

# FORUM

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# Official Policy and the Concept of Comprehensive Education

The Department of Education and Science, under its single Secretary of State, is now responsible not only for school and further education, but also for higher education as a whole. Some decisions, taken over the last year, have been disturbing. These include the determined rejection of the unified system of higher education advocated by the Robbins report and, more recently, the nature of some of the schemes being accepted (and rejected) for secondary school reorganisation.

FORUM has consistently stood for a genuine system of comprehensive secondary education—one where, to quote the leader in the last issue,

'all the doors are kept open to all the children for as long as possible'. We have, equally, argued for 'a comprehensive system of higher education open to all who qualify, and comprising an integrated system of institution of equal status, offering equal, though various, opportunities' (in our 'Open Letter to the Robbins Committee', Vol. 4, No. 1, Autumn 1961).

In view of current developments in both these fields, the Editorial Board commissioned the following articles from two of its members, the first covering secondary school reorganisation, and the second, developments in higher education.

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## Social Selection and the Doncaster Plan

BRIAN SIMON

'Let no one look forward complacently and see the future merely as the abolition of the 11-plus examination. The implications of any form of reorganisation of secondary education are far reaching and are worthy of careful study.'

These words were written a year ago by the President of the Doncaster Association of the N.U.T. in the foreword to a pamphlet, produced by the local association, criticising what has now become known as the Doncaster-Cardiff plan of 'comprehensive' reorganisation.

The warning was apt, although the advice of the teachers was rejected by the local authority. Instead of the fully comprehensive system proposed by the teachers, and regarded as eminently practical (common schools from eleven to sixteen followed by a junior college) the authority has gone ahead with its own plan, which has been approved by the Secretary of State. In this plan, as is now well known, parents have to choose when their children are aged thirteen whether or not they wish them to remain at school for five years and sit 'A' levels. If they are prepared to guarantee that they will do so, the

children will be transferred to the 'grammar' school. If not, they remain in the 'modern' (or 'high') school—they may transfer at 16 after taking 'O' level. This plan is presented variously as 'an evolutionary step towards greater flexibility of a comprehensive system', as a means of saving the 'high' ('modern') schools from 'the obliteration occurring in other areas of the country', as a means of abolishing the 11-plus and 'retaining in essence the academic grammar schools tradition', and of making parental choice of schools 'really relevant'.

### Fully comprehensive ?

The D.E.S. Circular on the reorganisation of secondary education (10/65) listed six different methods of introducing comprehensive education. Among these were two which were defined as 'not fully comprehensive' and as acceptable only as 'interim solutions'. These include the Doncaster-Cardiff pattern. The Doncaster scheme in fact pays lip service to the ultimate desirability of a 'fully comprehensive schools organisation.' But no plan has been made for this evolution—nor does it appear that the D.E.S., in approving the plan, has insisted on this in any way. In finally rejecting the teachers' scheme, the local authority (Labour controlled, by the way) say that in view of current difficulties (buildings, staffing) they 'cannot envisage a better

immediate solution' than their own and—and this is just the point—are confirmed in this view by the fact that an increasing number of other authorities are now adopting this solution to similar situations'.

The Comprehensive Schools Committee performed a useful function last Autumn when it pointed out that the kind of school system that will emerge from reorganisation proposals depends on the action of the Secretary of State in approving or disapproving schemes submitted (as all now have to be). During the Summer and early Autumn three schemes that can be called 'fully comprehensive', based to some extent on grouping existing schools to form comprehensive units, were partially, in some cases substantially, rejected (Stoke-on-Trent, Liverpool, Luton)<sup>1</sup> while four based on or similar to the Doncaster plan were accepted (Doncaster, Cardiff, Wakefield, Middlesbrough). By this means a green light was given to authorities indicating a minimum type of reorganisation (involving, of course, 'the abolition of the 11-plus') that would be acceptable.<sup>2</sup> At the same time a sharp warning appears to have been given to authorities wishing to bring about a radical reorganisation, with Liverpool as the scapegoat. This has been, in effect, the objective result of the D.E.S.'s actions.

### Parental choice

The issues raised by the Doncaster scheme, as the local N.U.T. has pointed out, are far reaching indeed, and those who support and have fought for the idea of the comprehensive school need to be fully seized of them. The key question is whether a deliberate attempt is now being made to build into the state system of education, under the umbrella of the comprehensive school, a clear principle of *social selection*.

This issue hinges on the significance of the introduction of 'parental choice' as *the determining factor* in the division of children into two or more parallel types of school, each having different facilities and

different vocational directions. The first paper drawn up by Doncaster Development Sub-Committee states that 'the richest contribution of the 1944 Education Act' was to ensure that 'grammar school education' is open to talent, and this 'must naturally be retained'. The paper then argues, in a curious passage, that had fees been retained 'in addition to the existing system of entry to grammar schools, the present dissatisfaction would not have arisen' while parental freedom of choice 'would also have been realised'. The effect of the 1944 Act is then characterised as follows: 'Parents who feel that their children should receive a more academic education or be educated in an atmosphere of the traditionally established schools, have been deprived in fact so far of that right of decision'.

### A new separation

What is being argued here, surely, is that middle class parents should be able to ensure a 'grammar school' (i.e. a separatist) education for their children if they want it. 'Before the war, ability to pay fees was an accepted way of entry to grammar schools. This could now be replaced by parental choice so long as certain safeguards are accepted, as is now being done in parts of Leicestershire'. Although there is no reference to class in these documents, the class differentiation which Doncaster-type parental choice will bring about is the key issue, as was recognised by the local N.U.T. association, by the Comprehensive Schools Committee, and many others.<sup>3</sup>

The reference to Leicestershire is unfortunate. That county was the first to introduce 'parental choice' as determining between two alternative routes, though here the choice is made at fourteen and the promise required for transfer to the 'grammar' (or 'upper') school only to sixteen. But research has already shown what many suspected: that parental choice even at this level discriminates

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<sup>1</sup>For the Liverpool and Stoke schemes, see FORUM. Vol. 7, No. 2, and Vol. 7, No. 3 respectively; Luton has now worked out a modified scheme.

<sup>2</sup>The Development Sub-Committee of the Doncaster Education Committee, which drew up the scheme, report that they were 'particularly impressed by the impartial comments of Her Majesty's District Inspector of Schools and by his advice and confirmed their view that an evolutionary development towards comprehension was the best and only solution justified at this time'. Wakefield, which has a similar scheme, reports that their representatives were 'well received by the officers of the Department, who appeared to sympathise greatly with the aims of the scheme and with the preparations for reorganisation which has already taken place'.

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<sup>3</sup>'It appears to us that there is a further disadvantage in the proposed transfer at 13-plus where the transfer is dependent on parents giving guarantee that their children will remain to 18', write the Doncaster teachers. 'One of the points made forcibly in a number of recent reports has been that potential talent is not developed to the fullest extent amongst girls and children of parents in lower income groups. We think it highly probable that differentiation at thirteen-plus would intensify the problem, for we fear that many parents of the lower income groups will not commit themselves, so early, to guarantee that their children will remain at school to eighteen. It would be more likely for them to take such a decision when they have some assessment of what their children will do at "O" level. It is not possible to foresee this at all clearly at the age of thirteen plus'. *Re-organisation of Secondary Education in Doncaster*, p. 7.

against the working class child—that, to put it simply, middle class parents choose an extended education for their children more frequently than working class parents.<sup>4</sup> Partly because parental choice of this type operates in this way, the Leicestershire Education Committee has taken the decision that transfer will take place automatically for all children at the age of fourteen when the leaving age is raised to sixteen (and, in one area at least, before that). Thus the perspective is of a 'fully comprehensive' system to be achieved in a defined and limited time—a system in which parental choice operates in the form of choice between varying courses within the single school.

### Middle class schools ?

But the Doncaster plan holds out no such perspective—and, further, presents working-class parents with no genuine choice at all since these, in general, are *not in a position* to make the promise required—*yet the ability to make this promise is the condition for the existence of a choice in any meaningful sense of the term*. This, of course, is why the authority expects only 25% of parents to 'choose' an extended education to eighteen for their children. No information has been vouchsafed as to the socio-economic structure of Doncaster; but a separatist education for 25% over thirteen in these conditions involves, almost by definition, a separation by social class. The 'grammar' schools will become middle class schools possibly to an even greater extent than they were in the 1930's.<sup>5</sup> The clock will be well and truly turned back.

One might feel less concerned about the situation if there were any recognition, in any of the Doncaster documents, that the scheme proposed has the tendency outlined here, or if there were any attempt to answer the charges of the Doncaster N.U.T. in this respect. But the documents make no reference whatever to the class factor—the main discriminatory factor in educational opportunity highlighted in every official report made to the government over the last ten years (e.g. the *Early Leaving* report, the Crowther report, above all the Robbins report,

which is packed with *facts* about the situation—particularly Appendix I)<sup>6</sup>. The Summary of the Doncaster scheme states: 'this criterion of choice to stay till the age of 18 is a reasonable choice to demand from parents when their son or daughter is 13 years old'. This is an asseveration, not an argument. It continues: 'With the advice of Heads of schools it is a fair decision to make'. The meaning of this sentence is obscure. This is literally all the argument that is presented on this issue—considered sufficient, apparently, to set against all the concrete evidence compiled by sociologists, government committees and advisory councils over the last ten years. If this is the way research is to be 'applied', one wonders whether it is worth the taxpayer financing it at all.

It is our contention that the D.E.S. should not have accepted the Doncaster plan, even as an interim measure. *The Times*, editorially fearful of comprehensive reorganisation, has openly called on the middle class to fight for its own interests. The Doncaster scheme, with its nostalgic yearning for the '30s and its evident attempt to rehabilitate the grammar school as a class school, appears as an effective means for this purpose—as the *Daily Telegraph* has pointed out. The scheme is not only a step backwards. It appears as a serious and deliberate attempt to challenge the whole concept of comprehensive education.

### The need for vigilance

It is not too much to ask that the Secretary of State should not approve any further schemes of this type, while those authorities whose schemes have already been approved might be asked to think again—as Liverpool and Stoke have been asked. The nature of these schemes shows the importance of vigilance by local, as well as national bodies supporting the idea of comprehensive education. All local schemes need the most careful scrutiny, while the public deserve to be kept informed of the full implications of reorganisation proposals. At this stage in the educational history of this country it is surely of vital importance to ensure that new obstacles are not set in place of the old; least of all that this should be done while the public is under the impression that a movement towards 'comprehensive education' is taking place. After all it was Dame Florence Horsbrugh who defined a common (or comprehensive) school many years ago as 'one

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<sup>4</sup>The difference is substantial. Thus in a predominantly working class area (South Wigston), 77.5% of non-manual workers' children transferred to the upper school in 1964, compared to 30.0% of manual workers' children. In the predominantly middle class area of Oadby in the same year, the percentages were 89.2 and 59.1 respectively. See John Eggleston, 'How Comprehensive is the Leicestershire Plan?', *New Society*, 25 March 1965.

<sup>5</sup>How does the authority propose to ensure, as it claims is necessary, that 'those who intend to proceed at 13-plus to grammar schools . . . attain at least as high an academic standard as at present in grammar schools'?

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<sup>6</sup>On the Crowther report see, for instance, Jean Floud, 'Reserves of Ability', FORUM, Vol. 3, No. 2; on the Robbins report, Jean Floud, 'Are the Robbins Estimates Conservative? An assessment of Appendix One', FORUM, Vol. 6, No. 3.

which is intended to cater for *all* the secondary education of *all* the children in a given area'. In what conceivable sense can the Doncaster type scheme, for children over 13, be described as 'an evolutionary step' in this direction?

## The Binary System in Higher Education

F. C. A. CAMMAERTS

The debate, initiated in the House of Lords by Lord Robbins on December 1st, provided the opportunity for considering all those parts of the Robbins Report which had been rejected or postponed indefinitely by the Government. Lord Robbins laid particular stress in his introduction to the debate on the so-called Binary System of higher education, announced by the Secretary of State for Education and Science in his Woolwich speech. On reading the debate in Hansard, one can only be impressed by the standard of knowledge and understanding revealed by most of those who took part in a debate which lasted nearly five and a half hours. It was, perhaps, unfortunate that a great many of the participants had university interests, and were, quite naturally, primarily concerned with the delays in expansion caused by the moratorium on buildings. Nevertheless, Lord Robbins himself, in his vigorous attack on Government policy, gave a suitable weighting to the major issue of the policy which arises from the decision to perpetuate two forms of higher education.

