergency training colleges and ow many colleges were in operation.

The Ministerial answer revealed that 3350 men and 022 women were undergoing training, that 212 men and 290 omen had completed training and that 22,659 men and 2731 omen had been accepted for colleges but as yet had not een admitted. Eventually there would be 56 Emergency olleges but at that time only 25 Emergency colleges were erating.[3]

A few weeks later on November 12, 1946, the King's eech contained an assurance that "all necessary action being taken to enable the school leaving age to be ised in April of next year."[4]

There was, however, considerable concern whether is action was sufficient although the Ministry projected rise in the teaching force from 176,000 in January 1946 190,000 in January 1948 and to 200,000 in January 1949.[5]

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[2]An Adjournment debate is an opportunity for a vate member to speak on a subject and receive a minis- ial reply. Ibid., Vol. CDXV, p. 1652.

[3]Ibid., Vol. CDXXVII, pp. 305-306.

[4]Ibid., Vol. CDXXX, p. 7.

[5]Ibid., Vol. CDXXX, p. 339.

On February 6, 1947, Miss Ellen Wilkinson, the
nister of Education, died and Mr. George Tomlinson was
ointed to be her successor.

In July the new Minister speaking in a Debate on
Education Estimates described the raising of the
ool leaving age in 1947 as the first big step in the
lementation of the 1944 Act. He spoke of the temporary
permanent accommodation being provided. In regard to
supply of teachers, he assured the House that the
ults of the Emergency Training Scheme would ensure that
re would be no question of a shortage of teachers to
lement the new measure.

In praising the quality of these college entrants
revealed that 51 Emergency colleges were operating with
annual output of 11,600 and in addition 10,500 other
chers were being produced through the conventional
ining departments and colleges.[6]

By the Spring of 1949 the Emergency Training Scheme
coming to an end and would according to the Minister
d 23,000 men and 12,000 women teachers of whom over
00 had already completed their training.

Before the war the normal training colleges had an
al intake of 7000. The corresponding figure for 1949
said the Minister, 12,500 and in a year or two would

[6] Ibid., Vol. CDXLI, pp. 651-652.

ach 14,000. In addition there were 34 additional
lleges.[7]

In the same speech speaking of the allocation of
sources he said:

> The first claim we have to meet is that of the million extra children coming into the schools in the next few years on account of the increased birthrate.
>
> In other words, our first commitment must be to provide school accommodation for the children of statutory age.[8]

He did however believe it was impossible at the
e time, to carry out the vast improvement programme
bring existing schools up to a reasonable standard
nting out that 70 per cent of the existing school
ldings were more than 50 years old.

The full flow from the Emergency Training Colleges
ncided with the raising of the school leaving age. In
short-term it was therefore a success and although
birthrate bulge was later to cause a considerable rise
entry at the primary level, the immediate crisis at the
ondary level, while not completely solved, was very
alleviated.

Buildings were a more severe problem. Here there
a need to expand the number of grammar school places,
rsify and increase opportunities in technical educa-
, but above all convert the old elementary buildings
the new secondary modern schools.

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[7] Ibid., Vol. CDLXVI, p. 1975.

[8] Ibid., Vol. CDLXVI, p. 1980.

Many schools, particularly in rural areas, still ontained all children from 5 to 15 within the same build- ng. If genuine secondary education was to function these chools would have to be reorganized and this would of ecessity involve extensive school building.

As early as 1946 Miss Wilkinson had warned of the uilding problems the raising of the school leaving age ere bound to create.

> . . . But do not let us make any mistake about it. It will have to be done in temporary buildings. It will mean, alas, that nearly one-third of the children over 11 will still be in all-age schools.[9]

A ministerial reply to Mrs. Elizabeth Manning pping, Con.) showed that in January 1946 there were still 662 all-age schools, 3,746 were in urban areas, and 5,916 rural areas. Of these 5,584 were church or voluntary hools and 4,078 county schools.[10]

Two years later, speaking on February 27, 1948, . Kenneth Lindsay (Combined English Universities, Con.) s quite cynical about the progress made in reorganization aiming that only 60 per cent of the schools had been rganized for secondary education.[11] There was however dence of a gradual elimination of the all-age school and January 1948 they were down to 8,016, a reduction of 46 in two years.[12]

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[9] Ibid., Vol. CDXXIV, p. 1806.

[10] Ibid., Vol. CDXXX, p. 339.

[11] Ibid., Vol. CDXLVII, p. 234.

[12] Ibid., Vol. CDLX, p. 157.

This particular problem was to remain for some years and it was not until David Eccles became Minister that the numbers of all-age schools showed a dramatic decline.

The smallest group in the tripartite system was the various technical schools and as late as July 24, 1951, Florence Horsbrugh (Manchester Moss Side, Con.) speaking in a Supply Debate on Education referred to the lack of expansion in this area:

> . . . I wonder whether we have pushed on sufficiently with that part of our educational system. The numbers have not increased to the extent that I thought they would.[13]

She indicated that in 1948 only 72,000 were attending secondary technical schools and even by 1950 it had only risen to 74,000.

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[13] Ibid., Vol. CDXCI, p. 219.

CHAPTER III

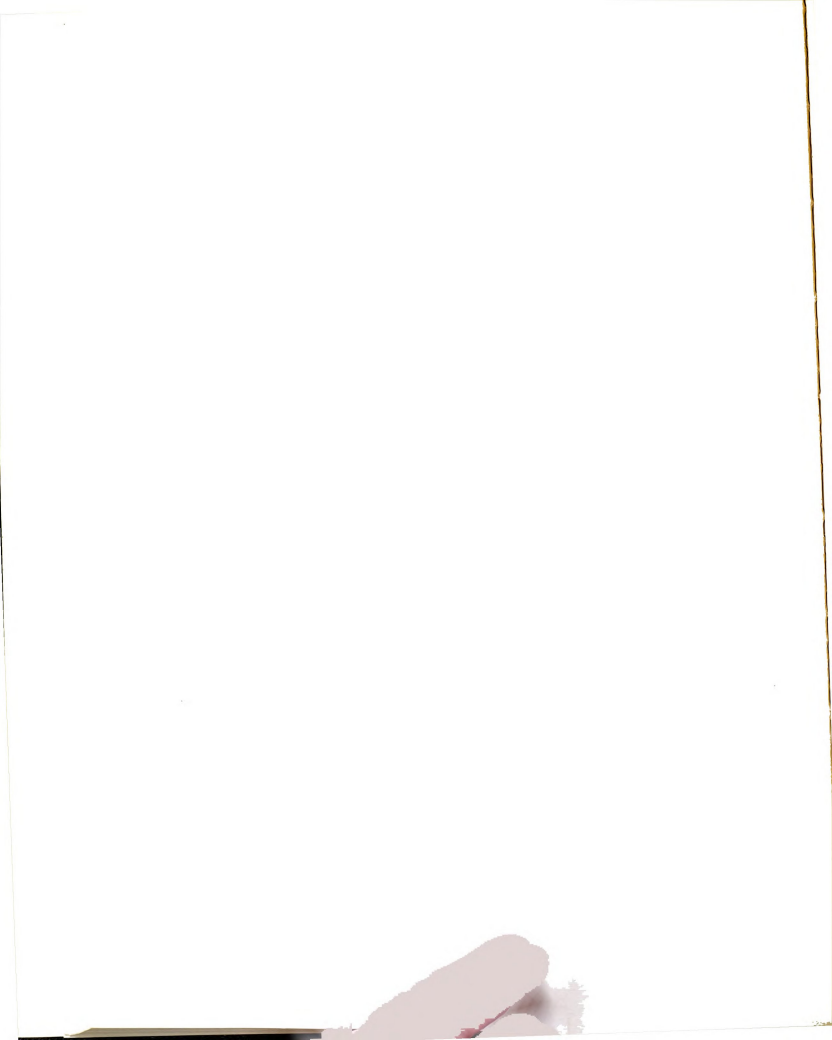
THE TRIPARTITE SYSTEM AND REACTION TO IT

"Parity of Esteem" was a phrase widely used about the different types of schools which were to form the new secondary system following the 1944 Education Act.

Its form was largely that recommended by the Hadow Committee in 1926 and went largely unchallenged at the time of the passage of the 1944 Act. The "Spens" Committee had rejected a Comprehensive system, except on an experimental basis and Dent[1] says that this was distasteful to public and professional opinion.

Reading the debates concerned with the passage of the Bill one sees an assumption that, in their idealism, secondary education for all was interpreted by many as being academic or grammar school education for all. Similarly the man-in-the-street believed that all the secondary schools would be on the same level and the disillusionment that clearly shows itself in the Commons was merely a reflection of the views of parents and teachers.

[1]Dent, op. cit.



In consequence we see evidence of disquiet over selection methods--the 11+ and after a very short time the growth of a movement demanding the end of the tripartite structure and the introduction of comprehensive secondary education.

The Education Committee of London County Council had in 1943 argued the disadvantages of a divided secondary system:

> The prime difficulty about accepting such a tripartite scheme of secondary education is that, if it be accepted, the secondary school of the future will, in effect, consist of two select types--an academic and a technical type with 'the rest' left behind in a large group of a modern school.[2]

They largely anticipated the reactions of half a decade later, when although accepting the system would be in advance of the then existing arrangement, they pointed to the problems of selection and anticipated that the modern schools would be the poor relations of the system.

In late 1945 the Ministry of Education issued a pamphlet that clearly stated that modern schools should be looked upon as schools for working class children: "whose future employment will not demand any measure of technical skill and knowledge."[3]

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[2] Times Educational Supplement, 4th December, 1943, London.

[3] The Nations Schools, Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 1, 1945.

The pamphlet had to be withdrawn as a result of pressure from the Labour movement although two years later it was repeated in more subtle language.[4]

In the first months of the Labour government the Minister outlined her ideas on the form secondary education would take.

> Let us consider what are the alternatives. The grammar school is well known, and it will have a vital part to play in our national life. At present it attracts pupils, many because they are thoroughly suited to the education it provides, and others because it is thought to be the superior sort of school. Many of the second group would be better off in a different sort of secondary school if--and the 'if' should be underlined--one existed. But in many areas today other secondary schools exist only in name, and until they are brought up to date and have developed into true secondary schools in parents' minds--whatever may be in our minds--it will seem as though the only form of secondary education is grammar school education. I am glad to say that already different sorts of secondary schools do exist . . .[5]

She went on to suggest that there existed a great deal of misunderstanding in parents' minds but that this would disappear when they saw some of the new kinds of school operating. The Minister referred to the secondary technical schools aim as providing a "good secondary education with a scientific or technical bias."[6]

It was of course the new secondary modern school to which the great majority of children were going and it

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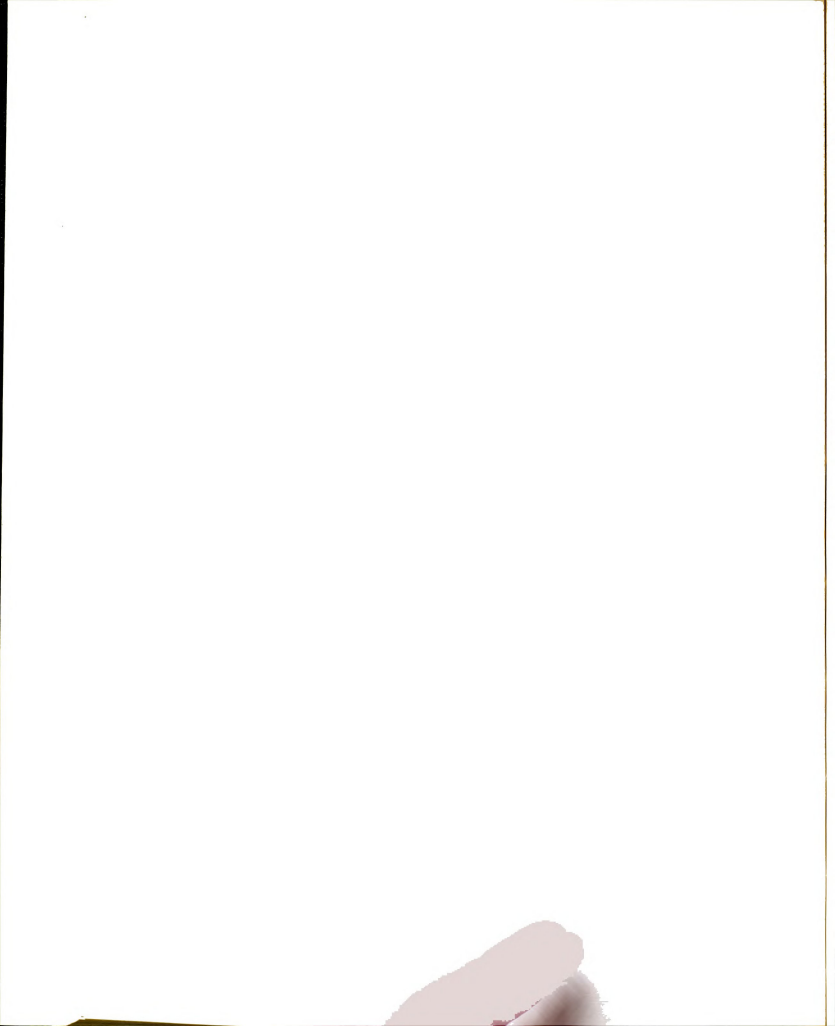
[4] The New Secondary Education, Ministry of Education Pamphlet No. 9, 1947.

[5] Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. CDXXIV, p. 1810.

[6] Ibid., p. 1811.



was this sector of secondary education which was giving the most concern. The Minister argued that it was impossible to transform a senior elementary school into a modern secondary school merely by sending a corporation workman along to paint out the words "senior elementary" and put in the words "modern secondary."

She was anxious to point out the needs, problems and progress in premises, staff, planning of curriculum and above all the need for experimentation.

It was during this same speech that the Minister first referred to the possibilities of schools outside the tripartite system. Significantly she did not mention comprehensives but named multilateral and bilateral schools.[7]

The existence of the various schools made necessary the question of selection and this was to take place at 11.

The Minister admitted that 11 was purely arbitrary and was devised to ensure that children had four years of secondary education.[8]

R. A. Butler, the Conservative Opposition spokesman on Education, expressed his view on the modern school believing that its curriculum to be broad and experimental.[9]

Professor Gruffydd (University of Wales) who had been dubious about the Act even in 1944 blamed the vagueness of the Act and lack of planning for what he believed

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., p. 1812.

[9] Ibid., p. 1803.

was the disappointing being experienced at that time:

> Most of the promised benefits show no sign of materialising, and such action as the Ministry has taken has caused the gravest apprehension to all those who are concerned about education.[10]

One of the Socialist backbenchers, Cove (Aberavon), took up the point of the Ministry of Education Pamphlet "The Nations Schools."[11] He decried the philosophy that there was only a small section of the community fitted by capacity and aptitude for grammar school education. He attacked his own Minister as "a danger to the whole Labour movement as far as education policy is concerned."[12] He called for the repudiation of the Ministry pamphlet accusing the Minister of not believing in the capacity of the ordinary child, the equalitarian system of education or the education policy of the Labour Party.

Although he did not gain the support of other speakers, this was by any standards a savage attack upon a Minister and her policy, particularly so, in that it came from a member of her own party. It was the first major parliamentary criticism on educational policy since the passage of the Act and heralded a growing concern within the Labour ranks over how the Act was working in practice.

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[10] Ibid., p. 1826.

[11] See page 28.

[12] Ibid., pp. 1830-1834.

