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**ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN SOUTH-EAST NORTHUMBERLAND
1918-1939: PROGRESS AND CHANGE WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE
TO THE BOTHAL AND WOODHORN AREAS**

DAVID JOHN WISE

MASTER OF ARTS

1997

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ABSTRACT

DAVID JOHN WISE

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN SOUTH-EAST NORTHUMBERLAND,
1918 - 1939: PROGRESS AND CHANGE WITH PARTICULAR
REFERENCE TO THE BOTHAL AND WOODHORN AREAS.

The study aims to examine and discuss the extent to which, if at all, the organisation of elementary education changed and progressed between 1918 and 1939, with particular reference to schools situated within the boundaries of the ancient parishes of Bothal and Woodhorn, Northumberland. The investigation gives particular attention to school organisation and re-organisation, class-size, staffing and the provision of new buildings.

Having reviewed the existing literature and identified questions for further study, the methodology and procedures to be adopted for the study are formulated. The policy and work of the Northumberland Local Education Authority and the experience of two contrasting schools, Pegswood Mixed School and Longhirst School are then discussed, with reference to the initial question and in the light of material drawn from surviving documentary evidence.

The conclusion is reached that there is evidence to show that between 1918 and 1939 Northumberland Local Education Authority pursued a policy of change and progress in elementary school organisation and did much to implement that policy in the area addressed by the study, despite several set-backs which were largely the result of financial difficulties.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN SOUTH - EAST
NORTHUMBERLAND, 1918 - 1939 :
PROGRESS AND CHANGE WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE
TO THE BOTHAL AND WOODHORN AREAS.

DAVID JOHN WISE

A THESIS SUBMITTED FOR EXAMINATION FOR THE DEGREE OF
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TABLE OF CONTENTS.

Preliminaries.	Abstract.	p. i.
	Title page.	p. ii.
	Table of contents.	p. iii.
	List of appendices.	p. iv.
	Abbreviations, acknowledgements and statement of copyright.	p. v.
Chapter One	Introduction.	p. 1.
Chapter Two	Literature review.	p. 7.
Chapter Three	Questions arising from the literature review &c.	p. 41.
Chapter Four	Methodology and procedures.	p. 44.
Chapter Five	Progress and change in elementary school organisation, 1918 - 1939: the policy and work of the Northumberland L.E.A. with particular reference to the Bothal and Woodhorn area.	p. 52.
Chapter Six	Progress and change in elementary school organisation, 1918 - 1939: the experience of Pegswood Mixed School and Longhirst School.	p. 90.
Chapter Seven	Discussion and conclusion.	p. 138.
	Appendices.	p. 153.
	Bibliography.	p. 171.
	End-notes.	p. 177.
	The "Harvard" system is used for references throughout the study. Numbers in the text refer to end-notes.	

LIST OF APPENDICES.

1.	Pegswood Mixed School.	H.M. Inspector's report for 1923	p. 153.
2.	"	" " " " " " " 1925	p. 155.
3.	"	" " " " " " " 1929	p. 156.
4.	"	" " " " " " " 1932	p. 157.
5.	"	" " " " " " " 1936	p. 158.
6.	Longhirst School.	" " " " 1923	p. 159.
7.	"	" " " " 1925	p. 159.
8.	"	" " " " 1928	p. 160.
9.	"	" " " " 1931	p. 161.
10.	"	" " " " 1934	p. 163.
11.	"	" " " " 1938	p. 164.
12.	Account of the Ashington Coal Company's Day Continuation Scheme, Ashington Collieries' Magazine, July, 1922.		p. 165.
13.	Account of the opening of Linton School, Ashington Collieries' Magazine, August, 1926.		p. 167.
14.	Extract from the " New Code " of 1910 re. school log books.		p. 168.
15.	Map of Northumberland.		p. 169.
16.	Map of the Bothal and Woodhorn area.		p. 170.

ABBREVIATIONS.

P.M.S. Log	Pegswood Mixed School Log.
P.S.S. Log	Pegswood Senior School Log.
P.J.I.S. Log	Pegswood Junior and Infant School Log.
P.C.I.S. Log	Pegswood Colliery Infant School Log.
P.M.S.M. Minutes	Pegswood Mixed School Managers' Minutes.
H.M.I.R.	H.M. Inspector's Report.
L.S. Log	Longhirst School Log.
L.S.M. Minutes	Longhirst School Managers' Minutes.

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CHAPTER ONE. INTRODUCTION.

The study which follows aims to examine and discuss the extent to which, if at all, the organisation of elementary school education changed and progressed between 1918 and 1939, with particular reference to the schools situated within the boundaries of the ancient parishes of Bothal and Woodhorn in the county of Northumberland. The investigation intends to give particular attention to school organisation and re-organisation including class-size, staffing and the provision of buildings. As will be shown, historians have given varying degrees of attention to these topics and are divided in their evaluation of changes in elementary education during the 1918 to 1939 period. It will also be demonstrated that the situation in the area of the Northumberland Local Education Authority has been considered in only the most general terms and that almost no attention has been given to the locality of this particular study.

Northumberland is exceeded in area by only four of England's traditional geographical counties: Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Devonshire and Norfolk. The county includes both sparsely and densely populated areas and contrasting urban and rural localities. It was admirably described in 1976 by L.W. Hepple:

"It has a varied landscape of shipyards and wooded river valleys, pit villages and windy moorlands. The boundaries of the county are well defined: the Tyne and Pennine foothills in the south, the Cheviots and border moorlands in the north-west and the winding Tweed in the north."

Hepple, (1976) p. 13.

During the 1918 - 1939 period the various communities to be found within the county¹ could be classified as follows:-

- i. rural communities, centred on market towns,
- ii. mining communities, some of which were populous and
- iii. coastal communities, consisting of ports and fishing villages.

This division is a useful if somewhat inexact one, as some rural and coastal communities included newer settlements based upon mining. To attempt an investigation of change and progress in elementary school organisation, 1918 - 1939 with reference to the entire area of the Northumberland L.E.A. would be a massive undertaking in terms of both research and analysis. It has therefore been decided to restrict the the scope of the study to a smaller area. Whilst L.E.A. policy has to be considered as a whole, its impact has been viewed with particular reference to schools situated within the boundaries of the ancient parishes of Bothal and Woodhorn.² This area of the south-east of the county has been selected for six particular reasons:-

- i. the parishes include contrasting examples of schools situated in urban/mining, rural and coastal communities,
- ii. the history of the parishes reflects that of many others in the county, i.e. a nineteenth/early twentieth century movement from a series of small communities based upon agriculture and fishing to larger communities dominated by the coal industry,
- iii. documentary evidence relating to the schools is readily available,
- iv. many of the school buildings of the period survive,
- v. the parishes are convenient units in view of the many changes made to local government boundaries and
- vi. it is the writer's home area and its general history and character are familiar to him.

The locality is not claimed to be representative of other areas of the county but does, without doubt, have much in common with other localities in terms of its history, geography and economy.

Bothal and Woodhorn parishes³ were essentially rural in character until the nineteenth century. The local communities were based upon agriculture, with fishing villages at Newbiggin and Cresswell. In 1849, mining commenced at Fell-em-Doon, from which the modern settlement of Ashington

developed, particularly after the sinking of the Bothal pit in 1867. (Moffat, c.1989 pp. 10-11). In addition to the expansion of Ashington colliery, new collieries opened in Bothal parish at Longhirst in 1868 (N.T.E.C. , 1993; p. 11) and at Pegswood in 1868 (Moffat, c.1989 p. 3). Longhirst colliery closed in 1897 (N.T.E.C. , 1993 p. 11), but its closure was more than compensated for by developments during the late nineteenth century and first decades of the twentieth century in Woodhorn parish. To North Seaton colliery, sunk in 1859 (Moffat, c.1989 p. 15), were added Woodhorn, sunk in 1894 (Moffat, c.1989 p. 18), Newbiggin, sunk in 1908 (Moffat, c.1989 p. 35), Linton, sunk in 1895 (Leach, 1986 p. 79), Ellington, sunk in 1909 (Leach, 1986 p. 76) and Lynemouth, opened in 1934 (Leach, 1986 p. 81).

The impact of this industrial development is reflected in population figures. In 1851, the population of Bothal Demesne, Ashington and Sheepwash was 345. In 1861 it stood at 718, in 1871, 1,085, in 1881, 2,179, in 1891, 5,603, in 1901, 6,336 and in 1911, 8,115. At Hirst, the increase was even more dramatic: from 57 in 1891 to 7,672 in 1901 and 16,428 in 1911.⁴

After 1918, the situation changed. Although Ashington Urban District's population reached a peak of 29,418 in 1931, the economic situation was unstable and the coal-trade often depressed. Major strikes took place in 1921 and 1926. In the summer of 1932, unemployment in Ashington reached 63% (Hepple, 1976 p. 129). Despite the depression, the Ashington Coal Co. Ltd. attempted to move forward and in 1934 opened Lynemouth colliery, at which the most modern available technology was used and which had a work-force housed in a model village. At Lynemouth, the population rose from 22 in 1921 to about 2,000 in 1923 (Leach, 1986 p. 81). Prosperity was only just returning to the area when the Second World War broke out in 1939 (Hepple, 1976 p. 130).

The changing nature of the local communities was reflected in changes in school provision. In the mid-nineteenth century the schools which existed were those founded and supported by the Church of England and local land-owners. Such schools included Bothal, built in 1725 by Lord Oxford and later supported by his descendents, the Dukes of Portland (Bibby, 1973 p. 295), Cresswell, built in 1838 by the Cresswell family (Leach, 1986 p. 64) and Longhirst, built c. 1859 by the Lawsons of Longhirst (N.T.E.C., 1993 p. 11). The expansion of population led to the opening of new schools, such as Bothal National Schools, opened in Ashington in 1873 and New Hirst (North) School in 1896 (Harrison, 1983 pp. 27-28). By 1918, the area addressed by this study was covered by a network of often large, all-standard schools which were the responsibility of either the Church of England or the Education Committee of Northumberland County Council, established in 1902 as the Local Education Authority, with particular responsibility for former "Board" schools and others not provided by the church. The area was also served by a single Roman Catholic school (Kirkup, 1993 pp. 211-212). The 1918 situation is more fully discussed later in the study.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE STUDY.

Having outlined the study's aims and scope and having provided background information relevant to the locality in the above introduction, the literature of relevance to the subject is reviewed. The literature review aims to consider and discuss through an examination of existing literature the extent to which, if at all, the organisation of England's elementary schools changed between 1918 and 1939 and the extent to which any changes can be regarded as a contribution towards progress. Particular attention is paid to the importance of the 1918 Education Act, the 1926 "Hadow" report ("The Education of the Adolescent", 1927), the provision of

school buildings, staffing and class-size, with reference to the study's aims. The literature of direct local relevance is also discussed as are the contrasting views of historians on the question of whether or not the period was one of progress and change in elementary school organisation.

The literature review is followed by a chapter which addresses the questions arising from that review. These questions form the basis for the investigation. The chapter also considers the value of undertaking a local study.

A methodology chapter follows the above and discusses the method adopted for investigating the research questions and the advantages and limitations of the available sources of information. The methodology chapter also includes an account of the procedures adopted.