### A curious alliance

He rightly pointed out the paradox of a Government pledged to abolish 'artificial hierarchies and invidious distinctions in the schools . . . being actively engaged (under the same Secretary of State) in preventing the elimination of such hierarchies and such distinctions in higher education'. He listed the curious alliance of those who favour a Binary System; on the one hand, the most conservative of university purists who want to keep the present university system intact, and, on the other hand, the local education authorities and the Department of Education and Science itself, who wish to retain their direct control over vocational courses of all kinds and teacher training in particular. He might have added the extreme egalitarians, who regard the universities with such suspicion that they wish to keep them isolated from the major expansion of higher education which is bound to come.

It was interesting, during the debate, to note how many speakers defended the Binary System because

it was cheaper. Indeed, the policy was defended almost exclusively on practical and material grounds except by Lord Snow, who quoted the excellent work done by two good regional technical colleges, and said that 'we must see that they get prestige and freedom'. He went on to say, 'we may get a different and, in some ways, a more inventive section of education'. His defence was singularly unconvincing, and was rendered even more so when the principal of one of the colleges he quoted wrote a letter to *The Times* on December 6th, opposing the Binary System.

In the particular area of teacher training, Lord Annan and the Earl of Longford both gave the Department of Education and Science full credit for the increase of four thousand students, admitted to colleges of education this year, and Lord Annan doubted the ability of university administration to produce such effective results. I have no doubt, however, that the Secretary of State would himself give full credit for the increase in numbers of students where it should be given, that is to say, to the colleges who have, with very little extra provision, managed at great inconvenience to everyone and with the exercise of great ingenuity, to meet the demands created by suitable candidates.

### A new policy?

The issue of the rights or wrongs of the policy of a Binary System has become extremely confused because of the many different interests affected by it. The policy is not a new policy at all. It is, in effect, an attempt to preserve the *status quo* under the dignified title of a new policy. It ensures that we will retain all those institutions which are at present labelled universities and all the new ones which are on the planning board—the colleges of advanced technology—in one separate sector, which has variously been defined as the autonomous or even the private sector of higher education. This sector will continue to receive its funds presumably through the University Grants Committee, and will presumably continue to retain the complete freedom in academic matters which Lord Snow defined in the debate as the 'possible freedom to make Coptic studies compulsory for all undergraduates'. (The only sanction that would be applied to such a wild decision would be the reluctance of students to apply to such an institution and, eventually, the reluctance of the University Grants Committee to make much money available for such an institution.)

The rest of education for all students who have left school will be lumped together in the public sector of higher education and will include all technical colleges which have not yet received the status

of C.A.T., all colleges of education, colleges of further education, specialist subject colleges and colleges concerned with an immensely wide area of varied training programmes; a grouping of tremendous variety, including an almost infinite range of courses. These colleges may be given a greater measure of control of their own affairs, though present negotiations would appear to be treating this problem as a piecemeal problem within the public sector. However, fundamentally, they will continue to be administered by local education authorities with a greater or lesser exercise of central control from the Department of Education and Science.

This policy will enable the Department and the local authorities to exercise a direct influence on 'the efficient use of the plant' if they wish. No doubt, the pressure for more intensive use of the plant will apply to the public sector alone and not to the private sector.

There is no doubt that such a policy has very obvious advantages in the immediate future for everyone concerned with administration, but what will be the results on the long run? There is not much doubt that the policy will perpetuate inferior staff/student ratios, inferior salaries of teachers, inferior provision of libraries and equipment and inferior conditions for students for the public sector of higher education. It will ensure that, for a long time to come, the public sector will recruit its students very largely from 'second choice candidates'. It will perpetuate the illusory esteem which is attached to all internal honours degrees as compared with all other qualifications. It will, in fact, ensure that the situation between the two systems will be an almost exact parallel with the situation that has existed for twenty years between secondary grammar and secondary modern schools.

### **Stale arguments**

All the arguments and all the attitudes which go into the defence of this system can be closely paralleled by all former and present defences of the bi-partite system of secondary education. The fact that there are secondary modern schools today running sizeable sixth forms and 'A' level courses does not delude anyone into thinking that a genuine equality of opportunity can be achieved in secondary education under its present binary system.

One of the most serious immediate results of this policy will almost certainly be to discourage the recruitment of young men of suitable quality into the colleges of education. No one can doubt that the real answer to the teacher supply problem is the encouragement, by every method possible, of the

recruitment of men to the teaching profession in greater numbers.

This policy ignores or denies the Robbins evidence on the pool of ability. It chooses to ignore the tremendously rapid improvement in the quality of work achieved by students in the public sector of higher education. It also fails to recognise the national as opposed to the local character of so many of those institutions, but, perhaps most important of all, it has failed to grasp the lesson which could have been learnt from the United States.

There is much evidence from the United States that if you raise your sights and your standards in higher education, you encourage recruitment and, eventually, achieve a much higher proportion of students able and willing to achieve much higher standards; secondly, that the limited commitments of vocational courses, including teaching, will drive able students to seek higher qualifications in order to achieve greater flexibility in their future career.

It is a very serious matter indeed that one of the results of this policy is likely to be that the autonomous sector of higher education will not be brought more closely under public control, and yet, from a reading of the Robbins Report, two conclusions stand out clearly: a healthy development of university work inevitably involves a greater measure of public control, while a healthy development of the rest of higher education involves a greater degree of autonomy for what is now called the public sector.

### **Comprehensive higher education**

What we require at present is a genuine policy of comprehensive higher education, the creation of a system with common forms of control and of freedom with extensive possibilities of inter-changeability of students and a co-ordinated policy of courses, equipment and research, geared to the needs of society, its industries and its professions. In many ways, the specialist vocational nature of many courses outside universities have been recognised recently as having serious deficiencies. Technical colleges are developing their liberal arts sides as quickly as they can, but they are encountering the inevitable difficulties of the restriction of motivation of their students. Colleges of education require to extend their work to embrace all those other forms of training for social services at present dispersed in a wide variety of institutions, some in universities and some in technical colleges and in university extension work. Higher education is at present fragmented so that there is practically no contact between one kind of institution and another, however similar the nature of the work carried out.

The development of research in such matters as closed-circuit television and the use of computers is undoubtedly highly extravagant in its present form. In the long run, there might be plenty of evidence to show that there would be a genuine saving of money and of staff time in a comprehensive unitary system. What we have at present is a system that has grown up according to immediate needs and pressures.

It is indeed unfortunate that it should be a Socialist Government which is putting forward a definite theory that the present system is the best and the most workable. When challenged in a public meeting in Leicester recently on the apparent discrepancy between a comprehensive policy of secondary education and a Binary System of higher education, Mr. Crosland answered that the sheer numbers of colleges seemed to make the latter essential, but admitted that it was a complicated problem which needed constant re-examination. It is a policy without planning and without offering the opportunities for change which are essential. It is a policy that is intended to last for a decade or

so, but, even more serious, it is a policy which is apparently approved of as well by the Conservative Party. Therefore, the opportunity for reversing it appears extremely difficult, unless the teaching profession as a whole make their opinion felt in no uncertain terms.

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#### LORD ROBBINS ON THE BINARY SYSTEM

*'If I had known that anything so reactionary and half-baked as the binary system was going to be propounded, I certainly would have suggested adding a few paragraphs to the Report, dealing with this as it deserves.'*

*'What seems to me so horrible about this decision is that our perfectly practical evolutionary possibilities are being stifled, such as the proposed conjunction of a technical college at Coventry with the new university there. I regard that as pedantic myopia of the most backward-looking kind.'*

From the *Universities Quarterly*,  
December 1965.

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## NON-STREAMING IN THE JUNIOR SCHOOL

There are still a few copies of the third impression of this booklet available.

It includes the Evidence submitted by the FORUM Editorial Board to the Plowden Committee, presenting a detailed case for non-streaming in the junior school. In addition, it includes a number of articles bearing on non-streaming by practising teachers and others.

This booklet has achieved a wide circulation among teachers and in Colleges of Education. It was well received by the educational press.

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From: BOOKS MANAGER, FORUM, 71 CLARENDON PARK ROAD, LEICESTER



# The Probationary Year

Teaching is too often a lonely job. There is, of course, the camaraderie of the staff-room but when the bell goes, all, young and old, the experienced and the inexperienced, depart to their separate class-rooms to carry on the job in hand. Rarely does one teacher visit another. It is ironical that the only interlopers are H.M.I.'s or local inspectors (now advisers) — or, very occasionally, perhaps the head.

This situation is particularly hard on the young teacher, the newcomer to the profession, straight out of college. In most other professions the newcomer works alongside a colleague who can advise and assist him. Not so in teaching—at present, at any rate. Here he works alone and at what is, perhaps, the most challenging of all the professions.

Officially the main responsibility for a teacher's probation rests with the employing authority, the local education authority. It is the authority's job to decide, before the end of the period, whether the teacher 'has given evidence of practical proficiency', whether to recommend to the Secretary of State that the probation period should be extended by six months, or whether to recommend 'that the teacher should be determined unsuitable for further employment as a qualified teacher'. Administrative Memorandum

4/59, from which these quotations are taken, stresses in addition that it is the authority's responsibility 'to make arrangements for more general help and guidance, to supplement that which the head teacher and staff can give, and to see that the teacher knows to whom he can turn for it'. The probationary year is seen not only as an opportunity 'for testing a teacher's capacities' but also 'for helping him during what may be a "difficult running-in" period'.

In focusing attention on this issue we have deliberately used the technique of allowing young teachers to express their own views on their experiences during the first year's teaching. It is clear that there are problems enough, and that these can only be overcome if schools, colleges (and Institutes of Education) and authorities work more closely together. One article, that by Mr. Sealey, indicates the kind of approach that is now beginning to be made by all these agencies while another reports a pioneer experiment in which the probationary year is made an integral part of the teacher's preparation.

With the planned increase in the numbers of students in training the problems of the probationary year will become of growing importance. This special number then, concentrates on a key aspect of teaching as a profession.

## Probationers Talking

### Opinions on the first year

*For the last two years, the Leicester College of Education has run a conference for its ex-students who have completed their first year's training. Last year some 50 young teachers took part—about a quarter of the College's annual output. All the discussions were taped and, in the article below, George Kitson—Principal Lecturer in Education—brings the material together and highlights the most widely held views. Caroline Nicholson brought together a similar group for a different purpose in London—to act as a source for the English New Education Fellowship's memorandum to the Plowden Committee. These discussions were also taped and in both articles all quotations are taken from the verbatim proceedings. Two recent probationers, Mr. Benton and Mrs. Hicking, also contribute their own experiences.*

# The Leicester Conference

GEORGE KITSON

'Now that you're teaching you'd better forget all that rubbish you learned at the college.' However trite this remark might seem, it appeared as quoted and in several disguises at a conference for Probationary Teachers who had gathered in Leicester for a long week-end to discuss some of the problems with which they had been faced in their first year of teaching.

Remarks such as this indicate that all is still not well in the relationship between Colleges of Education and the schools. Of course the young teacher, with his loyalties still rooted in the college where he was trained, is particularly sensitive to this kind of criticism, yet it ought to be a salutary warning to those of us who are engaged in the training of teachers. 'There is quite a lot of resentment against training college lecturers and if you think about it and try to get through the rationalisations it seems to be based on two factors, one is that college lecturers appear to be advocating methods which teachers in the schools don't understand or know about or approve of, and in the second place, there is quite frankly an element of almost jealousy—these blokes have got on without any apparent merit and are in soft jobs, whereas the man in the school is in the front line.'

## Teacher involvement

Whilst feelings of this kind exist, the resultant conflict will inevitably become focused on the young teacher about to embark on his career. How can these feelings be reduced? The answer was given to the conference, not by a tutor, but by another young teacher. 'A great many lecturers don't take teachers into their confidence. The only time they ever see a tutor is when he comes in to look at his students and says very politely, "Do you mind if I come into your classroom?" He seldom discusses techniques or teaching methods with the class teachers and teachers are seldom invited to the college to see what is going on there. They are never allowed to feel that they can contribute anything to the training. I am sure that greater involvement for teachers would reduce much of the hostility that exists at present.' Here indeed is sound advice for the colleges.

To many young teachers it was apparent that the function of the Probationary Year was never made

fully explicit, either by the college or the local authority. 'We would like to know something more of the probationary year from the employer's angle. It seems to vary so much. In some areas the full responsibility of your passing or failing is in the hands of the head, in others a local inspector or adviser, even an H.M.I. is brought in. It would be a profound relief if we knew where we stood.'

## Forced to conform ?

The misuse of what ought to be an opportunity for the young teacher to develop further under constructive guidance and supervision became blatantly clear from the following remark. 'A friend of mine who was a very good teacher found that the probationary period was used as a kind of threat to force her to conform with the wishes of the head in regard to her personal life. He almost revelled in the sense of power he had over her and in the end she did fail. It was only because her college tutor advised her to resign and recommended her to another authority that she was able to free herself from what amounted to a blackmailing situation.' This, of course, is a situation that is unlikely to occur frequently, but one which could develop, with quite disastrous consequences if the system allows it.