Even members on the Conservative side were uncertain as to the future prospects of the secondary modern schools. I. J. Pitman (Bath, Con.) described the school as ". . . a mongrel--a mixture of the (other) two and will contain only the rejects of the (other) two."[13] He was however completely opposed to any view which believed in the complete soundness of only one type of education.

George Tomlinson became Minister in February 1947 and in July he made his first major parliamentary speech in office and took the opportunity of defining his policy in relation to secondary education.

Under the Act local authorities were required to submit their own plans for reorganization. They were to have much in common but differed to meet local needs and philosophies. The Minister reported that complete plans had been submitted by the majority of authorities and in examining the plans he was looking for

> . . . equal opportunity for all to develop the faculties with which all are endowed, and I would emphasise as I have said on more than one occasion, that we seek no reduction in the standard of the grammar school. A good deal of talk has been going on in different parts of the country with regard to the position of the grammar schools, and I want to emphasise that it is no part of our policy to reduce in any way the status or standing of the grammar schools.[14]

Having given an assurance that the grammar schools were to be retained in their existing form he then went on to express the idea of "parity of esteem":

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[13] Ibid., p. 1840.

[14] Ibid., Vol. CDXLI, pp. 655-656.

> I also want to emphasise the necessity for the new secondary schools to come up to the same standard. I know the difficulties of new schools making their appeal to parents if we seek all the time to emphasise differences, and to look upon academics as the only form, or the highest form, of development. The confidence of our people, if they are all of the same status, will be increased a thousandfold.[15]

It was clear from this speech that there was to be no radical change in policy and the government was still convinced that "parity of esteem" was a realistic and viable proposition.

There was however some evidence of wider thinking in that the Ministry had recently issued a pamphlet[16] which defined the different types of schools suggested under the school plans. The Minister supported the need for experimentation and listed the multilateral, the unilateral, the comprehensive and the school base as being contained in the pamphlet.

There was at this time some frustration within the ranks of Labour Party members. At the 1947 Labour Party Conference, the members expressed their indignation by passing a resolution urging the Minister

> . . . to set up comprehensive rather than tripartite schools and pointed out that such a resolution had been passed at four of the five previous conferences.[17]

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[15] Ibid., p. 656.

[16] Ministry of Education, Circular 144, 1947.

[17] B. Simon, The Common Secondary School (London: Lawrence Wishant, 1955), p. 42.

Thus rank and file Labour Party opinion was already hardening against the tripartite system and the policy of the Labour government.

Butler, the architect of the 1944 Act and the Opposition spokesman, was severely critical of those local authorities who had submitted plans for large multilateral schools. He likened them to factory units and although he was not in favor of very small schools he favored middle-sized units.[18]

One of the difficulties facing both the government and the local education authorities was that their need for maximum expansion and expenditure coincided with a period of severe economic difficulties. Despite this there was still considerable pressure on the Minister, mainly from his own supporters, for a vast and immediate building programme. Ralph Morley (Southampton, Soc.) was a constant critic in this area, arguing that little progress, apart from raising the school-leaving age, had been made and that the majority of secondary modern schools, were in terms of equipment and amenities not really secondary schools.[19]

By 1948 much of the dissatisfaction over the way secondary education was being run was directed to selection procedures.

Leah Manning (Epping, Con.) thought that 11-plus, although administratively easy, was not the right age in

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[18] Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. CDXLI, p. 669.

[19] Ibid., pp. 703-707.

either social nor emotional terms and was in favor of a later transfer as in the Public Schools.[20] In this she was supported by Heatcoat Armory (Tiverton, Con.).[21]

Alice Bacon (Leeds N.E., Soc.) suggested that ". . . the whole of the primary school stage is governed by the fact that examination will come at the end of it."[22]

She believed that there were only two satisfactory solutions to the problem. The first would involve a new grouping of the education system with a non-selective secondary school from 10 to 16 years and a specialist higher secondary school from 15 or 16 years to 18. She conceded that in view of development plans she was asking the impossible, therefore she would settle for a common secondary school after the age of 11, thus abolishing the 11 plus.

Replying to the critics of selection the Minister said:

> It is suggested that the development of the comprehensive school will solve this problem. It may do; but it is not in our lifetime.[23]

The Minister was to some extent in the position of a man embarked on a course of action, committed administratively and financially in a period of severe financial difficulty and being asked to change his entire formula. Although one detects a growing but cautious favour for the

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[20] Ibid., Vol. CDXLVII, pp. 2350-2354.

[21] Ibid., Vol. CDLIV, p. 1385.

[22] Ibid., Vol. CDLXXVII, pp. 1888-1889.

[23] Ibid., Vol. CDLXXVI, p. 1973.

comprehensive pattern the Minister was a prisoner of circumstances seeking to make advances within the structure he inherited, rather than overthrow that system and begin again.

Few people were really satisfied by the selection method but while different types of schools existed, some form of selection would be inevitable. The Minister went to lengths to encourage local authorities to have a review at 13 and not to rely on the results of tests alone. He expressed the dilemma authorities faced when he said "the parent whose child at the age of 13 does not get into secondary school will think it just as big a swindle as he thinks the present system is."[24]

Those who still hoped that the secondary modern school would achieve "parity of esteem" saw as their strong point, their freedom from having to build their curriculum around external examinations. Butler was one who saw this as a particular strength believing that ". . . parity of esteem will only be won if the general curriculum and the general occupation of the secondary modern school is suitable for life and for the children who go there . . ."[25]

"Parity of esteem" however was far from a reality and in the Debate on Education early in 1948, several speakers spoke of disillusionment and the myth of equal

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[24] Ibid., Vol. CDXCI, p. 329.

[25] Ibid., Vol. CDLIV, p. 1373.

secondary education. Alice Bacon (Leeds, N.E., Soc.) put the view that ". . . already in the minds of parents there is the idea that the grammar school is secondary education and the modern school is still elementary education."[26]

In February 1950 there took place a General Election in which the Labour Government was returned to power with a much smaller majority.[27]

The last large scale Education debate of the parliament took place on July 5, 1949.

In the debate the various criticisms of the functioning of the 1944 Act were aired and the opponents of the tripartite system were obviously growing and were by this time combining forcefully to press for universal comprehensive education.

Cove (Aberavon, Soc.) saw it as a philosophical problem, arguing the aims of education were to bring about an integration of the individual and society. He believed that this goal was unattainable outside a comprehensive system.[28]

He was supported by Ralph Morley (Southampton, Soc.) who argued that no real parity existed in the eyes of children, parents, teachers and employers.[29]

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[26] Ibid., p. 1413.

[27] Labour won 315 seats, Conservative 298 seats, Liberal 9 seats.

[28] Ibid., Vol. CDLXVI, p. 2011.

[29] Ibid., pp. 2048-2049.

One of the arguments constantly put forward by those who sought to make the tripartite system work was that when the material conditions of the three types of schools reached par, parity of esteem would be an inevitable consequence.

Morley sought to debunk this idea, believing that the esteem would always follow a vertical, rather than a horizontal pattern. For him the interpretation of the 1944 Act phrase "according to their ages, aptitudes and abilities" was the comprehensive school, of a neighborhood type and streamed into classes with varying curriculae. He argued that such a school would solve all questions of prestige, promote solidarity and that intellectuals and non-intellectuals would socialize as equals.[30]

One of his colleagues, Florence Paton (Rushcliffe, Soc.) saw the tripartite system as the means of perpetuating the class system and believed all class distinctions would be eliminated with a comprehensive system.[31]

The number of Labour members speaking out in favor of the grammar schools was growing increasingly rare and the voice of Mr. Corlett (York, Soc.)[32] raised in defense of grammar school freedom was in this particular debate a lone one.

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[30] Ibid.

[31] Ibid., pp. 2057-2058.

[32] Ibid., p. 2019.

Most of the dispute was clearly between the Socialist Minister pursuing a policy of developing the tripartite system, hopefully believing that "parity of esteem" would slowly emerge, yet at the same time encouraging experimentation and an increasing and vociferous number of Labour members who wanted no part in the tripartite system and saw comprehensive secondary education as a solution or even a panacea.

The Tory speakers in this area of education were few. They largely appear to have taken the view that things should be left alone and that a gradual expansion of grammar and technical opportunities, together with the new curriculum chances in the modern school would bring about, although slowly, the aims of the 1944 Act.

Kenneth Lindsay (Combined English Universities, Con.) rather summed up this view in saying:

> Do not let us disturb the quality of standards where they exist, but let us try to level up all along the line. It is for this reason that I want the Ministry and local education authorities to encourage every possible experiment, and not to clamp down any more regulations than are absolutely necessary. I call a director of education a good director if I see that every school in his district is different.[33]

Conservatives had throughout this parliament refrained from attacking comprehensive school experiments but Mr. Linstead (Putney, Con.) in responding to the views of Florence Paton, denied that the prime function of a

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[33] Ibid., p. 2011.

school was to eliminate the class sytem and challenged the Minister on his intentions to approve 27 large comprehensive schools in London.

His argument, and one which was to be taken up increasingly in the next parliament, was that a 2,000 pupil school was too large for a child to feel that he belongs to a unit and impossible for a headmaster to impress his personality.[34]

Quite early in the new parliament (June, 1950) the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Education, Mr. Hardman, took the opportunity of reviewing what in this view was the progress of the past five years and outlining government policy for the future.

He presented a view of continual improvement, despite great difficulties. He confessed that the changes of the 1944 Act in relation to secondary education has caused much heart-searching and reorientation of ideas. In defending the secondary modern schools he quoted from the inspectorial report[35] which praised the standards and methods of the secondary modern School.

The Parliamentary Secretary sent on to say that although the grammar schools were least affected by change ". . . there can be no question that their prestige based

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[34] Ibid., p. 2065.

[35] Ministry of Education Report 1949.

on a fine tradition of sound learning, is as high as ever."[36]

Miss Bacon (Leeds N.E., Soc.) although a supporter of comprehensive education did not like such schools to contain more than 1,000 pupils and chided the Minister for turning down proposals for smaller comprehensive schools.[37]

One of the strongest educational reasons for insisting on comprehensive units of over a 1,000 was based on the need for a large intake to produce a sixth form of sufficient size to warrant the highly specialized staff required at this level.

In his speech winding-up the debate the Minister stuck to his position arguing that the potential of the modern school was still to come and not until the leaving age was raised to 16 could equality between the schools be a reality. In the meantime the modern school had a humanizing influence.

He defended Ministry decisions on the approval of plans for comprehensive education and reassuring his critics that he stood for experimentation and as evidence of this pointed to Middlesox, where he had recently given permission for three comprehensive schools, each containing less than 1,000 pupils.[38]

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[36] Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. CDLXXVII, pp. 1872-1873.

[37] Ibid., pp. 1888-1889.

[38] Ibid., pp. 1972-1973.

James Johnson (Rugby, Soc.) moving an Adjournment Debate reverted to the dispute over the desirability or otherwise of large comprehensive schools. He was undaunted by size arguing that Eton, the great Public School, contained "getting on to 1,400 scholars."[39]

The Conservatives did not accept this idea or the argument. Ian Harvey (Harrow, Con.) rejected Eton as a valid comparison because of its residential nature.[40] Miss Florence Horsbrugh (Manchester Moss Side, Con.) was opposed to the over-large school and what she described as "mass factory arrangements."[41] She conceded that experiments had to be made but urged the Minister to see that such experiments should not be on a large scale.

She was like most of her party for allowing the tripartite scheme time to develop. "We have the tripartite scheme. Cannot we try that out and see whether it succeeds?"[42]

During the period since the passing of the 1944 Act the principal disagreement over secondary education policy was not between the two major parties, but within the Labour parliamentary party itself. At what was to prove the very end of the Parliament, Mr. Hardman, the

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[39] Ibid., Vol. CDLXXVIII, pp. 646-649.

[40] Ibid., Vol. CDXCI, p. 249.

[41] Ibid., p. 219.

[42] Ibid., p. 227.

Parliamentary Secretary, was still praising the grammar schools and going as far as to say "we tamper with them at our peril."[43]

At the same time, he claimed that the secondary modern schools had built up ". . . an extraordinary strong esprit de corps, and they would hastily resent being swallowed up in some new pattern of education."[44]

To those who sought a new direction in government education policy these words would find little favor, but the Conservative opposition were unlikely to object to the belief that:

> The Government will never say that uniformity in educational provision is either necessary or remotely desirable in this country.[45]

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[43] Ibid., p. 240.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., p. 241.

CHAPTER IV

PARTY EDUCATIONAL POLICY, 1951

During the campaign, for the 1951 election, education was not a major issue. In their election addresses[1] only 29 per cent of the Socialists and 30 per cent of the Tories mentioned education. This compares with the relative importance given to other subjects. Education ranked fourteenth in the Labour issues and nineteenth in the Tory issues.

TABLE 1.--Table Indicating Some of the Comparative Issues of the Campaign.[2]

	Socialists	Tories
Food	64 per cent	34 per cent
Employment	74 per cent	69 per cent
Housing	54 per cent	86 per cent

[1]An election address is a general leaflet forming an important part of election material.

[2]Adopted from D. E. Butler, The British General Election of 1951 (London: Macmillan).

The Conservative Campaign Guide[3] promised that if elected the Conservatives would bring into operation all the reforms set out in the 1944 Act. It particularly mentioned the following points:

a) Reduction in the size of classes.

b) Elimination of all-age schools.

c) An increase and enhancement of technical education.

d) Simpler school designs.

e) Increased rewards for teaching and a raising of teacher standards.

f) Greater planning for school building.

The Guide[4] referred to the Labour Government's economy proposals of October 1949 when Sir Stafford Cripps, the then Chancellor, reduced the Exchequer grant to education. They listed cuts and pointed out the need for economy, particularly in the cost of new school buildings. The Guide pointed out that the Conservative Party had for a long period opposed the extravagant standards of the Labour Government.[5] It also pointed out the delays in the Socialist building programme and mentioned the particular problems of the new housing estates. It pointed to the difficulties that existed:

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[3]Conservative Central Office, The Campaign Guide (London: 1951), p. 241.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Ibid., pp. 242-243.

> Although the number of actual places required will probably be found, it is obvious that, for a number of years, there will still be far too many over-sized classes and obsolete schools in existence. Moreover, outside halls have had to be hired and school dining halls used for teaching.[6]

The Guide anticipated future overcrowding in secondary schools and noted that the needs of the primary and secondary schools would prevent the compulsory setting up of Country Colleges for some years.[7] The party stated its aim to bring down the cost of pupil place in schools. In regard to teachers' salaries, the Conservatives maintained that they wished to retain the present negotiating machinery of Burnham[8] and that the party "has always shown sympathy for the claims of teachers."[9]

External examinations and the regulation of February 1949 restricting the age of entry to 16 met with clear Tory opposition. They had, at the introduction of the regulation, opposed it on the grounds that the new age limit would dislocate sixth form work in the Grammar schools and keep back the more intelligent child. The Guide affirmed that the party retained this view.[10]

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[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Burnham is the name of the negotiating panel on teacher salaries.

[9] The Campaign Guide, op. cit.

[10] Ibid., p. 248.

In the Conservative election manifesto Britain Strong and Free[11] much of the passage devoted to education was devoted to recognizing the advances of the 1944 Act, but warning that efforts must be made to avoid a breakdown. In view of the serious financial position, it suggested that there must be a review of the cost of education in connection with local government finance. It stated that a system of priorities would have to be evolved, concentrating the principal effort on primary schools.

