NEXT STEPS IN EDUCATION

FABIAN SOCIETY
"The Challenge of 1950"

NEXT STEPS IN EDUCATION

A discussion pamphlet based on a Report to the Fabian Education Group by
JOAN THOMPSON

"CHALLENGE" SERIES No. 6
TRACT No. 274

LONDON
FABIAN PUBLICATIONS LTD.
11, DARTMOUTH ST., S.W.1.
and
VICTOR GOLLANCZ LTD.
14, HENRIETTA ST., W.C.2.
CONTENTS

I. IMPLEMENTING THE 1944 ACT - - - - 3
II. THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS - - - - 6
III. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY - - - - 11
IV. TEACHERS - - - - - - - - - - 19
CONCLUSION - - - - - - - - - - 23

NOTE.—This pamphlet, like all publications of the Fabian Society, represents not the collective view of the Society, but only the view of the individual who prepared it. The responsibility of the Fabian Society is limited to approving the publications which it issues as embodying facts and opinions worthy of consideration within the Labour Movement.

June, 1949.
I. IMPLEMENTING THE 1944 ACT

There is a tendency in some quarters to think that the major tasks in the provision of the social services will have been achieved by 1950 and the job thereafter will be mainly one of consolidation. But this is to overlook the fact that the education of the young is a social service of the greatest national importance. There is still a long road to travel before the education services reach the standard in reality which we have already mentally pictured since 1944.

What has been achieved in the last five years? The school leaving age has been raised by one year and most children in the country are receiving a four year course of secondary education which can in suitable cases be continued for as long as seven years. Fees have been abolished in all L.E.A. assisted and maintained secondary schools. The raising of the school leaving age was only achieved in 1947 by strenuous improvisations such as the H.O.R.S.A. ("Huts Operation for Raising the School-leaving Age") scheme and the S.F.O.R.S.A. (furniture) scheme. But it was a test of the Government's sincerity of purpose and was received by the parents of this country as evidence of the Labour Party's determination to fulfil the basic promises in the new educational charter. Despite all the competing claims for the limited building facilities available, the expenditure on new school buildings since 1945 has climbed steadily to the 21 millions expended last year. There has been some provision for grant-aided nursery schools and the number of children now in such schools is treble that of 1938.

Nevertheless, the permanent educational building programme has hardly begun. In 1949 the estimate of capital expenditure on education in England and Wales is £38 m. and it is hoped that this will rise steadily to £70 m. in succeeding years. It is clear that all that can be achieved by 1950 will be proper provision for the extra year, for the increase in the birth rate and for the school buildings required on the new housing estates. Almost all the developments in technical education, in providing more special schools for handicapped children, in standard building of proper schools for the 'modern' secondary stream, in supplying boarding accommodation, plus the replacement of old and unsuitable buildings by new structures—all these will remain as tasks to be accomplished in the 'fifties.

(a) Outstanding Deficiencies

Leaving for the latter part of this pamphlet the major long-term question of supply of teachers, what are the most urgent needs of the next year or two in education? Undoubtedly they are a reduction in the size of classes in both primary and secondary schools. The solution of this problem is the first great task of the
educational programme in the next five years. On that basic reform all the successive steps to carry out the 1944 Act could be securely built, even if some storeys in the structure are added more slowly. The phrase “equality of opportunity” is meaningless without the essential basis of reasonable-sized classes in the primary stage of schooling.

Much remains to be done in reorganisation alone. About a fifth of all children over twelve years of age are still in “all age” schools and cannot therefore be classified as receiving an adequate secondary education. 8,000 schools still remain to be reorganised, and here the greatest obstacle is the building limitations. In the overall average reduction of classes some progress has been achieved to date, but in the majority of secondary school classes the children exceed thirty in number. In the primary schools the position is much worse; and that is why the greatest drive to reduce the size of classes must begin with the under-elevens. The very large classes of over fifty are decreasing, but too slowly. There are twice as many classes in the primary schools with forty or more children as there are with thirty or under; and these figures omit any consideration of nursery classes for under-fives. The present Government is planning to reduce the size of all classes in secondary schools to thirty, and in primary schools to forty, by 1951. This is all to the good but it is not enough because the primary stage is of paramount importance and equality of opportunity must begin there. Whatever else must wait, that is a foundation stone which ought to be laid in the next five years and the Government’s long-term estimates of the numbers of teachers required by 1953 must be correspondingly revised. We shall enlarge on this point in Section IV.

If this is the first aim, it follows that some increase in the proportion to be spent on educational building out of the amount available for capital reconstruction will have to be seriously considered. The exact possibilities of capital development in the years 1950-55 cannot be gauged at the present time. It is proper to state here that complete fulfilment of the 1944 Act in these years is just not possible. The problem is to choose the priorities, but there should be no doubt that the reduction in the size of classes, recommended above, must be the first priority. It is meaningless to discuss improvements in the content of the curriculum and methods of teaching or to talk about the qualitative provision of education on any other basis. For if the length of school life is increased without this improvement in its quality, there may well be a justifiable revulsion among parents against keeping children longer at school.

The second major development in the next five years is a more controversial topic—whether from a political or a purely educational point of view. The authors of this pamphlet are unable to agree whether the next priority should be the building of County Colleges
or the raising of the school leaving age to sixteen. Opinion is divided.