Two chapters of analysis follow the methodology chapter. The first chapter of analysis is based upon material chiefly derived from the minutes and associated documents of the Northumberland County Council Education Committee for the 1918 to 1939 period. The second chapter of analysis examines material obtained from the school log-books (including the reports of H.M. Inspectors) and school managers' minutes of Pegswood Mixed School and Longhirst School for the 1918 to 1939 period. Both chapters aim to examine and discuss material which is relevant to a study of change and progress in elementary school organisation, including policy and its implementation, special provision for younger and older children, staffing, class-size, buildings and re-organisation. Both chapters are preceded by brief introductions and include discussions of the material obtained and brief conclusions.

The survey of material is followed by a chapter which includes an overall discussion of the evidence, which in turn leads into a conclusion

which aims to answer the questions the study sets out to address.

The dissertation is completed by appendices, a bibliography and end
-notes.

CHAPTER TWO. LITERATURE REVIEW.

BACKGROUND AND THE SITUATION IN 1918.

In discussing the organisation of elementary education between 1918 and 1939 in terms of change and progress it is necessary to consider the position in 1918.

The system of elementary education as it existed in 1918 could be traced directly back to Forster's Education Act of 1870 which aimed to provide schooling

"for all the children resident in such district [i.e. a district lacking in school provision] for whose elementary education suitable provision is not otherwise made."

Forster intended to

"supplement the present voluntary system - that is ... fill up its gaps at least cost of public money, with least loss of voluntary co-operation and with most aid from the parents."

Lawson and Silver (1973) pp. 311-317.

The voluntary "system" alluded to by Forster included a variety of categories of school, notably those associated with the National Society (Church of England), the British and Foreign School Society (undenominational) and the Roman Catholic Church. Lawson and Silver summarise the purpose of the schools established under the terms of the 1870 Act as follows:

"The 'public elementary schools' to be provided by the boards, it should be emphasized, were intended to and did rest on the same central assumption as the voluntary schools which they were called on to supplement - they were for the children of the poor, providing an independent system for the lower class. Although lower-middle-class children came to benefit from their existence, the elementary schools were viewed as catering for the class of children ranging from the 'street Arabs' to those of the 'respectable' working class. They were self-contained and not preparatory to a grammar school or any other education."

Lawson and Silver (1973) pp. 317-318.

By a subsequent Act of 1880 school attendance, with certain exceptions, was made compulsory up to the age of 13. An Act of 1891 permitted the waiving of fees, limited in 1870 to no more than 9d (Lawson and Silver, 1973 p. 317 and pp. 321-322).

The 1902 Education Act abolished the School Boards established under the terms of the 1870 Act. The status of Local Education Authority was given to County and County Borough Councils. The exception to this rule was that municipal boroughs with over 10,000 inhabitants and urban districts with over 20,000 inhabitants were given control of the administration of Part III of the Act (which covered elementary education) and in due course were known as Part III authorities (Lawson and Silver, 1973 p. 370).

The Dual System was retained by the 1902 Act, L.E.A.s being made responsible for the payment of voluntary school teachers and for the repair of "wear and tear" upon voluntary school buildings (Lawson and Silver, 1973 p. 371). Partly as the result of the establishment, by some school boards, of extra-grade classes or higher grade schools, the 1902 Act permitted L.E.A.s to

"supply or aid the supply of education other than elementary."

Lawson and Silver, (1973) p. 370.

Many L.E.A.s did establish secondary schools, largely based upon traditional grammar schools; entrance was usually dependent upon passing a test at the age of eleven. After 1907 a free-place system was developed:

"In 1907 the free-place system was introduced, by which grants to secondary schools were made dependent on their keeping at least a quarter of their places, without fee, for pupils from elementary schools. Entrance was conditional upon passing an 'attainment test' at approximately the age of eleven, which had grown in popularity as the best age of transfer since the end of the nineteenth century."

Lawson and Silver, (1973) p.382.

The free-place system continued until 1932 when the economic situation led to its conversion into a "special-place" system which required those parents who were able to contribute towards the fees (Lawson and Silver, 1973 p. 394). Eaglesham comments that the 1902 Act

"Helped to contain, to repel and in some respects to destroy the upward striving of the elementary schools."

(Eaglesham, quoted in Lawson and Silver, 1973 p. 371).

and that

"A cynic might argue that Morant [from 1903 Permanent Secretary of the Board of Education and a champion of the traditional grammar school and its curriculum] aimed at and achieved a stand-still in elementary education."

Eaglesham, quoted in Lawson and Silver (1973) p. 380.

It is clear that the 1902 Act did not lead to a change in the officially perceived role of the elementary schools, as the 1904 code stated that their purpose was to provide

"training in followership rather than leadership training, suited to the working classes."

1904 code, quoted in Lawson and Silver (1970) p. 380.

At least one pre-1914 organisational development was of notable significance to the post-1918 elementary system: the central school.

Musgrave comments:

"With Morant's departure from the Board post-elementary schools began to grow again. After 1911 Central Schools became possible under the elementary code. These were schools to which older children in large towns could be sent for the latter part of their elementary schooling if they wanted to stay beyond the minimum legal leaving age. Such schools were established first in the north and in London. ... Central Schools became very common in the inter-war years and by the thirties were sending former pupils to universities."

Musgrave, (1968) pp. 82-83.

Barnard regarded the central schools as the fore-runners of the

"modern" schools advocated by the 1926 "Hadow" report:

"... central schools had been started in London in 1911....

They were designed as a kind of higher elementary school, fed by several contributory schools, for pupils aged to fifteen, and

their curriculum, although it had a commercial or industrial bias, was not narrowly vocational."

Barnard, (1961) p. 235.

A further innovation in 1913 was the foundation of Junior Technical schools

"for pupils from Elementary schools in preparation either for artisan or other industrial or for domestic employment."

Musgrave, (1968) p. 83.

Thus, by 1918, school attendance was, with certain exceptions, compulsory up to the age of 14. The majority of pupils received their education in an elementary school founded or maintained by a voluntary or statutory body and organised as infant classes and "Standards" numbered from I to VII (The system of "standards" dated back to the revised code of 1862: c.f. Lawson and Silver, 1973 pp. 282-283). A very few pupils transferred, following success in an entrance examination, at about the age of 11, to a secondary school or were able, in some localities, to proceed to a central or junior technical school.

DEVELOPMENTS IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ORGANISATION, 1918 - 1939.

The 1918 - 1939 period witnessed, as will be shown, many changes in the organisation of elementary education. The extent to which those changes represented progress is a contentious question. Whilst change can be identified comparatively easily, progress is more complex to define. This study aims to identify as progress those developments which would, in general contemporary opinion, have been regarded as contributions towards progress. "Contemporary opinion" was not unanimous, but it is clear that the legislation and "Hadow" reports of the period ("The Education of the Adolescent," 1927, "The Primary School," 1931 and "Infant and Nursery Schools," 1933) contained provisions or recommendations which generally aimed to bring about progress

in the educational system. These included the aim to provide more distinctive provision for older and younger children, to extend the duration of a child's school life, to develop a broader curriculum with opportunities for practical activities of various kinds, to improve staffing and buildings and to extend opportunity generally. Not all these aspects of "progress" are addressed in this study, but an awareness of them contributes towards an understanding of how the term has been used. As will be shown, progress towards implementing these objectives was not steady. A review of the aims of the 1918 Act, the "Hadow" reports and the 1936 Act and related events illustrates the extent to which each, at least to some degree, consolidated earlier intentions before setting out new objectives.

THE EDUCATION ACT, 1918 AND ITS INFLUENCE UPON ORGANISATION.

The origins of the 1918 Education Act are to be found in the years prior to and during the 1914 - 1918 War and thus lie outside the scope of this study. Bernbaum and Sherrington provide useful summaries of the issues. Bernbaum states:

"... the war aggravated the old problems: staff shortages, poor facilities; school work suffering from part-time employment, as pupils were frequently permitted to leave school for part of the week in order to enter employment, and physical weakness of the children."

Bernbaum, (1967) p. 14.

Between 1902 and 1914 there was a constant demand for greater access to secondary education (Lawson and Silver, 1973 pp. 371-373). The war illustrated the advantages possessed by Germany in many fields, an advantage at least in part due to the German educational system. In 1918, Lloyd George observed:

"The most formidable institution we had to fight in Germany... was the schools of Germany.... An educated man is a better worker, a more formidable warrior, and a better citizen. That was only half comprehended here before the war."

Sherrington, (1981) p. 128.

The factors which lay behind the 1918 Act were, therefore, complex and were the result of both pre-war circumstances and the war itself. H.A.L. Fisher, President of the Board of Education in 1918 struck a chord when he stated:

"Where war demands of all equal sacrifices, it was felt to all should be accorded, as far as might be, equal opportunities,"

Dent, (1970) p. 83.

and that his plans were

"to repair the war's intellectual wastage" and to "secure for its juvenile population conditions under which mind, body and character may be harmoniously developed."

Martin, (1979) pp. 86-87.

The Bill proposed by Fisher, after certain modifications had been made, received the Royal Assent on 8th. August, 1918. The following is a useful summary of its provisions:

1. The framework of 1902 was retained. The powers of the L. A. were increased, but legislation was permissive not mandatory.
2. Local Authorities were directed to use the powers given by the Act of 1902 to provide (a) by means of Central Schools or classes, practical instruction suitable to age, ability and requirements of children (b) to organise advanced instruction for older children and more intelligent pupils over 14 years.
3. Compulsory full-time attendance was to be 5 to 14. Local Authority could raise the leaving age to 15.
4. Those leaving at 14 would be required to attend a continuation school for 326 hours each year - to be compulsory.
5. All fees in elementary schools were abolished.
6. No child under 12 was to be employed. Hours and times of employment for those over 12 amended. No street trading by children.
7. Local Authority to provide facilities for Physical Education and games in day and evening.
8. Medical inspection and treatment extended to Secondary Schools, but optional in aided schools. The new feature was the provision of certain forms of treatment.
9. Special provision was to be made for physically defective children as well as Defective and Epileptic.
10. Power was given to Local Authority to pay maintenance grants to children holding scholarships to Secondary Schools.
11. The Dual system was retained.
12. Private schools to be registered and open to inspection.
13. Percentage grants introduced. (Government now paid approximately half of L.E.A. expenditure).
14. Local Authority allowed to open Nursery Schools for which grants would be given."

May and Greer, (1973) pp. 11-12.

The 1918 Act, therefore, provided for considerable changes in the organisation of elementary education. Few would contest that by the standards of 1918, raising the leaving age to 14, improving the educational experience of older pupils through central schools or classes, paying grants to scholarship winners, the development of continuation schools and the promotion of nursery schools, would have represented real progress. The Act did not constitute a break with the past but attempted to build upon earlier measures, most notably the 1902 Act. Sherrington comments:

"Viewed in this way the 1918 Act contributed to the end of an era rather than the opening of a new world.... Perhaps the 1918 Education Act should finally be judged not against ideals but in the terms of those who framed it. It did not set out to restructure English education or create full educational opportunity. It built upon the earlier Act of 1902, by trying in part to eliminate some of the deficiencies revealed since."