The statement referred briefly to the need for simplified building; safeguards for the Independent Grammar schools. The policy in regard to the vexing questions of the comprehensive school and the restricting age on the General Education Certificate was stated very briefly:

> We dispute the value of the over-large comprehensive school. We shall review the certificate regulation which holds back the talented pupil.[12]

The Labour Party were not very vociferous in relation to education. The Labour Party Manifesto[13] allowed the subject only a single paragraph; viz.

> Labour will press forward towards greater social equality and the establishment of equal opportunities for all. We shall extend our policy of giving all young people equal opportunities in education. We shall encourage a spirit of hope and adventure in the young.[14]

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[11] Conservative Central Office, Britain Strong and Free (London: 1951), p. 13.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Labour Party Manifesto (London: Transport House, 1951).

[14] Ibid.

This policy statement, standing alone, was extremely difficult to interpret and presents a philosophy without presenting specific detail.

In June 1951, the Labour Party published a pamphlet entitled A Policy for Secondary Education[15] which was not widely circulated but designed for the information and guidance of the Labour Movement. It advocated the abolition of the Public School System by "a gradual process of attrition."[16]

The 1950 Labour Party Conference at Margate passed a resolution calling upon the Government to implement the Labour Party's declared policy of the comprehensive school in education.

The Labour Party had attacked the tripartite system of education on the grounds that this amounts to "class segregation" and proposed to substitute comprehensive schools to take all the children of secondary age in their areas ". . . irrespective of class or wealth or of their varying aptitudes and levels of intelligence."[17]

Two small untitled leaflets also appeared in 1949 and early in 1950 urging a comprehensive system.

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[15]Labour Party, Transport House, A Policy for Secondary Education (London: Co-operative Press, June, 1951).

[16]Ibid.

[17]Ibid.

The Liberal Party, who were contesting 109 seats, made no mention of education in their manifesto.[18]

The Times Educational Supplement[19] in a round-up of constituency opinions on education expressed the view that education, as usual, was taking a back seat in the campaign. One of the main topics was concerning educational expenditure and whether it could be maintained. Mr. Henry Brooke (Hampstead, Con.), was quoted as saying that a fair proportion of money spent on social services was available for education. He believed that the chief priority was to ensure school places were available for every child. If cuts were necessary they should with regret fall on Adult Education and would, he though, affect the building of County Colleges. Henry Brooke,[20] an extremely influential member of his party, spoke in favor of increased inducements to highly qualified sixth form teachers and said that he had always been in favor of equal pay for teachers.

The two Members for Southampton had a particular interest in education. Mr. Morley (Itchen) and Dr. King (Test), both Socialists, wanted a Comprehensive School System but disagreed as to the treatment and future of the

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[18]Liberal Party, London, The Nations Task (London: Liberal Publication Department, 1951).

[19]"Election in the Constituencies," The Times Educational Supplement (London, October 12, 1951), Vol. 1902, p. 794.

[20]Became Minister of Housing and Local Government in 1957.

public schools. Dr. King would take steps to restore these to the people by introducing into them a considerable proportion of poorer children "not just a few guinea pigs."[21] His colleague, Mr. Morley, doubted the feasibility of an integration of public and state education and believed that the public schools would disappear and be replaced by State boarding schools, selection for which would be made with reference to the wishes of the child's parents and the conditions of the home.

Mr. Morley wanted a drive against large classes and a recruitment of many more teachers. He would do this by making the profession more attractive and encouraging more pupils to do sixth form work in Grammar Schools, thus increasing the potential recruiting group.

Mr. Donald Wade, the Liberal Member for Huddersfield West, presented his party's view that cuts should first come in the Health Service Administration rather than education, but that if economies were necessary in education they should be made on school amenities like gymnasiums and playing fields. Priority, he felt, should still be given to reducing the size of classes and increasing the number of teachers. He was suspicious of multilateral schools believing that they would lead to too much

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[21]"Election in the Constituencies," op. cit.

uniformity. He wanted variety in schools and the retention of the Independent schools.[22]

Commander Maitland (Horncastle, Con.), a former chairman of the Conservative Party's sub-committee on education stressed in an interview the need for an inquiry, possibly a Royal Commission, into the whole process of financing the educational service. In his view, there were defects in the General Certificate of Education which promoted quality for equality's sake. He felt that Britain must be prepared to spend heavily on a service which had the future economy of the country in its hands.[23]

C. J. Alport (Colchester, Con.) stated that education, after housing, must take priority in the social services. A number of Tories expressed their disagreement with the General Certificate of Education age limit and the Comprehensive Schools.[24]

The National Association of Labour Teachers[25] issued a circular[26] which laid stress on bringing the public schools into the state system, comprehensive schools and an improvement in accommodation standards.

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[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Thirty-four of whom were contesting seats.

[26] Out-of-print, no detail available.

The Times Educational Supplement opinion column felt that there was little difference in the educational policies of the major parties:

> . . . There is, too, a fairly general admission on both sides of the importance of the primary school and the need to find more teachers to reduce the size of its classes.
>
> While happily there is no great clash of educational principles between the parties, it would be wrong to assume that a change in power would bring no changes at all in education. Possibly a Labour Government, observing the confusion and fruitless extra work caused by the age-limit in the new examination might eventually strike out the regulation. This however, is kindly speculation; it is far more likely that the age-limit owed chiefly to egalitarian impulses would be retained by Labour. Everything said by the Conservatives suggests that they would remove it at once.[27]

About the crucial question of Comprehensive schools, The Times[28] pointed out that they had for long been voted as official policy at the Labour Party Conference but lacked supporters among the Conservatives. It believed, however, that local control by Education Authorities would have a greater effect than the policy of the national government.

Interestingly enough, The Times article presented the view that although the party were enthusiastic

> . . . it is extremely doubtful whether Mr. Tomlinson ever once lifted a hand to extend them. Whatever the result of the General Election, it is hoped that the small but intelligent body of opinion inside the Labour Party, which has begun

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[27] The Times Educational Supplement (London), October 19, 1951, Vol. 1903, p. 815. Leader Article "Party Policies."

[28] Ibid.

> to criticise sharply the whole Comprehensive idea, will gain increasing influence.[29]

The Times writer saw in the Conservative promise of 300,000 homes a year a threat to education, believing that the figure could only be attained at the expense of the school building programme.

The Times,[30] the most informed and widely representative of British educational journals, was seemingly inclined toward Conservative rather than Labour policy. Nevertheless it did indicate the apparent lack of major conflict on educational issues and at the same time indicated the differences where they did exist.

The result of the election was to return a Conservative majority. The Tories took 321 seats, Labour 295, and the Liberals 6. The Conservatives thus had a majority of 17 in a House of 625, and this small majority would obviously limit their policies. The Opposition were extremely strong and had actually polled more votes than the Tories.

The grave economic crises facing the Nation was to overshadow all else and many of the policies, even those advocated by both sides, would have to be modified until the immediate crisis had passed.

The new government was pledged to spend more economically and gain greater value for the money spent on

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[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

Education. Nevertheless, it had given assurances that the essential framework of education would not be endangered, and its task of securing economies without impairing essentials was apparently going to provide difficulties that would be carefully watched by a vigilant opposition.

The Labour Party were no longer in a position to institute legislation and policy but as an opposition they would certainly attempt to accelerate any of the Tory proposals with which they were in agreement and would attempt to prevent any government action with which they disagreed.

The Conservative Party as shown earlier in this chapter, had, at the election, presented a definite education policy which they were now in a position to implement. The Socialists had refrained from presenting a detailed policy but were generally committed to continuing their policy of 1945-1951; as an opposition their function and powers would be considerably changed, and although their philosophy would remain the same, their policies would largely be reactions to the implementation of Government policy.

The New Parliament

The First Session of the Fortieth Parliament of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland opened on October 31, 1951.

In forming his Cabinet Mr. Churchill, the Prime Minister, excluded the Minister of Education and this

exclusion stimulated much Socialist criticism. The new Minister of Education was Miss Florence Horsbrugh (Manchester, Moss Side) and her Parliamentary Secretary was Mr. Kenneth Pickthorn (Nottingham Central).

Miss Horsbrugh was born in Scotland and educated at private and finishing schools. She had for some years been a party spokesman in education and had first entered Parliament in 1931. The Secretary was a product of a Public school and earned a Litt. D. at Cambridge. He was an eminent historian and entered the Commons in 1935.[31]

In the King's speech opening Parliament no reference was made to education, but during the Debate on this Address, Dr. Horace King (Southampton Test, Soc.) introduced education into his speech. Although not the official spokesman of the Opposition, he was an important voice on educational matters. In the first salvo of opposition he said,

> Some day education will be lifted out of party politics, but we are a long way from that yet, in a country in which it is still considered a mark of respect not to send ones children to a state school.[32]

The favorable and privileged position of the Public or Independent school provided a regular contentious point, while the bad condition of school buildings was the concern of all Members.

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[31] Who's Who (London: A. and C. Black, 1962), p. 1485 and p. 2408.

[32] Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), Vol. CDXCIII, p. 89.

Dr. King anticipated the possibility of some cuts in education. This subject was to become one of the major fronts on which the Opposition were to mount their attack.

The exclusion of the Minister of Education from the Cabinet was a surprise. The growing importance of the Ministry was widely recognized and in normal times a place in the Cabinet was usual.

Early in the Debate, Winston Churchill, in his first speech as a peacetime Premier, quickly pointed to the severe difficulties that faced the Nation. He spoke of the hard task that lay before His Majesty's Government and the grave responsibilities weighing upon the new Parliament:

> We must all be conscious of the realities of our position. Fifty millions of people are now crowded in our small island which produces food for only three-fifths of them, and has to earn the rest from over the seas by exporting manufactures for which we must first also import the raw material. No community of such a size, and standing at so high a level of civilisation, has ever been economically, so precariously poised. An even larger and more formidable world is growing up around us. Very soon severe competition from Germany and Japan must be expected in our export markets. The problem of earning our independent livelihood stares us in the face. All our united strength will be needed to maintain our standards at home and our rank among the nations.[33]

Churchill went on to list the dire problems: the overseas payments were showing a wide deficit, confidence in sterling was impaired, the nation was buying goods and materials for which it could not pay, coal stores were

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[33] Ibid., pp. 67-80.

precariously low, and food supplies were insufficient (the meat ration was reduced to one shilling and fivepence worth per week--even lower than wartime).[34]

The theme of the Premier's speech was that it was time for Britain to set her house in order. This broad policy statement, coming at the beginning of the session, indicated that the Government intended to economize and attempt to introduce greater efficiency in all departments of government. Education was likely to receive its share of economy and change. The economic state of the Nation was an overriding factor in government policy in regard to social services, and Churchill's statement contained great significance in regard to developments in educational policy.

The Opposition and many educational groups in the country were most concerned by the exclusion of the Minister of Education from the Cabinet. Many who doubted the Government's sincerity in regard to education saw in the move an attempt to lower the status of education by a government unsympathetic to the state system of education.

The Prime Minister attempted to reassure educators and silence his critics when he told the House:

> Then there is the question of whether the Minister of Education ought not to have a seat in the Cabinet. There is a great importance in keeping the Cabinet small and the fact that some Ministers holding important offices are not in the Cabinet does not deny them access. Any head of a great department has only to ask the Prime

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[34] Ibid.

> Minister for him to be given every opportunity of presenting the case of the Department.
>
> Quite apart from this the Minister of Education would always be summoned when anything directly or indirectly affecting education and its many concomitants were under discussion.[35]

This explanation was, however, not sufficient to silence the Opposition. However genuine the Premier's motives, his decision appeared to some as a snub to education and would do little to allay the fears of many that the Conservatives had no great regard for public education. The Socialists resented the move and seemed determined to bring pressure on the Premier to reverse his decision.

In the Debate on the King's Address the Opposition opened their attack. Mr. Michael Stewart (Fulham, Soc.) pointed out that this was the first time a Minister of Education had held non-cabinet status in peacetime since 1931. He charged that, "There are, I am afraid, too many people in the party opposite who regard education as merely a sort of frill which can be cut off in time of emergency."[36]

Mr. George Thomas (Cardiff West, Soc.) alleged that "The National Union of Teachers is disturbed. It is anxious at the way in which the high office of Minister of Education has been denigrated as the first contribution of the Conservative Government."[37]

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[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., p. 388.

[37] Ibid., pp. 143-144.

During the first months of the new government Socialists put down (i.e., submitted) a number of questions calling for the admittance of the Minister of Education to the Cabinet. Mr. Stephen Swingler (Newcastle-under-Lyme, Soc.), a constant critic of the Government, raised the matter, in February 1952, in an adjournment debate[38] and other Members continued to raise the question until the Minister was promoted to Cabinet rank in November 1953. The Socialists claimed that their vigilance and persistance had achieved the intended result. It had some effect, but it was difficult to evaluate the importance of other factors such as the improving economic conditions and Government experience that demonstrated the need for a Minister of Education inside the Cabinet.

[38] Ibid., Vol. CDXCVI, pp. 1550-1582.

CHAPTER V

SECONDARY EDUCATION

The 1944 Education Act had provided for universal secondary education. As can be seen, this was largely interpreted as a tripartite system. At the age of eleven, an examination which had become known as the "Eleven-Plus," was taken by all children and, together with other data, the results of this examination formed the basis of deciding what type of secondary education they were to receive. There were, of course, facilities for transfer.

The Conservatives favored a system which provided a great variety of schools. The 1944 Act had stated that the Local Education Authorities must provide schools,

> sufficient in numbers character and equipment to afford for all pupils opportunities of education offering such variety of instruction and training as may be desirable, in view of their different ages, abilities and aptitudes, and of the different periods for which they may be expected to remain at school.[1]

In fact, three main types of secondary schools were provided. These types were: (1) Secondary Grammar

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[1]Great Britain. Education Act, 1944, George VI (1944).

Schools, which were academic and produced recruits for the universities and professions; (2) Secondary Technical Schools, which provide various courses with a strong technical and scientific base. These are often geared to meet the demands of a local area; and (3) Secondary Modern Schools, which are the only non-selective type school and provide a general type education with a very wide range.

The issue received no attention in the Campaign Guide,[2] except a mere mention of Conservative opposition to the Socialist restriction on examination entrance. In the election manifesto Britain Strong and Free they promised safeguards for Independent and Grammar Schools: "We dispute the value of the over-large Comprehensive School. We shall review the certificate regulation which holds back the talented pupil."[3]

The Labour Party in their manifesto make the promise that:

> Labour will press forward towards greater social equality and the establishment of equal opportunities for all. We shall extend our policy of giving all young people equal opportunities in education. We shall encourage a spirit of hope in the young.[4]

This vague statement of philosophy would hardly indicate any direct policy, but in view of previous Socialist policy, it would seem to indicate a policy of

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[2] The Campaign Guide, op. cit., p. 248.

[3] Britain Strong and Free, op. cit., p. 13.

[4] The Labour Party Manifesto, op. cit.

comprehensive schools, but this direct description is, for some reason, avoided. The pamphlet, A Policy for Secondary Education[5] had called the existing system, "class segregation" and had openly advocated the Comprehensive School. Their 1950 Conference at Margate had followed the pattern of previous years. Here they voted in favor of a comprehensive system. Although the Comprehensive School was not advocated loudly in the national policy campaign, many Socialists, in their individual campaigns came out as strong advocates of the Comprehensive system.

The only Liberal view available on the subject came from Donald Wade, who was suspicious of multilateral schools. He believed that they would lead to too much uniformity. He wanted a variety of schools.[6]

The Conservative view was quite clear. Many candidates followed the view of C. J. Alport (Colchester) who disagreed with the General Certificate of Education age limit and Comprehensive Schools.[7]

The National Association of Labour Teachers, who had a large Commons representation, laid great stress on the Comprehensive School. Although this was the generally accepted policy, the Times Educational Supplement[8] felt

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[5] A Policy for Secondary Education, op. cit.