There was a very definite feeling that if the probationary year were to be anything more than a farce, it should be regarded more seriously by both head teachers and local authorities. Often it was not even mentioned. In a few instances the head showed the young teacher the report he proposed to send to the local authority at the end of the year. In other cases a visit from a local inspector appeared to be related in some obscure way to probationary assessment. Little attempt was made to finalise what was, for many young teachers, a period of uncertainty and concern about the future. 'My cards may be in the post at this very moment. I'm sure this kind of thing would never be tolerated in industry.'

There was a strong indication that young teachers found their most helpful source of guidance through informal personal contacts with the staff of their schools. 'The staffroom is marvellous in that there is complete interchange of ideas. There is none of the business where Mr. Smith has his little ploy and is unwilling to share the secrets of his methods. But I think you are more likely to find this kind of co-operation in a junior school.'

In contrast to this a secondary teacher reported: 'One of the troubles I find is that the teachers don't really know each other. They don't know what other teachers in the school are doing, or the kind of people they are. For years and years they go on scratching away at their own little pile, quite

unaware that it is part of a larger mountain.'

The young teacher welcomed a word of praise from his more experienced colleagues, yet it was seldom offered. 'If only they could bring themselves to give the odd word of praise. They wouldn't think of coming into the staffroom and saying, "Well done, Eric. I've seen such and such a book. Why don't you try that with another form?"' The inclination was to undermine rather than to build up confidence. The submerged hints in the staff meeting about the deterioration of the children's behaviour are taken rather personally by the inexperienced—'If other members of staff wouldn't let them be insolent then we might be able to hold our standards.'

On the whole it seemed that support for the young teacher was greater in the primary schools, although even there some help was regarded as interference and resented. 'I was told that I had to teach fractions whether the children understood them or not and whilst I was taking some other children out swimming my class was taken by the head and taught fractions in a way that was quite contrary to my own. I didn't like this, but felt I couldn't say anything.' Another teacher was less concerned about concealing her interference. 'I was told by the teacher of standard two that I should confine my teaching to what was done in standard one.' It is little wonder that we continue to perpetuate fragmented ideas about education whilst such attitudes exist.

There was a felt need to make available sources of help other than within the schools. Some areas provided courses and discussions for young teachers. A few of these appeared to be valuable, while others had little relation to the kinds of problems the young teacher had to face. The best was a series of well-organised courses for primary teachers which introduced the probationer to the new approaches that were being developed in a particular area. The worst was an onslaught on Colleges of Education, criticising them as ineffective institutions for the professional training of teachers.

### **The relevance of college**

However, from the College point of view, it was encouraging to find that something of value had resulted from the training experience of three years. 'One is surprised to find how relevant the college course was. In fact the things that they told you seemed to be the things that worked. Looking back on the training one of the criticisms that I heard was that we were never told anything. I now realise that facts aren't nearly so important. What did rub off was an attitude, an attitude to teaching and to

children. Any clot can rub up a bit of history, or French or English if he has a grain of sense.' And from a young secondary teacher working in a tough school in the south-east of London we heard, 'When one talks about subjects—that part of the college course seems relatively unimportant. What I think I got was an attitude and this has found its way into all that I do. You can't get this from a book. This may be one of the reasons why we find ourselves at variance with more established members of the profession. We are concerned about children while they concentrate on subjects.'

### **A question of confidence**

It was apparent, particularly from those who were teaching in secondary schools, that the young teacher felt a high degree of pressure which with his inevitable insecurity tended to threaten his confidence and precipitate his acceptance of a more traditional approach in his teaching. 'I needed help and went to the head and the deputy. They were of the old school—a bit stuffy, but sound. I reverted to the old way and now everybody is happy—except perhaps the children!' Is it possible for the young teacher to resist those influences that threaten to engulf him in a system of teaching with which he may have little affinity? 'I have found a terrific tendency for teachers to gang up against children, condemning them without trying to understand the reason why—even having a look at themselves and their own lessons. Short of isolating oneself from staffroom conversations of this kind it is extremely difficult not to compromise. This is what I have tended to do, but then the deputy told me I was unfriendly. You just cannot win.'

Acceptance and withdrawal are several of the ways by which the insecure deal with situations in which they feel threatened. But for the tougher young teacher who is prepared to make a stand for what he believes then 'One is regarded as the centre of insubordination, which perhaps one is. At college most people are likeminded and you don't realise how far on the extreme of things you tend to be. I was compelled to compromise in order to live in the place at all. Pressures are brought to bear in all kinds of subtle and insidious ways and it is often difficult to do what one wants to. The college might have been able to help us here, but I don't know how.' Perhaps indeed colleges might well spend more time in helping students to develop the skills necessary for dealing with situations of this kind.

During the conference there was an opportunity for the young teachers to discuss with three head teachers who represented different types of school. The heads were most emphatic in their concern for

helping the probationer during his first year out. Considerable effort was made and care taken in placing the beginner. 'The old story about the new-comer being placed with the "D" streams just isn't true. In several cases I have allowed the beginner to be in the school for a few weeks at the end of the Summer Term and then discussed with him his choice of class.'

These particular heads had very definite ideas about the function of the probationary period and regarded it as a year of continued support for the young teacher, emphasising the need to keep things professionally respectable. 'The reports I send to the office about the teachers are shown to them and discussed before they go in the postbox.' However, from the experience of those present, particularly the secondary teachers, there was an indication that many heads tended to be remote and unattainable, 'not within reach of the new lad who is trying like hell to give the impression that he has everything buttoned up and to go to the head required quite a degree of courage and swallowing one's pride'. It was suggested that head teachers might make it easier for the young teacher to approach them.

#### A therapeutic function ?

It might appear from the above extracts that this conference provided little more than a favourable opportunity for a group of young teachers to give vent to their feelings of hostility against the schools. To some extent this might well be recognised as a legitimate therapeutic function of such a gathering, but without exception, all the discussions showed considerable insight and understanding of the problems and experiences that were related. There was no licking of wounds, no self pity or projection of blame on to others, but rather a sincere and honest attempt to view the year's work in an objective and constructive way. Where criticism was expressed, it was not seen as a condemnation, but as a problem to be solved through the active participation of the young teacher in the school situation.

A number of points emerged from the weekend that might be helpfully noted by both schools and colleges alike. It was abundantly clear that the young teacher is far less confident during the first year than we imagine and it is at precisely this time (when he is least prepared to deal with it) that he has focused on him many of the tensions that are the result of conflicts between colleges and the schools. If the young teacher is to be protected from these pressures, it would appear that considerable effort must be made by the schools and colleges to reduce these conflicts. This in part might be achieved by involving the teaching profession more fully in the

task of training teachers rather than, as at the moment, leaving most of it to those who are 'no longer in the front line'. Through accepting greater responsibility for students during teaching practices, practising teachers would be more likely to accept a continuing responsibility for their younger colleagues during the probationary year.

This approach would involve some quite radical rethinking of our present teaching practice procedures. It might require the acceptance of an entirely different rôle for the college tutor in relation to his students while they were in schools and would necessitate much closer co-operation between the staffs of schools and colleges. From such co-operation the student in teaching practice and the young teacher in his first year out would derive enormous benefit and many of the relationship problems that were so apparent during the Leicester conference might be avoided.

## The New Education Fellowship Group

CAROLINE NICHOLSON

This will not be a precise paper in a researcher's sense: nothing has been measured. Nine young teachers—seven in their probationary year—met once a week for ten weeks running to discuss their professional problems. They did this within the wider context of providing evidence for the Plowden Committee. Wherever it was appropriate we used the Plowden questionnaire as a starter for discussion. There were some matters, important from the Committee's point of view, like the age-shift from primary to secondary, which the group felt they couldn't usefully talk about because they didn't know enough about it; but much of their experience was disturbingly relevant to the terms of the enquiry.

Here are the biographies of the group members:

Alison: Age 23, married, expecting first baby. Art-trained. Experience: Supply Teaching, London County Council (Primary).

Rosemary: Age 22, married. Training College (Secondary) trained. First post, Secondary Modern.

Karin: Age 22. Training College (Infant) trained. Experience: London County Council Infant School, and Independent Progressive School.

Margaret: Age 24. Degree and Diploma in Education. Experience: County Girls' Comprehensive and Polytechnic.

James: Age 23. Degree and Diploma in Education. First post: London County Council Comprehensive.

Anne: Age 23. Degree and Diploma in Education. First post: London County Council Comprehensive.

Joan C.: Age 24. Degree and Diploma in Education. First post, London County Council Comprehensive.

Michael: Age 27. Degree and Diploma in Education. Experience: Grammar School, Public School, Teacher Training College.

Joan B.: Age 24. Art-trained. First post, Comprehensive.

Summing up: two out of nine were men. Two were Training College trained; the rest, graduate plus one year's professional training—this included the two art teachers. All were teaching in London, four at comprehensive schools, and six had specialised in history. On the face of it this looked too homogeneous to yield much. As it turned out, the experience and the contributions were as various as the individuals.

### Applying for a job

We tape recorded every word and my rôle was more that of recorder than chairman. So much for the set-up. What about the content? Difficulties begin—or did for eight out of the nine in this group—when you apply for your first job. The real problem is to find out anything about it—anything that matters, that is. 'You want inside information about a school, the atmosphere prevailing—but you can't get it until you're inside yourself.' The Training College trained pair felt sore that they had had no choice of school and no opportunity to meet their future Heads. In one case, the College Principal had forbidden her students to apply direct to a school,

backing this up by refusing to sign any form of application other than one through the L.E.A.; in the other case, she had been told by the L.E.A. to turn up at the beginning of term at the only Infant school with a vacancy—'And God knows what would have happened if the Head hadn't liked me.' The Department of Education trainees had done rather better in the matter of choice, but had met bias against the comprehensive system. One Head of Department had confronted the non-conformer at the high table: 'Our girls usually go to good Grammar schools.' There had been a general experience of bad manners, from the Secondary Modern Head—'And don't come back in a fortnight's time and tell me you're pregnant,' to the Head of a famous public school who returned the applicant's letter with 'No' written across it. Only one of the group had had an interview which she felt to be informed and helpful, the rest ranged from the fixed to the fatuous, 'And when did you lose your Scottish accent?' It was a question of buttering up the nits . . . 'You're all right so long as you say you *like* teaching middle-ability children.'" Or, 'How can you teach the Middle Ages unless you are a convinced Christian?'

### Problems of hierarchy

No one had had any kind of introductory experience which had actually helped them; the old L.C.C.'s mass get-togethers for new teachers were felt to have been good in intention but ghastly in practice—I landed up in the kitchens eating cakes compulsively, 'One left with the conviction of what hell the first year was going to be.'

The initiates' difficulties don't end here. Once at school there are problems of hierarchy, some not serious (new teachers often get the extra duties or don't get a locker to themselves), others more so:

ANNE. The worst thing is being positively discouraged from trying out your own ideas.

KARIN. I stopped disagreeing—I just didn't do it, like making the boys and girls (of six) sit apart. But this involved inconsistency for the children. I did feel rather discriminated against. There were two of us new and we had our walls crammed with stuff and the Head used to say, 'Better change that! You've had it up at least a fortnight!' but the old teacher next door had the same stuff up all term and brought the same frieze out for Christmas two years running!

CAROLINE. Has anyone ever taken anything up which they felt strongly about?

ROSEMARY. Yes, I did. I found that a third of the school (secondary modern) did not do art, so I asked why and they said it was impossible. I asked if I could take an out-of-school class and the Head said, 'Yes, but only with the dim ones—because you mustn't interfere with the G.C.E.' I raised the question of the way the children rush out of school, too, but the Head wouldn't talk about it, said it was natural after a day in school and we weren't responsible after they are off the premises. Next week a boy was knocked down by a bus, but nothing's been said.

### Theory and practice

Many of the problems reach back to training. Only three of this group—the Infant teacher and the two Art teachers—felt any glow about their professional training. Amongst the rest the feeling was mainly that what they had been taught, and how they had been handled, during teacher-training hadn't been near enough to the demands of the job. 'You can't put into practice with a class of forty the educational theory you've learnt, so it would be more help in training college if they told us how to total our registers or organise forty children drinking their milk.' Everybody wanted more, and more effectively supervised, teaching practice, and 'It would have been a help if our educational psychology had had some bearing on what goes on in school, like why so-and-so is creating a riot at the back of the class!'

### A trouble-maker ?

This remark was a *cri-de-coeur*; the man who made it, a conscientious and caring teacher, was going through the teething troubles of how to be human and a teacher. He had discipline problems, if you like to put it that way. He believed in the importance of his work, taking a lot of trouble to do it better, minding when he fell down on it. Yet I have some senior colleagues who, when I told them of his disappointment with the educational psychology he'd been taught, reacted as though it were the destructive criticism of a disaffected trouble-maker.