At present the Ministry of Education want to build County Colleges for the compulsory part time education of those aged 15 to 17 years, i.e., a two year course only. Undoubtedly there are grounds for fearing that, if the County Colleges are not built in the next five years, they will go the way of Fisher's day continuation school scheme after the 1914-1918 war. Moreover, for the age group attending one day a week for two years, only 200,000 County College places will be required as against the provision of nearly 500,000 secondary school places and corresponding number of teachers required by the raising of the school leaving age to sixteen. The general atmosphere in industry is favourable to a development of part time education. Voluntary part time release for education is spreading rapidly and employers are becoming more and more sympathetic, even in small firms, to the release of their young workers. The impetus to vocational guidance and careers advice given by the 1948 Training and Employment Act would be enormously increased by the existence of the County Colleges with a place therein for the Advisory Service. Later, when the school leaving age can be raised, the County Colleges will be already based on a two year intake but, if they began now with young people from 15 to 18, the Colleges would eventually have redundant capacity. Moreover, it is not impossible in the next few years, by the development of special training colleges and by giving opportunities to suitable volunteers from outside the present teaching field who are attracted to this special work, to find sufficient teachers to staff the colleges, without too greatly impoverishing the secondary school teaching cadres.

Notwithstanding all this, there is much to be said for the alternative priority. There are those who argue that practically all the County Colleges will have to be in new buildings, while some of the half million places required for another year of full schooling could be found in existing schools or by building on extension classrooms to existing schools. While this latter device is manifestly impossible in congested urban areas, it would be possible in the country districts and less densely built-up towns. It is also strongly argued by some educationists that children who leave school at fifteen do not fully benefit from secondary education, and that there can be no “parity of esteem” for the three streams of secondary education (modern, technical, and grammar) so long as the “modern” children leave school at least a year before any of their contemporaries in the other types of secondary school.

To sum up: one or other of these major steps could be taken in the next five years but not both in any present calculation of our estimated national resources during the period, both in materials, training provision and manpower.
(b) Other Developments

There are other measures less vital, but still of considerable importance, which should also be tackled in the next five years. The drive already begun for increased facilities in technical institutes must be continued. It may be noted here that if County Colleges are built, they will assist in the extra provision of evening technical courses but only to some degree. There is a great need for more full time and part time day technical courses, but lateral pressure will probably stimulate these developments.

Next should come the provision of nursery schools. While these are highly desirable on educational grounds, it would be unrealistic to expect that all the nursery schools demanded by the parents who want to use them can be built in the next five years, in addition to all the other buildings required by the priorities already listed. The standards set for nursery schools by the Ministry’s regulations are so high that they cost more for each place than any other type of school. Under the present standards it will be decades before the 1944 Act’s provisions for nursery schools can be implemented.

It is recommended therefore that the regulations relating to standards should be reviewed with the object of reducing capital costs without sacrificing the essential amenities. Moreover, the building of nursery wings on to existing primary schools, as opposed to the present insistence on separate nursery schools might well be considered as a practicable step in the right direction. It may mean re-casting some Development Plans by rural Education authorities, but that is preferable to setting the ideal standards out of reach for the mass of infants coming into the nursery school field in the next few years. Moreover, it is only by the extension of a nursery class or wing that anything can be provided for the ‘toddler’ in the village. It is not practicable to have a separate Nursery School for under-fives in any but the largest villages; and the country mother requires some consideration as well as her urban sister.

II. THE INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

The public schools are the most notable of the independent private schools and the question of their association with the State educational system was examined by the Fleming Committee which reported in 1944. There were then 83 independent schools and 99 direct grant aided plus a few maintained schools which were members of the Headmasters’ Conference. Membership of this body is commonly taken to cover the group included in the everyday conception of the boys’ public school in this country. The majority are entirely boarding schools or offer boarding facilities. The boarding vacancies total about 6,000 a year, which means that they cater for 2 per cent. of the boys of the 13 year age group. The
girls' public boarding schools are a much smaller group (41 independent and 58 direct grant schools) and their boarding vacancies only total 2,000 in any one year.

There are also between nine and ten thousand private schools of varying size in which about ten per cent. or slightly less of the school age population are educated. They vary to such a degree that they range from well-established efficient institutions with as many as 200 pupils, recognised by the Ministry of Education before 1939, to the dozen or twenty children in a private house, taught by teachers little better qualified than the "dames" of the nineteenth century. One important provision of the Act of 1944 affected the schools outside the state system and that was the section making inspection of all schools compulsory, in order that reasonable standards of education should be maintained in them. This provision is about to be enforced and, in view of the mushroom growth of small private schools since the end of the war, it is imperative that inspection should begin as soon as possible. About three quarters of all private schools await inspection.

This section will be mainly concerned with the public schools, since they are the most significant of the independent group and have a national importance out of all proportion to their quantitative provision.

In no other country are there independent schools which rival the British public schools in prestige. In the United States, the Dominions, and in European countries the power of the purse may be used to buy higher education at a university or technical college but not to any comparable extent to buy a different form of schooling as in Britain. The belief of the British middle class in the educational and social advantages to be gained by attending public boarding schools is such that parents will make considerable sacrifices to send their children, particularly their sons, to these schools. Undoubtedly they have certain educational advantages in a higher ratio of staff to pupils than has yet been possible in the state secondary schools, and in their buildings and playing fields and other amenities. In some cases their methods of education and curriculum are out of date and their traditions have not been modified to harmonise with the developments of this century. But, by and large, they offer a very good education to those of their pupils able to profit by it.

But they have the great disadvantage of exclusiveness, not of birth so much as of money. The upbringing, especially in the boarding schools and the prosperous preparatory boarding establishments that cater for the senior establishments, is remote from that of most people in this country, particularly the manual workers. An example of this is the need, now apparent, to give the young Foreign Office cadets, still largely drawn from the major public schools in this country, some nodding acquaintance with the normal economic
and industrial life of their fellow-citizens before they proceed abroad as Britain's representatives to other industrial countries.