[6] "Election in the Constituencies," op. cit.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid.

there was a group inside the party who were not in favor of the comprehensive idea.

The Tory party was, itself, in some way divided over the Comprehensive school. Some believed that they should not be tolerated under any condition, but, the majority, while seeking to preserve the tried and trusted Grammar School, felt that there was room for limited experimentation with Comprehensive Schools.

There was no mention of the subject in the King's Speech, nor in the Address although Michael Stewart did seem to reiterate Socialist policy when he said

> It is the imperative need on the part of the nation to see that where there is a natural talent it shall receive the training and education which is necessary in order to make it as serviceable to the community as possible.[9]

This view, of course, differed in no real way from Conservative policy. It would be the interpretation of such a statement that would provide the conflict.

The early days of the new Parliament were devoted, in regard to education, to the Governmental economies. Only an occasional question referred to the field of secondary education. J. Johnson (Rugby, Soc.) showed concern that cuts would affect the Comprehensive Schools, and John Crowder (Finchley, Con.) and Somerville-Hastings (Barking, Soc.) disagreed over a lower age limit for the General Certificate of Education.[10]

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[9] Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. CDXCIII, p. 388.

[10] Ibid., Vol. CDXCIV, p. 547.

In January 1952, in reply to further demands for a reduction in the General Certificate of Education[11] age limit, Miss Horsbrugh announced that she did not propose, at that time, to institute any change.[12] This was out of step with Conservative policy and promises and met with the disapproval of many Tory Members. Despite the decision, they continued to press for revision.

On April 24 the Ministry announced that Ministerial experts had advised that, although the age limit was to be retained, headmasters were to be allowed to exercise their discretion in regard to individual pupils. They could enter candidates below the stipulated age, providing they could provide a satisfactory educational reason. This compromise seemed to settle the matter. Both sides appeared to be satisfied with the decision.[13]

Mr. Sparks (Acton, Soc.) questioned the Minister on her department's decision to close Hornsey Grammar School and re-open it as a Secondary Modern. The Minister gave as her reason the school's failure to attract sufficient numbers of pupils who would benefit from this type of education.[14] The significance of this exchange was that the Tory party, the champions of the Grammar Schools,

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[11]The General Certificate of Education is an external examination essential for university entrance.

[12]Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. CDXCV, p. 58.

[13]Great Britain, Examinations in Secondary Schools, London, H.M.S.O., 1952.

[14]Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. CDXCVI, p. 59.

were closing a Grammar School for educational reasons and forming a Secondary Modern and not a Comprehensive High School.

During the Censure Debate of March 25, 1952, Mr. Chuter Ede (Soc.) spoke of the need for more Secondary Modern Schools and aids to increase its status. About the Grammar School he said: "I think that the supply of Grammar School places in proportion to the population as a whole is probably now about right, if not a little too high."[15]

Coming in the Opposition's major speech of the debate, from the most distinguished Opposition spokesman on Education, this was a surprise. Ede saw the need for limitation. There would seem to be some evidence to suggest that the official spokesman of his party did not fully approve of his party's educational policies. What Ede failed to say, held perhaps more significance than in his words.

In an answer to Oldfield it was shown that Ede's view, that is, that possibly too many were attending grammar schools, could probably be justified in that the percentage of Grammar School pupils at 13 had between 1938 and 1951 increased from 14.0 to 21.0 per cent.[16] This, however, was the figure for the entire country. There were great differences from place to place.

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[15] Ibid., Vol. CDXCVIII, pp. 215-227.

[16] Ibid., Vol. CDXCIX, p. 117.

The Tory policy, in practice, seemed to indicate that the Comprehensive School was suffering little under the new government. In November 1952 the Minister, answering Swingler, stated that nine new Comprehensive Schools were under construction and the Government had not turned down any local request for such a school.[17]

One of the problems facing the Government was to provide a variety of secondary education in every area, of which a reasonable amount would be in the form of Grammar Schools. An answer to Swingler, in October 1953, showed that although the percentage of Grammar School places for England was 19.2 per cent, it varied considerably from place to place. Stoke had 10.8 per cent, while the adjourning town of Newcastle-under-Lyme had 35.8 per cent. A later figure showed that Gateshead provided a Grammar School place for only 9.0 per cent of its children, but Merioneth provided a place for 69.0 per cent.[18]

Another answer to Swingler, on March 26, 1953, revealed that 13 (seven Welsh) local education authorities provided over 50.0 per cent of their pupils with Grammar places while rather more had less than 20.0 per cent.[19] This variation from place to place was unsatisfactory. Most members were not satisfied with the situation. In

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[17] Ibid., Vol. DVII, p. 125.

[18] Ibid., Vol. DXVIII, p. 151.

[19] Ibid., Vol. DXXV, p. 151.

the Civil Estimates Debate,[20] April 27, 1954, Morley expressed Opposition displeasure with the prevailing differences and called for a leveling out as soon as possible.[21]

In the same debate, Raymond Gower (Barry) expressed one Conservative view when he spoke of "that monstrosity, the Comprehensive School."[22] In contrast a number of Members from the Socialist side were calling for additional Comprehensive Schools.

Throughout the period there had been some little Socialist questioning and comment favoring the Comprehensive system, but not until June 1954 did the first real storm break.

The London Education Authority, which was Socialist controlled, had decided to establish a large Comprehensive High School. In order to provide the academic groups, they had attempted to close an established Grammar School. This move had been halted by the Minister.

On June 4, 1954, Christopher Mayhew (Woolwich, Soc.) raised the matter, arguing the advantages of a Comprehensive School. He also charged that the Minister, in refusing to sanction the Eltham Hill transfer, was

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[20]The civil Estimates are for the financing of government financed enterprises of a non-military nature of which education is one.

[21]Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. DXXVI, pp. 1461-1474.

[22]Ibid., Vol. DXVIII, pp. 1522-1527.

depriving the Comprehensive School of its academic streams, and went on to suggest that the Minister had partisan reasons for her decision.[23]

Mr. Steward (Woolwich) presented the Conservative view, stating that for 27 years Eltham Hill had maintained a high standard and its buildings had exceptional facilities for the type of education it provided. He argued that the pupils were to be educated in accordance with their parents' wishes. He claimed that the protest against the closure was not political. The counter protest, he said, certainly was. Petition forms were issued by the local secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union.[24]

The London County Council, he claimed, had been checked in their desire to extend the Comprehensive at the expense of the Grammar School and they were quite willing to spoil a first class set-up to bolster a Comprehensive idea, which was only experimental:

> It has yet to be proved that herding together 2000 children at a time will advance the standard of education.

Conservative members were, he said, against mass-production education but

> nevertheless await with interest and with as open minds as possible the results of the comprehensive school experiment when in order to make sure that

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[23] Ibid., Vol. DXXVIII, pp. 1599-1606.

[24] Ibid., pp. 1607-1610.

> it is a success it is necessary to close down schools and transfer teachers and pupils to the new education factory.[25]

Dr. King claimed that:

> Elected members of the London County Council believe that it is wrong that three types of secondary education should be fixed in London merely because one happened to exist--Grammar Schools, one was beginning to emerge--Technical Schools and one had to be invented in 1946, Modern Schools, because up to that time we had made no provision for secondary education for 5,000,000 out of the 6,000,000.[26]

He maintained that it was wrong to divide children at 11 and claimed that the "selection examination is a nightmare even in the minds of hundreds of thousands of sensitive, keen and ambitious children."[27] He believed that late developers had opportunities to emerge under the Comprehensive School system, and what was good for the Public Schools was good for the London County Council. King thought that the Comprehensive School would provide a sense of belonging to a single community and lead to a classless society. To his mind, the Minister had misused her powers.[28]

Mr. H. A. Price (Lewisham West, Con.) claimed that education was now a political issue and quoted the Socialist pamphlet, Challenge to Britain,[29] which proposed to

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[25] Ibid.

[26] Ibid., pp. 1610-1619.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Labour Party Transport House, Challenge to Britain (London: Co-operative Press, 1951).

abolish all Grammar Schools and make all secondary schools Comprehensive, despite the fact that only 6 out of 146 local education authorities had decided in favor of comprehensive education. He accused the London County Council of acting against public and education opinion in proposing to set up 67 Comprehensive Schools. They were, he suggested, not considering the parents but were only concerned with their own idealogical conception of education. He was not against giving the Comprehensive School a trial, but was entirely opposed to an irrevocable change-over to the idea.[30]

Henry Brooke, a member of the London County Council, pointed out that Section I of the 1944 Education Act stated that

> It is the duty of the Minister of Education to promote the education of the people of England and Wales and the progressive development of institutions devoted to that purpose.[31]

The Minister, he claimed, was being criticized for refusing to close such an institution. The fear of Eltham Hill going Comprehensive caused the number of parents of primary school girls selecting the school to drop by 70.0 per cent, compared with 1953.[32]

The Minister, explaining Government policy toward this particular school, pointed out that the Minister must

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[30] Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. DXXVIII, pp. 1620-1624.

[31] Ibid., p. 1629.

[32] Ibid.

look carefully at proposals to close schools and make a judgement whether it is desirable from the point of view of the education of the children. In her view the advantages outweighed the disadvantages for retaining Eltham Hill:

> I will not approve a plan in which there are only comprehensive schools. If the parents and teachers had held different views the positon would have been different but Kidbrooke was no different, than ten other Comprehensive Schools in that in their foundation no Grammar School was closed.[33]

From this debate it was obvious that there existed a firm cleavage between the two major parties on the comprehensive issue. The Government was not entirely opposed to their foundation, but very much against the closure of long established and proven Grammar schools.

In the Education Supply Debate of July 26, 1954, Alice Bacon, speaking on the building problems, thought that unless there was an expansion of Grammar school building the result of the population bulge would lower the grammar school percentage.[34] The Labour Party was, of course, against the building of Grammar Schools. In view of their opposition role, their argument was obviously valid.

Generally speaking, the major problem in this area was not the number of Grammar Schools, but rather their

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[33] Ibid., pp. 1633-1639.

[34] Ibid., Vol. CXXXI, pp. 48-59.

distribution. Ede, Miss Bacon's co-spokesman on education, had in an earlier debate presented this view.

Bacon went on to state the view of the Socialists, which coincided entirely with the recent party publication, Challenge to Britain.[35]

> Surely this is the time to consider the whole question of secondary education in this country. We on this side of this House are quite honest about it. We believe that it is a wrong principle to select children at the age of eleven for different types of schools. We say quite honestly that we believe in the Comprehensive School, which is, after all merely a secondary school to which all children in a district go, and where they find their special bent and follow it as long as they and their parents wish.[36]

This explanation of the Comprehensive School seemed to be an oversimplification, but clearly indicated the Socialist attempt to put forward an acceptable image of the system they advocated. Bacon charged the Minister with not wanting the Comprehensive to succeed, as it was against the philosophy of the Tory party to give everybody a fair chance. She backed her argument by claiming that: "The schools of Harrow and Eton are really comprehensive."[37]

Henry Brooke who followed Bacon in the debate presented the view of a very influential Tory:

> My own belief is that to 1939 we tended to concentrate too large a proportion of our efforts as secondary grammar schools and that one of the great problems which needed to be tackled after

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[35] Challenge to Britain, op. cit.

[36] Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. DXXXI, pp. 48-59.

[37] Ibid.

> the 1944 Act was to give full educational opportunities to those boys and girls who were not Grammar School type.[38]

Brooke spoke of the need for experiment and attacked the Socialist policy for seeking to restrict all secondary education to the comprehensive type:

> We on this side think that, before the comprehensive school had been tired out, it is educationally wrong to say that by no other possible way whatever can the pattern of providing good secondary education for the non-bookish children be solved.[39]

In most debates and discussions on secondary education, the Secondary Modern was often forgotten but Brooke gave praise to the first-rate education being provided in many of these new schools.

The Conservative opposition to Socialist policy seems to be clearly indicated by Brooke when he said:

> I shall be intensely interested in the Comprehensive School experiment. There appear to be a number of questions quite unanswered as yet by its advocates. Kidbrooke and other schools may provide the answers. My sole objection is to the attitude of the party opposite, as a party, in saying at this stage, before we know the answers to those questions, that the answers are bound to come out right and therefore we can put all our eggs in one basket.[40]

Brooke saw that the Comprehensive School was a strong alternative to the Eleven-plus, which was admitted to be imperfect. Brooke, however, disputed with those who attacked the Eleven-plus out of hand. He believed

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[38] Ibid., p. 66.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Ibid., p. 69.

that while there was a variety of school, there would be competition.[41]

Miss Freda Corbett (Peckham, Soc.) argued that, "in the London area a demand is coming from parents for the comprehensive type of education." She attacked the Grammar Schools as being places where children were segregated strictly according to their brain-power. She said that she deplored this and argued that this was not so prior to 1944 when "average and below average children helped to make the Grammar Schools into normal, Comprehensive schools."[42] This final statement is inaccurate in that entrance was limited to a small group and an examination was required.

A Tory, Mr. David Renton (Huntingdon), was against the creation of any Comprehensive schools that involved the closure of Grammar Schools. At the same time, he said, he thought that it was time to think, once more, about the Eleven-plus.[43]

Mr. W. G. Cove (Aberavon, Soc.) claimed that the Comprehensive School was the only medium by which "the lower and middle classes can get the normal child educated beyond fifteen."[44] This was, in fact, very true. One of the difficulties of the Government and one of the main

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[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid., pp. 70-75.

[43] Ibid., pp. 92-98.

[44] Ibid., pp. 98-100.

omissions in the policies of the two parties was provision for the normal or less able child after the age of 15. The 1944 Act had allowed for this group with the suggested provision of County Colleges and special extended courses in Secondary Modern and other schools. The serious need in other quarters had prevented the implementation of this very important part of the Act. This is not to say that some progress had not been achieved, but that the pace of this had been slow compared with advances in other areas of education.

Mr. Anthony Hurd (Newbury, Con.) declared an open mind toward Comprehensive schools. He wanted to see them prove their value, as the longer established schools had.[45] Morley pointed out that 21 per cent of all children were receiving Grammar School education, but that in 1960, 52,000 extra places would be required to maintain the existing percentage. His answer to the problem was more Comprehensive Schools.[46]

Hollis disagreed with Opposition policy on the Comprehensive School. He quoted the late George Tomlinson as once saying: "Duller children are liable to discouragement in every kind of school where they are in company with those who are much more able."[47]

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[45] Ibid., pp. 100-102.

[46] Ibid., pp. 114-120.

[47] Ibid., pp. 123-132.

Mr. F. Mulley (Sheffield, Park. Soc.) wanted the Comprehensive School installed and the Eleven-plus abolished. He advocated replacing it with "proper keeping of primary school records for the records and reports of headmasters and headmistresses to be taken into account."[48] He admitted that it was necessary, even in Comprehensive Schools, to have objective testing.

Chuter Ede, speaking in the same debate, although disapproving of the Minister's part over Kidbrooke School, very noticably was the only Opposition speaker who failed to sing the praises of the Comprehensive system.[49]

The Minister, in defending her policy, stated that she was not entirely against Comprehensive Schools, for of the 21 in existence, 18 had been approved during her Ministry, and that she had approved plans for a further 10. Her reason for refusing a new one at Bec was that it included the closure of an established Grammar School.[50]

During the Christmas Recess the Ministerial changes took place, and although secondary education was specifically mentioned in the Queen's speech, it pertained to the reorganization in rural areas. The Government was only to remain in office for four months before

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[48] Ibid., pp. 135-144.