This emerges as the key to the probationary problem. Young teachers come into the schools full of go and imagination. They meet the entrenched hierarchy—and very few survive. If we cannot become more rational about criticism, recognise that cultural evolution does not mean personal annihilation, that critical recruits to teaching are not undermining all we have personally ever achieved *but are in fact adding to it*, then the young teachers' lot is unlikely to be a happy one. It is certainly far less

productive than it should be. We squander the drive of youth with our persecutory preoccupation about criticism. And when you think about it intelligently, it's unlikely that nine young teachers would consistently attend a discussion group ten weeks running and contribute written records merely to be disaffected. The opposite was, in fact, the case. They were, all nine of them, exceptionally able and keen and they cannot be dismissed as 'untypical' in any negative sense.

### Conditions of work

Not that they restricted themselves to complaints. One session was, by agreement amongst themselves, spent on discussing conditions of work. Everyone felt uncomfortable pressure from shortage of time, except the one member who was then working in a Teacher Training College, so we went round the group canvassing individual requirements. Here is a summary.

Q. What would you most like altered by way of conditions of teaching?

JOAN C. (London Comp.). Smaller classes, 15-20, except for the VIth in which case ten. This would in itself create more time. (General agreement).

MICHAEL (Training College). Time to pursue research, either one day a week or a sabbatical year. (For lack of this, M. doubts whether he will ever teach in a school again, and he feels very sad about this.)

MARGARET (Grammar School and Polytechnic). More clerical help. Hours a week spent on cutting stencils for exam papers, etc.

ALISON (Primary). Someone to balance her registers. (Karin, our other Primary School teacher, though not here on this occasion, has already voiced the difficulties of attending to all the administrative side of things, dinner money, milk, etc.)

ROSEMARY (Secondary Modern in transition). More latitude in the timetable—her own domain—she, like other new teachers, has no room of her own—room for wall charts, a sink, proper boards and cupboards. Clay, for teaching geography for example, and other such equipment in every teaching room.

JOAN B. (Comp.). Says everyone here ought to teach Art in her school as she has most of the conditions they want. Would like more time, a four-day week to recuperate and plan things.

JAMES (Comp.). A sense of not spending all the time thinking about school. Relief from the pressure of the set timetable of five or six lessons to get through each day. Informal activity in afternoons.

ANNE (Comp.). More time to get to know certain children. More project work in the afternoons. *'You are not the teacher then, you are the helper.'*

Perhaps the most significant thing which came out of these exchanges was the need for exchange. The people working in comprehensive schools did have opportunities for letting off steam or swapping experiences with their peers, but they didn't have much idea what life was like in a C. of E. Infants (mixed). One of the historians found the teaching techniques of one of the Art teachers a revelation, one Oxford graduate would hardly believe how different attitudes were in Gravesend, and so on. On the one hand, the pooling of similar problems and the reassurance got from this; on the other hand, the riveting experience of hearing how the other half lives.

Seven out of nine said they thought this kind of discussion group could be a great help to a first or second year teacher—that it had been to them—provided the group members were a good mixture, provided the leader did his part right (not too little, not too much), provided they had a clear sense of purpose in meeting. They had in this instance—and some of their views have actually got through, via the E.N.E.F., to the powers that be.

## Probationary Problems

E. BENTON

For the purpose of this discussion, I propose to view the problems of the probationary year as divisible into two types—those whose solutions are to be found in the probationary teacher's adaptation to the school, and those whose solutions are to be found in the school's adaptation to the probationary teacher. The former are generally temporary, though perhaps more intensely felt, and will be considered first.

It is a matter of empirical fact that in those sections of society undergoing rapid changes there is a tendency for signs of stress to manifest themselves. Probationary teachers, in common with others entering new occupations, are faced with the

problems of a particularly radical change in their conditions of life. Their new job makes demands upon personal and social skills and qualities which may not have been greatly exercised previously; many new social contacts must be made, and habitual behaviour-patterns must be readjusted to meet the practicalities of a new environment.

As if this were not enough, the first months of teaching itself is a testing period in a much deeper sense than are most student teaching experiences. It was with some surprise that I realised, early on in my probationary year, how much my own student-teaching had been influenced, whether consciously or not, by the requirements of tutors and assessors. For the first time I now felt the full responsibility of planning an educational programme, and trying to put into practice my own ideas.

### A new experience

Related to this is the point that the experience of 'being-a-teacher' is, to the probationary year teacher, essentially a new one. His only past experience of teaching is likely to have been while still a student, and it is a matter of common observation that students on teaching practice continue to regard themselves as students—they are not dependent upon the school to supply their social needs and the end of the practice is always in sight. Hence the tendency is not to become deeply involved in the school situation. A partial solution to this difficulty might be provided by much longer teaching practices, a small part only of which would be subject to assessment. In this way teaching practices might become more realistic and useful experiences, making the transition from student to teacher a more gradual one.

The cumulative effect of these difficulties is to make the first year in teaching appear (to oneself and to others) less successful than it would otherwise be, and the experience of self-doubt is a common one.

It is, of course, true that these temporary difficulties are susceptible of no complete solution (excepting that of time itself), yet, having accepted this, much can still depend on the way we use our experience of problems. An understanding of our own feelings at this time may help us to deal more sensitively and usefully with the present problems of young adolescents attempting to cope with a whole range of external and internal changes; and of pupils grappling with a new and difficult subject. Also, we may be better equipped to prepare school leavers for their future problems of adjustment to a new rôle in life. If used in these ways, our initial difficulties can become a great asset.

## Challenge and Response

SHEILA HICKING

Now I propose to turn to a consideration of some unnecessary problems and limitations experienced by probationary teachers—those difficulties best overcome by the adaptation of the school to the probationary teacher.

The first year in teaching is necessarily a time of rapid professional growth, since every method tried is a new one, and fresh insights are gained from almost every experience. Our philosophies, and the methods by which we try to implement them, are continually being challenged by experience and demand constant reconsideration.

In my own probationary year, I found the flood of specific new insights far too rapid to be readily incorporated into the wider framework of a working-philosophy. Also, I was continually frustrated by having insufficient time to assess the relative values of different methods tried.

It is clearly important (and just as clearly impossible, in the context of the present teacher-shortage) for *all* teachers to be able to stand back from the everyday practicalities of their job, and to examine its wider implications and directions. But if this is important for all teachers, it is essential for newcomers to the teaching profession. The provision of more free time for the very small proportion of the profession which probationary teachers constitute would not present insurmountable organisational problems, and would, I am sure, have very beneficial long-term effects.

### Rigid structures

A second factor exerting a limiting influence upon the professional development of first year teachers is the general reluctance on the part of so many to discuss their attitudes and approaches, and to pool their resources and experiences. Why do so many staff meetings seem to be so dominated by discussion of trivialities, rather than of the job the school is trying to do? Why is the teacher's classroom still his castle?

I feel that the practice of 'promotion' from within the profession has many undesirable effects which are related with this problem, but that is another question. Primarily, it is the rigid and formal structure of traditional school society which is the most deadly enemy of all real communication between individuals in our schools, and hence of education itself. In even the most progressive and enlightened school, remnants of the traditional systems of formalities, rights, privileges, responsibilities, commanders and commanded, judges and judged are still felt as strong limitations. To create pathways through barriers such as these is the real task before future generations of young teachers.

My probationary year in teaching was definitely a challenge in more ways than one.

The school building was a challenge in itself. An old board school, it had been 'modernised' at the beginning of the century as a secondary school. However, the small, dark rooms and outside toilet facilities presented more of a problem in infant teaching. The room in which I was to work was extremely small with little storage or display space, and very little equipment. I must confess that in the circumstances I was very grateful for my tutor's instructions in 'how to make something out of nothing'.

My first appointment was with a reception class. (I don't know why it is but the newest, most inexperienced teacher invariably has the reception class. Personally, I think this is a very bad policy. At such an important stage in a child's development, I feel that a more experienced teacher is necessary.)

I was also asked to start a new reading scheme in the school. I was extremely worried about this, and felt that my college tuition on this subject had been very limited. Admittedly, we had had lectures and discussions on the psychological aspects of teaching reading, the problems of backwardness, and so forth; but, as for actual schemes and their names, the only things I knew I had learnt during teaching practice. However, I did begin a new scheme, although, again, equipment was limited and actual reading books were few, and had to be shared.

Schemes of work had been planned many years ago and I was presented with faded manuscripts from which to plan my year's work for reception stage children. My education course in college had prepared me considerably for such planning, but as far as the school was concerned it was a matter of 'hit or miss', with very little help from the Head or staff.

Unfortunately, the Head of the school left after my first term, and for the following two terms the deputy took responsibility for the school and for her own class. This was rather a chaotic situation with little school management at all. Staff were divided in their loyalties and each class tended to become a separate unit.

During this time I had no help or guidance of any description and was left to plan my work and organise my class as I thought. In many respects

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# A Wasted Year?

B. J. MAWBY

*Mr. Mawby is assistant secretary to the membership Committee and Secretary of the Young Teachers' Advisory Committee of the National Union of Teachers.*

'What happens in my probationary year?' I have been asked that question by hundreds of students in their last term at college. There is no doubt that concern about probation looms large in the minds of students. It is a concern difficult to allay because probation is different in every school: no two local education authorities approach it alike: no two head teachers react to the new teacher in the same way. The only consolation is that as the year ends most young teachers wonder why they were so worried but twelve months earlier.

## **The classroom situation**

Most students go to their first teaching post far from well equipped for their work. College has broadened their knowledge, has given them opportunity to teach, has introduced them to psychology but has not examined with them the day to day classroom situation which can tax the ingenuity and

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*(Continued from page 52)*

this was a good thing, and I had excellent opportunities to experiment with new ideas. However, I would have welcomed some idea of standards in the school, as I had very little experience on which to draw and make comparisons. Also, during this time we had very little stock in the school. The deputy, having taken on some of the responsibilities of the school, still didn't feel that she was completely in charge of the situation, and didn't like to spend excessively in case at any time a new Head was appointed. Similarly with any major disputes or decisions, nothing definite could ever be resolved.

I cannot say that my first year teaching was an easy one. It was definitely a challenge and at times I felt terribly frustrated. However, I completed the year successfully, if somewhat thinner and more cynical, and with the knowledge that it could not really get much worse.

patience of even the experienced teacher. But this is usually well balanced by the new teacher's enthusiasm and humility, based on the acceptance that there is still a lot to learn. Probation should mean that the foundation of experience should be laid under proper condition and supervision.

Paragraph 2 (b) of Schedule II of the Schools Regulations (1959) reads:

'During his probationary period a teacher shall be employed in such a school and under such supervision and conditions of work as shall be suitable to a teacher on probation.'

Notice that the regulation reads 'shall', not 'should': nor is a saving 'if possible' inserted. In the light of this regulation one imagines college principals and tutors in the closest collaboration with Chief Education Officers and their staffs, assessing each individual and choosing a school for each with the greatest care. One can hardly imagine every local administration saying this or that school is unfit or this or that head, whatever other virtues they possess, cannot supervise with sympathy and encouragement. Yet this is what the regulation demands.

## **A positive approach**

There are many college principals and tutors who do all they can to see their students well placed, but their influence over local authorities is limited. The administrator knows that so many new teachers must be recruited for the following September: naturally this is his first consideration. Both college and authority are much bothered about many things: it is amazing that they are able to do as much as they do for the individual. Clearly it is impossible to do all that should be done.

There are a few local education authorities who have appointed an officer whose duty is to supervise the work of the probationer. It is through such officers that a closer link between college and

authority can be made. This is a positive approach to the probation problem which should be encouraged by the Secretary of State.

The number of maladroitness first appointments seem to be less than in former times. This is in itself remarkable bearing in mind the much larger number of students being appointed. One hears far less often of the secondary trained student being put to the reception class of five-year-olds or of the art specialist being put to teach geography in a secondary school. These things still happen but are comparatively rare.

Unfortunately it is still far too easy for a young teacher to find himself in a school which is unsuitable on personal grounds. It cannot be expected that head teacher and staff must readjust themselves to suit the newcomer: it is for the newcomer to be prepared to make the necessary readjustments. It is, however, reasonable to expect the experienced and the inexperienced to deal with each other with sympathy and understanding. It is perhaps too much to imagine that a student fresh from the influence of an educational pace-setter in a College of Education will settle easily into a school where the educational method is fiercely traditional. It is in this situation that a supervisor of probation could be particularly helpful, acting as a catalyst between head and newcomer, almost certainly to the benefit of both. Lack of understanding on both sides can lead to disheartenment, to frustration for the beginner and to bitter criticism from the head.