In industry, in the Civil Service, in the Forces, democratic leadership and the arts of management can come best from those men and women who can understand as well as direct. A separate and exclusive form of schooling for those who will hold these posts makes understanding difficult. It has been said that the snobbishness and exclusiveness which create barriers are found more often in the lesser public schools which have claimed kinship in the last century or so with the great historic foundations, than in the latter themselves. The great schools have produced a manifold diversity of individuals who have contributed to many aspects of national development. On the other hand, it is also said that they are too completely assured of their superiority and that the 'caste' mark is only concealed by good manners.

While class division in this country based on economic status is being diminished by heavy taxation, and by increased social services benefiting the lower income groups, there is still a danger that a separate caste system of education for a small proportion of children may breed one strongly marked class division in the future, more dangerous than the fine gradations of class division in education in the past. We shall return to this point in discussing comprehensive schools in Section III.

(a) State Policy Towards Independent Schools

No sane person would suggest a general prescription of all private education. Apart from its utter impracticability, a state monopoly of education would have dangers to be shunned by British democrats as well as obvious inconvenience. Not less important, there would be no room for experiment and little chance of the diversity which will keep true democracy healthy.

Nevertheless, an attempt should be made in the 'fifties to integrate the public independent schools more clearly into the general educational system. A system of a few special places arranged with odd local authorities, such as has developed in the last two or three years, is not sufficient. There is evidence to suggest that some of the best public schools would be willing to come gradually into the general educational system. It is recommended that a start should be made now by the adoption of the Fleming Committee's Scheme "B", which would mean that the schools which elected to adopt the scheme would offer 25 per cent. free places to L.E.A.s, with corresponding financial assistance and public representation on the governing bodies. This should be gradually but steadily raised to 100 per cent. In some cases the schools would come ultimately under the control of a group of L.E.A.s jointly with the Ministry of Education, or under the Ministry alone. The scheme should be open to the independent schools to join at any time.
Schools which did not decide to come into this scheme should not be assisted in any way from public funds. Eventually the demand for an exclusive type of education, *qua* exclusive, would be likely to diminish in proportion to the steady development of boarding and other amenities in the state secondary schools. The demand by the would-be exclusive would also be gradually curtailed by the levelling of incomes. Any of the independent schools remaining outside the scheme, which were faced with severe financial difficulties and were willing to sell out, could be taken over completely and used for boarding education by the Ministry, or for adult residential colleges or some other form of further education.

So long as there is still great leeway to make up in the provision by L.E.A.s of boarding facilities to meet the demands of parents, there will be an imperative need to secure immediate provision of some boarding places in the existing independent schools. But as standards in L.E.A. schools are raised, the educational advantages of the fee paying places in the independent schools will progressively dwindle and middle class parents will be able to economise on their present heavy expenditure.

**b) The Place of the Boarding School in the Educational System**

Next arises the question—what types of children are to fill the Scheme B places at public boarding schools and at the newly built boarding schools and hostels set up by the local authorities? There will never be a majority of parents who demand boarding facilities, but there will always be special groups who require them for good reasons. For example, children living in rural areas who are far away from grammar or technical schools but who require this type of training; children whose parents are abroad, or separated, or who are perpetually moving about in their jobs. The loose assumption that boarding schools should be reserved for maladjusted or delicate children should be avoided. No boarding school can give a balanced educational training unless it contains a normal cross-section of the child population. Nevertheless it will be a heavy task for L.E.A.s to sort out the claims of those children who should have boarding facilities from those of the children whose parents desire it for the wrong motives. Careful records should be kept of the progress of children allotted to boarding schools to ascertain what types of children most benefit from this kind of school life, both in the primary and secondary stages of schooling. This will be a task of national importance for those educational research groups which undertake it.

**c) Present Use of Boarding Schools by L.E.A.'s**

Under the 1944 Act L.E.A.s were given power to provide boarding education for those children for whom the L.E.A. and the parents considered it desirable. While L.E.A.s are not able
to build new boarding schools of their own, the authorities are using boarding places in independent schools, and are helped by the Ministry of Education's central committee which has a pool of places available for local authorities. For 1947-48, the first year of this committee's work, 594 places were put at the disposal of the committee, 358 of them in independent schools. Only 85 were applied for by local authorities. L.E.A.s also make their own arrangements with particular boarding schools (e.g., the L.C.C. has had 280 places offered to it by schools it has approached and it is estimated that 150 of these places are being used at an average cost of £135 per annum). The very expensive schools whose fees run to £300 per annum are, with a few exceptions, not used by the L.E.A.s; but, even so, the cost is high to the local taxpayer as compared with a place at an L.E.A. secondary school. Moreover, the L.E.A.s tend at present to limit their assistance to boarding pupils to those who have specially bad home circumstances, or whose parents are abroad. The proportion of places available to girls is low and makes for undesirable sex differentiation where parents would prefer boarding facilities for their daughters as well as their sons.

Although independent boarding schools are not at present being used extensively by L.E.A. pupils—and their use can be justified as a very temporary expedient—the authors of this pamphlet are of the unanimous opinion that it would be dangerous to allow these arrangements to develop into a permanent part of the educational system. The procedure of selection is too haphazard in any case. A definite policy of long-term integration, starting with Scheme B of the Fleming Report, should be inaugurated as soon as possible.

The present use of independent day school places by the local authorities on the other hand can be better justified as a proper expedient while there is not yet a sufficient provision of grammar school places by the state for the number of children who can profit by an academic education. As the L.E.A.s will build day grammar schools more quickly than new boarding schools, the problem of this temporary expedient will gradually solve itself in a reasonable time.