Sherrington, (1981) pp. 117-119.

Fisher's Act did, therefore, represent progress on the organisation of England's elementary schools, but the promise of the Act was not destined to be fulfilled. Simon (1974) and Bernbaum (1967) provide full discussions of the issues surrounding the failure to fully implement the 1918 Act. Fisher was conscious that full implementation would be costly and agreed to the Board of Education paying at least one half of a L.E.A.'s expenditure (Bernbaum, 1967 p. 26). The 1920 - 1922 slump however caused a drastic increase in the number of claimants for dole or relief. Consequently, a Board circular of 1920 stated that:

"except with fresh cabinet authority, schemes involving expenditure not yet in operation are to remain in abeyance."

Bernbaum, (1967) p. 29.

Analysis of the reasons for this economy drive reveals that the press was partly responsible. In 1921 the "Daily Mail" launched an anti-waste campaign which Bernbaum describes as "furious" (Bernbaum, 1967 p. 29). The Chairman of the Midland Bank

"called for measures which were 'ruthless, relentless, remorseless.'"

Bernbaum, (1967) p. 29.

Many economists believed that government spending had contributed towards the crisis. A Select Committee on National Expenditure was formed under the chairmanship of Sir Eric Geddes, which reported in 1922. The committee was highly critical of the financial support Fisher had promised to the L.E.A.s and condemned his scheme as a "money spending device."

Bernbaum, (1967) p. 29.

Even before the 1922 report, L.E.A.s had been instructed not to erect "large and costly buildings."

Bernbaum, (1967) p. 29.

Savings were made by cutting teachers' salaries and other services, but as Bernbaum observes:

"The main effect of the economy drive was that all plans for reconstruction on the lines suggested by the 1918 Act were discarded. Nationally the Act remained virtually inoperative as far as the nursery schools, day continuation classes and the raising of the school leaving age to 15 were concerned."

Bernbaum, (1967) p. 30.

It is important to appreciate in a wider study of inter-war progress and change that despite the failure to enact many of its provisions, the Act did result in some concrete organisational improvements and also contributed towards a spirit of progress which influenced later thinking. Martin notes:

"Although many of the Act's proposals soon foundered in the economic crisis, its spirit set the tone for the work of post-war reformers."

Martin, (1979) p. 87.

Dent comments:

"Fisher's Education Act was far from being a dead loss. On the contrary, it effected a round half-dozen permanent reforms of lasting value."

Dent, (1970) p. 85.

Dent identified these as the fixing of the leaving age at 14, without exception, the various prohibitions relating to attendance and employment and the abolition of fee-payment in elementary schools (Dent, 1970 p. 85-86). Lowndes observed that:

"the continuation school provisions of the Act excited greater interest at the time, these two sections [those relating to compulsory attendance until the age of 14 and improved provision for older scholars] are now generally recognised to have been among the greatest benefits which it conferred."

Lowndes, (1969) p.113.

Fisher also attempted to improve teachers' conditions through the committee established in 1919 under the chairmanship of Lord Burnham. Both Curtis and Dent identified the permissive character of much of the Act as a weakness, but at least some authorities did take advantage of their new powers:

"Much of the legislation was permissive instead of being mandatory and therein lay the weakness. It was possible for certain educational services to be obligatory in one district and not in another.... The powers of the L.E.A.s had been augmented, but those of the Board of Education remained as nebulous as before."

Curtis, (1967) pp. 341-342.

"The slight use made by most L.E.A.s of valuable permissive powers granted to them must have been particularly disappointing to Fisher. One of his chief ambitions had been 'to place the onus of reconstruction on the local authorities and to rely on their public spirit and initiative to carry through the proposals in the way that was intended.'"

Dent, (1970) p. 86, including a comment made by S.J. Curtis.

The 1918 Act, although it promised much, did not lead to a dramatic re-organisation of England's elementary schools. However, at the very least, the Act did lead to some experiments in elementary school organisation and encouraged further thought (c.f. Lawson and Silver, 1973 pp. 384-385).

THE "HADOW" REPORT AND ITS INFLUENCE UPON ORGANISATION.

Simon entitles his discussion of post-1918 developments "Making the

10

most of the elementary system." As early as 1920, Simon states, London's development plan spoke of

"three distinct phases in elementary education, the first covering the period of a child's life from 5 to 7, the second from 7 to 11, and the third from 11 to 14 plus, or even 15 plus where the parents desire to retain their children to this later age."

Simon, (1974) p. 118.

Simon also identifies the failure to develop continuation schools as a further incentive to improve the elementary schools. R.H. Tawney's "Secondary Education for all," published in 1922 discussed many aspects of the then current problems. Tawney believed in a system

"under which primary and secondary education are organised as two stages of a single continuous process; secondary education being the education of the adolescent and primary education preparatory thereto."

Bernbaum, (1967) p. 35.

The years after 1918 also witnessed a great increase in demand for places in traditional grammar or secondary schools; this was largely due to the realisation that a secondary education paved the way into secure occupations (Dent, 1970 p. 94). Bernbaum points out that both Conservative and Labour Presidents of the Board of Education advocated a policy of re-organisation in the 1920s. In 1925 a circular entitled "The Organisation of Public Elementary Schools" advocated "advanced instruction" for pupils aged over 11 and separate Junior and Infant schools. Bernbaum concludes:

"Although these recommendations were intended for planning new schools, some local authorities began to re-organise existing schools along the lines suggested and the Board of Education seemingly approved this."

Bernbaum, (1967) p. 41.

The above circumstances lay behind the preparation of the report of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education, entitled "The Education of the Adolescent," published in 1927. The Consultative Committee was formed in 1895

"to advise the President of the Board on matters referred to it

by the President."

May and Greer, (1973) p. 27.

Early in 1924, Edward Wood, then President (Bernbaum, 1967 p. 41) referred the following question to the Consultative Committee:-

- "i. To consider and report upon the organisation, objective and curriculum of courses of study suitable for children who will remain in full-time attendance at schools, other than Secondary Schools, up to the age of 15, regard being had on the one hand to the requirements of a good general education and the desirability of providing a reasonable variety of curriculum, so far as is practicable, for children of varying tastes and abilities, and on the other to the probable occupations of the pupils in commerce, industry and agriculture.
- ii. Incidentally thereto, to advise on the arrangements which should be made (a) for testing the attainments of the pupils at the end of their course; (b) for facilitating in suitable cases the transfer of individual pupils to Secondary Schools at an age above the normal age of admission."

"The Education of the Adolescent," (1927) p. xvii.

The committee of twenty completed its report in 1926, the report being published in 1927. Since the committee sat under the chairmanship of Sir Henry Hadow⁵, the report is customarily referred to as the "Hadow" report. The members of the committee were aware of the development of special provision for older children in Scotland, on the Continent and in the United States and of earlier developments in England and the report noted the tendency

"of the national system of elementary education to throw up experiments in post-primary education. Though such experiments have again and again been curtailed or rendered difficult by legislative or administrative action, they have persistently reappeared in various forms. This fact in itself seems to indicate the half-conscious striving of a highly industrialised society to evolve a type of school analogous to and yet distinct from the secondary school, and providing an education designed to fit boys and girls to enter the various branches of industry, commerce, and agriculture at the age of 15."

"The Education of the Adolescent," (1927) pp. 34-35, para. 38.

Bernbaum identified the 1926 report as

"the centre piece of educational reform for the next thirty years."

Bernbaum (1967) p. 43.

In view of the report's importance to a study of progress and change in school organisation, it is useful to include May and Greer's summary of its recommendations:-

1. Primary education should be regarded as ending about 11. A 'second stage' should then begin.
2. All normal children to have post-primary education.
3. A break at 11 plus. Provision to be made for transfer, both up and down, at later ages.
4. Two types of secondary schools, grammar and modern.
5. Curricula of modern school:-
 - a. courses for three to four years, i.e. shorter than grammar schools;
 - b. subjects similar to grammar schools, but more emphasis on handwork etc.;
 - c. not vocational but practical;
 - d. curriculum to be planned as a whole;
 - e. to be connected with 'further education' after leaving and
 - f. practical bias in third and fourth years.
6. Junior Technical schools mildly encouraged, but not as Secondary schools, because purely vocational.
7. Building and staffing standards to be 'approximate' to those of grammar schools.
8. New leaving examination - entry voluntary.
9. Eleven selection to be by examination. [sic].
10. School leaving age to be raised to 15.
11. Administrative recommendations
 - a. L.E.A.s to be reorganised.
 - b. hoped that voluntary agencies would develop non-provided modern schools.
 - c. school managers to be given well-defined duties."

May and Greer, (1973) pp. 27-28.

The following paragraph of the report is worthy of particular notice

"It is desirable that education up to 11+ should be known by the general name of Primary Education, and education after 11 by the general name of Secondary Education...."

"The Education of the Adolescent," (1927), para. 99.

The report also proposed that since the term "elementary" had become misleading it should be abolished and that the term "secondary" should be used to describe "post-primary" education in general (Dent, 1970 p. 98).

The 1926 report thus advocated great change in the organisation of elementary education and the unbiased observer would probably agree

that the proposals represented progress. As Curtis comments, the adoption of the report

"would necessitate a complete reorganisation of the existing elementary schools into separate departments catering for infant, junior and senior pupils respectively."

Curtis, (1967) p. 349.

Whilst it is true, as Barnard states, that

"the importance of the Hadow report was generally recognised,"

Barnard, (1967) p. 237,

not all of Hadow's recommendations were adopted. Lowndes comments:

"... the Hadow report was, in many parts of the country, in advance of its time. The 'real conviction and the new outlook' had to be painfully built up, against the misgivings of parents and the rigidities of school buildings planned to take children of all ages."

Lowndes, (1967) p. 114.

Whilst Barnard noted that in 1928 the Board produced a pamphlet which discussed the problems of re-organisation entitled "The new Prospect in Education," Bernbaum perceived a lack of enthusiasm within the Board and the Cabinet: Lord Eustace Percy, the then President, noted that the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Churchill, displayed little interest in educational matters and that the Minister of Health, Chamberlain, believed that public opinion favoured increased spending upon health and housing rather than upon education (Bernbaum, 1967 p. 46). The leaving age was not raised to 15. In Bernbaum's words, the Board's officials were determined

"not to alter fundamentally the nature of the educational system."

Bernbaum, (1967) p. 47.

The Board's officials may have been reluctant to support changes which might restrict the development of the secondary schools opened by L.E.As following the 1902 Act, demand for places in which was high (c.f. p. 16 above) and which by the late 1920s were well established (Lawson and Silver, 1973 p.389 & p.391). A further complication was caused by the enthusiasm of some teachers' organisations for "multi-bias" schools, consisting of distinct departments within a single school (Bernbaum, 1967 p. 48). As noted above, the 1926 "Hadow" report favoured a division of secondary education into two categories:

secondary/grammar schools and modern schools (or senior classes which followed the modern school curriculum). Only cautious encouragement was given to junior technical schools ("The Education of the Adolescent," 1927 pp. 175-177). The "multi-lateral" concept, whereby various courses, including those of the grammar, technical and modern school type, with opportunity for transfer, were to be offered in a single school, was explored in the 1938 "Spens" report (Curtis, 1967 p. 357).