Colleges of Education can do something to ease this situation and indeed many are already doing it. In the past, college and school have often lived too far apart. The college lecturer has tended to forget the lowly classroom situation and has seen a school solely in the school practice context: the teacher has been suspicious and sceptical of what is going on in the college. Far-sighted college principals are making far closer contacts with the schools and heads are given the opportunity to see and understand what is being done in the colleges. The head teacher who is in close contact with his neighbouring College of Education is far more likely to help the new teachers joining his staff, simply because he is more aware of the way in which students are being trained today.

#### **The structured staffroom**

The newcomer also has to cope with the staff room. It is sad that there are still some schools where students on school practice are rigidly barred from using the staff room. There are still staff rooms where the newcomer has to 'work his passage'. But the teaching profession as a whole is younger today

than it used to be. It was possible twenty or more years ago to be a probationer in a school where every other staff member had twenty or more years' experience. Then the newcomer's way could be very hard. Today the new teacher, ready to give more than to take, should easily settle into the staff room—but not into the only comfortable chair there. A willingness, ready and generous, to help with 'out of school' activities will work wonders in staff rooms. Acceptance by older colleagues will guarantee a successful probation in all but most exceptional circumstances.

There is one other important factor that every newcomer must never forget. The teaching profession is essentially conservative, not easily to be persuaded of the necessity of change (once persuaded it tends to go to the extreme of uncritical enthusiasm).

#### **Economic stresses**

Probation may be a matter for the school, for the head and staff and education authority. It is also at the mercy of circumstances outside the control of these more obvious influences. There is no doubt that many young teachers today are subject to severe economic stresses. The young College of Education trained teacher is not paid enough in the first years of employment. This is true of men and of women. The cost of lodgings in the big towns, the call for economic help from the family, the need to equip oneself with clothes and books and transport, the responsibilities of early marriage all press upon the new teacher and often make the anxieties of the first year's teaching heavier than they should be. Youth may be resilient: overcoming hardship may be good training, but this is not an excuse for parsimony and it is sadly true that the attitude of government and community to the young teacher is mean and hard. It sometimes seems that the difficulties of life outside the school are more inimical to a successful probation than the conditions within the school itself.

Yet, in spite of everything that can go wrong, the overwhelming majority of our young teachers complete their probation year successfully. This could be due to it being regarded as little more than a formality: if so, it should be discarded quickly. More probably, it is due to the good sense with which the whole business is worked. But this is no reason for it being left as it now is. There is still too much of the 'throw them in at the deep end' technique: too much is left to chance. The young teachers are ready to accept the necessity of a probationary period: I believe they would like to see it dealt with in a far more positive way.

# The Local Authority and the Probationer

L. G. W. SEALEY

*Mr. Sealey, who has had experience as an assistant teacher and headmaster in primary schools, was appointed Adviser for Junior Schools in Leicestershire in January 1956, remaining there until 1965. During this time he spent one year on secondment as Lecturer in Education at the University of Leicester. He is now Principal of a new College of Education for men at Bletchley.*

In September of each year it is not uncommon to find a new face in the staff room, as the harvest of the Colleges of Education is distributed, fairly or unfairly, throughout the schools of the land. For the new teacher, the occasional practice, with all its artificiality, is put aside. What was once unusual must become routine.

Although the assessment and supervision associated with periods of teaching practice during the college course have gone, the first year of teaching is of the utmost importance and is one during which many young teachers need real help. This probationary year, although an end to the training period, is, at the same time, a beginning to the professional life of the person concerned. What happens during this first year can shape an attitude, kindle or put out enthusiasm for the job and perhaps even make or mar a career.

The responsibility for teachers in their probationary year rests largely upon the Local Education Authorities. Whether or not all education authorities accept this responsibility and its implications I cannot say, but I can speak of the ways in which my own education authority, Leicestershire, dealt with the probationary teacher during the nine years that I was employed in the county as Adviser for Primary Schools.

## The right appointment

Our first problem was that of placing the teacher in the right appointment. Applicants are just names on pieces of paper, their personalities vaguely formulated in conventional phrases jotted down by college staff or in their own letter of application. Provisional assessments by colleges are, at best, a rough guide, but valuable nonetheless. Often, the provisional assessment of practical teaching ability is a very important factor in deciding whether or not one will consider offering an applicant a post in any school. Authorities which are fortunate enough to have a large number of applicants do

not look kindly on borderline candidates. Yet how often the person imagined before the interview turns out to be quite different from the reality!

Interviews can be very doubtful selection procedures, and the scheduled rate of interviewing is such that it is not easy to give all the time that seems to be necessary to any one person. The only way to offset all the disadvantages is to prepare carefully. In Leicestershire, as far as vacancies in primary schools were concerned, the interviews were conducted by the Staffing Officer (an administrator) and either myself or the Adviser responsible for Infant schools. The administrator knew the schools very well from one angle with the Adviser seeing them from a different viewpoint. All relevant papers were seen by us a few days before the interviews were carried out. Consultations were held regarding the vacancies in the various schools, and, before seeing a candidate, one normally had a half-formulated notion of possible placements.

## The interview

The interview first sought to establish that the person applying for a first teaching post was generally suitable and then narrowed down to a consideration of particular posts. But this was never a one-sided affair. Teachers in their first appointments do not have a great deal of money to spare, and it is important that suitable living accommodation should be available and that they should not spend too much time or money on travelling. Due attention was also paid to friendship links. Often, particularly in the case of women, students would suggest that they wished to share a flat with a friend. This was always taken into account. In certain circumstances it was felt that candidates should see schools on the day of their interview. Often it seemed desirable to rush off to a school with a student so that the person would have a chance to talk to the Headmaster over lunch, meet the staff, and have a glimpse of the building and the work within it.

By these, and other procedures, it was a relatively easy matter in some cases to match school and probationer. On other occasions, the matter would be so difficult, or there would be so many variables, that a match would not be attempted at the time, but put aside. When interviews are conducted, vacancies for the coming year are not always known, and this provides an opportunity to make adjustments or recommendations at a later date. In Leicestershire, the Head teachers and the managers of schools were the final arbiters in the appointment of any teacher and papers were always passed on. In every case, teachers would be invited to the schools before the end of the Summer term so that they could become familiar with the existing pattern and begin to think about the coming year. Often, Head teachers and others in schools would give help in finding accommodation, if such accommodation was needed. As a result of all these measures, it was hoped that young teachers would find the transition from college to school relatively easy and that they would commence their probationary year with a feeling that every consideration had been given to their appointments.

During the first year of teaching, major responsibility for overlooking the work of any young teacher was vested with the Headmaster or Headmistress of each school concerned. Nevertheless, probationary teachers were supervised and generally guided by the advisory team. With this in mind, an early occasion was taken to invite all probationary teachers in primary schools to meet the advisers informally. The usual form was to meet for coffee in a convenient new school on a Saturday morning early in the Autumn term, and for the advisers to explain briefly their various rôles. Sometimes some innovation would also be described and illustrated. For example, at the time that the Programmed Learning Research Unit was operating at the University of Leicester, the work of this Unit was explained by means of a specially produced 16 mm. sound film.

### **Pastoral function**

On the occasion of these meetings, opportunity was taken to point out that the general advisers in Leicestershire were available to give friendly and 'unofficial' advice concerning all matters relating to teachers and would be pleased to do so if ever it was necessary. As a result, many probationary teachers who had problems of various kinds brought these to the attention of the advisers before they became overwhelming or grossly inhibiting. Sometimes these problems were of a personal nature; often they were related to difficult situations in school.

This pastoral function of the general adviser proved to be a very important one in relation to the teacher in his probationary year.

But advisers are busy people with many responsibilities. It is not always possible to be constantly available to any probationary teacher who needs help or advice. Yet this constant availability is just what probationary teachers seem to need. This is not to suggest that ample help is not available from within the schools or that young teachers are always looking to other people. But a real relationship with somebody who is experienced, sympathetic and not involved in the affairs of the school is an important factor, especially for teachers, who, a few months previously, had such a relationship with college tutors. Some Local Education Authorities now recognise the need of probationary teachers in this respect and have appointed advisory teachers or advisers whose special responsibility is to teachers in their probationary year.

### **Impersonal mediator ?**

Towards the end of my period in Leicestershire, this need became very clear to us and such a person has now been appointed. At one time, in Leicestershire, meetings of probationary teachers were held from time to time throughout the probationary year, but it was then realised that regular meetings might be better held under the wing of an 'impersonal body' such as the School of Education. There was a tradition of real and close links between the School of Education of the University of Leicester and the local authorities. Indeed, discussion revealed that the School of Education was already concerned with the needs of probationary teachers, and study groups and conferences were already in mind.

It is not possible to generalise about the links that teachers in their probationary year maintain with their Colleges of Education. It seemed that some students preferred to make a clean break, even if opportunities for guidance were available. In certain instances, in situations of grave difficulty, students turned to their former tutors in the colleges rather than to the advisers or other persons within the local authority. All this would seem to be natural and good. No one would wish to close any avenues.

It is very important to teachers in their probationary year that they should know how they are progressing. Progress reports were submitted by Head teachers in Leicestershire at the end of each term, and these were normally discussed with the teachers before submission to the Authority. Such reports were usually a formality and continuous appraisal of the work of the young teachers was a

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# A Two-Year Experiment in Graduate Training

J. P. TUCK

*Professor Tuck, who discusses here an experiment carried out at a University Department of Education, is Professor of Education at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne.*

During the academic years 1963-5 the Department of Education of the University of Newcastle upon Tyne was enabled, by the co-operation of the Ministry of Education, Local Education Authorities and Heads of certain local schools, and with the support of H.M. Inspectorate, to try a small-scale experiment in two-year training for graduates.

The normal one-year course consists of the following elements: first term: one week of lectures and discussions, three weeks of teaching practice, eight weeks of lectures and discussions; second term: nine weeks of teaching practice, one week of lectures and discussions; third term: eight weeks of lectures and discussions followed by a final examination. This adds up to twelve weeks of teaching practice, and eighteen weeks of lectures and discussions.

The experimental course followed the same pattern for the first two terms, but the third term was modified to consist of six weeks' teaching practice followed by six weeks of seminars; the fourth term consisted of a full term of service teaching; the fifth term consisted of eight weeks of seminars and a final examination; and the sixth term consisted of a further full term of service teaching. Thus, the experimental course consisted of a com-

plicated sandwich of eighteen weeks of teaching practice, twenty-four weeks of lectures, discussions and seminars, and two full terms of service teaching.

The object of the experiment was to ascertain whether the experience of a longer course, at the end of which the students were established teachers, was more satisfactory than the conventional experience in which there is a clean break between the year's work as a student and the first year's work as a teacher.

The experiment was complicated to administer, because it was necessary to obtain recognition for the students as qualified teachers at the end of the first year, in order to ensure salaries in the second year, to negotiate with the Ministry and the Local Education Authorities an exchange of extra teaching practice in the first year against service lost in the second year, and to ensure that the students taking part in the experiment were replaced in their schools by one-year students when they returned to complete their course in the Department in the fifth term.

The only students who could be offered the experimental course were those who had been appointed

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*(Continued from page 56)*

much more important aspect. One may well ask whether or not supervision and assessment should be in the same hands. The whole question of assessment of a complex activity such as teaching is a matter for discussion within another context, but the probationary year is a period of confirmation that the teacher is a suitable person to join the professional ranks. As such, assessment cannot be excluded from the process. If probationers were in grave difficulties in any Leicestershire school, they were always very well aware of this long before formal reports were submitted and outside help was always made available.

One interesting innovation in connection with the probationary year was the day course to reflect upon the probationary period that was organised at the beginning of the young teacher's second year of teaching. These day courses were not always

possible, because it became increasingly difficult to find suitable accommodation. They were held on a normal school day and teachers were released to attend. The process of reflection and analysis was always useful, but we attempted to do more than this in that new ideas were thrown out and some piece of work involving a new approach invariably formed a major part of the course.

Although, on reflection, it now seems that we could have done much more for teachers in their probationary year, one should be wary of doing too much. An over-protective attitude is not the right one, neither do young teachers want somebody looking over their shoulders the whole time. Given the chance to start off in a first appointment that is carefully chosen and with resources available to help and guide them, all the evidence suggests that most young teachers can take the step from college to school with confidence and success.

before Easter 1964 to permanent posts in local schools which were willing to participate in the scheme; and in the event, although 22 students and as many schools were willing to participate, only four students, all of them men, were so placed at the critical time, and all turned out to be, not unnaturally, graduates in 'shortage' subjects, physics and mathematics. The Ministry of Education agreed to recognise the second year of the course as equivalent to a probationary year and as qualifying the students for a service increment: furthermore, they were willing to allow the participating authorities *not* to count the students against the quota of teachers in service in the authorities' areas.

At the end of the course two kinds of appraisal were made: the Lecturers in Education met the Heads of participating schools and two of Her Majesty's Inspectors at a final meeting; and the participating students discussed the course with their tutors and wrote brief accounts of their impressions.