(d) Present Position of Direct Grant Schools

Mention should be made, however, of the general position of all the 166 Direct Grant Grammar schools receiving aid from the Ministry direct, in the same way as the old Direct Grant list of 231 schools in existence at the end of the war. Under the 1945 regulations Direct Grant schools have to offer 25 per cent. free places to pupils who have been at least two years in a grant-aided primary school. The governors or the L.E.A.s can make the selections for these places. If an L.E.A. needs extra places an additional 25 per cent. may be reserved. The residuary places can be filled according to methods decided by the governors. Parents are entitled to apply for a remission of fees in accordance with an
income scale approved by the Ministry. No fees are payable where the gross income of a family with one child is less than £7 10s. 0d. a week. In 1947 56 per cent. of residuary day pupils over ten years of age were not paying fees, 16 per cent. were paying partial fees and 28 per cent. only were paying full fees. In the lower schools (children under ten) 98 per cent. were paying the full fees, as the lower schools do not qualify for grant nor have to comply with the regulations for remission of fees. The number of pupils in the senior Direct Grant Grammar schools was 31,599 in 1947, and the number of places annually available was about 10,000, therefore catering for about 2 per cent. of the 11 year age group.

It should be noted that these Direct Grant schools are only partially controlled. The Fleming Committee did recommend, by an eleven to seven majority, that all fees should be abolished in Direct Grant schools to bring them into line with other grant-aided secondary schools; but so far this recommendation has not been adopted by the Government. It is recommended that the next Labour Government should discontinue the direct grants and treat as independent those schools which did not agree to come under full public control and eventually offer 100 per cent. free places. There is no reason why some of the existing Direct Grant schools should not come directly under the Ministry and be governed by a body appointed by the Ministry. There is no need for every school in the public educational system to be maintained by a local authority and many of these Direct Grant schools have associations beyond a narrow local boundary.

III. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY

The 1944 Education Act did not by mere enactment provide a broad measure of equality of opportunity, but in its main provisions it envisaged great strides in that direction. The old epithet “elementary” was to be abolished in education with all that abolition entailed. However, until the new school buildings and playing fields, laboratories and libraries, are visible to the parental eye, it is naturally hard for the mass of weekly wage earners, whose older children now enjoy “modern secondary” education up to the age of fifteen, to feel that “equality” means very much when their young neighbours go off to the local grammar school, with its grey stone walls and grassy playing fields, however old and overcrowded that local grammar school may be. Some socialists have an uneasy feeling that the wonderful new buildings, spacious one-storey palaces of light and colour opening on to grassy forecourts, will not necessarily develop “parity of esteem” for the modern school, compared with the shabby old grammar school, even in process of time, because the prestige of the grammar school is really based on the fact that it is selective. Perhaps it is for this reason that a majority view in the Labour Party has for some time been in favour
of all secondary school pupils being educated together in "comprehensive" schools. Educationists as well as politicians are divided on this issue, as the controversy in the correspondence columns of the Times early in 1945 clearly showed. In any case, the policy of large multi-stream secondary schools is not being universally enforced by the present Government. It is being left to the local authorities to organise secondary education in their own areas each in the way they think best. The critical comments made by the Ministry of Education in March 1949 on the Middlesex County Council's development plans for all-in comprehensive schools of about 800—1,000 pupils have further stimulated argument on this issue.

What are the points in favour of "comprehensiveness"? Some hold that such schools embody the best educational foundation for a democratic socialist country, in which people of different occupations and tastes can understand and work with each other. The bookish and the more practical-minded child share alike in the possession of building and equipment amenities, in which the old snobbish social distinction of the historic local grammar school is swallowed up. A very large school taking in half a dozen streams of children at eleven can give each individual pupil the kind of curriculum most suited to his abilities and aptitudes, because such a wide range of subjects and activities is available. One of the greatest arguments in favour, on the purely educational side, is that a "late-developer" can have his school curriculum adjusted accordingly at thirteen or fourteen without needing to change his school. Moreover, a widespread system of comprehensive schools avoids the great difficulties and problems involved in creating equitable methods of selection at the age of eleven or twelve years for different types of secondary school. Decisions taken then are harder to alter later on. Those in favour of comprehensive schools honestly believe that the scholastic standards need be no lower than in grammar schools. Provided that comprehensive schools are large enough, they argue that there can be diversified specialist sixth form courses available for the group of very clever children who wish to compete for university and other higher education awards.

There is a great deal in this and, apart from the dangers of trying to enforce uniformity of policy in all local government areas, it is a policy which has much in its outward favour. While the building regulations do prescribe the same standard of buildings for all types of secondary schools, and while all are supposed to have the same ratio of staff to pupils, it is very obvious that parity of buildings and staff will take a long time to achieve.

On the other side of this argument, those in favour of differentiation in secondary education, as well as local freedom of choice, argue with some evidence that in the long run the quality of secondary education provided by the grammar schools' sixth form work will be diluted. In the United States, pupils of all grades of ability
attend the comprehensive high school, and forty years of experience is leading American educationists to the view that the dull and the very able at each end of the secondary range are being neglected. In the United States large high schools numbering 2,000 pupils and more should in theory be able to provide excellent sixth form specialist courses, but in practice they do not. Only about one in ten of adolescents of exceptionally high intelligence are properly catered for in the American high schools. A large group of leading American educationists is now endeavouring to frame a plan for identifying pupils of ability and providing for them separate educational facilities suited to the highly intelligent, on lines not unlike the methods of the most distinguished of British grammar schools.