The re-organisation would clearly require many new buildings and major work on existing ones, a fact recognised by the government which sanctioned 50% building grants for three years from 1929 (Bernbaum, 1967 p. 52). Due to the financial crisis these were withdrawn in 1931 (Curtis, 1967 p. 352). The 1929 Labour government proposed to raise the leaving age to 15 in 1931: this proposal was withdrawn in 1930 when the extent of the school accommodation problem was realised and the fact that the voluntary bodies lacked the resources to fund new buildings was fully appreciated (Bernbaum, 1967 pp. 52-53 and Dent, 1970 pp. 100-101). Assistance for the non-provided schools did not materialise until the 1936 Education Act, which aimed to raise the leaving age to 15 in 1939 and which sanctioned grants to the churches of 50% to 75% of the cost of school building projects in return for increased L.E.A. influence over school management (Curtis, 1967 p. 353). Barnard identifies some particular problems which hindered the progress of re-organisati

"In country areas travelling was often a problem. If a small village all standard school were converted into a junior school, the post-primary, which the elder would have to attend, might be some distance away. Complications also arose out of the 'dual system.' If an all-standard Church of England school were 'decapitated' and became a junior school and no senior Church of England school were accessible, those children who left at the age of eleven plus might have to be drafted to a post-primary council school."

Barnard, (1961) pp. 237-238.

In view of the many obstacles which stood in the way of a complete re-organisation on "Hadow" lines, the Board decided to tackle the problem of poor buildings and facilities. Dent refers to

"improving voluntary school buildings, still many of them in a shocking state. Instead of attempting impossibilities, the Board advised, go for

the other, easier (and cheaper) reform Hadow had recommended: the division of all-age elementary schools into two schools, primary and senior. Much of that could be accomplished by the expenditure of only marginal sums of money."

Dent, (1970) p. 101.

Dent observes that this policy was broadly adopted, with the exception of the years 1929-1931 when the Labour government made an unsuccessful attempt to raise the leaving age (Dent, 1970 p. 101). In the long term, Dent believed that:

"the leisurely progress of Hadow reorganisation gave teachers time to learn, and to like, new ways of dealing with the 'juniors' in the primary school and with adolescent boys and girls of modest intellectual ability in the 'modern' and 'senior' schools. Many of us discovered in those days, as many teachers have discovered since, that given appropriate curricula and methods such girls and boys will rise to unexpected heights in work, play and behaviour. Much amazingly good experimental work was done between 1926 and 1939 in senior elementary schools, especially perhaps in girls schools. (The pity of it is that most of it has not been, and probably never will be, put on record.)"

Dent, (1970) p. 101.

Two further reports were prepared by the Consultative Committee on aspects of the elementary system: the Primary School (1931) and Infant and Nursery Schools (1933). Dent comments that the 1933 report:

"concentrated on the physical and mental make-up of young children, and on the educational programme and methods that teachers should use, rather than on the structure and organisation of schools."

Dent, (1970) p. 103.

Dent also noted that the infant school tradition was a strong and living one and that the report was a

"recapitulation of already established excellences...."

Dent, (1970) p. 103.

The 1931 report had a considerable long-term influence upon the development of school organisation and reflected the changes advocated for older pupils in the 1926 report. Maclure commented that the 1931 report

"indicates clearly the currents of psychological and pedagogic thought which were to change the old elementary school into the modern primary school."

Maclure, (1965) p. 188.

Dent's assesment of the 1931 report was similar:

"The junior school had no tradition save that of being the least considered part of the public elementary school. The Primary School report preached what was to most teachers an entirely new gospel; and to their eternal credit great numbers of them set out eagerly to learn it. Had they not been handicapped by the necessity, due largely to parental pressure, of preparing their intellectually most able pupils for 'the scholarship' their success would have been even more resounding."

Dent, (1970) p. 103.

Thus, the 1931 report, by re-defining the nature of the school years prior to the "post-primary" stage addressed by the 1926 report, complemented the revised conception of "secondary" education with a clearly-defined "primary" stage. The 1931 report also made most important recommendations regarding the curriculum, which lie beyond the scope of this study. The 1926 and 1931 reports, as Bernbaum discusses (Bernbaum, 1967, pp. 84-85), advocated the "streaming" of pupils according to ability, a proposal which tended to increase the influence of the scholarship over the primary curriculum and which was to have a long-term impact upon their development (Curtis, 1967 pp. 351-352). The order in which the different periods of education were addressed by the Consultative Committee was criticised by Curtis, who stated that

"the order was unfortunate, since in most areas priority was given to the needs of the adolescent."

Curtis, (1967) p. 352.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS.

Most writers appear to agree that, slow and irregular though progress was, the period between 1918 and 1939 did witness change for the better in elementary school organisation, an improvement which owed much to the influence of the 1918 Education Act and the 1926 "Hadow" report.

Curtis and Boulwood state:

"After 1933 the worst features of the slump disappeared and L.E.A.s. were able to continue their building programmes, but at a more cautious pace. By the end of 1938 about 64 per cent. of the children over the age of eleven were in senior classes and

the number of 'over-sized' classes had been reduced. Reorganisation was more rapid in urban than in rural areas."

Curtis and Boulton, (1966) p. 188.

Bernbaum notes :

"... though the 1930s may have seemed to have repeated the failures of the 1920s, there had been progress. Reorganisation continued, and the failure of the far-reaching schemes for reform should not obscure the extent of the slow changes which had been taking place. [The number of classes containing more than 50 pupils had increased in the year ending 31st. March, 1927 from 19,982 to 20,212.. In 1926 the number of children over 11 in reorganised departments was 165,000 compared with 1,823,060 in unreorganised all age departments. By 1929, the number had risen to 225,000 compared with 1,442,000]. In 1931 there were still 8,571 classes of over 50 children and only about one third of the children over 11 were in unreorganised senior departments. Seven years later, however, 63.5 per cent. of such children were in reorganised schools and the number of classes of more than 50 had been reduced to 2,100."

Bernbaum, (1967) pp. 70-71.

Jarman's comments are similar:

"progressive local authorities did press on with schemes of reorganisation in the following [post - 1926] years, and selected children for secondary, selective central or non-selective senior schools. The less progressive authorities did little reorganisation, and such authorities, with many old, unsuitable school buildings, had not therefore made the preparations which would have made easier the carrying out of the 1944 Act."

Jarman, (1963) p. 299.

Change and progress in organisation did take place between 1918 and 1939, but was not of a uniform character and to a large degree depended upon the initiative of individual local education authorities.

SCHOOL BUILDINGS.

The 1918 - 1939 period witnessed a general desire to improve or replace existing unsatisfactory school buildings and to erect schools of a design which reflected contemporary needs and aspirations. The need to replace old buildings became more urgent with the adoption of plans to reduce class size, to raise the leaving age and to follow a curriculum of greater breadth.

There is little disagreement to be found which contradicts the view that

the buildings erected during the period were of superior design to those of the nineteenth century. Armytage commented that the traditional board-school design with class-rooms leading from a central hall allowed for the

"rapid movement of classes and headmasterly supervision."

Armytage, (1970) p. 209.

Armytage noted that new designs encouraged included that adopted in Derbyshire which placed windows on both sides of class rooms to improve ventilation and the single-story quadrangular blocks favoured by Sir Felix Clay, the Board of Education's Chief Architect, 1904 - 1907.

Curtis commented that between 1902 and 1944

"almost revolutionary advances were made in regard to school buildings and equipment."

Curtis, (1967) p. 366.

and that

"A marked improvement was afforded by the introduction of the pavilion type of school after 1907. In this type the class-rooms led off from a veranda or corridor, and it was a simple matter to arrange for windows on each side of the class-rooms to give cross ventilation. The assembly-hall was apart from the class rooms, either at one end of the building or in the centre of the line of class rooms. The new arrangements for ventilation could be very troublesome in cold and boisterous weather. Experiments made to avoid this resulted in semi-open-air schools, in which the provision of folding glazed doors, which could be closed or opened according to the state of the weather, effected a great improvement. Whenever possible, the class rooms were built to face south. Most pavilion types of school are one-storey buildings and take up a good deal of ground, an important consideration in districts where land is limited and expensive.

An alternative arrangement was provided by the quadrangle type of school, in which the class rooms were sited on the long sides of the quadrangle, and on the shorter sides the assembly-hall and rooms for art, science and practical work were located respectively. In towns, where land is expensive, the quadrangle type of building is in greater favour. Many variations of each type exist. Corresponding improvements were made in the lighting and heating of school premises in areas where light and power were available.

Curtis, (1967) p. 367.

Curtis also commented that the period saw a movement away from static desks to dual desks and chairs and a tendency towards the provision of rooms for

practical work and that

"Attention was also paid to the provision of adequate play-ground space, playing fields and school gardens."

Curtis, (1967) p. 367.

Martin's brief comments upon building design complement those of Curtis:

Although official control of design was strict and funds limited, the inter-war period produced pleasant school buildings. One-story, pavilion-style schools were a fashion. Concern with ventilation and a fashion for 'open-air' schooling allowed whole walls to be opened by folding back glazed doors."

Martin (1979) p. 91.

Dent identified the Board's 1936 "Suggestions for the Planning of Buildings for Public Elementary Schools" as a document which illustrated progress in design:

"Not because of any particular types of building advocated in the Suggestions (though they were on the whole extremely good), but because of the basic principles it laid down - principles which today are taken for granted, but which only thirty years ago were either quite novel or completely ignored in practice. Such as, for example, the planning of school premises should be related to the type of school that would use them; that craft rooms were needed in primary as well as secondary schools; and that - believe it or not - attractive interior decoration was as appropriate for schools as for homes."

Dent, (1970) p. 111.

An examination of available literature, therefore, suggests that the 1918 - 1939 period witnessed progress in the design of school buildings and an extension of the range of facilities they were expected to include. The extent to which old buildings were replaced or improved is a separate question.

The years before 1914 did witness progress in building provision, L.E.As. being encouraged to act by the Board's "black-list" of unsatisfactory schools. Barnard comments:

"In 1908 the Board of Education exerted pressure on L.E.As. by drawing up a 'Black List' and encouraging them to eliminate their worst schools which were included in it.... improvement was made until it was checked by the first World War."

Barnard (1961) p. 216.

Simon discusses the post-1918 circumstances and quotes from a 1921

circular which stated that:

"Large and costly permanent buildings" could not be erected unless the circumstances were extra-ordinary and the course "unavoidable."

Simon, (1974) p. 33.

As Barnard notes (Barnard, 1961 p. 216) the "black-list" was resumed in 1924. Middleton and Weitzman comment that in 1924, some 2,800 schools were "black-listed" and that by 1928 1,000 schools had been dealt with, it being estimated that a further seven years would be required to replace or improve the remaining 1,800 schools (Middleton and Weitzman, 1976 p. 155). Bernbaum comments that the 1929 Labour government introduced 50% grants to L.E.As. for building projects, many being needed in order to enable the leaving age to be raised to 15 in 1931 (Bernbaum, 1967 p. 52). In actual fact, 1931 saw the withdrawal of grants due to the financial collapse. Curtis states:

"no new buildings could be erected except in cases of necessity, such as providing school facilities for a new housing estate."