There was general agreement that the experiment had been valuable, in a number of ways. The development of the students followed a different pattern from that of the one year course, resulting in a more fully formed professional judgment and a more practical and less detached approach to the study of education: their grasp of problems and degree of interest in the subject-matter of their studies was heightened by their more mature experience of the responsibilities of teaching. Some of the students had taken a course in physical education, and their development in this subject was particularly remarkable.

The Headmasters' view of the course was that as a whole it constituted a better introduction to the responsibilities of professional work than the normal one year course: it promoted co-operation between the Department and the schools, and made a probationary year unnecessary. The students had developed a professional conscience which made them regret leaving their classes in the fifth term; yet the value of that term's study, once they embarked on it, was heightened by their experience of a full term's work as serving teachers.

The students' own comments were of great interest. They appreciated both the longer experience of actual teaching (including experience of a larger number of different schools) and the extra time devoted to theoretical work; they enjoyed the less formal organisation of the third and fifth terms' seminars, giving a much higher proportion of time to discussion work; they developed a closer relationship with their tutors and with each other, over the longer period, and they met and discussed problems with many more outside speakers and teachers in the schools.

On the other hand, they felt that the scheme deprived the students who took their places in the fifth term of the help and supervision they needed from the regular teachers of their forms, and so had an adverse effect on the children's work; that they could not neglect extra-curricular work in the schools during the fifth term; that the integration of theory and practice was still not completely satisfactory, though better than in the one year course; that the small size of the experimental group—all with the same academic background—limited the scope of their discussions; that the continuing tutorial visits during the second year detracted from the independence an established teacher would enjoy; and that there remained inevitably some conflicts between their loyalty to the demands of the Department and their sense of obligation to the school.

All the students made suggestions which would be of value if the experiment were to be repeated. They recognised that the administrative arrangements had protected them from any financial loss and expressed pleasure at being privileged to take part in the scheme.

Several conclusions seem to emerge. One is that it might have been more satisfactory to plan a two year course from the start for a group of students who chose to do it at the beginning of their training: but as it would be unjustifiable to ask a student to spend two years on a grant, this would have been very difficult, though perhaps not impossible. Skilled 'forward placing' of final year undergraduates in posts could perhaps have been arranged. On the other hand, authority to pay a second year's grant at the same rate as a first year's salary would have helped, but would not have given the students a really paid established post in their second year.

A second conclusion is that once a teacher has assumed responsibilities in a school, the interruption of those responsibilities during a school year can cause difficulties. Our present school practices seem artificial, because they do not give the student more than a temporary responsibility as a supernumerary member of staff, but at least they avoid this pitfall. A third conclusion could well be that a better experiment might be devised with a second year not broken by a term in the Department, but so arranged that the teaching load was light enough to permit of continued studies concurrently with a continuous period of teaching. But this could be arranged satisfactorily only by considerable adjustment of the school timetable to secure a workable 'day release' system. Fourthly and finally, there is clearly much room for further experiment in this intricate business of devising alternative patterns of professional training for graduate teachers.

# Comprehensive Schools Committee

DAVID GRUGEON

The Comprehensive Schools Committee was launched last Autumn, two months after the Circular on Secondary Re-organisation went out from the Department of Education and Science. In the same week that C.S.C. started, the D.E.S. announced its massive £200,000 programme of research.

These were just coincidences. We are very much a grass-roots, voluntary organisation with members who are also involved in the work of FORUM, the Confederation of the Associations for the Advancement of State Education (C.A.S.E.) and the Advisory Centre for Education (A.C.E.). As you might guess, the Committee is composed of parents, teachers and researchers. The Sponsors include Dr. Cyril Bibby, H. L. Elvin, Brian Jackson, Margaret Miles, Dr. Robin Pedley, A. D. C. Peterson, Brian Simon, Professor Peter Townsend, Angus Wilson and Dr. Michael Young.

## Constant watchdog

We feel there is need for basic information and discussion, local research which can be shared between schools and authorities, and for a constant watch to be kept on all local plans that are submitted to the D.E.S. and on schemes which are approved or rejected from the centre. As a non-party independent body, solely concerned with promoting the extension of the comprehensive principle throughout secondary education, we are well placed to criticise schemes which smack of parsimony and expediency; and we can act more quickly than more complicated institutions to bring the latest successful research and experiments into the public eye.

## CSC services

Many of our members are teachers in comprehensive schools. We have a panel of speakers who can talk from experience to meetings which range from University Teach-Ins to local Primary P.T.A.s. We get requests from people throughout England and Wales. (We would be very grateful for some more offers to join the panel from FORUM readers.) Besides the national speakers' service, we also act as a national research and information centre. We have been gathering reports, figures, prospectuses, and have even been called on to advise (by return of post) on choice of Ph.D. thesis topics within the range of comprehensive education. One thing that surprised us: there is a much greater body of formal research, done in association with recognised research bodies, than we ever guessed.

If you add to that the extremely varied local researches done by teachers in individual schools, it is quite clear that the last 20 years' comprehensive experience has not been wasted: it simply has not been properly collated for public inspection. Each future issue of our magazine, *Comprehensive Education*, should resurrect some of this buried treasure. Anyone who wants to add to the collection will find that the Secretary (address below) will be glad to hear from them.

## The next steps

'Comprehensive Education' is already widely supported by all social classes; its opponents are mainly middle-class people who themselves went to grammar schools (see both Stephen Hatch's survey, published by A.C.E., and the Gallup Poll findings). But what happens afterwards, when the fuss has died down? Some authorities have quickly slipped through the net, and their schemes are sometimes even worse than the present system. Our first editorial came out against a new 13-plus scheme in four areas, where parents will have to decide whether to commit their children for the next five years. How remote can the administrators be from the real situation in the home and the school that they can actually believe that it is a reasonable thing to ask parents of 13-year-old girls and boys to choose a new school where they assume they may not leave before 'A' level at 18? The fact that this blackmail does not always become a legally binding sanction makes it even more farcical. Why ask parents to sign a form if it means nothing? The result will be that many parents will be tricked into denying their children the chances they ought to have.

What about direct grant schools and private schools? Why preserve them while the grammar schools become part of the comprehensive provision? What about streaming? Why are so many comprehensive schools divided on tripartite lines within their walls? What about neighbourhood comprehensive schools? Are schools becoming centres for the community, involving adults as well? Is there to be choice between schools, mainly operated by parents 'who know', or has selection *between* schools been replaced by choice for the student *inside* the school? These are just some of the questions. We hope to help people share the variety of answers that are coming from all parts of the country.

*Membership of the Comprehensive Schools Committee, which entitles you to receive the magazine and to use the Speakers' Research and Information Services for one year is £1, payable to Mrs. Valerie Packham, Secretary, 209 Belsize Road, London, N.W.6.*

# The Flexible School

PETER MAUGER

*In November last year, Where published a supplement entitled The Flexible School, by Michael Young and Michael Armstrong, concerned specifically with methods of abolishing streaming in comprehensive schools. This is discussed here by Peter Mauger, headmaster of Nightingale County Secondary School in the London Borough of Redbridge. Nightingale school has now operated as a non-streamed school for several years.*

The comprehensive school is the pattern for the future, say the authors of the pamphlet, but the victory has been won at a high cost. Comprehensive heads, defensive against criticism that the 'creative minority on whom the fate of any society depends' would be sacrificed to the mass of ordinary children, have streamed their classes rigidly. Streaming can nullify the two linked purposes of the comprehensive reform: to end selection and thereby to raise the standard of education of the great majority of children, and to bring about more social unity.

They emphasise that the act of streaming, by whatever criteria it is done, is an act of selection. 'Children . . . conform to the expectations that teachers have of them'. Hence streaming helps to determine the achievement of children, making it high or low according to the decision that is made. Working-class children suffer the most because 'Streaming makes the school in the image of society. The society has a hierarchy of classes; so does the school and because of that acts to perpetuate social class. Working-class children are, by and large, put in the lower streams. Their 'ability' falls off in consequence and after a time it seems they are capable of nothing but manual work. Their own expectations are forced into line with the exceptions of society.

Streaming (and its variant, setting) is often justified by the argument that transfers between streams are possible. In fact this happens far less than it is supposed to, and in so far as it does the price paid for promotion is lack of stability. The choice is between injustice and instability (with demotion, of course, you get both).

But the more stable the streams, the more difficult it is to promote social unity.

The authors draw the tentative conclusion that experiments in unstreaming should be carried out—tentative, because British research in this field is so far inconclusive. And 'every effort should be made to design a school which embodies high all-round expectations, which aims at strengthening the motivation to learn for all children.' To achieve this aim internal reorganisation within each school and curriculum reforms are necessary.

Their recipes for the 'flexible' school are—an expansion of the sixth form practice of individual work; team teaching, with much larger groups for lectures and presentations, the teachers thus saved being used for smaller groups; programmed learning; extensive use of audio-visual aids; correspondence courses.

The child is to be stimulated to want to learn on his own by guidance, by the use of ancillaries in and out of school, especially for marking, and by competition in the form of local, regional and national 'eisteddfods'.

The work of good, unstreamed primary schools, with the accent on children discovering and experimenting and inventing for themselves, should be taken as a model for secondary school work. 'Individual learning needs to be supplemented and enriched by group learning . . . Children will learn from and teach each other . . . Learning then becomes a common enterprise in which each individual has his own particular task.'

The authors discuss the advantages of flexibility of groups, varying in size and composition for different purposes, but prefer on balance the stability of the class of 30, staying in its own classroom most of the time.

A considerable amount of reading and thinking has gone into this pamphlet, Young and Armstrong have done education a service by their attack on streaming, by suggesting that the establishment of the comprehensive school by itself need achieve no significant educational advance, although it provides the essential precondition for advance.

But the question of how that advance is to be achieved is less satisfactorily answered. Most of their suggestions are worth considering, some are examples of useful classroom practice. But together they add up merely to a collection of piecemeal improvements in method.

The weakness of the pamphlet is that there is no fundamental examination of the content of the curriculum. It illustrates the confusion of educational thought in this country today. Even those of us who have done away with streaming try to teach the same subjects in much the same way. This is an advance, but a limited one, and too many children remain uninterested in their school work.

Young and Armstrong stress the basic importance of motivation. But motivation to do what? The answer is much more basic than they indicate. Guidance in individual work, use of ancillaries and eisteddfods are mechanics, not motivation.

School work must be relevant to the needs of the pupils, and must be seen by them to be relevant. Without relevance the 'flexible' school will be a floppy school, all flexed up and nowhere to go.



Children cannot be expected—in any type of school—to see school work as relevant to their needs while their curriculum is fragmented into uncoordinated subjects. The subject-based curriculum, with syllabuses determined by external examination requirements, encourages didacticism and rigidity in teaching methods, passivity and acquiescence in the regurgitation of received truths by the pupil.

Moreover, the subject-based curriculum is clearly inadequate in view of the knowledge explosion. It is estimated that the sum total of human knowledge doubled from about 1750 to 1900, doubled again by 1950, and doubled yet again by 1960. The idea that schools should remain content with equipping children with a body of knowledge is absurd and frightening. Tomorrow's adults will be faced with problems the nature of which we can today have no conception. They will have to cope with jobs not yet invented. They need a curriculum that will teach them to ask questions, to explore, to enquire, to recognise the nature of problems and how to solve them: a curriculum that they can see as an organic whole, related to their present and their future needs. The flexible, unstreamed comprehensive school is only a means, but an essential means, to that end.

## **SPECIAL NOTICE TO COLLEGE AND UNIVERSITY TEACHING STAFF**

A new scheme is being brought into operation with the current issue to enable students to obtain FORUM at substantially reduced rates.

To operate this scheme effectively, we are appealing for agents from among the Staff to act as distributors.

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EVINGTON, LEICESTER**

for further details of this new scheme and special student rates.

## **TO ALL TEACHERS OF NON-STREAMED CLASSES**

The movement towards non-streaming in both primary and secondary schools has been gathering pace in the last year or two.

Non-streaming implies a new approach to teaching, both as regards content and method—it has even wider implications. As practising teachers will know, it presents new problems requiring new solutions.

FORUM is considering organising one or more discussion conferences to consider these problems and to allow for the exchange of experience. We would also be glad to put teachers of non-streamed classes, working in the same geographical area, in touch with each other so that they could arrange their own meetings. Pioneer schools in some areas still feel isolated and teachers carrying through this change have little opportunity for discussion and mutual support.

If you teach a non-streamed class or are Head of a non-streamed school and would like to participate in any discussions which may be arranged, please write to us. Include the name and address of your school and your home address. It would be helpful if you could add a few details, i.e. your subject (if secondary), how long your school has been unstreamed, the size of your school.