The greatest argument of the psychologists against the comprehensive schools is that of their sheer size and consequent impersonal quality; a school where even the individual child, let alone his parents, is not known personally to the Head is not a real school, they protest. Moreover, there are opinions in the Labour Party which do not want to see the special heritage of our day grammar schools destroyed or reduced to meet the immediate needs of this epoch. A policy of comprehensive schools might widen the gulf between 'secondary' and 'public'. An aristocracy of learning amongst the adolescent is not necessarily, they believe, incompatible with an equalitarian age. To hold this view does not involve a lot of vague class thinking about "leaders of the people". It does involve, however, a sincere belief in the values of scholarship as an end in themselves. Nor is this argument for the separate grammar school concerned in any way with the implied contention of the First Civil Service Commissioner, publicised last year, that the main job of the grammar schools is to produce good higher civil servants.

On the contrary, it holds that a continuation of the best grammar school traditions will bring civil servants and others into contact with values which transcend their own careers. Undoubtedly there is room for criticism of a policy which seems to call for an educational "élite", if it is merely to be an élite to monopolise the best jobs in the community. The answer to that criticism by the protagonists of the separate grammar schools is that our democratic society will need in the decades ahead of us a small body at least of citizens who have been educated in the ability to criticise.

Both sides in this controversy should derive satisfaction from the present policy of allowing local choice. It is all to the good that some authorities and some parents hold fast to one view and some to the other. It is imperative, however, in the next ten years that carefully devised research should be made into the results of the separate and the comprehensive types of secondary schooling, on the basis of comparison of fair samples of each, until there is solid evidence upon which to build long term secondary education policy.
However emphatic may be the arguments on either side in this issue, Labour policy must still be immediately concerned in the next five years with the systems of selection for the various kinds of secondary schooling. These should not be based solely on examination results at the end of the primary stage, but must include also the use of record cards kept throughout the 7—11 stage of schooling. They should be standardised throughout. Conferences between teachers in primary and secondary schools for discussion of borderline cases should be a sine qua non. The examinations themselves should be in the form of simple attainment tests and their markings also standardised throughout the country. In addition to intelligence tests, which all children should be given a chance to practice, aptitude tests should be available, such as those devised by the National Institute of Industrial Psychology. These might prove specially useful for selection of pupils for the Technical Schools.

(a) External Examination

The Minister of Education has recently accepted the report of the Secondary Schools Examination Council, which recommends the greater use of school records and results of intelligence tests by prospective employers, in preference to the results of external examinations. The School Certificate, Higher School Certificate and Scholarship examinations will be replaced by an examination at 'Ordinary', 'Advanced', and 'Scholarship' levels in which all subjects are optional, which can be taken by those not at school and which will not be taken until 16 years of age (to be raised to 17 years of age when the school leaving age is raised to 16). The Council considers the need for qualifying examinations for entry to various professions will be met by passes in the "Ordinary" and "Advanced" certificates in specified subjects, and that the need for competitive examination for university and other awards will be met by the Scholarship papers.

When the Minister accepted the Council's report, there were many criticisms and protests, especially from the Grammar Schools, concerning the fixing of the minimum age for taking the General Certificate. Some leading schools protested that the early maturing specialist would be penalised by having to carry his general subjects for too long; on the other hand, some protested that specialisation would begin too soon. In practice very few modern school pupils will stay at school to take the examination and we believe that the Minister is right to remove the possibility of taking the examination from those of the present modern school leaving age. Modern schools might otherwise be dominated in their curriculum planning by the examinations which have very little significance for the great majority of young workers. The modern schools have at present this great advantage over their technical and grammar school neighbours in possessing freedom from the claims of external
examinations and hence freedom to experiment. Moreover, employers must be led to rely more and more in the future upon school records which assess the character and attainments of the school leavers and not, as in the immediate past, upon the possession of a 'parchment' by the youthful candidate for a job which is often not clerical but may require a certain aptitude and disposition. Even when the school leaving age is raised to sixteen and the examination age to seventeen, the grammar schools will still be tied to the examination tradition.

We therefore agree with the Secondary Schools Examination Council report and welcome its adoption by the Minister. Educationally, external examinations have very little function. Inspection or external evaluation of internal tests can enforce certain minimum standards in schools. External examinations are only needed, as the Council pointed out, for some qualifying and competitive purposes. They should be kept for these narrow purposes, otherwise the parents, teachers and pupils tend to think of education as the acquirement of certain externally prescribed standards, rather than as a method of helping young people to live to the full in a society which they have been guided to understand and direct.

(b) Entrance to the Universities

We fully accept the principle that no attempt should be made to infringe the academic independence of the universities. We consider that it would be wrong to attempt to interfere with their academic liberty, including their independence in making appointments, assessing standards of merit, and organising their own affairs.

But it is not incompatible with this principle that the Government should seek to have certain measures implemented with the cooperation of the universities, where these measures involve social rather than strictly academic policy. The Government cannot fail to be concerned with the policy adopted towards recruitment of students. It should be our aim for university places to be filled as far as possible on merit. Young people should have an equal opportunity of gaining on their merits a university education for its own sake and for the advantage it confers on those who can profit by it. It should be remembered that the largest part of the incomes of the universities and of their students derives from public funds. The scholarship awards made by the Ministry or the local authorities to those selected to attend the universities, and the grants to students selected by the universities themselves, are made available direct to the students and not through the universities. Public funds are provided by the Exchequer through the Universities Grants Committee. One of the functions of the latter is to assist in the preparation of such development plans for the universities as may from time to time be required in order to ensure that
they are fully adequate to national needs." The amount of public assistance is shown in the following table:

**Public Expenditure on University Education**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1938-9</th>
<th>1948-9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>(a) State Grants</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Grants by U.G.C. to the Universities</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>11.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Scholarships</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>11.96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3.26</td>
<td>23.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**(b) L.E.A. Scholarships**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>55</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Total**

|                | 3.64   | 24.39 |

(From *The Economist*, July 17th, 1948.)