Curtis, (1967) p. 352.

Dent identifies a

"virtual cessation of new building between 1931 and 1936"

Dent, (1970) p. 104.

Curtis comments further that

"... the worst aspects of the slump began to fade after 1933, and the work of reconstruction began once more, but more slowly and steadily and perhaps with greater wisdom and foresight."

Curtis, (1967) p. 352.

The Education Act of 1936, which aimed to raise the usual leaving age to 15 on 1st. September, 1939, included provisions intended to assist the voluntary bodies to provide adequate buildings by means of grants based upon "special agreements." By 1939, of 519 proposed schemes, only 37 had "materialised" (Curtis, 1967 p. 353). Middleton and Weitzman comment that the continued use of many old and unsatisfactory buildings in many areas placed a great obstacle in the way of the re-organisation

advocated in the 1926 "Hadow" report as the facilities required for practical work and sports were often unavailable (Middleton and Weitzman, 1976 pp. 192-193).

In the light of the above paragraphs it could be assumed that the 1918 - 1939 period saw little progress in the improvement of school accommodation. Nationally, it is clear that the early 1920s and the years 1931 - 1936 were periods of little change, but, as Curtis notes, some L.E.As. made notable progress, particularly those which acted at about the time when the 1926 report was published:

"Many education authorities pressed on vigorously with their schemes of reorganisation, but in some cases authorities made no move until pressure was applied by the Board of Education. Those like the West Riding authority, who went ahead with the building of new schools, accomplished much of the work before the next economic slump slowed up developments, and were on the way to carrying out the requirements of... 1944."

Curtis, (1967) p. 351.

The 1918 - 1939 period witnessed some progress, despite many setbacks, towards providing improved elementary school buildings. The extent of this progress was clearly limited and the literature suggests that progress was closely related to the dynamism of individual L.E.As.

CLASS-SIZE AND STAFFING.

Lowndes notes that the cuts of 1921 ended the optimism of the post-1918 Act period that action would be taken to reduce the size of classes in elementary schools (Lowndes, 1969 p. 125). He also notes that the expression "as soon as financial circumstances permit" was adopted as a formula by inspectors to exempt schools from conforming to the Board of Education's requirements for staffing (Lowndes, 1969 p. 125). The Board of Education's requirements were embodied in a system of "staff-values". Thus, supplementary and student teachers were to have classes not exceeding 20 pupils, uncertificated and head-teachers were to have classes not exceeding 35 pupils and certificated teachers were to have

classes not exceeding 60 pupils (Lowndes, 1969 p. 124). The categories used show that not only were teachers lacking certificates recognised as effective teachers in 1918, albeit for classes of limited size, but also the extent to which the Board considered training qualified teachers to be responsible for much larger classes than their colleagues: treble the size of classes permitted to supplementary and student teachers and almost double the size of class permitted for uncertificated staff. The "values" also show that even in 1918, the demands placed upon head-teachers were such that it was considered appropriate to limit the size of the class they could be responsible for to 35.

Lowndes notes that after 1926, the system of staff values was replaced

"by a complicated and unpublished staffing formula. This enabled the Treasury to persuade timid Presidents of the Board of Education in the later inter-war years to place artificial restrictions on the volume of teacher training in the supposed interests of economy.... If ever there was a time when the shortage of teachers could have been remedied it was the 1930s. The opportunity was deliberately jettisoned."

Lowndes, (1969) p. 123.

Despite such set-backs, the inter-war years did witness progress towards smaller elementary school classes. From 1924 onwards, reducing numbers was

"one of the first objects of every Government."

Lowndes, (1969) p. 125,

except at the time of the 1931 cuts. Lowndes states:

"there were in 1922 28,000 classes in England and Wales containing between 50 and 60 children and 5,000 with over 60, the numbers had by 1934 come down to 6,138 with between 50 and 60 and a bare 56 with over 60¹. (1. The 56 classes with over 60 were probably cases where, owing to the absence of a teacher on 31st. March 1934, two classes were combined for the day)."

Lowndes, (1969) p. 125.

The above figures show that nationally real progress was made between 1918 and 1939 towards reducing the size of classes. Middleton and

Weitzman, (1976) pp. 193-194 provide evidence to show that the percentage of qualified staff in the elementary schools increased between the wars. In 1920-21 69% of elementary school teachers were certificated. Of these, 21.6% had qualified through the "pupil-teacher" system and had not completed a college course. The remainder of the staff employed in 1920-21 were uncertificated teachers (those who had passed an examination but who had not undertaken a training-college course), were student teachers or were female supplementary teachers (women who were not required to have any formal qualifications). By 1938, 79% of elementary school teachers were certificated and the appointment of supplementary teachers had ceased, as had the pupil-teacher scheme. (The pupil-teacher system came to an end in 1926: c.f. J.M. Taylor, 1989 p. 83). In addition, in 1938 7.3% of elementary school teachers were graduates, most of whom were also trained teachers (Middleton and Weitzman, 1976 pp. 193-194). There was, therefore, a marked improvement in the level of qualification of elementary school teachers between 1920 and 1938.

LITERATURE OF LOCAL RELEVANCE.

The literature relating to progress and change in the organisation of elementary schools in Northumberland (let alone the area addressed by this study) between 1918 and 1939 is limited. Two recent works are, however, of particular relevance: J.M. Taylor's "England's Border County," a centenary history of the Northumberland County Council and an essay on the role of the See of Newcastle in elementary education, contributed

by G.W. Hogg to "A Social History of the Diocese of Newcastle."

Taylor's work includes several useful chapters on the work of the Education Committee. Much of the material is presented in a chronological and descriptive manner and serves to give an overall impression of change and progress in elementary school organisation. Having commented upon the 1918 Act, Taylor states that the council

"did not feel able to establish Day Continuation Schools because of high building costs and the shortage of suitable teachers and because the provision of elementary and secondary schools seemed to be a matter of greater urgency."

J.M. Taylor, (1989) p. 79.

The writer notes that some day continuation schemes were organised, those in conjunction with the Ashington Coal Co. Ltd. being within the area of this study. The council's concern with elementary provision was justified, as some classes had over 60 pupils (J.M. Taylor, 1989 p. 79). National policy, Taylor believed, dictated three main tasks to the council in 1918:

"completing the school building programme and the replacement of sub-standard premises, interrupted by the war of 1914 - 18; of meeting the rising demand for secondary education; and of reorganising elementary schools to cater for the needs of children of 11 and over."

J.M. Taylor, (1989) p. 80.

Taylor comments that Northumberland was one of the L.E.As. which attempted to improve provision for older children prior to the publication of the 1926 "Hadow" report. This may have been the result of local demands for more secondary school places, a demand which arose from improved wages and the perception that a secondary education led to secure employment (J.M. Taylor, 1989 p. 80). The Education Committee

"proposed to divide the elementary school course into two and to provide in the senior division practical training in crafts and technical subjects, opportunities for games and facilities for cultivating hobbies and interests."

J.M. Taylor, (1989) pp. 80-81.

In urban areas, the committee intended to gather all "senior" pupils in a locality into a newly-built "central school" (J.M. Taylor, 1989 p. 81). Northumberland's 1930 development plan anticipated an early raising of the leaving age and the elimination of classes of 50+ in the infant and junior schools and of 40+ in the senior schools. Additional county organisers and 55 additional teachers were to be appointed (J.M. Taylor, 1989 p. 85). The

"most urgent need was to provide senior elementary schools for children who did not go at the age of 11 to academic secondary schools."

J.M. Taylor, (1989) p. 85.

In the county generally, the small size of senior classes made re-organisation difficult and the decision was taken to provide senior facilities in some of the larger villages (J.M. Taylor, 1989 p. 85). The 1931 economic crisis and the associated economies prevented many of the building projects essential to successful re-organisation from proceeding. In that year plans for five new senior schools in addition to the five already completed and for eleven conversion or renovation projects had to be postponed (J.M. Taylor, 1989 p. 86). Taylor notes

"the building programme had not fully recovered from the limitations imposed in 1931 by the time that war broke out in September, 1939."

J.M. Taylor, 1989 p. 86.

Junior and infant schools are little discussed in the centenary history, but comment is made upon the "junior scholarship" examination, success in which secured a free or special (i.e., one which required a parental contribution) place in a secondary school. After 1918, the examination became increasingly competitive due to the pressure upon places (J.M. Taylor, 1989 p. 83). From 1921, steps were taken to include an intelligence test in addition to tests in English and Arithmetic.

J.M. Taylor states:

"The results gratified the Education Committee, especially because awards were gained by pupils in small rural schools."

J.M. Taylor, (1989) p. 84.

The tests were devised by Sir Cyril Burt and their use in the county was notably early. Later, by 1932,

"all pupils of 11 plus took a single examination which was used to classify children for the different types of senior school which were being developed."

J.M. Taylor, (1989) p. 84.

It is of interest to note that the 1926 "Hadow" report, after discussing the various forms of selection used for secondary and other schools commented:

"A written psychological test might also be specially employed in dealing with border line cases, or where a discrepancy between the result of the written examination and the teacher's estimate of proficiency has been observed."

"The Education of the Adolescent," (1927) para. 157.

The extent to which Northumberland L.E.A. pioneered the use of such tests is discussed by Bernbaum (Bernbaum, 1967 pp. 80-81).

Bernbaum comments:

"In these years following the end of the First World War Northumberland reached a point of rationalisation of its selection arrangements which was not attained by other authorities until at least another twenty years."

Bernbaum, (1967) p. 81.

Taylor's work includes references to other developments during the 1918 - 1939 period such as the Education Committee's attempt to alleviate hardship during the depression, the expansion of the school medical service and the participation of schools in national and royal events. Such subjects are not within the scope of this study.

The centenary history's comments upon buildings and staffing are brief. Priority was given to providing new buildings in areas of expanding population and army huts were used to reduce overcrowding (J.M.

Taylor, 1989 p. 81 and p. 87). In 1923 the council resolved that

"in view of the supply of teachers now available including a large number of ex-servicemen who have been specially trained, 'married women 'not dependent on employment for a livelihood' should be replaced by unmarried women or men."

J.M. Taylor, (1989) p. 82.

The centenary history serves to outline several of the developments in elementary school organisation in the area of the L.E.A. between 1918 and 1939. The overall impression is that the period witnessed an ongoing desire to bring about change and progress, a desire which was repeatedly frustrated by financial limitations.

G.W. Hogg's essay entitled "The Church and School Education" includes a consideration of some of the issues faced by the Church of England in attempting to improve elementary school organisation in Northumberland between 1918 and 1939. Hogg comments that in 1918 financial restraint prevented the Established Church from making the improvements the 1918 Act called for, including the provision of advanced courses and practical opportunities for older pupils. Most of the 124 Anglican schools in the area of the Northumberland L.E.A. in 1921 were

"small, rural and housed in old buildings" and
 "even before 1921 it was evident that the dual system was a major stumbling block to any re-organisation of post-elementary organisation."

Pickering/Hogg, (1982) p. 291.