Please address your letter to:

**The Editor, FORUM, 71 Clarendon Park Road, Leicester.**

# The Content of Comprehensive Education: an Appraisal

G. PRICE

*Mr. Price, who reports here on a study of developments in Anglesey, is head of the Education Department of Chorley Day College of Education. He has had a varied teaching experience and is at present editor of 'Teaching Arithmetic', a journal for primary teachers.*

Should the present impetus towards secondary reorganisation be maintained, there will soon be few parts of the country where the idea of comprehensive education is not a frequent topic of educational discussion. For forward-looking educationalists and teachers the main focus of attention should now be shifting from the debate on the structural problem of reorganisation to the urgent consideration of the content of comprehensive education. Or, to put the matter in another way, once we have got our comprehensive schools, what do we do with the pupils inside them?

There are enough existing 'comprehensive' schools of long-standing now to provide some answers to this question. To discover these latter a group of tutors from Chorley Day College of Education set out to study first-hand the present secondary school arrangements in Anglesey, where, it is generally held, the comprehensive system has had long enough time to consolidate and mature.

The choice of Anglesey was made for several reasons. It is an island whose educational structure forms a complete entity comprising four secondary schools and 51 primary schools; it is small enough to sample effectively; the secondary reorganisation was carried out some twelve years ago and with little of the political arguments to hasten or impede the process; the grammar schools which existed on the island before reorganisation were limited in size and had very small sixth forms; only one secondary modern school had been established there.

One group of seven tutors was able to visit three of the four secondary schools and nine of the primary schools contributing pupils to them. We felt it most important to see the primary schools since we were interested in discovering how their curricula and methods had been affected by the existence of a common secondary school system for their pupils, who are allocated to the secondary schools purely on a catchment area principle.

Thanks to the most co-operative approach of the island's Education Officers and the welcoming and frank attitude of the Heads and teachers we met, the salient features of our survey were soon clearly defined. Before remarking upon these it may be

useful here to state the general assumptions held by our party prior to looking at the Anglesey schools.

We had assumed that the secondary schools there were organised as 'comprehensives'. This, we thought, would allow not only for a common secondary school for all pupils in given areas, but in each such school a delay in any attempt to stream the pupils by class grades A, B, C, etc., until the later years of the pupils' careers. Instead, we thought that a 'setting' of pupils according to various subject attainments in perhaps the more academic subjects would be evident, with classes of mixed attainments for the remainder of the syllabus. As a reciprocal view, we did not expect to find a tripartite (or, as one member of our group put it, a 'tripartheid') system in which grammar, technical and modern school populations shared little more than a common roof and a school uniform.

We expected to find that the primary school staffs would be working in close co-operation with their colleagues in the secondary schools since the careful assessment and guidance of their shared pupils would have to continue well into the middle secondary period. Hence, any judgment of a pupil's progress by the time of the 11-plus break would be of great value to the secondary teachers who would no longer have the 11-plus examination results to guide them.

Most important of all, we expected that in the decade or so since reorganisation, the backwash effect of secondary selection upon the primary schools curricula and methods would have passed away completely and that the unencumbered primary schools would feel quite free to work in the most up-to-date way.

## Differences in the schools

Our first discovery was that the three secondary schools we saw differed in their internal organisation not only in detail but in principle as well. Only one, we thought, approached our concept of the comprehensive model. It is organised on a house basis in which the annual 180-pupil intake is divided into six houses of 30 pupils, made up of 15 boys and 15 girls. Each house is arranged as a mixed

ability and a mixed linguistic (English and Welsh) group. These house groups are kept together in such groups up to the third year for the non-academic subjects, though the pupils are 'set' for other subjects. The housemaster/mistress registers the children each morning. He also takes the pupils for a double activities period. These activities are mainly cultural, such as play-reading, folk-dancing, drama production, and so on. The children's records are kept by the housemaster. They include examination marks, state of health, home circumstances, etc. Parents meet the housemasters at regular intervals to discuss the progress of their children. In effect a personal tutorial system is in operation.

After the third year, more conventional 'streaming' grows though the house periods continue for some subjects. This sketch is, broadly, an outline of the comprehensive model we had had in mind. Its most significant feature is that streaming is deferred until about the third year of the secondary school level and up to then the children, of all attainments, share the same educative environment as far as this can be arranged under present conditions. At the same time, individual differences are catered for by the arranging of 'sets' for the more academic subjects. It is only fair to add here that this school was built as a comprehensive school comprising six houses which gives it an immediate advantage over the rest of the island's secondary schools.

The second school has no common house system but selects its streams at the onset of the second year. It is also arranged as a 'Lower' and 'Upper' school with most of the graduate staff teaching in the latter. In practice, after the first year of a pupil's life, the school becomes virtually a bilateral type, in which the A and B forms are equivalent to the grammar streams and the C form, described to us as 'borderline G.C.E.', does not attempt foreign languages.

The third school is similar to the second, though much better housed in new type buildings. It is also described by the Head as 'a bilateral' school and it was therefore not surprising to us to find that after the first week in the school, the pupils are streamed into six streams from A to F and do not mix even for games. An attempt by the school to mix them was apparently discouraged by visiting H.M.I.s who disliked the large numbers of children on the fields at one time.

#### **Freer methods**

The impact of these three schools on the contributory primary schools appears, in spite of their different internal organisations, to be much the same. Whilst most primary teachers we met agree that the present system in general allows freer

methods and experimentation to develop at primary level, the numbers taking advantage of it would not seem to be greater than in a random sample of schools in any other educationally conscious county. Perhaps this is because primary school managers and parents no longer ask about a school's 11-plus successes but instead, in the words of one progressive head, 'How many of the fourth year are going into the A stream of the secondary school this year?' Clearly, where the secondary school streams its pupils in groups that are tangible to the lay public, such as the usual school classes, the prestige effect upon the primary schools gaining most A stream places would be as marked as the earlier effects of the old 11-plus arrangements. On the other hand, the longer the secondary school delays streaming, the more difficult it would be for anyone to link up the pupils' success, in gaining an A stream place, with the primary school he had left two or three years previously. In this case the primary school would be spared the deleterious effects of a narrow cram curriculum upon the broader education of its pupils

#### **No contact**

Our second discovery was that there is virtually no contact between the primary and secondary staffs. This fact was given by every teacher and Head we met. In fairness to Anglesey's teachers this lack of professional contact is no different from that probably obtaining in any other part of the country, but we had hoped for something different, especially since we were told that only one Head of a primary school had been appointed from outside the island in the last decade and many of the existing teachers and Heads of the schools must know each other outside of their professional rôles. The corollary of this lack of contact is that the secondary schools have little faith in the reports on their incoming pupils produced by the primary school sending them and are inclined to arrange their own tests, which they also use for internal streaming purposes.

After a week of intensive visiting our group of tutors came to the conclusion that a comprehensive system of education is a concept which must go far beyond the mere setting up of a common secondary school however devised. It should embrace the primary schools (which have always in some measure been 'comprehensive') so that they are consulted regularly as to the progress of their pupils, especially those about to enter the secondary school. Staffs should be encouraged to visit each other's classrooms and secondary teachers should have the opportunity to understand what progressive primary schools are striving to do. The internal organisation



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of the comprehensive secondary school would help the development of the work of the primary school were it to preclude any form of rigid streaming until late in the secondary school stage. Local Education Authorities could help the process of full comprehensiveness by providing suitably designed profile record cards for their primary schools with pupils' conceptual attainments as a main feature rather than the traditional 'scores' in mechanical tests in English and Arithmetic.

The education authorities in Anglesey are well acquainted with the problems mentioned above and are grappling with the difficulties involved in developing their system. A new system certainly does not arise out of merely changing a school's name, nor by simply placing three types of school under one roof but maintaining the partitions between them.

Everyone in education should be grateful to Anglesey for helping to pioneer a comprehensive system. Even if it is by no means completed yet, at least the foundations are laid.

## New Techniques of Examining

A great deal of thought is going into developing new methods of assessment, particularly in relation to the C.S.E. *A Critical Review of Assessment Procedures in Secondary School Science*, by J. F. Eggleston, is the first publication of the newly established Research Unit for Assessment and Curriculum Studies. Written in a most amusing and lively way (unusual but very welcome in a research paper), the author submits current procedures and objectives to a somewhat merciless criticism. He argues for a more rigorous definition of objectives in teaching, and the working out of techniques of assessment which will in fact measure what the teacher sets out to do. Although concerned with science, and particularly the C.S.E., the thinking embodied in the text seems relevant to other areas of the curriculum. Available from the School of Education, University of Leicester, for five shillings (post free).

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### The Inhibition of Learning

*How Children Fail*, by John Holt. Pitman (1965), 25s.

*Escape from the Classroom*, by R. F. Mackenzie. Collins (1965), 18s.

Rarely is dissatisfaction with traditional curricula and teaching expressed with such forceful analysis as in *How Children Fail*. What makes this book so vital is that Mr. Holt goes on to demonstrate how a teacher can instigate real learning that enables children to develop their own powers of thought. Largely concerned with junior mathematics, he first shows that through traditional methods it is often the thinkers who fail and the formula-drilled answer-producers who pass as successful while the majority never understand the principles involved in their manipulations; then he illustrates how progressive learning occurs when children experimentally discover the principles for themselves.

Here are Piaget's findings exemplified and applied by an empiricist American teacher. His search for effective teaching methods is in the wider context of pupil-teacher relationship. Even in a non-authoritarian school he finds children motivated by fear that inhibits learning, causing them to devise strategies for right answers regardless of understanding, to suppress curiosity and play safe: hence they fail to develop deductive reasoning, and gradually accept that most of what they are taught makes no sense. Mr. Holt thus explains the origins of adolescent rejection of education.

Caught up in his own reaction against what passes for education, and disturbed by its inherent dishonesty and failure, in his last chapter he questions the need for any curricula. Having pointed the way towards structured learning based on experimental analysis of concept formation on Piaget's lines, he leaps back to Dewey-inspired, individualist child-centred approaches.

Mr. Mackenzie attacks not only irrelevant and ineffective education, but also the under-privileged environment of a depressed Scottish coal town secondary school, where teachers insist on the belt, and the blind obstruction of administrators. He wanted 'to find out what work to do in school and how to do it so that the pupils are different people, broader, more confident, eager, from this nourishment'.

His approach, too, was empirical, beginning with a highland cottage to which groups of ten children and a teacher went for a week. This led directly to the search for a shooting lodge where the venture could be extended. Then came fundamental questioning of traditional curricula, 'finding that most of it could be jettisoned without much loss' because of its irrelevance and consequent lack of impact. Rejecting existing content and methods he makes no attempt to analyse why and how children do or do not learn, merely affirming lack

of motivation where so much is nonsensical and divorced from the outside world. *Escape from the Classroom* exemplifies his faith in spontaneous or problem-solving learning in an environment of freedom and nature. Ultimately, however, he sees little hope until there is a social and educational revolution—the latter to create the former.

Many will sympathise with Mr. Mackenzie's galling frustrations, and indeed cull ideas from his experiment; but it is likely to be through endeavour by teachers like Mr. Holt that immediate progress will be made outside Utopia.

NANETTE WHITBREAD.

### Forward, Sociology!

*English Primary Education*, by W. A. L. Blyth. Routledge and Kegan Paul (1965). Vol. 1, 214 pp., 30s. Vol. 2, 156 pp., 25s.

*The Sociology of Education*, by P. W. Musgrave. Methuen (1965), 278 pp., 30s.

Professor Blyth's achievement is monumental. In his two volumes he has presented an immensely valuable compendium of our existing knowledge of the sociology of the primary school. The achievement is all the more important because it occurs in this field, hitherto neglected by most major sociological studies. Indeed, as the author notes, 'it is as though sociologists thought that life began at 11 plus'.

His approach is two-fold. He begins by laying down a coherent theoretical framework on which the primary schools can be analysed, employing the formulations of both Ginsberg and Parsons in this task. On this framework there is assembled, with infinite resource and patience, the whole of our existing knowledge in this field, even the most fragmentary and peripheral contributions are there. The operation bears a remarkable resemblance to the work of the archaeologist reconstructing a Roman pavement. Here the successful accomplishment of such a task leads to the new meaning and relevance with which the salvaged parts become invested and the sharp identification of the areas where most of the parts are missing. This is precisely the achievement of this book. On the one hand, for example, the studies of early family life are brought into new and more meaningful relationship with the schools: on the other, the dearth of knowledge about, say, the organisational consequences of destreaming are clearly demonstrated.

Of course, the book has minor irritations. One finds it difficult to use the term Midlands to refer to an age group rather than a geographical area, the more so when evidence from Midland areas (geographical) has to be used. At other times the exhaustive treatment of the data becomes a fault, as for instance when, in the chapter on 'Adults in Primary Schools', we have to have a paragraph on the traffic warden, even though we can be told little more than that he is a traffic warden. But these are only minor criticisms of a major work which will stand us in good stead not only in advance of Plowden but also for many years after.