Now that the post-war Further Education and Training Grants are coming to an end, there is need to consider further steps in making university education available to all those who can best profit by it, regardless of their means. The Further Education and Training Scheme has been the dominating feature of post-war university entrance. In 1947-8 over 22,000 of the 77,000 full-time university students were receiving grants under the demobilisation scheme. It should also be recorded that about 42,000 students, or 55 per cent. of the total, were in receipt of scholarship or other grants, a high proportion of them being on a scale sufficient to cover fees and maintenance. The present Labour Government has greatly increased the number of State scholarships and has adopted the policy of supplementing university scholarships awards to a level sufficient to cover fees plus maintenance. It has encouraged the Local Education Authorities to do likewise. This is all to the good.

But, with the slackening of the flow of ex-service students, the number of students attending universities on private means is bound to rise proportionately, unless a large scale system of grants for selection by merit and suitability is introduced in the immediate future. Assuming that State and L.E.A. awards of the categories listed in the table at the end of this section are made each year in the numbers shown, there will only be about 8,000 of these awards (other than F.E.T. grants) available each year. These calculations are subject to various margins of error, but the main conclusion emerges that a total of only 28,000 students in any one year would be assisted from these sources, as compared with the 42,000 assisted at present. Fortunately, the Ministry of Education's committee set up to examine the position consequent upon the winding up of F.E.T. grants has recommended that some 75 per cent. of university

---

1 Estimate.
places shall be filled on merit and that the holders of these places shall to the extent necessary receive awards from public funds, while leaving unimpaired the discretion of the universities to decide upon the actual candidates for entry. The number of State scholarships and University awards should be increased; while local education authorities should provide assistance to all suitable candidates offered a place by the universities.

A case can be made out for continuing to allow a minority of places to be filled by those who are able and willing to pay for them but who cannot obtain entrance on ability alone. Methods of judging merit are not infallible and there is much to be said for maintaining some flexibility in the entrance system for those who fail to pass a certain entrance test, but are anxious to have a university education. The comparatively small number of this type of university place would result in competition amongst those with the means to pay, so that only the most able of them would obtain entrance. A careful review of the position would require to be held after a decade of this kind of experiment.

A word should be added about the total size of the universities. In spite of an increase of more than 50 per cent. in the number of university students as compared with pre-war, the proportion of the population receiving a university education is far lower in Britain than in most other advanced countries. This is not offset entirely by the high quality of university education in this country. Before the war about one person in nine hundred was a university student in this country. The proportion of students to population in some other countries was: —U.S.A., 1 to 150; New Zealand, 1 to 250; France, 1 to 550; Denmark, 1 to 650; Belgium, 1 to 700; Holland, 1 to 800. The Barlow Report (Cmd. 6824, May 1946) states: “At present rather less than 2 per cent. of the population reach the universities. About 5 per cent. of the whole population show, on test, an intelligence as great as the upper half of the students, who amount to 1 per cent. of the population. We conclude therefore that only about one in five of the boys and girls who have intelligence equal to that of the best half of the university students actually reach the universities”.

It is therefore generally agreed that a considerable increase on pre-war numbers of university students is desirable, and that the recent increase should not be regarded merely as a post-war bulge and allowed to contract. An increase of 100 per cent. on pre-war output of science graduates is generally regarded as desirable, and has in fact been challenged as a conservative figure. It is impossible to assess the number of Arts graduates which may be desirable, from the point of view of providing graduates for occupations in which an Arts degree is a recognised qualification or asset; but more Arts graduates are certainly needed, especially in the management levels of commerce and industry as well as for the expansion of the teaching cadres which will be the subject of the
next section. In 1947 the then Chancellor of the Exchequer (Dalton) accepted the view that in the next ten years the number of university students would reach 88,000 at most, if university standards were not to be lowered. It may be that this is the sort of figure to work towards in the next five years, but the general aim should be kept in the foreground of educational policy that a university education ought to be available to all those who can profit by it, subject to the economic position of the country. We do not want to produce a class of frustrated graduates for whom no satisfactory jobs are available, but we may perhaps think of an optimum figure, under foreseeable conditions of national recovery, as round about 100,000\(^1\). This would be a doubling of the pre-war figure and would bring us better into line with other large modern states.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number and Cost of University Awards</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1937-38(^2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>England and Wales</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Number of new awards available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>£</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. State Awards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Further Education &amp; Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants (Ex-Service)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Scholarships</td>
<td>360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Scholarships</td>
<td>1,200 (Not State aided)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher Training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants (4 years)</td>
<td>1,298</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Science Awards</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Bursaries</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,888</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Local Authority Awards</td>
<td>1,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4,588</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^1\) This is roughly 1 in every 250 of the working population.

\(^2\) The figures for number and cost are not exactly comparable except in the case of local authority awards. For State awards the cost is related to the financial year; the numbers relate to academic years.

\(^3\) Includes 100 technical and 20 mature awards.

\(^a\) None were awarded in these years, but 420 were still current in 1947-48.