The lack of funds resulted in the poor state of repair of many church schools: nationally, non-provided schools outnumbered provided schools by almost 3:1 on the Board's 1924 - 1925 "black-list" of unsuitable buildings. In Newcastle Diocese, 24% of the Church of England schools were "black-listed" (Pickering/Hogg, 1982 p. 292). The inability of the church to maintain let alone to improve its schools in accordance with the demands of the Board coupled with the depressed state of the local economy brought about the transfer of many schools to the L.E.A. Between 1903 and 1930 77 non-provided schools passed to the L.E.A.: almost all were Anglican (Pickering/Hogg, 1982 p. 293). In the post-1918 period the L.E.A. proposed, as early as 1921, a partnership with the church in the Wooler area, by which the church would be responsible for pupils between 5 and 12 and a

new council school be provided for older children (Pickering/Hogg, 1982 p. 295). Although the scheme did not proceed, its existence is a further illustration of how, through the provision of "central" schools, Northumberland L.E.A. was attempting to improve provision for older pupils, as the 1918 Act urged, well before the publication of the "Hadow" proposals. Senior Council Schools were not wholeheartedly welcomed by the church, as it was clear that one result of re-organisation would be that many church schools would lose their older pupils. In the post-1918 period, the Church of England regarded its schools as a vital link with an increasingly secular society and viewed any proposals to reduce the influence of the Church over education with considerable caution (c.f. Cruickshank, 1963 pp. 113-136). By 1927, however, the National Society had accepted "Hadow" re-organisation in principle

"and agreed that in most areas children would have to proceed from the church school at eleven to the provided senior school, subject to the Anson bye-law of 1902 which gave parents the right to withdraw children from provided schools during a period of religious instruction."

Pickering/Hogg, (1982) p. 295.

Few of the church schools, in the opinion of the L.E.A. , had the potential for development as senior schools, the essential facilities for which Hogg identified as

"halls, libraries, practical instruction rooms and dining facilities."

Pickering/Hogg, (1982) p. 295.

Hogg notes that by the early 1930s, parochial effort and a fund established by the Bishop of Newcastle had resulted in provision being made for senior instruction in seven diocesan schools, including that at Newbiggin (Pickering/Hogg, 1982 p. 297).

The 1936 Education Act aimed to assist the churches to retain a place in the education of older children. The Act, which planned for the school leaving age to be raised to 15 on the 1st. September, 1939, made 50% to 75% building grants available to the churches for three years,

in return for the transfer of certain powers to the L.E.A. The Diocese of Newcastle took advantage of the Act, but none of the schemes related to schools within the area of this study (Pickering/Hogg, 1982 p. 298). The church experienced difficulty in finding even the 25% contribution required to secure government grants for building projects under the terms of the Act and as the pioneer of elementary education, the church possessed many old school buildings which were difficult to improve. These difficulties were reflected by the fact that in 1939 only 16% of senior pupils in church schools were being educated in a senior school or department, whereas 62% of senior pupils in council schools were being so educated (Pickering/Hogg, 1982 p. 299).

The relationship between the See of Newcastle and Northumberland L.E.A. was considered by Hogg to have been a generally good one. In some respects both bodies displayed a certain conservatism and respect for the pre-1914 status quo. In 1927 this consensus was demonstrated when the managers of Beltingham C.E. School dismissed the headmistress on the grounds that she was married (Pickering/Hogg, 1982 p. 301). Hogg gives details of other incidents which serve to show how important traditional relationships between the L.E.A., clergy, managers and staff were in order to secure the perceived effective organisation of church schools.

On the subject of the organisation of practical work, Hogg observes:

"The 1918 Education Act had made it the duty of authorities to provide facilities for practical work for seniors, but there were difficulties, especially for rural schools, over suitable accommodation, equipment and provision of specialist teachers. To some extent such problems were overcome by pupils during the summer months proceeding by bicycle and bus to centres (usually other schools) for instruction in practical subjects and by L.E.A. organisers holding classes for teachers, especially in physical education and handicrafts, to make them more competent. However, organisational difficulties, especially in a rural area like

Northumberland were tremendous and the authority could report as late as 1935 that barely one third of its senior pupils were receiving practical instruction."

Pickering/Hogg, (1982) p. 299.

It may be concluded from Hogg's essay that between 1918 and 1939 the Church of England attempted to improve the organisation and buildings of its schools in the diocese of Newcastle and to co-operate with the demands of the Board and the L.E.A. but that real progress was rendered so difficult by financial limitations that many managers resolved that progress could most easily be accomplished by the transfer of their school to the L.E.A.

PROGRESS AND CHANGE IN THE ORGANISATION OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION,
1918 - 1939: THE HISTORICAL ASSESMENT.

The literature reviewed above has shown that between 1918 and 1939 many changes to the organisation of elementary education were advocated, a high proportion of which were to some degree implemented. A more contentious question than the extent to which change took place is the question of to what extent, if at all, the changes represented progress. Historians are divided in their response to this question. For convenience, their views can be considered in three categories: those who consider that no real progress took place between 1918 and 1939, those who take the opposite view and those who believe that later developments, such as the Act of 1944, built upon the experience of the inter-war years.

Simon takes a negative view of the period. He comments upon the poor buildings then in use, the lack of good educational materials and the constant calls for economy:

"In the memory of those who lived through them, the inter-

war years were dominated by the cry for, and practice of economy."

Simon, (1974) p. 294.

Simon includes a large body of material in support of his arguments, including comments made by F.F. Potter, Director of Education in Cheshire, 1922 - 1947:

"The quarter of a century was punctuated by a succession of 'financial and other crises.' The optimism and idealism of 1918 led into 'troubled years ... for an officer with any hopes or ideals in education' and there was an 'uneasy feeling' of getting no-where in the 1920s ... the end result was 'a feeling of complete frustration.'"

Simon, (1974) pp. 294-295.

Simon blamed many problems still facing some schools in the 1970s upon

"a legacy of the twenty inter-war years. What it meant during those years in terms of intellectual stimulus, or opportunity to go beyond the bare minimum of elementary instruction so far as most children were concerned has been sufficiently emphasised."

Simon, (1974) p. 295.

A.J.P. Taylor also takes a negative view. Having commented upon the raising of the leaving age to 14 in 1918 he notes:

"in 1922 a quarter of the classes had more than sixty pupils. The highest ambition of educational policy between the wars was to reduce the classes to under fifty. Even this was not achieved."

A.J.P. Taylor, (1965) p. 241, foot-note 1.

Taylor notes further that:

"Finance was the great educational issue between the wars, and a reforming president of the Board of Education thought he had done well if he managed to spend more money."

A.J.P. Taylor, (1965) p. 242.

Taylor did regard the 1926 "Hadow" report as a progressive development

"Here was a great achievement, at any rate in principle: a clear recognition, again imperceptibly accepted by many of all parties, that the entire population, and not just merely a privileged minority were entitled to some education beyond 'the three Rs.'"

A.J.P. Taylor, (1965) pp. 272-273.

Taylor thus saw the period as one during which certain progress was made in attitudes towards improving the organisation of elementary

education but that financial limitations prevented real progress from being made.

Curtis, who based his observations upon the years 1902-1939, took a surprisingly favourable view of events and believed that the period witnessed marked progress in the organisation of elementary education:

"The modern school has become 'child-centred' that is, it no longer tries to mould the child to a preconceived curriculum The capacities, needs and interest of the individual child are now considered, and the old idea that all children have the same interests and learn in the same way has been abandoned."

Curtis, (1967) p. 369.

Curtis conceded that poor buildings and sites hindered the progress of some schools but identified several instances of progress in such areas as teaching methods, materials, the use of practical activities and improving the health and general welfare of children.

The majority of historians whose works have been examined express the general view that the 1918 - 1939 period did witness progress in elementary school organisation, at least to some extent but that the real fruits of progress based upon pre-war thinking and experiment did not appear until the 1944 Act. Barnard commented that:

"The 1918 Act contains the seeds of reform which have begun to germinate after lying dormant for some time."

Barnard, (1961) p. 233.

Cruickshank (1963), Baron (1965), Lowndes (1969) and Musgrave (1969) all, in some cases very briefly, agree that the inter-war period was one of modest progress upon which later reforms were built. Musgrave states that the Consultative Committee

"represented a built-in agency of highly-informed and progressive, as opposed to avant-garde criticism of the system. This Committee constantly worked for redefinition of education at whatever level was under consideration."

Musgrave, (1968) p. 106

Middleton and Weitzman, Bernbaum and Dent reflect upon inter-war developments in greater detail. Middleton and Weitzman regard the 1918 - 1939 period as one during which new approaches in education developed, the implementation of which was largely prevented by financial constraints:

"The period between the wars had been a particularly frustrating and negative period, for all the modern developments are in evidence: the use of psychologically-based methods of teaching as against training by rote, a different approach to children and an understanding of the problems of children from poor backgrounds. It is depressing to see this wider and more liberal approach being widely discussed and accepted in educational circles, only to have implementation of new ideas prevented by the refusal to make funds available for all but a limited advance."

Middleton and Weitzman, (1976) p. 191.

Bernbaum identifies the re-organisation according to the "Hadow" proposals as a major influence upon inter-war change and other changes including

"the increased attention to subject matter, the concentration upon preparation for examinations at various levels, the development of streaming" and "the advance of techniques of selection."

Bernbaum, (1976) p. 96.

Dent made the following comments:

"In terms of large-scale advance the 1920s and 1930s have by comparison with the first decade of the twentieth century relatively little to offer. Much of their record is unhappily, of recurrent set-backs, frustrations and outright failures."

Dent, (1970) p. 103.

Dent listed some of the failures as the abandonment of the scheme for day-continuation schools, the post-war constraints upon teachers' conditions, the failure to raise the school leaving age, "the still-born compromise" of the 1936 Act, the "virtual cessation" of the building of new schools between 1931 and 1936, the high levels of unemployment amongst teachers, the "near collapse" of several voluntary training colleges, the failure to improve technical education

"and finally the fateful 1 September, 1939 when once again the lights went out all over Europe."

Dent, (1970) p. 104.

Dent continues:

"If, however, one looks at the period between the wars as a period in which ideas were being conceived and born and nurtured into tentative practice, it is possible to regard them as being much more fruitful than the foregoing paragraphs would seem to suggest."

Dent, (1970) p. 104.

Dent believed that the "massive educational reforms" incorporated into the 1944 Act developed from the experience of the inter-war years and that

"the principles and ideas on which they were based" had been "patiently and perseveringly shaped and developed by school teachers and educational administrators in all parts of the country between 1918 and 1939."

Dent, (1970) p. 104.

As has been shown in the above literature review, the 1918 to 1939 period witnessed many changes in the organisation of elementary education in England as a whole and in Northumberland in particular. Many changes were associated with the 1918 Education Act and the 1926 "Hadow" report, whilst others arose from local initiatives. Change was evident in such areas as the structure of education and the provision made for older pupils in elementary schools, the nature of school buildings, staffing and class-size. The extent to which change led to progress in improving the educational experience of pupils in elementary schools between the wars is, as has been illustrated, a question about which historians are divided. Local authority initiative was clearly a factor of considerable importance.