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However, one must express reservations about the provision of a textbook of *any* kind. One of the most encouraging aspects of the widespread growth of courses in the sociology of education in colleges and departments of education has arisen from the need for students and their tutors to search for relevant theory and data and use it to work out their own conclusions. The result has been work which has often been marked by a level of lively controversy, thought and discovery which is not always to be found in education courses. In such circumstances the arrival of an omnibus textbook of any kind must be something of a regressive step. It becomes possible for tutors to say to students, 'read this and you'll pass', and by the self-predicting rules of the system, they do.

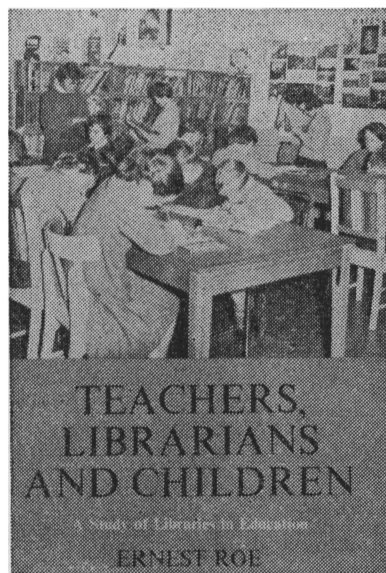
In such circumstances the only hope is to write a thought-provoking text and, in general, Dr. Musgrave has succeeded in this task. But one gets a nasty shock from his opening statements that 'an introductory textbook should avoid controversy' and 'a reasonably uncontroversial narrative has always been provided'. Surely it is not the avoidance but the identification of controversy which a textbook must strive to achieve? Fortunately one's worst fears are unfounded and areas of controversy are very properly identified, but in achieving this the writer commits some crimes of 'readythink' on the way. Thus we have 'Despite these explanations of the higher divorce rate some writers make a convincing case that . . .', or, in a discussion of the two cultures issue, 'The validity of this argument in such an extreme form can be questioned, but there is an element of truth in it'. Presentation of material in this way can often shield readers from personal consideration of the issues raised. In consequence there may be the risk that they will be shielded from one of the most important contributions to professional development which a study of the sociology of education can offer.

JOHN EGLESTON.

## Should headmasters also be trained?

*The Principal at Work*, by W. G. Walker. University of Queensland Press (1965), 219 pp., 37s. 6d.

The largely biographical character of the literature about headship in English schools accurately reflects the way in which the head's rôle is conceived in this country. The differing traditions of the instructor/proprietor, the post-Arnoldian gentleman scholar, and the elementary school 'master' with his monitors and assistants, have each made their contribution to this conception. In certain respects their influence has been in the same direction, encouraging a substantial measure of localised charisma, a somewhat authoritarian attitude to staff as well as pupils, and a protective rôle with



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A feature of the book is a number of case studies of individual children in which emphasis is upon the significance of libraries in their lives and upon the diversity of the favourable or hostile influences on their reading attitudes and habits. Finally, Dr. Roe makes some thoughtful predictions as to the effects on libraries of social and educational changes, and there are references to electronic store-houses, teaching machines, intelligence, creativity, and the 'two cultures'.

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*Dr Roe is Senior Research Fellow,  
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respect to the influences of parents and the community on the work of the school. The head's comparative freedom from official and community pressures has limited the bureaucratisation of his task and placed an emphasis upon the personality of particular incumbents rather than the rôle itself; hence the biographies, and a failure to regard as important the question of the head's preparation for his job.

Elsewhere in the world, where the force of tradition has been less evident, national and local pressures and constraints stronger, the need for a conscious explication of purpose and integration of aims more visible, the rôle of the head has developed along somewhat different lines. In the United States there are those who maintain that the task of the principal is not to provide leadership in the conventional sense at all, but to act as a facilitator, to administer the school in such a way as to permit the teachers to get on with their job in an effective manner. The principal is everywhere spoken of as a school administrator—a term that still has perjorative associations in this country—and courses in a variety of aspects of administration form a substantial part of the offerings of the summer and winter sessions of North American university education faculties. The notion that the principal needs to be prepared for his job and refreshed on an inservice basis tends to be taken for granted; the only matters for dispute are the nature of the preparation and training offered and the criteria to be used in estimating its value.

Australia has inherited some of the English traditions, but has benefited from the more recent American self-consciousness regarding leadership and administration in the school. The impact of this is clearly seen in *The Principal at Work*, the major part of which comprises twenty-nine case studies of school management, contributed by a variety of practising educationists and designed to provide a basis for the discussion of principles and procedures in educational administration. The case method in training heads is a relatively new development even in the United States, and this collection provides a valuable addition to the literature.

The settings for the cases are all Australian, but the bulk of the issues are universal—the new principal runs foul of the well-established senior mistress, the old scholars' association goes into a decline, the beginning teacher proves inadequate because of emotional problems, the janitor turns awkward. The problems dealt with in the cases fall into four main areas—relationships with children, relationships with teachers, relationships with the local authority, and relationships with parents and community. There is a useful if necessarily somewhat superficial introductory section which sets out some of the better known concepts of organisational and administrative study as 'guide lines for thinking'. The bibliographies are detailed and well organised.

It is clear from this book and the authorities and articles that it cites that there is much greater awareness of the problems of training and preparing those who will occupy responsible posts in education in Australia than there is in this country. The study of educational administration and organisation in its widest sense—not simply the provisions of the Education Acts and the powers of the local authorities, important though such

topics are, but of educational decision making, the structure of authority in the school, the analysis of educational goals and values, the norms that influence behaviour in study, staff room and classroom—is one of the most neglected aspects of the work of the university and other bodies that run courses for teachers.

Perhaps the emergence of new problems and new needs with the creation of larger schools on a less traditional and structured basis may bring about an improvement in this respect; perhaps such an improvement is itself one of the conditions for the new problems and needs being recognised and met. Whichever is the case, the next few years are likely to see an increasing interest in preparing heads and senior teachers for their tasks, and it is not simply the absence of competitors that makes a book like *The Principal at Work* a most welcome addition to the available material for stimulating consideration and discussion of the way in which schools are run.

WILLIAM TAYLOR.

## The élite or the mass

*Education and the Labour Movement, 1870-1920*, by Brian Simon. Lawrence and Wishart (1965), 387 pp. 50s.

'The Education Act of 1870,' H. G. Wells truly said, 'was an Act to educate the lower classes for employment on lower-class lines.' They were barely consulted. The desire of the common people of this country for educational opportunity has been consistently played down by modern historians; and it is time the neglect was repaired, as it now is in Mr. Brian Simon's important book, a sequel as it proves to be to his *Studies in the History of Education: 1780-1870*, which appeared five years ago.

In a sense the development of the Labour movement, particularly in its leftward aspects as typified by the ideas of the Social Democratic Federation, provides the framework of this book; and the most is made of the continuity of certain trends, such as the movement's well justified bias against vocational teaching, also the secularism which, when pressed, threatened to undermine the voluntary schools. Still, the fundamental concern is less with politics than with the way the vocalised needs of the industrial workers and their leaders for a classless organisation of schools made their impact on the country. The slowly growing appreciation of the full implications of 'secondary education for all', in the advancement of which trades councils and the trade union movement had a stronger vision than any political body, is well and vigorously handled, as, too, is the influence—never commanding wide support from Labour—of the action groups which claimed to be using advanced forms of working-class education, such as the Labour colleges, as a direct means for achieving political victory for socialism.

The Workers' Educational Association gets, I am glad to see, full credit for its work on all fronts, including that of policy making. The endeavours of the Fabians, who after all provided in a most articulate way a massive power-house for the reform of education of the people, are brushed off, some will think (and say) too readily, because they pressed for the speedier

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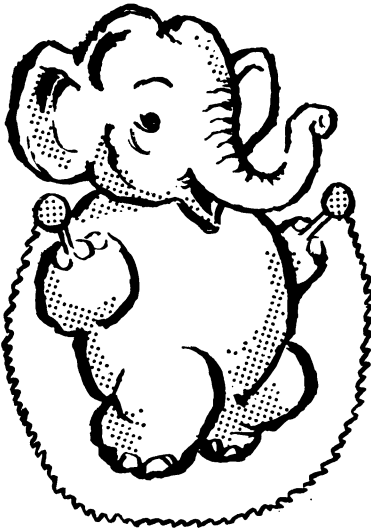
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promotion of a working-class *élite*. The author is against the promotion of *élites*, even where ladder contrivances could secure prompt short-term results; for he would hold it to be important that this kind of social mobility should be avoided. In this hostility he is consistent throughout; and it must be said that with this theme and this period some insistence on value judgments helps to keep the argument airborne.

The volume is to be sure packed with interesting material. Yet one cannot help but reflect upon the greatness and intensity of the perceptions which animated the reformers in the period of Mr. Simon's first volume—ideas which blazed as the radicals took them red hot from the age of reason and revolution—all this rather to the disadvantage of the messages which come to us, ably stated and edited, from our fathers and grandfathers in the present book. *Their* feelings on the content of education, where they show through, seem pedestrian. As to their social analysis, the prelude to the present maelstrom of discussion, it was ponderous and slow to develop.

The only outstanding planner, in a 'history of breakthroughs and retreats', namely Morant, with his imagination, ruthlessness and almost psychotic cunning, was, as it becomes abundantly evident, on the wrong side, preferring the long ladder to the broad escalator. And it could well be, as Mr. Simon seems to think, that in the outcome of 1944 all political groups in the country, whether to left or right, had lost their vision in the search for 'different types of secondary school to serve different needs'.

A. V. JUDGES.

## A useful trio

*How to Find Out: Educational Research*, by D. J. Foskett. Pergamon Press (1965), 132 pp., 15s.  
*Programmed Learning in the Schools*, by John Leedham and Derick Unwin. Longmans (1965), 140 pp., 10s. 6d.  
*Investment in Children*, edited by M. L. Kellmer Pringle. Longmans (1965), 180 pp., 12s. 6d.

Mr. Foskett is the extremely energetic librarian at the Institute of Education in London. He has written what should prove to be an outstandingly useful book on educational research. Believing as he does that research in education 'must aim at providing a sound basis for the practice of teachers', he sees as a prime task 'the communication of research results to those who can use them'.

The book, though comparatively short, covers a very wide range and is written with great skill and acumen. There are chapters on the organisation and documenting of research, on 'the library as a teaching instrument', on the literature of education and how to use it. Three chapters deal with specific fields of research—in philosophy, sociology, psychology, history, administration and comparative education. These give useful up-to-date surveys of work done and under way. For both

teachers and students, this book should prove invaluable.

The other two books listed are the latest products of Longman's paper-back 'Education Today' series. John Leedham and Derick Unwin are well known for the work they have done—and inspired—in programmed learning, and here they give the fruits of their thinking on the subject, as well as a great deal of practical help in the preparation of programmes both for primary and secondary education. The book concludes with a 'Design for a new school' based on group and individual learning.

*Investment in Children* is a symposium of papers given at the first Conference held by the National Bureau for Co-operation in Child Care. These are concerned with child development and specifically with the promotion of child welfare. A feature of the symposium is its inter-disciplinary nature—there are papers by educationists, psychologists, administrators, paediatricians, psychiatrists and others, many of them leading figures in their professions. This book, also, can be most strongly recommended.

JAMES WESTON.

## That name again?

The Secretary of State for Education recently announced that a new quarterly journal will be published by his department, *Trends in Education*, which, it is hoped, will 'act as a forum for new ideas'. The first number is due to appear this month.

Since its inception, 18 copies of each issue of FORUM, for the discussion of new trends in education, have been circulating in the Department, and it is encouraging to find that the D.E.S., if not exactly prolific in new ideas, is at least capable of picking up a good one when placed under its nose often enough. FORUM has brought into the D.E.S., as to subscribers elsewhere, the views of practising teachers and others integrally concerned with education. Run on a shoe-string budget with voluntary contributions, it has managed to maintain its circulation and has now remained solvent for over seven years—a tribute to the demand for such a journal despite the various others available, backed by large organisations with almost unlimited funds at their disposal. It is, in short, the content of the articles that counts and there is no doubt that the views advanced in FORUM—on comprehensive secondary education and streaming in particular—have made their impact.

What will *Trends*—with an editor on the staff of the D.E.S., distributed by the Stationery Office and financed, presumably, by the taxpayer generally whether he likes it or not—set out to do? According to Mr. Crosland, it will help in explaining the findings of educational research projects to practising teachers and teachers in training. There is certainly room for such a journal, given the expanding work of the Schools Council and other bodies, particularly that relating to curriculum studies. The promised interpretation of the D.E.S. statistics should also prove useful. Curzon Street's first number will, in this office at least, be awaited with considerable interest.

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