\(^b\) Estimate.
IV TEACHERS

The Ministry of Education has plans to increase the present number of teachers, which is 196,000, to a total of 237,000 in 1953. The following table gives details of the supply of teachers and how the increased teachers will be trained:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1948</th>
<th>1953</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>000's</td>
<td>000's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Seniors</td>
<td>79\cdot5</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Juniors</td>
<td>66\cdot5</td>
<td>29\cdot5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Infants</td>
<td>50\cdot0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>196\cdot0</strong></td>
<td><strong>88\cdot5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Men</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For Seniors</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Juniors</td>
<td>29\cdot5</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>73\cdot5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For Infants</td>
<td></td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>88\cdot5</strong></td>
<td><strong>149\cdot0</strong></td>
<td><strong>237\cdot5</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1948*</th>
<th>1949</th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1951</th>
<th>1952</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>000's</td>
<td>000's</td>
<td>000's</td>
<td>000's</td>
<td>000's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment from E.T.C.</td>
<td>10\cdot25</td>
<td>9\cdot75</td>
<td>6\cdot75</td>
<td>7\cdot75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recruitment from U.T.D.</td>
<td>2\cdot0</td>
<td>2\cdot5</td>
<td>2\cdot5</td>
<td>2\cdot75</td>
<td>2\cdot75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Colleges</td>
<td>8\cdot25</td>
<td>9\cdot25</td>
<td>8\cdot75</td>
<td>10\cdot0</td>
<td>10\cdot25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Sources</td>
<td>2\cdot5</td>
<td>2\cdot0</td>
<td>1\cdot75</td>
<td>1\cdot75</td>
<td>1\cdot75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertificated teachers trained</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-\cdot5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td><strong>23\cdot0</strong></td>
<td><strong>23\cdot5</strong></td>
<td><strong>19\cdot75</strong></td>
<td><strong>15\cdot75</strong></td>
<td><strong>14\cdot75</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wastage</td>
<td>10\cdot0</td>
<td>9\cdot5</td>
<td>9\cdot75</td>
<td>9\cdot75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Annual Gain</td>
<td>13\cdot0</td>
<td>14\cdot0</td>
<td>10\cdot0</td>
<td>6\cdot0</td>
<td>5\cdot0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If young people attend County Colleges for one day a week for two years, about 200,000 County College places will be needed, since each place accommodates five students. This entails a supply of at least 8,000 teachers on a basis of one teacher to a class of twenty-five, and proportionately more for the preferable ratio of one to twenty. The estimate made by the Ministry for raising the school leaving age to 15 was 13,000, but the extra number required for raising the school leaving age by another year would be greater. It is clear, therefore, that the total of 237,000 teachers budgeted for in 1953 will be sufficient for only one major expansion in education, either County Colleges or the extra year, but not both, if any reduction in the size of classes and expansion in higher technical education is also to be achieved.
We cannot approve the target of 237,000 teachers by 1953 as satisfactory because the Ministry is only aiming at a reduction of all secondary classes to 30 and all primary classes to 40. We recommend that classes in all schools should be reduced to 30 as the major priority in the educational plan for the next five years. Further, we think it would be unwise to give up so many of the emergency training college places, as is now apparently the policy, when the complete fulfilment of the 1944 Act is our long-term objective. If either the County College or the extra school year is introduced after 1955, about 15,000 more teachers will still be required then, and there will also be the full development of nursery school education to be tackled. Yet by 1952 the net annual inflow of new teachers will have dropped to 5,000, all of whom will be needed for reducing school classes to 30. Where are the extra teachers required to come from? The grammar school output cannot supply them all.

The citizens of this country ought to face the fact that both the quantitative and the qualitative provisions of education outlined in the 1944 Act require a bold plan for expanding the numbers of teachers and teaching auxiliaries. In the *Times Educational Supplement* of 18th February, 1949, a plea was made for a wider view of the allocation of manpower essential to the great social service of education. Including all the administration cadres (local and national) of the educational system and the provision of lecturers, teachers, inspectors and auxiliaries for the universities and schools of the future, the total estimate of persons engaged in education should fall little short of half a million. Of these about half, or 250,000, ought to be professional teachers. This allocation sounds ambitious, but it only means setting apart one person in every 46 or more adult workers in the country to be responsible for the education of the whole population. The psychologists already know enough about the levels of intelligence in this country to assure us that there is an ample suitable field of supply, but new long term plans will have to be devised for recruitment and training. It may be remarked in passing that far too few teachers represent the profession on the new Advisory Council on the Supply and Training of Teachers which has recently been set up.

(a) Recruitment of Teachers

The Ministry's emergency measures for recruitment so far have been successful. The emergency trained teachers have shown the value of recruiting people with experience of other types of work as teachers. They will be increasingly valuable as County Colleges are set up and all children stay at school till 16. It should continue to be possible to take in older people as student teachers; to recruit part-time teachers of suitable types; and to encourage married women to return to teaching as their children grow out of infancy. A major factor contributing to the success of teacher
recruitment is the free training and maintenance allowance provided under the emergency scheme. If teachers are going to be recruited from other employments in future, it will be necessary to continue maintenance allowances for them, according to their family responsibilities, and to maintain the pension rights they have earned in other employments.

At the moment there is a deficiency of women teachers because of the numbers of infant teachers required for the post-war bulge in the birth-rate. We recommend as a minor measure, to assist in dealing with this shortage, that nursery helpers should be employed in order to make conditions in the infants' departments more attractive to women teachers. The Ministry is urging Local Education Authorities to do this, but exhortation may not be enough.