The available literature thus poses certain questions which it does not entirely answer, particularly with regard to the area of the present study. The remainder of this investigation aims to clarify these questions and at least in part to provide some answers to them.

CHAPTER THREE. QUESTIONS ARISING FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW, &c.

The review of existing literature on the subject of change and progress in the organisation of elementary education between 1918 and 1939, both with regard to England in general and Northumberland in particular raises certain issues relating to the subject: the value of a local study and the questions which a local study ought to address.

THE VALUE OF A LOCAL STUDY.

The limited nature of the literature relating to the organisation of elementary education in Northumberland between 1918 and 1939 suggests that a local study could be of value. A local study can, perhaps, be justified on two counts:-

- i. as an exercise in historical research, analysis and interpretation, the purpose of which is to explore and discuss an aspect of history which has not been examined before and
 - ii. as a contribution to the wider field of knowledge: a local study may establish that widely accepted historical interpretations are not applicable to a particular area and may accordingly challenge the previous understanding of the subject.
- Equally, by conforming to an accepted interpretation, the results of a local study may support previous findings.

Rowland's comments upon the value of local history in general are worthy of notice:

"Considered widely, local history is far removed from parochialism It does not mean that the parish council is more important than the United Nations Organisation, but if people can understand the working of local communities they are all the more likely to understand how larger communities function. They may gather some idea of interdependence, which is extremely difficult to realise in modern complex societies."

Rowland, (1973) p. 7.

Rowland's views on the value of local studies are of relevance to a study of educational history. The English tradition of ecclesiastical,

voluntary and local government responsibility for education led to the development of a system which, even after the formation of the Board of Education in 1899, was decentralised. Thus, a local study in educational history might well contribute something of wider interest to students of the subject. Silver's discussion of the problems associated with local studies in educational history is useful. His cautions on the subject of case-studies are worthy of notice:

"More often than not in the writing of an historical thesis an author will claim case-study status for an account of a particular institution or group of institutions (school, school-board, mechanics' institute, pressure group, etc.) in order to suggest a relevance wider than that immediately implied by the account - at the same time as setting it in an introductory historical sweep which is assumed to be required ritual in higher studies. What is true of a particular institution or place may somehow be seen to be true or in some way relevant elsewhere. A particular analysis or story may strengthen or weaken the held orthodoxies about the picture in the sector or nationally."

Silver, (1983) p. 294.

The present study does not claim that what was true of the Northumberland L.E.A. was also true of other L.E.As. during the same period. Similarly, the localities and schools chosen for closer investigation are not presented as being representative of other mining or rural communities, either in Northumberland or elsewhere. It may be true that other authorities and schools have a similar history but claims that the study has a wider relevance could not be substantiated without an investigation of a more extended character and even then would be open to challenge.

QUESTIONS ARISING FOR INVESTIGATION.

The literature review has shown that the question of to what extent, if any, the 1918-1939 period witnessed change and progress in the organisation of England's elementary schools is a contentious one. The review of the local literature has shown that developments in Northumberland as a whole, let alone the area addressed by this study have not been extensively investigated and that a local study of change and progress could be

of value. In this light, the following questions have been chosen as the basis for further investigation and discussion:-

1. To what extent did Northumberland L.E.A. adopt a policy of change and progress in the organisation of its elementary schools, with particular reference to schools situated within the ancient parishes of Bothal and Woodhorn, between 1918 and 1939?
2. To what extent was the policy of change and progress, if such existed, implemented by the L.E.A. in the area under consideration?
3. What impact, if any, did L.E.A. policy have upon the organisation (including buildings and staffing) of individual schools within the area under consideration?

CHAPTER FOUR. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES.

Research in education has been usefully discussed by Bassey, who suggests that educational research can be classified into three convenient if over-lapping categories: empirical, reflective and creative. Since the present historical study, which aims to investigate the extent to which, if at all, change and progress took place in the organisation of elementary education in the Bothal and Woodhorn area of Northumberland between 1918 and 1939, combines in its approach aspects of the patterns Bassey defines as empirical and reflective, it is useful to note his definitions:

"By empirical research I mean the kind of research where data collection is centre stage; where data is systematically collected by strict procedures, critically analysed, interpreted and conclusions drawn."

"Reflective research is the term I use to describe systematic and critical thinking in which the findings of empirical research are the starting point for review and argument about educational issues. Many articles in the literature are in this form."

"... the boundaries are somewhat vague. For example, every empirical researcher engages in some reflection, and every reflective researcher has to read the literature in order to obtain data to think about."

Bassey, (1992) pp. 4-5.

The place of historical studies in educational research is thoughtfully considered by La Fleur and Cook, who comment that:

"A knowledge of history is often glibly defended as enabling us to avoid making the same mistakes in the future, or in some cases even to predict the future. There is a grain of truth in this, but it makes more sense to think of an understanding of history as providing us with a perspective on the future.

Any problem will be easier to deal with if we can get some perspective on it, can step back and view it in its context of past and present events."

"Historical research can also be carried out for its own sake, that is, an interest in the truth about the past."

La Fleur and Cook, (1975) pp. 29-30.

The present study is concerned with "the truth about the past" and also seeks to examine how some of those who were responsible for elementary school education approached various issues during the 1918-1939 period. It thus reflects aspects of both of La Fleur and Cooks' justifications for

undertaking historical research.

Whilst material derived from oral history interviews, biographical works and school visits (as noted below) could contribute towards the investigation of the questions identified above (p. 43), such approaches would essentially be complementary to an analysis of accurate factual information. As noted in the literature review, few secondary works address the area and issues this study is concerned with. Accordingly, factual information has to be extracted from documentary sources. Although it would be possible to approach the questions with reference only to the records of the Northumberland Local Education Authority, it is almost certain that an approach using a variety of sources from more than one perspective would lead to a better informed and more accurate result. Accordingly, information has been drawn from the records of the Northumberland L.E.A. (the Education Committee of the County Council) and from the records of individual schools. To give a wider view again, two contrasting schools have been selected for individual study and, whenever possible, the questions have been approached with reference to three sources: the school log-book, the minutes of the school managers and the reports of H.M. Inspectors. Some use was also made of press reports. The advantages and limitations of the different sources are discussed below.

(i).County Council and Education Committee Minutes and Records.

The minutes of the votes and proceedings of Northumberland County Council have been published in an annual volume since 1889. The minutes of the Education Committee are included in this volume and often have memoranda, building proposals and development plans as appendices. Infallibility cannot be claimed for the county council and L.E.A. minutes, but as the official and approved record of proceedings it can reasonably be assumed that their accuracy is of a very high order. The minutes give a fuller picture of county council affairs than that which appears in press reports. Whilst it is improbable that the minutes could be subject to the same editorial influence as press reports, the possibility that the minutes

could be presented in a way which showed the council in a favourable light or which was intended to win approval for particular proposals should not be disregarded. It is also possible that some matters might have been excluded from the minutes because of their confidential nature. Furthermore, the minutes probably do not always reflect the strength of feeling or divergence of views about the business discussed.

(ii) Individual schools and their records.

In order to obtain a different view of the issues addressed by the study it was decided to investigate the experience individual schools had of progress and change during the period. The two schools selected for individual study were chosen with two particular considerations in mind. Firstly, it was decided to choose two contrasting schools from within the area. The schools are not claimed to represent particular categories, but do reflect some of the differences between agricultural and mining villages in the Bothal and Woodhorn area during the 1918 - 1939 period. Pegswood Mixed School was a council school throughout the period, whereas Longhirst School was a Church of England school until it was transferred to the L.E.A. in 1927. Pegswood Mixed School received its pupils at the age of 7+ from a separate Church of England infant school, had a roll of several hundreds of children and a usual staff of about ten. Longhirst had an all-age village school, with a roll of about seventy children and a staff of three. Pegswood was essentially a mining community, with a population of 2,667: Longhirst relied largely upon agriculture and had a population of 397. (Northumberland County Council Minutes, 1935 pp. 404-405). Both villages were, however, situated within the ancient boundaries of the parish of Bothal and were separated by a distance of less than two miles. Secondly, the two schools existed throughout the period and have left quite full and readily available records, unlike some of the other schools in the area. Pegswood Mixed School's log-book is complete for the 1918 - 1939 period and includes the reports of H.M. Inspectors. Minutes of the meetings of school managers are extant from 1921 to 1939. Longhirst School's log-book

is complete for the 1918 - 1939 period and includes reports of H.M. Inspectors. The school managers' minutes survive from 1928 to 1939. The advantages and limitations of these various classes of record are discussed below.

1. The School Log-Book.

Articles 24 and 85 of the "New Code" of 1910, which pertain to the keeping of the school log-book are noted in appendix 14. The log-book, as the "New Code" states, is essentially the diary of the school. The log was examined periodically by H.M. Inspectors, school managers and school correspondents. (The correspondent was an official who acted as the clerk to the managers &c.) The log contains information on such subjects as staffing, class-size, organisation, facilities, the school building and special events. The reports of H.M. Inspectors were also entered, the accuracy of the transcription being checked by the correspondent. The log entries have the advantage of immediacy and, being made by the head-teacher, were the work of an individual who had first-hand knowledge of the events and circumstances described. However, since it was the duty of a single person to maintain the log, the information is of an essentially subjective character. At Longhirst, for example, two headmasters failed to enter unfavourable reports from H.M. Inspectors. For this reason, information from the log was considered with, when possible, material from the managers' minutes also in mind.

2. The Minutes of the Meetings of School Managers.

The minutes of school managers' meetings, although not presented and printed in the manner of L.E.A. minutes, constitute the adopted record of their proceedings. The minutes often serve to corroborate entries in the log-book and contain details of appointments, organisational changes and building work in addition to more routine information. The duties of managers' clerk and school correspondent appear to have been usually discharged by the same person. The correspondents of Pegswood and Longhirst Schools during the period were well qualified for their duties, a fact which suggests that their records can be relied upon. At Pegswood,

Mr. Thomas Hutchinson was appointed correspondent in 1921 following his retirement as headmaster and served until 1937 (c.f. end-note 7). In that year he was succeeded by Mr. S.J. Batey (P.M.S.M. Minutes, 24/6/1937, p. 4). Mr. Batey was at one time deputy agent to the Duke of Portland and was a long-serving member of the Bothal Castle estate staff (Bibby, 1973 p. 11 & p. 105). At Longhirst, Mr. C.M. Crombie, factor of Lord Joicey's Longhirst Estate (N.T.E.C., 1993 p. 16), appears to have been correspondent throughout the entire inter-war period (L.S. Log, 3/7/1919 p. 2 & L.S. Log/H.M.I.R. 6-7/7/1938, p. 195). It is probable that the managers' minutes, like those of the L.E.A., did not always record all matters discussed or reflect the strength of feeling in meetings.

3. The reports of H.M. Inspectors.

The reports of H.M. Inspectors constitute an important source of information. Five reports survive on Pegswood Mixed School, each being the work of a different inspector. Six reports survive for Longhirst, each, again, being the work of a different inspector. The reports addressed such areas as the curriculum, organisation and staffing. The details included and the amount of comment made are variable.