[49] Ibid., pp. 135-143.

[50] Ibid., pp. 144-154.

Prorogation,[51] but there is no evidence of any basic change at the secondary level.

The Education Supply Debate on April 26, 1955, was the only remaining debate of the Parliament to discuss education. By its timing and nature, it was really in anticipation of general party policy for the election.

Bacon, the leading Socialist spokesman, again attacked the Eleven-plus and the lack of Comprehensive Schools. Speaking of the Comprehensive School, she said:

> This is the generally accepted system in the U.S.A. I am not advocating their particular kind of school but I am saying the education of all children over eleven in the same type of school appears to work in America and in other countries. It is worth while noting that in the U.S.A. there are fewer private fee-paying schools than we have. I believe that if we had no examination at eleven, no selection at eleven, and if the parents knew that their children could continue their schooling beyond the age of fifteen according to their ability and the wishes of their parents, fewer parents would send their children to fee-paying schools. The benefits of Comprehensive schools are enormous. Every child will have a chance, and if not academic can continue with several suitable courses.[52]

Bacon went on to defend the big school which she claimed, gave children all the advantages. She believed that the part of the headmaster was overstressed. She went on to quote Dr. Robin Pedley[53] in support of her

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[51] Prorogation marks the end of a Parliament and is followed by a General Election.

[52] Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. DXL, pp. 768-779.

[53] Author of Comprehensive Schools To-day, Councils and Education Press, London, 1949.

views, and disagreed that the Comprehensive School meant any leveling down.

Bacon went on to claim that parents welcomed Comprehensive Schools and, although they were coming, they would come more quickly under Labour. She quoted a journalist's interview with parents:

> A reporter explained to these hundred people what comprehensive schools were and the idea behind them, and asked, having heard a broad outline of what they are, do you favour them? One hundred people answered 'yes' and nobody 'no.'[54]

Not surprisingly, this claim was followed by prolonged laughter.

Sir David Eccles, the incoming Minister, did not, in his speech, refer directly to the Comprehensive School. He confined himself to the problem of the great variation in Grammar school places from Authority to Authority:

> I certainly want every area to reach 15 per cent or more. Of the Authorities under 15 per cent all except one have plans for increasing the proportion while in the group providing 15-20 per cent most of these have new Grammar Schools contemplated. I have suggested a working maximum of 25 per cent because I believe in the progress and development of the Secondary Modern School. I think that this is not only possible, but definitely in the best interests of our children.[55]

Government policy, was he said, also against too braod an extension of the Grammar School or university, having no wish to alter radically their academic character. Sir David, put it as follows:

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[54] Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. DXL, p. 776.

[55] Ibid., pp. 779-793.

> Therefore, it seems to me better to try to build, alongside the Grammar School university stream, many strong and various streams leading from the Secondary Modern Schools to the Technical Colleges, Technological Institutes and all other forms of higher education.[56]

He was sympathetic about the Eleven-plus:

> Hon. Members opposite want to get rid of the eleven-plus examination, and we very well understand their reasons. The difference between us is how to get rid of it. I do ask them not to do it by destroying 1200 Grammar Schools and showing the whole body of teachers and parents that the Labour party has no confidence in the Secondary Modern School.[57]

He argued that many of the Secondary Modern Schools, were proving a success after a very short history, and queried why the Socialists wanted Comprehensive Schools, suggesting that it was for political purposes. He pointed out that teachers were against large schools and stated his willingness to follow the judgement of the teaching profession: "It is best to leave the matter to the teachers themselves in whose judgement I am quite confident in this whole issue of Comprehensive Schools."[58]

Michael Stewart accused the Minister of not knowing the meaning of the Comprehensive School and offering no real alternative to the Eleven-plus:

> I would not decry the excellent work done by many Secondary Modern schools but I say that neither the Modern School nor the Grammar School is as good as a really good Secondary School can be, if we can once get rid of this artificial selection and undesirable division of people into two types at too early an age.

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[56] *Ibid.*

[57] *Ibid.*, p. 791.

[58] *Ibid.*, p. 793.

> The vision that would inspire our educational system is not only one of steady advance quantitatively, but also one of a society trying to ensure that all our people have a good general education.[59]

Frederick Peart, a former Grammar Schoolmaster, praised the Comprehensive Schools and denied the Socialists wanted to destroy the Grammar School education. He said they merely wanted to transfer it to the Comprehensive School. He recognized the wonderful work done by the Grammar Schools but attacked the Minister by saying:

> It is all very well for the Minister to talk about faith in the Secondary Modern School. I would believe the Tory party's faith in these schools if Hon. Members opposite showed a personal example by sending their sons and daughters to them.[60]

Commander Maitland, believed that there were many places in the educational system where the Comprehensive School could be used, but he was opposed to its universal application:

> To abolish all the various existing schools which would have to be done, to face the enormous expense of turning over to that system and to slap the face and stop the advance of the existing Secondary School is surely a completely unrealistic approach.[61]

Opinions followed strict party lines. G. Thomas admitted that there was bound to be interference with the Grammar School in some areas.[62] I. J. Pitman (Bath, Con.) presented the more flexible view that some areas, such as

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[59] Ibid., pp. 794-802.

[60] Ibid., p. 812.

[61] Ibid., pp. 813-816.

[62] Ibid., pp. 816-820.

Anglesey were well suited educationally and economically to a comprehensive experiment. On selection he said: "Of course it is bound to be resented since it presents facts which are necessarily unpalatable."[63] He was for objective selection, but felt that, even with the Archangel Gabriel making the selection, there was bound to be resentment. He was against the large school. He cited a school in Vancouver which he had visited. There the headmaster deplored the difficulty of stimulating good pupils because they excelled in such poor company.

Pitman believed in a policy of improving the Secondary Modern School of which, he felt, many fine ones existed.

The Welsh Member, Cove, denied that it had ever been the policy of the Labour party to wipe out the Grammar School. He claimed that the Eleven-plus was a fallacious test:[64]

> The social basis of the Comprehensive School system is a faith in the ordinary ability of the ordinary normal child and in giving an opportunity to that normal child to develop his capacities and aptitudes in the best possible conditions. This is the meaning of the Comprehensive School.[65]

This was as one Socialist saw the controversial system. He went on to pledge, that they would drive the Conservatives from their entrenched position, and provide

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[63] *Ibid.*, pp. 821-826.

[64] *Ibid.*, pp. 826-828.

[65] *Ibid.*

a system for the normal child, superior to that existing in the tripartite system.

The former Secretary, Pickthorn, speaking in the debate as a backbencher, claimed it was mathematically impossible to have a Comprehensive School with a sixth form as good as a Grammar School unless it contained well over 2,000 pupils. The Socialists generally disputed this, claiming that even 800 was a suitable figure.

Pickthorn believed that too many claims were being made for the Comprehensive School after a very limited experience. He asserted that it was "a dangerous exaggeration to suggest a child's whole life is decided at eleven."[66]

One of the merits of an examination, claimed Pickthorn, was that it discovered the child who would do better on special, rather than normal, occasions. He was for seeing things as they existed and believed that:

> Parents and neighbours will always know which are the clever boys and which are not and it is no use kidding ourselves, and we do kid ourselves, about the fact that every boy in the school excells at something or other.[67]

This he thought, might be true in God's sight, but in human means of measurement he said: "Give me a school where the boys all run faster than the others and they

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[66] Ibid., pp. 828-837.

[67] Ibid.

will all do better Latin verses as well, and vice versa."[68]

Pickthorn, in the latter part of his speech attempted to induce a realistic approach to the problem. He presented the argument that the Grammar School was not an artificial unit. His ideas, however, were obnoxious to the Opposition and caused Mr. Turner Samuels (Gloucester) to describe his speech as a "vaudeville version of education."[69]

Angus Maude (Ealing, Con.) claimed that the Socialists' view, represented by Cove, wanted an educational system "concentrated on the normal, ordinary child of the lower middle class. A more class-conscious concept it would be difficult to conceive."[70]

He mistrusted the vagueness of Socialist policy and could see no way of retaining the long established Grammar School in a Comprehensive system, without making a farce of the whole idea. He could see no way of getting a fully academic sixth form in the Comprehensive School without abolishing Grammar Schools.

Maude gave the electors a promise that if the Tories were returned they would keep Socialist hands off the Grammar Schools. The Secondary Modern Schools would

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[68] Ibid., p. 837.

[69] Ibid., p. 837.

[70] Ibid., p. 842.

be given "attention, encouragement and nurturing with the is a most critical stage in their development."[71]

One Socialist speaker, A. Moyle (Oldbury and Halesowen), claimed that both sides were committed to Comprehensive schools, and that the Minister had not turned down the principle. He thought that the only difference between the parties was to the extent of the comprehensive system which should be applied. This seemed to many a simplification, but not too wide of the mark.[72]

Some Government supporters were particularly concerned that the Socialists should clarify their policy. Alport believed that the Labour party were using the comprehensive idea to appeal to parents, more than for the considered interests of the children. He claimed that was aimed to produce an illusion of equality amongst parents, but would, in reality, handicap the children. He followed the view of other Tories that the aim should be to develop the Secondary Modern School.[73]

In a short speech, Chuter Ede came out, for the first time, in favor of the Comprehensive School, but modified his statement by describing it as an experiment. He attacked the Eleven-plus on the grounds that it was wasteful in that "it lets through a lot of children who

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[71] Ibid., pp. 843-850.

[72] Ibid., pp. 850-854.

[73] Ibid., pp. 843-850.

ought not to get through on any real educational basis."[74] He was, however, for a greater variety of schools. This differed significantly from his colleagues.

The new Secretary, Vosper, took the line that the present system was a good one, and the Secondary Modern was itself an experiment and should be given time, not destroyed by the Socialists.[75]

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[74] Ibid., pp. 869-878.

[75] Ibid., pp. 878-890.

CHAPTER VI

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

Any school which does not receive any public funds is known as an Independent School. They exist in many different forms, are of varying quality, and although attended by less than one-tenth of all school children, have an importance far greater than their numbers would seem to suggest. They provide education for about 500,000 children in nearly 5,000 schools. The most important and most exclusive of the schools are the great "Public Schools" which are often run by non-profit making trusts.

A very wide group of schools are the preparatory schools which provide an education designed to prepare a child for entrance to a Public School. There are a number of non-public private schools, some are new in concept and experimental while others are merely imitation Public Schools. There are many other schools covering a very wide range.

Under the 1944 Act, Part III, it became necessary for all independent schools to be registered and any school not maintaining the required level was subject to closure.

Nevertheless, in 1951 this section of the Act had not been implemented and many private schools still flourished with poor, untrained staff under very unsatisfactory conditions.

There was no definite statement in the pre-election policies of the two parties concerning the Independent Schools, although both parties were pledged to the implementation of the 1944 Act which would include the relevant Part III. Many individual Socialists had indicated that they would demand an alteration in the position of the Public Schools, but the actual changes were not specified.

The 1944 Act had recognized the position of the independent schools and provided that the State should see that unnecessary hardships were not imposed on parents who chose to educate the children outside the system. In the previous Parliament, early in 1951, the Tories had attempted to gain tax relief for fee paying parents, but this had been voted down by the Socialist majority.

In such a close campaign as that of 1951 it was not to the Tories advantage to risk upsetting the "Independent School people" who were thought to be solidly Conservative. The educational background of Members showed that 240 Tories (74.7 per cent) and 60 Socialists (20.3 per cent) had attended Public Schools.[1] Although there are no accurate figures available, nearly all the children of Conservative Members and over half the children of

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[1]Adapted from D. E. Butler, The British General Election of 1951 (London: Macmillan, 1952).

Socialist Members were receiving education in schools outside the state system.

Although there had not been much publicity to the issue during the election period the Labour Member King speaking on the King's Speech on November 6 was quick to express his view that "some day education will be lifted out of party politics, but we are all a long way from that yet, in a country in which it is still considered a mark of respect not to send one's children to a state school."[2]

Socialist members, annoyed by Government cuts made comparisons with the Independent Schools and Dr. King accused Hollis of being willing to sacrifice all children except those at Public Schools.[3]

Dr. King was the Opposition's principal opponent of the Public School and on November 4, 1952, he accused the Nation of having, "a class sytem of education" and cited the entrants to Dartmouth Royal Naval College. He argued that one out of every two Public School boys who passed the written examination were selected, compared with one in seven of the Grammar School boys who passed the written examination. He followed with a series of rhetorical questions:

> Does this mean that a small social group produces four times as many leaders than those born to the

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[2]Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. CDXCIII, pp. 93-94.

[3]Ibid.

> other ninety-five per cent of the nation? Is a Public School education four times better than a Grammar School education?

He believed not.[4]

Dr. King was successful in a ballot of Private Members on March 20, 1953, and moved a motion concerning the Public Schools.

> That this House expresses its concern at the fact that most of the so-called public schools of this country are, in reality exclusive private schools catering for children drawn from a narrow social group and outside the State system of education; and believing that education ought to be provided for children according to their educational needs and not according to the financial resources of their parents, would welcome measures designed to achieve that object.[5]

King began by pointing out that this was a subject rarely debated in the House, and that there was a radical need for reform. He alleged that these schools had been stolen from the Nation and poor children a long time ago when: "John Lyon founded Harrow as a free Grammar School for the townsfolk." Queen Elizabeth I had founded Westminster, Merchant Taylors and Charterhouse particularly "for the education of the poor."[6]

King went on to trace the confiscations and the strayings from original charters. He charged that the Public Schools lead in Church, State and Law and held a complete monopoly of the positions of state in which

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[4] Ibid., Vol. DVII, pp. 105-107.

[5] Ibid., Vol. DXIII, pp. 434-437.

[6] Ibid.

training and social connections counted for as much as ability.

To illustrate his argument he presented figures to show the dominance of former Public School boys:

> In 1949, 56 out of 62 bishops, 21 of 24 deans, 33 of 37 judges, 190 of 271 senior civil servants and 88 of 103 bank directors were products of public schools.

He attacked the closed scholarships as the "narrow road to University" and gave the example of Harrow and Eton which had 30 to Oxford and Cambridge with a total value of 10,525. One hundred and twenty-one at Cambridge were reserved for particular schools.[7]

King argued that the fundamental weakness of the Public School system was its perpetuation of a social cleavage between children who have grown up and work together. He believed that as long as one group of children were protected and their fathers wielded power in Parliament, Whitehall, and local government, there would be a resistance to spending sufficient money on the State Schools. He thought that it was fantastic that inspectors, education officers, Ministry officials and all the senior civil servants who drew their living for running State institutions, took care to have their children educated outside the State system.[8]

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[7] Ibid.

[8] Ibid., p. 437.

The accusation, many felt, was true and pointed to the remarkable fact that the State system of Education was being run by people who had received their own education elsewhere.

Over the first term of the Conservative Government, the Independent School issue can be divided into two sections: firstly, there was the opposition to the exclusiveness and privilege of the Public School; and, secondly, there was the concern over the low standards of a large number of private schools.

Socialist Members led both campaigns and a good number of Members tabled questions calling for some measures to control private schools. Short called for a system of inspection for private schools.[9] This was in March 1953 and during that year G. Thomas, J. Griffiths, Lewis and other members all brought pressure on the same subject. In November Dodd and Lewis showed concern at unsatisfactory boarding schools. With the arrival of 1954 Opposition criticisms increased and a whole group of members called for the implementation of Section III of the 1944 Act.