(b) **Teacher Training**

The McNair Committee’s Report on Teachers and Youth Leaders (1944) recommended that Area Training Organisations should be set up, either in the form of University Schools of Education or as Joint Boards including existing University Training Departments. The Government has left each area free to choose its own form of organisation—very wisely, since the Committee itself was divided in its views. On the whole the universities have taken up this development, which was set in motion by the Ministry, with enthusiasm and practically all the University Schools of Education and Joint Boards are now established, or will be functioning by 1950. The University Institutes are financed by the University Grants Committee and the Area Training Organisations by the Ministry direct. However, the Joint Boards of the latter are given the same measure of responsibility by the Ministry as the University Institutes. The old conglomeration of one year post-graduate courses, two year training courses and three year domestic science, art, and physical training courses will now be surveyed as a whole in each area and properly integrated to fit in with the local needs clearly defined by survey and research and the prospective demands. The Ministry must, however, carefully inspect the working of these new Institutes to see that in fact each does guide the training and overhaul the somewhat out of date curricula and inadequate standards of amenities, hitherto prevalent in many of the two year training colleges. This is a step towards real equality within the teaching world.

At present there are only two colleges which are preparing teachers especially for continued day time education. These training programmes will have to be greatly increased if thousands of extra teachers are to be ready for County College work by 1953. Specially devised short courses for existing teachers who wish to transfer to County College work will also be required, because many emergency trained teachers will undoubtedly want to teach in County Colleges. We agree with the conclusions of the McNair Committee that the
duration of teachers' training should be three years; the period of training for graduates one year; and that suitable qualified persons other than graduates should be eligible for a one year or eighteen months' course of training with maintenance allowances.

(c) Conditions of Work and Remuneration

It should not necessarily be deduced that because the number of both men and women who wished to train for teaching in the last five years was much greater than the number of vacancies in training colleges, that the conditions of work and remuneration are entirely satisfactory. The quantity of recruits is adequate, at least on the male side, but it is the quality of the recruits that will make or mar the development of the 1944 Act in the long run. Holidays as a specially attractive condition of work should be disregarded in view of the nervous strain of teaching duties in term time and the preparation of lessons and corrections which have to be done out of school hours. The financial reward is not so good as in most other comparable professions. In particular, the pay at the top of the scale compares most unfavourably with the pay of those in responsible positions elsewhere in public service. The pay of heads of schools and departments should be increased, but this is only a partial remedy. Not all the best teachers, either those with a real sense of vocation or others who are ardent specialists, want to be heads, inspectors, or administrators. Some would prefer to spend their lives in teaching, whatever the cynics may think, but no kind of reward or incentive to this type of teacher exists at present. Opportunities for special teaching fellowships of the kind recommended in the McNaught Report, for sabbatical terms or a year of leave for educational research, and for temporary exchange with teachers in other countries, should all be thoroughly investigated and publicised, in order to keep more of the best teachers in the most important job in education, which is the actual teaching of the pupils. In addition, they should also have more pay: i.e., those with exceptional gifts in teaching should have their quality recognised by some form of assessment which should not be beyond the wit of the universities and other educationists to devise, so that they have a public recognition of their special contribution without being lured away from teaching to administration because of their financial or family responsibilities. There ought to be a system of reward for special merit in teaching while the general average standard is being raised.

An obvious factor in maintaining a good quality of teaching in the rank and file is the availability of refresher courses. In this field both the Ministry and the Local Education Authorities have a good record since the war. The provision of these courses throughout the country, however, is very uneven. It will be for the Institutes of Education to see that there are ample facilities for every type of refresher course in all areas in the future.
CONCLUSION

To summarise all the foregoing in a few lines is to emphasise that we are going to be faced with the task of deciding between alternative priorities in the next five years of educational planning, and then again in the following decade.

Only the chief immediate stages towards fulfilling the 1944 Act have been touched upon here. Shall we choose between raising the school leaving age now or setting up County Colleges while the general atmosphere prevalent in industry is favourable to them? Must we choose smaller classes in secondary schools rather than in primary schools, if both reductions at once are impossible? Must we stress the democratic "common" school by erecting very large institutions to comprehend every type of eleven year old, rather than press on with building three separate types of smaller schools with equal amenities in every area of any density of population? What do the voters want first; or rather, which of these things do citizens consider most pressing and important in educational development?

Should entrance to the universities of this country be based on tests of merit alone? Should the great public schools be gradually integrated into a national system? If the Labour Party's answer to both these questions is to be negative, then it must have good reasons behind its decisions. Both are very important issues in the peculiar and subtle structure of British social and economic democracy. If the school dentist's remuneration is to be higher than that of the headmaster, then the reasons for that discrepancy will have to be very soundly argued in many quarters. While the socialist ethic can be briefly expressed as competition for public service and not for private gain, we must admit that our educators have still to fight a long battle against materialist philosophy and the temptation of all governments in power to subordinate long-term ideals to immediate needs. Whichever priorities in the long-term programme are chosen, they must be pressed on to full achievement of aims. Tinkering with a little progress over all the wide range of claims will distort and possibly deform the development of a truly democratic educational system. But it is not easy to decide rightly what must come first and it is hoped that this pamphlet will stimulate discussion to that end.
CONCLUSION

The emphasis on race, culture, and language is a key feature of the argument in comparing...
"The Challenge of 1950"

A series of discussion pamphlets about Labour's policy for the coming General Election.

1. MORE SOCIALISATION—OR LESS? Charles Lang and Donald Chapman 6d.
2. SOCIALISM AND FARMING F. W. Bateson 1/-
3. WAGES POLICY? T. E. M. McKitterick 1/-
4. WORKERS' CONTROL? Eirene White 1/-
5. WHOLESALING AND RETAILING Henry Smith 1/-
6. NEXT STEPS IN EDUCATION 1/-

and among other titles planned are:

BUREAUCRACY

HOLIDAYS AND THE STATE

LOCAL GOVERNMENT REFORM

Issued by:

THE FABIAN SOCIETY

For particulars of membership write to the

GENERAL SECRETARY,

THE FABIAN SOCIETY, 11, DARTMOUTH STREET S.W.1.