Eventually, in June 1954, the Minister, Miss Horsbrugh, indicated that in consequence to the decreasing pressure on Local Education Authority schools the Government would look into Section III of the 1944 Act, which

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[9] Ibid., Vol. DXII, p. 135.

safeguarded educational standards. In the meantime, the Ministry were to take action to exclude unsuitable teachers and the proprietors of Independent Schools would be obliged to provide lists of their staff to the Government.

The new regulation required that any school wanting to be recognized as sufficient must meet the same requirements as already imposed on grant aided schools. They would have to report the facts to the Minister if a teacher's engagement was terminated on account of misconduct, grave professional default or conviction of a criminal offense.[10] The Minister's answer to Crosthwaite-Eyre (New Forest, Con.) showed that the number of children in Independent Schools recognized as efficient was increasing considerably.[11] Many children, were however, still in unrecognized schools.

Members were still concerned with what they regarded as the injustice of Public Schools and in November 1953 George Thomas brought to the attention of the House that over 90 per cent of Her Majesty's Ambassadors were Public School products.[12]

Socialist attacks on the Independent Schools prompted Henry Brooke to reply:

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[10] Ibid., Vol. DXXIX, pp. 1519-1523.

[11] Ibid., Vol. DXXV, p. 95.

[12] Ibid., Vol. DXXI, pp. 104-105.

> After all, however one may argue educationally or politically about the independent schools as distinct from the State system, what we all know in our hearts is that the independent schools at the present time possess one indisputable advantage, and that is that there, and there alone, parents can be sure of their children being educated in sufficiently small classes to make education a reality.
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> I bitterly deplore the size of the gap between the two, but let us for heaven's sake, aim primarily at bringing down the size of classes in the State schools, rather than abuse the independent schools for being able to do what in present circumstances the State schools cannot yet attain.[13]

Brooke was certainly right in suggesting that the size of classes was an extremely relevant factor but apart from this he would seem to have oversimplified the problem, for the Independent schools provided other very significant advantages.

John Eden (Bournmouth West, Con.) speaking in the same debate, declared his interest, being an old boy of Eton and the director of a private school. He wondered why the Socialists attacked Independent schools and regarded them as one of the last strongholds of privilege:

> I am firmly convinced that we must maintain the present free system of independent schools and of enabling parents to exercise their right of choice in sending their children to the schools they think fit for them.[14]

He felt that the existing standards in State education were not sufficiently high:

> If hon. Members think that there are many undesirable teachers in the independent schools, I would remind them that some hon. Members also think

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[13] Ibid., Vol. DXXXI, pp. 59-70.

[14] Ibid.

> occasionally that there are undesirable teachers in the State schools. It would be a much better principle to put this system right first.[15]

He quoted the example of Communist teachers in State schools, but these were men who had no criminal records and had not attempted to propound their beliefs in school, whereas the criticism of some independent school teachers had been that they were unqualified or convicted sexual offenders who would not be tolerated within the State system.

Far from limiting the Independent schools Anthony Hurd (Newbury, Con.) favored a tax allowance for parents sending children to Independent schools.[16] This move, although not without Government sympathy,[17] was outside official Tory policy. It would undermine the State system even further and, in view of the small Government majority would not be sound politics.

Morley countered with the Socialist view, which opposed any such form of tax relief:

> If a child has sufficient ability to pass the selective test, he can receive a grammar school education at the public expense and if he has not sufficient ability then a place is offered to him to enable him to receive an education suitable to his aptitude and his abilities at the modern

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[15] Ibid., pp. 65-70.

[16] Ibid., pp. 100-102.

[17] The Conservatives when in opposition, during the 1951 Finance Bill moved a clause for tax relief; which was defeated, but by only twenty-five votes.

> secondary school. Tax relief would be a State endowment for snobbery.[18]

One Conservative, Hollis, favored the suggestion of the Fleming Report that Public Schools should be given a broader base by being open to more scholarship boys.[19]

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[18] Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. DXXXI, p. 102.

[19] Ibid., pp. 114-122.

CHAPTER VII

SCHOOL BUILDING, CLASSES AND ECONOMIES

Three of the major educational problems facing the Government in 1951 were to provide new school buildings, to reduce the size of classes and the question of economies in education. These areas, together with the training and provision of teachers, were interwoven and the problems of one merged into the problems of the remainder.

The Conservatives and Socialists had both shown concern at overcrowded classes and the Tories had specifically stated their aim to speed school building by the introduction of simpler designs with greater planning. During the General Election a number of Tories expressed the view that there was room for economy in education, while Socialists were against any further cuts and believed that the Conservatives were ready to attack the very fabric of education.

The reduction in the size of classes formed one of the principal planks in stated Conservative education

policy. Even so, although expressing optimism about providing more places they believed that, "for a number of years, there will still be far too many oversized classes and obsolete schools in existence."[1]

The party planners evidently recognized the difficulty in implementing a promise to reduce the size of classes. Nevertheless, this promise was made from many election platforms without mention of the influences that would prevent any reduction being made.

The Labour Party were sufficiently vague in their educational policy statements as to allow a free interpretation of their intentions. Even so, it seemed that they believed in the value of reducing the size of classes, but with six years experience of the problem realized that classes would inevitably grow larger before they grew smaller.

The Socialists made full use of questioning to bring to light the seriousness of the situation and the extent of the problem. An answer to A. J. Irvine (Liverpool, Edge Hill, Soc.) revealed that 628 schools scheduled in 1925 as unfit and condemned were still being used.[2]

Because of a system of building priorities due to the shortage of labor and materials (at the time there was a severe steel shortage), school construction was handicapped by the need for priority certificates.

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[1] The Campaign Guide, op. cit., p. 115.

[2] Pariamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. CDXCIV, p. 1693.

One of the principal tasks facing the Government was the need for providing new school places. Although 650,000 new places had been built since the war and in October, 1951, 400,000 were under construction, classes were very overcrowded and the situation was becoming increasingly more serious.

Sir Thomas Moore (Ayr, Con.) voiced doubts as to the wisdom of implementing the 1944 Act in regard to the raising of the leaving age and Sir Thomas was offering a view not acceptable to his party.[3] Even so, his criticism appeared to be genuine and to have some basis. Although seldom voiced, the effect of the measure was to contribute heavily to the post-war educational difficulties.

The difficulties ahead were clearly indicated in an answer to Socialist George Thomas. He was anxious to know the steps being taken to reduce classes to below 40. Horsbrugh could see no hope of this in the near future due to the vast increase in children and the difficulties in increasing the number of teachers.[4]

In their pre-election policy statements the Tories had promised cuts in the "frills of education." During the Debate on the King's Address, Mr. R. Maudling (Barnet, Con.), a financial expert, expressed the belief that a

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[3] Ibid., p. 1446.

[4] Ibid.

better or equally good service could be provided at considerably lower cost.[5]

Socialists were against any economies, believing that all possible economies had been made during their administration and any further reduction would impair the essential educational service.

In reply to a series of Socialist questioners seeking information on school building cuts, Pickthorn, the Secretary for Education, answered that no decision could be announced until the Chancellor of the Exchequer made a review of the 1952 capital estimates, indicating that there was a likelihood of some revision.[6] Meanwhile, the Chancellor imposed a postponement of three months on all school building.

This exchange led to a spate of questioning from a variety of Socialist quarters producing supplementaries and follow-ups but the Minister stood firm. This pressure was confined to the Opposition ranks, while Government supporters restricted their questioning to less controversial fields.

Just prior to the 1951 Christmas Recess an important measure was announced in the form of Ministry Circular 242.[7] It called upon Local Education Authorities to aim at a

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[5] Ibid., Vol. CDXCIII, p. 429-430.

[6] Ibid., p. 580.

[7] Great Britain, Ministry of Education Circular 242, London, H.M.S.O. 1951.

reduction of 5 per cent in their expenditure on main grant services. The Circular stated that in some areas it might not be possible to reduce the expenditure without endangering the fabric of education and a smaller cut would be appropriate in such cases. Members were not given an opportunity to react to the Circular; but on their return on January 29, 1952, the Socialists were eager and ready to mount their opposition.

The returning Parliament heard the Chancellor announce a number of severe economy cuts in food and social services but education emerged unscathed. It is important when viewing educational difficulties to view them against the background of the country's economic crisis. Mr. Butler, the Chancellor, in a broadcast on January 27, 1952, in which he presented the Government policy of economies, said in regard to education: "I am determined to make the Act which I introduced go on and do the great job for which it was intended."[8]

The Socialist attitude appeared to be complete opposition to any reduction in the education service. Many members presented cases and circumstances as examples of the harshness of the measure. The Conservative view was that the reductions were only required where "the essential fabric of education" would not be impaired. The two parties differed directly over the interpretation of what the "essential fabric" covered. This Opposition,

[8]The Times (London), January 28, 1952.

in this controversy at least, appeared to take much broader view than Government supporters.

In the debate on the economic situation, the Labourites launched their attack. Mr. Hugh Gaitskill (Leeds South) viewed with grave anxiety the proposals of some Local Education Authorities, who, in response to Circular 242, were to abolish school dentistry. He was supported by his colleague Peart (Workington) who named five Authorities--all Tory controlled--who were about, he alleged, to cut the service. He compared these cuts with the privilege of "expensive private Tory Education."[9]

Other Socialists, including Miss Herbison (Lanarkshire), W. Hamilton (Fife), and A. Bottomley (Rochester and Chatham), called for the withdrawal of Circular 242 and pointed out what they considered to be some of the serious effects it was having on basic services.[10]

The attacks on Government policy prompted Government supporters to reply. Richard Fort (Clitheroe) pointed out that the Labour Government had in 1949 issued Circular 210 which was almost identical to the much attacked Circular 242. R. A. Butler countered that Peart's examples were not valid as the Ministry had not approved them.[11]

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[9] Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. CDXCV, p. 230.

[10] Ibid., pp. 230-320.

[11] Ibid., p. 230.

In the second week of February 1952 the Minister introduced another controversial circular (Number 245).[12] This was in general accordance with stated Conservative policy in regard to school building. The various labor problems and material difficulties had brought about a situation in which a great deal of work was under construction but the rate of completion was falling. The Minister, believing that too much work was under construction, placed an order delaying the start of any new school building without a special priority permit. This meant a reduction in the 1952-1953 programme of school building. Under this policy it was hoped that the labor available could be more economically deployed in order to catch up and finish incomplete work. The Conservatives had promised to bring about more efficient building methods and planning. The Socialists, however, were opposed to any delay in new building.[13]

On February 28, 1952, Stephen Swingler had the advantage of an unusually long Adjournment period and raised the question of school building. He began by complaining that opportunities for discussing educational problems were normally rare in the House and that education was the chief victim in the "cold war" on the welfare state. He attacked the Government policy on four main

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[12] Great Britain, Ministry of Education Circular 245, London, H.M.S.O. 1951.

[13] Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. CDXCVI, pp. 1550-1555.

issues: firstly, the absence of the Minister from the Cabinet; secondly, the postponement by the Chancellor of new school building for a three month period; thirdly, the Minister's request for a 5 per cent cut; and finally, Circular 245 calling for cuts in the 1952-1953 school building programme.

The debate developed into a partisan struggle but what emerged clearly was the determination of the Opposition to oppose any cuts and their apparent belief that the Tories did not care about or understand state education. In none of their criticisms did they mention the economic difficulties, but S. Marshall (Sutton and Cheam, Con.), argued that the prevailing economic difficulties made it necessary for cuts and that some of these must be borne by education.[14]

The Secretary of Education presented the Government policy in concluding the debate. He believed that things were progressing reasonably well and that it would not be reality to expect education to be put right quickly. The shortages of steel and the complex labor problems had ensured, before the advent of the present government, that the building programme would be behind schedule.[15]

Throughout the Spring months the Government continued to be harrassed by Socialist members pursuing their policy of discovering cuts in various parts of the country

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[14] Ibid., pp. 1572-1575.

[15] Ibid., pp. 1575-1576.

and challenging the Government's policy in regard to Circulars 242 and 245. This form of Opposition policy culminated in the tabling of a Censure Motion.

The motion read:

> That this House views with grave concern the effect of the circulars issued by the Ministry of Education on the estimates of local education authorities for the coming financial year, and calls for the restoration of all cuts which would impair the maintenance of the standards attained and the planned expansion of the service under the 1944 Act.[16]

Chuter Ede (South Shields, Soc.), moving the motion accused the Government of following a policy, since assuming office, of attacking the 1944 Education Act. He presented a list of cuts and attacked the Government's definition of "the essential fabric of education." He cited cuts in teachers, books and dental officers and expressed a view that there was "fear among students that by the time they are qualified to leave their colleges the full effect of these economies will be such that the employment they looked forward to will possibly not be available to them."

He urged a restoration of the full building programme and deplored the atmosphere in education that the circulars had created. Ede was, at the time, his party's leading spokesman on education. The reply of the Minister, Miss Horsbrugh, illustrated the difference in the official

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[16] Ibid., Vol. CDXCVIII, p. 215.

view of the two parties. On behalf of the Government she moved the amendment:

> That this House recognises the duty of Her Majesty's Government in present circumstances to promote economy and welcomes their determination to maintain the essential fabric of the educational service.[17]

The Socialist censure motion and the Government amendment differed only in the interpretation of "the essential fabric." There appeared to be no fundamental difference outside the fact that as a Government the Tories found it necessary to make economies and, in opposition the Socialists found it necessary to oppose any educational economy.

The Government's policy, the Minister reminded the House, was that it was essential to consider education in the light of the existing difficulties. In the year 1952-1953 the Government was to spend 14,600,000 more on education than in 1951-1952. This she claimed was not a 5 per cent cut but nearly a 5 per cent increase. The estimates for education were the highest ever presented to Parliament.

There were around 250,000 extra children, 3,000 extra teachers, salaries and wages had increased, and the Government's policy was to reduce the building lag and complete the work started. The Minister believed that it was essential to maintain a balance between education, providing new homes, buying food and raw materials, and

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[17] Ibid.

financing an increasing defense programme. The Government claimed that the economies contained in the circulars would not affect teaching. Buildings would be more compact, economies would be made on heating and lighting, scholarships would be retained at the existing level, and recreational classes would be self-supporting. The Minister argued that the policies of economy were very similar in content and effect to those of her predecessor in 1949. In fact the Conservative contention was that the Socialists were attacking something which they had instigated and supported three years earlier.[18]

Various Labour and Conservative Members entered into the debate and spoke strictly to the policy of their parties.

Donald Wade (Huddersfield West) presented the Liberal view and spoke of the disparity in grants as a source of contention. He believed that the House must face the reality of an economic crisis, but that the Minister must curb some Local Education Authorities in their cuts. He offered three ideas for easing the crisis: a possible lowering of the entry age, the wider use of temporary buildings, and the employment of untrained people to work temporarily with infants.[19]

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[18] Ibid., Vol. CDXCIII, pp. 227-249.

[19] Ibid.

The first and third of these ideas were highly controversial, and probably could only be presented by a Member of a minor party.

Many of the Socialist's claims were clearly exaggerated. Moreley had made the claim that Surrey was going to dismiss 80 teachers. Another member, Marshall, speaking as a Surrey Councillor, stated that, on the contrary, Surrey would employ 154 extra teachers.[20]

The Socialist view was expressed by Michael Stewart (Fulham East) who believed that George Tomlinson, the former Minister, had made all possible economies and any more would affect the structure of education.[21]

Summing up for the Government the Secretary denied that there was any cut.[22] After a six-hour debate the House divided, the censure motion being lost by 27 votes and the Government's amendment being carried by the same number.

The issues of the debate had been cloaked in partisan argument, and a balanced defense or criticism of Government policy was difficult to discover. The influence of the debate was hard to discern and would generally appear to follow party affiliations. Outside Parliament there was certainly some concern, particularly among teachers, that economies would go too far; but similarly,

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[20] Ibid., pp. 306-314.

[21] Ibid., pp. 314-323.

[22] Ibid., pp. 323-328.

there was an understanding that because of the financial crisis, economies of some sort were inevitable.

The Labour attack through questioning continued into the Summer. Late on June 16, 1952, Dr. Horace King moved the adjournment motion on education. He was concerned with the serious position in relation to school accommodation and began by attacking an idea put forward by the Archdeacon of Bedford that some children would be better leaving school at 14. He wanted the "ceiling" on new buildings removed and school building to be given a steel priority. In one point he agreed with the expressed Tory view, in that he saw the need for a new type of school building and new methods of construction.[22]

Answering the debate, the Secretary went as far as to pay tribute to the Labour Government who had originated the new techniques. He believed, he said, that it was the shortage of buildings that was causing excessive classes.[23]

Two of the principal planks in the Tory platforms were the reduction in the size of classes and the promise of increased rewards for teachers. In the first nine months of the new administration these two promises had not in any way been fulfilled. The size of classes was on the increase, the recruitment of new and the loss of experienced teachers was causing alarm. Almost all of the teachers were recruited from the Grammar Schools and

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[22] Ibid., Vol. DII, pp. 953-958.

[23] Ibid., Vol. DI, p. 72.

potential recruits had been increased by an expansion of these schools, nevertheless early leavers reduced the potential. An answer to J. Johnson (Rugby, Soc.) revealed that 44.5 per cent of girls were leaving Grammar Schools at the age of 16. In answer to another question it was shown that half of the girls who stayed on until 18 became teachers.[24] In order to increase the number of the teachers it was therefore necessary to increase college places and, at the same time, encourage Grammar school pupils to remain in school until their 18th year.

On November 4 the Queen, in opening the Second Session of Parliament, said the following in regard to Government economy:

> In the interests of the employment and standard of living of my people, My Government will persevere with measures to curb inflation and to reduce the heavy load of expenditure.[25]

From this statement it appeared obvious that the Government were to continue their policies.

The Opposition were quick to express their displeasure in the omissions from the speech. Dr. King was disgruntled that there was no action to relieve the teacher shortage. Short (Newcastle Central), complained that in Newcastle over 6,000 children were being taught in classes of over 50 and yet, despite this, there had been Government cuts in building. Under the Socialists, he said, the first

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., Vol. DVII, pp. 4-6.

quarter of 1951 had seen 20,546 new projects approved in contrast to 3,398 new projects in the same period of 1952.[26]

The Government policy of reducing the size of classes appeared unsuccessful for in 1951, classes had increased by 2.8 per cent and teachers by only 2.3 per cent.

In early 1953 Enoch Powell (Wolverhampton, Con.), asked an "inspired" question in asking for the amount of educational building work in England and Wales for 1951 and 1952.[27] The Minister was able to report an increase in 1952 of 50,000,000. In 1951 the increase had been just under 47,000,000. In some ways this answer served as a justification of Government policy and discounted charged that building was being cut. Nevertheless, on February 20, 1953, Dr. King brought up the issue on the Adjournment debate. He attacked the Government's policy of completing schools and not starting enough new schools. He and Morley believed that schools could be built without interfering with house building and feared that there was going to be a lack of school places.

The Secretary defended the Government policy, claiming that any Government entering power in 1951 would have taken the same action. He disputed the assertions that the cuts had created great danger to the school system

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[26] Ibid., pp. 102-107.

[27] Ibid., Vol. DXIII, p. 86.

and said that he thought that the country was now receiving better value for money because of more economic spending. The development of new building techniques was, he believed, going to prove of great assistance.[28]

In July 1953, during the debate on the Supply Estimates, Chuter Ede led a Socialist attack upon what they regarded as the failure of the Government school building policy. He pointed to the fact that only three completed schools, originated under the Tory Government.[29] This in itself was, although a criticism of Conservative policy, a recognition that stated Tory policy was being carried through. The Minister had constantly stated that it was Government policy to complete as quickly as possible the many schools started under the Socialists. This policy the Minister reiterated in her reply. She was also able to point to the success of her policy of economy and efficiency in school building. In 1949 she pointed out, it cost 1,000,000 to produce 2,800 Secondary School places, while in 1953, 3,800 places were being produced at the same cost. This, she claimed, was enabling the Government to produce more schools.[30]

Several Socialists complained about Government educational policy including their failure to fully implement the 1944 Act. Victor Yates (Birmingham, Ladywood),

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[28] Ibid., Vol. DXI, pp. 1686-1691.

[29] Ibid., Vol. DXVII, pp. 419-433.

[30] Ibid., p. 447.

pointed to the burden of the defense programme and argued that advances in education could best be obtained by cutting this programme.[31]

Enoch Powell a leading Conservative Member presented his party's view that the 1944 Act would take many years to implement and stated the three main problems as being: 1) that created by the raising of the school leaving age; 2) the problem of the age bulge; and 3) the difficulties due to the shift in population. As a justification of Government policy, he quoted figures to show the rise in school places which showed an increase under the Government:

1950	90,000
1951	130,000
1952	160,000
1953	220,000
1954	250,000 (estimated).[32]

Harold MacMillan (Bromley), speaking as the Minister of Housing and Local Government, said:

> Whether one takes primary and secondary schools or whether one takes all educational buildings, including technical colleges and other work; in other words whether one takes actual figures in terms of money, or figures of prices corrected to the end of 1951 prices, which is really the fairest test, in all forms of the figures our record of work done is by every test higher than in any year of the previous administration. I said work done which is the only

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[31] Ibid., p. 458.

[32] Ibid., pp. 494-501.

> test, not work approved, planned or dreamed about in a Socialist Utopia.[33]

The Government moved and carried with a majority of 33 a motion on the report backing Government policy:

> That this House welcomes the emphasis laid in the said Report on the importance of school building and is confident that Her Majesty's Government has made and is continuing to make the best use of available resources in the interests of the children, in order to deal with the serious educational situation which they found on taking office.[34]

Despite improvements there was still serious overcrowding and some terrible conditions in the nation's schools. In an answer to I. O. Thomas (Wrekin, Soc.), some disturbing statistics were revealed illustrating the seriousness of the problem in Shropshire. This was a story of bad sanitation, lighting, heating and ventilation while a number of schools had no playgrounds or cloakrooms.[35]

Towards the end of 1953, Socialist agitation and questioning against Government building and economy policies relaxed a good deal but a few Opposition backbenchers continued their interest.

On December 17, 1953, George Thomas moved the Adjournment motion concerning the supply and training of teachers. He charged that Government policies had not stopped the increasing size of classes and that the teachers were concerned with the temptation of, "debasing the coinage

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[33] Ibid., pp. 514-524.

[34] Ubud., p. 527.

[35] Ibid., Vol. DXVIII, p. 178.

to gain more recruits." To substantiate his charge he quoted a figure of 2,069 people who were admitted to the profession without any qualifications. He was concerned that despite the teaching shortage there were 250 vacancies in women's teaching colleges. The inconsistency between grants given to teaching and other students,[36] he felt, was a hinderence to recruitment.[37]

Significantly the Secretary, replying for the Government, avoided the issues and offered no indication of Government policy on dilution[38] or improving teacher recruitment. It appeared that the difficulties facing the Government led it to temporarily ignore dilution but the teacher recruitment problem needed some definite action.[39]

By the Spring of 1954 the Opposition stressed less emphasis on their criticism of Government economies and building programmes. The administration had achieved a good deal of progress in building and although classes remained oversize the imminent danger of a breakdown in the service had passed. Many of the economy proposals of Circular 242 had been relaxed and the general improvement

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[36] On average 70 a year less.

[37] Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol, DXXII, pp. 700-704.

[38] Lowering standard of student-teacher entry.

[39] Parliamentary Debates, op. cit., Vol. DXXII, pp. 705-706.

in the nation's economic position had led to an increase in expenditure on the educational service.

On April 27, 1954, the debate on Civil Estimates was concerned with oversized classes. Morley pointed out that in 1950, 37,106 classes had a role of over 40, yet this had risen to 43,202 in 1954 and oversize classes were still on the increase. There were, he maintained, 3,000,000 children in oversized classes and the Socialists believed that it was of prime importance of teaching that classes were reduced.

Morley was further concerned that in 1953 there was a drop out of 8,000. At this rate of increase it was only possible to maintain the existing ratio. He believed that recruiting was an extremely difficult problem because the profession did not have the comparative attraction to young people, that it had had 30 or 40 years previously. Salaries since 1945 had not kept pace with the cost of living. Too many potential recruits were lost by early Grammar School leaving. As a remedy Morley suggested a larger maintenance allowance for children attending Grammar School from age 16 to 18. He believed that a higher graduate allowance was necessary to combat the attractions of industry and he wanted a Royal Commission to investigate university education and the means to increase the number of science graduates. The Socialists, he asserted, recognized that this would require more money but he believed that good education could not be obtained cheaply. He

pointed out that in 1938 97.4 million was spent on education as compared to 366.3 million in 1953; but translating that figure into 1938 values, this equalled only 146 million and that there were now a 1,000,000 more children in the schools. In 1953, 85 per cent of all children were receiving secondary education as compared to only 10 per cent in 1938.[40]

> If we are to get a satisfactory system of education we shall have to spend at least another 100,000,000 a year and this extra money could be obtained by cutting defence costs.[41]

He described Conservative policy as a failure and described his aim for education as, "We should try to obtain for all our children the best possible education that the educational science of the age can give."[42]

The idea of a sharp increase in educational expenditure reflected the general Socialist view although such a heavy cut in defense was not held possible by the most influential section of the Party.

Dr. King conceded that the Education Department had been productive in its approach to all the problems of modern building and of modernizing school building processes. He paid tribute in saying that:

> The Ministry has spread the thin layer of new schools over the country efficiently and fairly,

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[40] Ibid., Vol. DXXVI, pp. 1461-1474.

[41] Ibid.

[42] Ibid.

> as I know from my experience in local government. Local Authorities which need schools most are getting the most schools.[43]

This was one of the rare examples of a member of one party praising or recognizing the success or fairness of their opponent's policies. Nevertheless, he went on to describe the serious problems caused by the great rise in school population, which would have a peak in 1953 of 6,500,000.

He gave recognition to the fact that by October 1953, over a 1,000,000 new places had been provided and 1,640 new schools. Although he admitted this was a great building programme, King saw the problem as a desperate one and he deplored the Government's cuts which he believed had halted the impetus built up by the Socialists.[44]

Speaking as a Government supporter Christopher Hollis (Devizes), agreed that the existing position of oversized classes was most unsatisfactory but defended the Government's policy by suggesting the Socialists forgot cuts of their own administration and failed to recognize that education must take its place with other buildings that were needed.[45]

George Thomas was concerned by the plight of backward pupils in crowded classes but was firm in not wanting any form of dilution. He described how the National Union

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[43] Ibid., pp. 1474-1483.

[44] Ibid.

[45] Ibid., pp. 1483-1492.

of Teachers were perturbed by the number of entrants without normal qualifications. He deprecated the Government's policy in regard to teachers superannuation contributions and wanted teachers' salaries to be paid from the Treasury, whilst retraining the local connection. From time to time members of both sides had made the suggestion without any action resulting. This really meant greater central financial responsibility yet at the same time preserving a balance of local responsibility.[46] He found immediate support from a Tory, Commander Maintland (Horncastle,) who asked that, "more responsibility for finance in education must be placed in the hands of the central Government."[47] These two views were almost identical but his concern was from what source extra money was to be found and believed that the Socialists had no answer except advocating a cut in armaments.

James Johnson (Rugby, Soc.), thought that the Minister was giving scant encouragement to teachers. His contention was that teachers were far more important than buildings and cited the Public Schools, as an example of where often poor buildings contained high scholarship, due to the small size of class and of the calibre and higher pay of teachers. Johnson believed that teachers were underpaid. He also wanted the elimination of uncertified

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[46] Ibid., pp. 1492-1495.

[47] Ibid., pp. 1495-1502.

teachers and the institution of a three year teacher training course.[48]

In contrast to the Socialist disquiet, Angus Maude (Ealing South, Con.), regarded the last three years of recruitment as very good and contended that an increase in teachers' salaries would not solve the shortage. At the same time, rather paradoxically, he wanted an attempt to recruit more men teachers. He was not against dilution and favored a scheme of apprentice teachers and more recruitment from Secondary Modern Schools.[49] This tone was not in line with Government policy, but was held by a number of his party but rarely stated in public. This attitude was, many said, educationally and administratively sound and revealed the lack of understanding of state education by many Tories. This was a shortcoming widely criticized by the Opposition and by all educational and teacher organizations who were opposed to any dilution.

Raymond Gower (Barry), another, but more liberal Conservative, believed that there must be greater provision for the salaries of schoolteachers and that a greater proportion must come from the Treasury. Gower, obviously felt that there were many "backwoodsmen" of his party who did not reflect his views:

> I may be a heretic on this side of the House, but I feel there is a case for better remuneration for the teaching profession and I would be generous

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[48] Ibid., pp. 1502-1506.

[49] Ibid., pp. 1506-1515.

in that respect if necessary at the expense of some of our buidings.[50]

This view obviously suggested that many Tories were not in favor of their stated policy of better pay and conditions for teachers, and gave support to Socialist criticism of Conservative insincerity.

Michael Stewart was concerned with the supply of teachers: "We can if it is really necessary to make do with make-shift buildings, whereas we cannot, without injury to children make do with make-shift teachers." He called for an increase of 50 per cent a year on teacher entry, more academic courses and more generous maintenance grants.[51]

The general urgency of the Socialists contrasted quite sharply with the few Government speakers. The tone and opinions of Maude contrasted sharply with the speeches of Socialists, such as Michael Stewart.

Throughout the debate the Government had been firmly on the defensive and the Secretary in his speech attempted to justify Government policy. Pickthorn argued that the implementation of the 1944 Act was a job for a generation and consequently Government policy was in accordance with this. He defended Government policy in that it was operating in a very difficult and special period. Although class sizes had risen, he believed that

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[50] Ibid., Vol. DXXVI, pp. 1522-1577.

[51] Ibid., pp. 1563-1572.

the rise was not significant, considering the rapid rise in school population and the shift in population.

The Government were concerned about the mobility of teachers, but the Secretary pointed out that the college entrants were in 1953 the best for any year. He claimed that the building moratorium had been successful in that the Government had produced more schools and approved more subjects than ever before.[52]

TABLE 2.--Value of School Buildings Completed and Approved Projects.

In 1951	25.1 million worth of schools completed
In 1952	35.1 million worth of schools completed
In 1953	42.1 million worth of schools completed
In 1951 the Government approved	34.4 million projects
In 1952 the Government approved	27.3 million projects
In 1953 the Government approved	42.1 million projects

These figures would seem to reinforce the Government claim, that their policy of a temporary suspension of new projects, would result eventually, in more building.

The Government were able to survive an Opposition censuring amendment with a majority of 16.

Speaking in the Education (Supply) Debate on July 26, 1954, Alice Bacon (Leeds, North-East) who had just

[52] Ibid., pp. 1572-1582.

become principal Socialist spokesman on education referred to the hardships the controversial Circulars had caused and regreted how debating time on education was spent:

> It is a great pity that nearly all our education debates, both in this House and outside, have to be concerned, not with education itself, but with bricks and mortar, but this is inevitable, because we must have buildings in which to put the children before they can be educated.[53]

Her views as leading party spokesman, naturally reflected the official view of the Opposition. In regard to new building, she thought that more should be done about blacklisted schools:

> Nearly all our new schools are built on new housing estates and this means that those children who have to live in old houses are condemned also to be educated in old schools, whereas those children who have advantages of living on a new estate live in new houses and have new schools.[54]

A section of Government policy which Miss Bacon criticized was the lack of expansion of Grammar Schools which would mean, if not remedied, that the affect of the bulge would be to diminish the percentage of children entering Grammar Schools.

The Minister, replying to the debate, announced that the Government was switching from primary to secondary school building. In June 1954, 143,943 secondary places were under construction, an increase over the year of over 20 per cent. The Government was doing more school building than ever before and were receiving better value for money.

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[53] Ibid., Vol. DXXXI, pp. 48-53.

[54] Ibid., pp. 53-58.

In 1949, for 1,000,000, 2,800 Secondary School places were built; in 1954 this had risen to 4,000.

The Minister claimed that her policy was only a continuance of the policy instituted by George Tomlinson and defended this policy against Socialist criticism. She explained that the reason for larger classes was that the highest intake had occurred in the last year.[55]

The Government were once again able to carry a confidence resolution but with a majority of only ten. This proved to be the last occasion of censure on the incumbent Government Officers of Education.

During the Summer Recess, Miss Horsbrugh and her Secretary, Pickthorn, were replaced by Rt. Hon. Sir David Eccles and Mr. Dennis Vosper.

Following the changes in the Ministry the Queen's speech on November 30, 1954, was particularly significant. The Queen, in Her speech, mentioned Government policy in regard to oversize classes, teachers pensioners, and technical education. It promised "to provide better education for children and young people. My Ministers will continue to encourage the building and improvement of schools and technical colleges."[56]

The new Minister then listed the causes of educational difficulty; the large post-war birthrate; the raising

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[55] Ibid., pp. 144-154.

[56] Ibid., Vol. DXXXV, pp. 116-126.

of the school leaving age (which he supported entirely), and the large number of new homes developed in new areas. Despite these factors he pointed to the provision of 650,000 new places since 1951 which he indicated was 125,000 above the school population increase.

In regard to future policy, he announced that "the battle against sheer numbers" was over and the policy of the Government was to turn their attention on schools that were unsatisfactory before the 1944 Act came into being. He attributed his ability to carry out his new policy to the successful work of his predecessor.[57]

It was the Government's intention to build more schools in rural areas and the Minister announced that the Government were to make an attack on slum schools. Above all else, he believed that the most pressing problem was in the rural areas and, in particular in All-Age schools.

In his policy statement the Minister was as comprehensive and as clear as any Governmental statement of education of the period. Indications were that a great move forward was planned and that the Conservative Party were becoming more enthusiastic and understanding in regard to the expansion of the educational service. Sir David summed up Government policy as being

> A continuation of the present building programme which is now largely concerned with secondary schools in urban areas; complete reorganisation in the rural

[57] Ibid., pp. 130-136.

> areas; freedom for minor works up to 1,000 per job; grants for village halls, community centres and school playing fields; and a substantial extension in technical education. This is as far as we can go at the moment.[58]

The Government were still concerned about financial economy and the Minister asked Local Authorities to prove to the taxpayers and the ratepayers that value for money would be obtained. Eccles pointed out that the net expenditure of Local Authorities had in the previous four years, increased from 250,000,000 a year to 380,000,000. This represented the largest increase of expenditure ever made in British education. In view of the increased spending the Minister asked for an assurance that all expenditure would be wisely spent.

The Conservative policy continued to be one of "value for money" involving a tight control over expenditure but allowing for considerable and rapid expansion.

The Government had announced their plan toward reorganization as a five-year plan, but it was becoming increasingly evident that with their small majority and the economic and material improvement of the nation a general election was imminent. The first Education debate for nine months took place on April 26, 1955 and was concerned with the civil estimates. This was the last Education debate of the Parliament for the dissolution had been announced prior to the General Election on May 6, 1955.

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[58] Ibid., Vol. DXXXV, pp. 128-136.

With an election pending, the debate took the form of an election forum on policy. The Labour Group, led by Alice Bacon, insisted that the money being spent was still insufficient and accused the Government of feverish activity with the election in mind.[59]

Most opposition speakers supported this view, but Michael Stewart spoke of the great improvements despite the difficulties. As examples he cited the raising of the school leaving age, the growing proportion of children staying on after statutory age, and the larger numbers going on to university.[60]

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[59] Ibid., Vol. DXL, pp. 768-779.

[60] Ibid., pp. 794-802.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

The period covered by this study falls into two distinct parts. The first is that in which a Labour government held office, from July 1945 until October 1951 and the second part from October 1951 until June 1955 which covers the period of a Conservative administration.

This work is concerned with the problems and issues that arose in implementing the 1944 Education Act, or at least those parts that concerned aspects of secondary education. It did not aim to be a pure study of the progress and consequences of the Act, but rather an examination of the reactions of legislators to the progress, problems and effects of the implementation of relevant parts of the Act.

The Act was conceived and passed under a coalition government and was in "good faith" an attempt to equalize educational opportunity and in clause XXXIV of the Act it was laid down that:

> It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitude.

By this it was hoped that secondary education for all would be realized. What was apparently not realized was that different types of secondary education would be the result of the Act and that these would inevitably vary in the esteem in which they were held by the parents, teachers, employers, children and the general public.

There was also at this stage a general feeling that all the measures encompassed within the Act would be rapidly implemented, but within a few years the Minister was warning that this would be a long term project. The raising of the school leaving age first to 15 then to 16 is a clear example of this. Although the minimum age was raised to 15 in 1947, the second rise, envisaged to take place within a few years has still not been implemented 26 years later, although it seems likely to be implemented quite soon.

In putting the 1944 Education Act on the statute book few members could have anticipated the enormity of the task of implementing their reforms. The existing buildings were crowded and out-of-date; teacher recruitment and training had virtually lapsed for five years; building materials and labor were scarce; capital costs were spiralling; the marriage and birth rates boomed, creating an inflated demand for houses and eventually schools.

The first major problem concerned teacher supply and it is clear from the evidence that this scheme brought new life to a flagging system and allowed the first raising

of the school leaving age to take place. The Emergency Training Colleges were maintained until the supply of mature entrants was exhausted but by that time the normal teacher colleges were extending their programmes and expanding the number of entrants to their courses.

Apart from some concern at the slow release of intending student teachers from the armed forces and the speed in setting up the colleges, members of parliament on both sides of the house reacted favorably to the scheme and its implementation.

The question of buildings was a far more difficult problem. Shortages and the priorities of housing, hospitals and industry made the problem a very serious one. If the tripartite system was to succeed much depended upon the increase in grammar school places; particularly in certain areas, the growth and diversity of new technical schools and the housing of secondary modern schools in modern, well-equipped purpose-built buildings.

Although the proportion of grammar school places was increased between 1945 and 1955, the chances of a child entering a grammar school varied considerably from place to place. The programme for new technical schools was extremely disappointing and virtually meant that most local education authorities were providing a bipartite system rather than a tripartite one.

The question of "parity of esteem" was affected by a number of factors, but not least was the idea of replacing

the name of an old, often condemned, ill-equipped elementary school which would transform it into an exciting, new experimental secondary modern school. In ordinary times a massive building programme of emergency proportions may have brough an "esteem" to these schools but in the necessarily limited way new secondary schools were constructed little of the impetus of change seems to have reached the public or politicians.

Doubts and concerns on these matters were constantly raised in Commons debates and, as members became aware that the 1944 Act could only work if solutions were found and implemented, some began to look for alternative schemes which by their radical nature could remove many of the barriers, that in the circumstances were inevitable under the accepted interpretation of the Act.

The existence of the all-age school was a special problem, for where no school existed, preference was given over the replacement of an existing school, particularly as, migration to the towns and a declining rural population meant that there was little overcrowding.

It was not until the advent of David Eccles as Minister that the Conservative election pledge, on this topic, became something of a reality. In the Queen's Speech of November 30, 1954 there appeared the premise that:

> Special attention will be paid to the provision of secondary schools, village schools, village halls and playing fields in the rural areas.[1]

This policy was welcomed by all sides as a move to slow down the movement from rural areas. Sir David described, how, on becoming Minister, he had examined the position in terms of priorities:

> There cry out for action all the old schools in town and country, all the over-sized classes and all the all-age schools. All these, whether in England or in Wales, are quite unworthy, and we must commit ourselves to getting rid of the whole lot.[2]

He went on to say that they together added up to a formidable task and that it was impossible to tackle them all effectively all at once. He believed that the central purpose of the 1944 Act was to provide every child with a secondary education, and if there were still all-age schools, the promises of the 1944 Act had not been fulfilled and reorganization was his first duty.

The implementation of this policy, which was virtually to eliminate all-age schools by 1960 largely fell in the period after 1953 but the fact that so many schools continued to exist so long after the passing of the 1944 Act was an unsatisfactory aspect of how the Act was not implemented fully during the period of this study.

The 1944 Education Act charges the local education authorities to do a number of things: it does not however tell them how to do them. In relation to secondary

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[1] Ibid., Vol. DXXXV, p. 6.

[2] Ibid., pp. 129-130.

education they largely decided, with government encouragement to establish a tripartite pattern. The time of these decisions was during the period in which a Labour government was in office, with Labour having control of most local authorities. It was therefore a Labour government decision to develop the tripartite system and the inevitable conclusion that must be drawn is that, at the time of the Act, the question of selection through examination and allocation was not a political issue of great intensity.

The eleven-plus examination had been justified on a psychological and pedagogical rationale which was supported in turn by Hadow, Spens and Norwood. In the early days of the eleven-plus the Ministry stressed that that criteria for selection or allocation to the various schools should not only be on intellectual aptitude but also pupil interests and aspirations. This rather pious wish went unrealized and the flaws in the "parity of esteem" idea soon appeared.

Gradually parliamentarians, particularly an element on the Labour benches came to the realization that secondary education for all, if it allowed different types of schools, did not bring about a "parity of esteem." It is clear that many expected too much, too soon and bearing in mind the great difficulties that prevailed, the tripartite system, working at its best, was allowed very little time to prove itself. For either of the governments in power, during the period of this study, to switch from the tripartite model

to all out comprehensive secondary education would seem virtually impossible. Not only would it have brought administrative chaos and confusion, it would have plunged all secondary education into a state of uncertainty and dissipated the efforts being made to make the half built system function effectively.

The Conservative government expressed no desire to change direction while the Labour members calling for change, expanded during their years of office, began to emerge as a clear majority before the end of the period of this study. The attitude favoring experimentation was always present in both parties although it began to decline with the Socialists as their view hardened on universal comprehensive education. The Conservative attitude was always inclined to cautious experimentation on a limited scale, with schemes particularly aimed to meet local conditions.

The growing number of opponents of the tripartite system in educational circles gave backing and encouragement to the political opponents of the system, causing their numbers to expand and their protests to grow. Undemocratic, inhumane and antipsychological were terms repeatedly used while there was constant questioning of the accuracy and fairness of eleven-plus selection processes, arguing that although they claimed to measure native intelligence they were culturally biased. A further claim was that the eleven-plus put the instruction

and curriculum of the primary schools into a strait-jacket and that the test to a child of eleven was an ordeal and made no provision for late developers.

Behind Conservative thinking in support of the system, one can detect, although they are often below the surface, three basic assumptions. Firstly, there is a recognition that educational resources were scarce and therefore choices had to be made in educational provision; secondly, that the functioning of society depended upon the identification of the ablest pupils who would then be given correct conditions for them to grow; thirdly, that ability is fixed and can, at least to some extent, be recognized.

The tripartite system was not without supporters. A most reputable educator, Professor W. O. Lester Smith, speaking at a conference on secondary education at the University of London on June 30, 1951 said: "The secondary modern school may be the great contribution of this generation to our society."[3]

This hope was based on the original intention of the school as offering a new experimental, non-examination, society orientation approach but was restricted by financial considerations and having to live in the shadow of the academic grammar school, its successes, although

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[3] Times Educational Supplement, Vol. 1888, July 6, 1951, p. 550.

not rare were unspectacular and insufficient to give them a popular appeal.

The Times Educational Supplement described the handicap of the secondary modern thus:

> The secondary modern school started with two disadvantages. As a novelty it was suspect, and it was housed in buildings that too often bore the stigma of the past. Add the established prestige of the grammar school and it is easy to see why many parents feel frustrated when their children are selected for a modern course.[4]

In 1953 the Labour Party pledged a complete overhaul of the entire system and promised

> Labour will abolish the practice of eleven-plus for different types of school because it is convinced that all children would benefit if during the whole of the period of their secondary education, they shared the facilities both social and educational of one comprehensive school.[5]

During the period of the Labour government education had been largely outside the political arena but with the growing division on the method of implementing secondary education there developed an increasing tendency for education to be drawn into the political cockpit.

The Independent schools which had, apart from Part III, had been largely unaffected by the Act, were subject only to spasmodic discussion during the years of the Labour administration. Under Part III of the Act, it had become necessary for all Independent schools to be registered and any school not maintaining the required

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[4] Ibid., p. 551.

[5] Ibid., Vol. 2430, December 15, 1961.

level was subject to closure. This particular part of the Act was not implemented even by 1951 but both major political parties were pledged to implementation as soon as possible.

It was not until June 1954 that the Minister took the first steps towards complying with this section of the Act. Clearly the pressures on the government in the years immediately following the passage of the Act called for action in meeting the requirements of the Act in other directions.

Similarly the focusing of attention on provision of teachers, building problems and the new secondary schools had allowed the Independent schools to go virtually undiscussed in parliamentary debate. With the return of a Conservative government and general Socialist frustration at the way the state system was turning out, a new anger and hostile opposition was directed by members of the Socialist ranks against what they believed to be the privileged position of the Independent schools.

On this issue the two major political parties were clearly directly opposed. The Labour Party believed that no egalitarian society could exist if some children were educated outside a common school. If this were true inside the state system, as under the tripartite method, it was obviously worse if some children were outside the state system altogether.

The Conservative philosophy of free choice and variety of school caused them to support parents who wished to provide, at their own expense, schooling for their children outside the state system. Nevertheless many of them were clearly aware of the wide gulf that existed between the "public" schools and many schools within the state system. Rather than destroy the "public" schools they sought to improve state schools thus narrowing the gap, and at the same time widen the intake of the public schools by following the suggestion of the Fleming Report in providing more scholarship places.

The shortages and economies of the Labour administration continued, at least in the first years of the Conservative administration. Unlike the economies of the forties the latter economies provoked a bitter and prolonged response from the Labour opposition. Partisan argument had replaced co-operation and consensus. Education was now political and what was the "essential fabric" of education and what constituted a cut in government spending were argued purely on political lines.

The early hopes following the passage of the Act soon turned to a certain amount of disillusionment and the demand which gradually grew for a replacement of the tripartite system with a common secondary school was a distinct feature of the period.

The movement from an almost non-political approach to education to a bitter, partisan struggle clearly has

its roots in the second half of this study. It began with the state secondary school issue and extended to the area of Independent schools.

Clearly many of the disagreements of this period remain unresolved today and the 1944 Education Act, or at least its interpretation, has changed, several times.

Perhaps the real crux of what happened and what really shaped the destiny of the Act is best described by its architect writing 8 years after it was passed:

> This is the irony of the Act of 1944. Though there have been real and striking advances, its full and rapid implementation is being retarded by the aftermath of the same war which called it forth.[6]

[6] W. O. Lester Smith, Education in Great Britain, O.U.P., London, 1967.

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