The reports, therefore, contain much information of relevance to a study of progress and change. They have the advantage as source material of being of an external character and the work of men of great experience, who would be able to compare practices in the schools visited with those which prevailed in many other schools of a similar type. Their comments would probably be more frank than those of even the most unbiased of headmasters. The reports do, however, have certain limitations. They were usually written after an inspector had paid a visit to a school seldom more than two days in length. Since each report was the work of a different inspector

the comments upon progress must have been to some extent based upon the content of the previous report. It would have been difficult for individual inspectors to appreciate the ongoing development of a particular school. The inspectors themselves probably had differing views about what constituted good and bad practice. It is possible that practice praised by one inspector many have been criticised by another a very few years later. The content of conversations between the inspectors and staff, which may have influenced the content of the final report are unknown. Never the less, provided that the various limitations of the report are borne in mind, the reports of H.M. Inspectorate remain a potentially very useful source.

4. Press reports.

Press reports are potentially useful source of detailed information of relevance to a local study but must be used with caution. Proprietorial or editorial influence may lead to the presentation of reports in accordance with a particular view-point. The material extracted from the local weekly newspaper "The Morpeth Herald" (a publication which reported local news in some detail) and "The Ashington Collieries' Magazine" (a publication of the Ashington Coal Co. Ltd.), should be viewed with these cautions in mind.

The original scope of the study was somewhat wider than that finally adopted. Oral history interviews were planned and conducted with a cross-section of past pupils of the period. Much of the resultant material was of marked interest but was not all of direct relevance to the narrower scope finally selected. However, such material, along with information contained in several biographical works and arising as a result of visits to several local schools gave a useful background to the study.

The procedures adopted for obtaining information from the various available sources are outlined below.

PROCEDURES.

The procedures adopted for using the various documentary sources were straightforward.

The printed minutes of the Northumberland County Council and of the Education Committee were loaned by the Central Library at Morpeth to the library at Ashington. Commencing in 1918, minutes and papers for each of the (usually) four meetings of the Education Committee were read through and relevant information noted down. The search concluded with the material for 1939. Relevant material from the minutes of the council was also noted.

The school log-books and minute books of the managers' meetings for Pegswood Mixed and Longhirst Schools are deposited at the Morpeth Record Centre of the Northumberland County Record Office. A chronological search through the logs, which also include the reports of H.M. Inspectors for the period, commencing in 1918 was made. A similar search was made through the managers' minutes, which survive for Pegswood from 1921 and for Longhirst from 1928. The search of managers' minutes concluded with those for 1939 and of logs with entries for 1944. In addition the admission registers for both schools and the log-books and managers' minutes for Pegswood Colliery C.E. Infant School were searched. (The infant school records were examined for the sake of completeness but do not form the basis for further analysis) In all cases, relevant information from the documentary sources was noted in the search-room.

A search was also made of two further publications: the Ashington Collieries' Magazine and The Morpeth Herald. All surviving issues of the monthly Collieries' Magazine were searched for articles of relevance.

Annual volumes of the magazine form part of the reference collection at

Ashington Library. The magazine was in print from 1921 until 1940. Issues for 1921, 1924, 1925 and 1937 are missing. All available past issues are available on microfilm at Morpeth Library. A selective search was made for articles of relevance. All issues for the following months were examined: January, 1921, March, 1925, May, 1930, September, 1935 and November, 1939.

The method adopted for organising the information obtained from the records of the L.E.A. and individual schools was straightforward. Cross-referenced lists of material relevant to the study were compiled on a topical basis. This process was completed quite quickly in the case of the L.E.A. minutes, which had paragraph summaries and indices, but proved to be time-consuming in the case of the hand-written school records. Eventually, by compiling the lists and re-reading the source material in the process, a familiarity with the evidence was obtained which enabled analysis to commence.

CHAPTER FIVE. PROGRESS AND CHANGE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ORGANISATION,
1918 - 1939: THE POLICY AND WORK OF THE NORTHUMBERLAND L.E.A. WITH
PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE BOTHAL AND WOODHORN AREA.

The organisation of elementary education was, as has been shown, an issue repeatedly examined and discussed during the 1918 to 1939 period. The 1918 and 1936 Acts and the 1926 "Hadow" report each, in their way attempted to improve the organisation of England's elementary schools and by so doing, to improve the educational experience of the pupils who attended them. The extent to which the period did witness change and progress in this field has been discussed by several historians who, as has been noted, have reached differing conclusions. This section of the study aims to review and discuss evidence relating to progress and change in such aspects of the elementary system as its structure, staffing, class-size, and building accommodation. Changes in the curriculum do not fall within the scope of this study. The questions are discussed with reference to the Northumberland Local Education Authority and its work towards re-organisation in the old parishes of Bothal and Woodhorn. Material chiefly derived from the Education Committee's minutes is discussed first. Secondly, in order to give a different perspective, re-organisation is discussed with particular reference to the experience of contrasting schools in the mining village of Pegswood and the rural village of Longhirst.

ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ORGANISATION IN 1918.

In 1918, all the schools situated within the old parishes of Bothal and Woodhorn were elementary schools. Some, such as Longhirst Church of England School, were founded to serve the needs of rural communities during the mid-nineteenth century (N.T.E.C., 1993 p. 11).

Bothal Church of England School was a "National" school founded in 1873 to serve the needs of the rapidly expanding colliery village of Ashington

(Little and Parker, 1973 p. 7). Other schools, such as New Hirst North (founded 1896), New Hirst South (founded 1908) and New Hirst East (founded 1913) were established by locally organised school boards (prior to 1902) or by the Local Education Authority (after that date, Kirkup, 1993 pp. 17-19). With the exception of a tiny minority of pupils who won scholarships to either the ancient Grammar School or new High School at Morpeth, children entered an elementary school at 5 and remained until the age of 13 or 14, having usually passed through "standards" numbered from I to VII (Little and Parker, 1973 p. 3 and p. 39 and Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1921 p. 75). Within this basic pattern, there were variations. At a rural school, such as Longhirst, pupils remained in the same building throughout their school life (Longhirst School Log, 1918 - 1939). At Bothal School, infants attended an infant school and moved on to a mixed school on the same site (Little and Parker, 1973 p. 20, p. 33 and p. 53). At the large Hirst schools, such as New Hirst North, infants attended a mixed infant school and moved on to separate boys and girls schools or departments (Kirkup, 1996 p. 4 and p. 6). One Roman Catholic school, built at Ashington in 1894 served the R.C. pupils of the area (Kirkup, 1993 p. 16). It is with this system that subsequent changes must be contrasted in considering progress in elementary school organisation during the 1918 - 1939 period.

DEVELOPMENTS FOLLOWING THE EDUCATION ACT, 1918.

Northumberland Education Committee noted the contents of the Education Act, 1918, shortly after its passage onto the statute book (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1918). In August, 1919, having considered a memoranda entitled "The development of education in Public Elementary Schools," the committee set out its objectives:

"The importance of improving the educational facilities available for the older scholars is generally recognised and the necessity of doing so will be accentuated when all children, without exception, are required to attend school until the end of the term in which they reach the age of 14 years. The normal course of primary instruction is now designed to cover a period of nine years, i.e. 5 to 14. It is believed that organisation will be simplified, and better educational results secured, if the normal course of primary teaching is planned in two divisions, namely:-

(a) A Junior Division to occupy 6 or 7 years.

(b) A supplementary course of teaching for 2 or 3 years.

The objects of this modification of organisation would be to assign a definite purpose, or purposes, to the two or three concluding years of a child's school attendance. While the curriculum of the Junior Division might well be simplified, the resources of a Senior Division in regard to staff, buildings and equipment should be sufficient to deal approximately with children of 12 years of age and upwards whatever the standard of their attainments or degree of their mental capacity. A Senior Division should provide, therefore, not only the means of further scholastic education for those whose attainments justify it, but also suitable training in manual arts and crafts for those who can be developed by 'doing' rather than 'learning.' A provision should also be made for organised games and for the cultivation of hobbies and recreative interests."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1919 pp. 89-90)

In view of the contrasting urban and rural nature of the county alternative suggestions for reorganisation were proposed :-

- .(a) to reorganise the existing accommodation and, if necessary, add to it so as to assemble in one building, or part of a building, the Senior Division pupils: or
- (b) to provide, in a place where school accommodation is now insufficient, a new central school for the purpose.

As regards rural districts, Senior Divisions might, in some cases, be added to existing elementary schools and utilised for older scholars attending schools within a radius of three miles. The committee is of opinion that the development of education in elementary schools should proceed on these lines."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1919 p. 90)

These proposals of 1919 illustrate many contemporary concerns.

As the 1920s progressed "secondary education for all" became a

popular slogan (Lawson and Silver, 1973 p. 385). It could

be argued that the above proposals of 1919 reflect concerns which

later found a fuller expression in the "Hadow" report of 1926,

which broadened the general understanding of the term and content

of "secondary" education and the 1931 report, which was an

important influence upon the development of the modern junior school.

The Northumberland proposals of 1919 give particular attention to the education of older pupils and make few recommendations for changes to the arrangements for younger children. This may mean that the committee did not consider that radical changes were needed or alternatively that the need for change to the system in place for older pupils was more urgent. The minute uses the word "primary" as an alternative to "elementary." This usage is of particular interest, as the 1926 "Hadow" report favoured the substitution of "primary" for "elementary" but limited the period of education it described to that ending at the age of "about eleven" ("The Education of the Adolescent, 1927 para. 99). The 1919 proposals for junior and senior divisions represents a notable change. In the locality covered by this study, if pupils did experience a change of school, it took place at the age of transition from an Infant School to Standard I at about the age of 7. This was the case, for example at Bothal (Little and Parker, 1973 p. 20, p. 23 and p. 53) and at Hirst North (Kirkup, 1996 p. 4 and p. 6). Senior and junior departments had existed before, for example at New Hirst School as early as 1903 (Kirkup, 1996 p. 4), but had apparently related to the convenient arrangement of classes within a single building rather than to the distinctly different approach advocated in 1919. The committee's proposal to develop "central" schools for older pupils shows an awareness of the development of such schools in London and other populous places before 1914 (Musgrave, 1968 pp. 82-83). Since "central" schools were to be opened where new schools were needed they were clearly the committee's preference, although the urban and rural alternatives proposed show a clear commitment to improve provision for as many pupils as possible. The final sentence of the above minute shows the committee's clear commitment to change.

Progress towards change seemed likely in May, 1920, when the authority

was required to submit proposals, under the terms of the 1918 Act,
for the

"progressive development and comprehensive organisation of education "
in its area (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1920 p. 44).
The requirements of the 1918 Act were the subject of a "draft scheme,
prepared by the Director" laid before the committee in November, 1920
(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1920 pp. 203-204). The twelve
sections of the scheme considered "aspects of the problem" including
the development of elementary and secondary schools and the provision of
nursery schools and continuation schools (Northumberland Education Committee
Minutes, 1920 pp. 203-204). The committee was clearly committed to
adopting the recommendations of the 1918 Act which, with its call for
continuation schools, would, if implemented, have marked a major change
and probably an improvement in the organisation of elementary education.
The committee's use of the word "problem" sounds a cautious note, but
it is clear that in November, 1920, the authority was committed to
making full use of the Act, albeit in the long-term :-

"To give effect to the developments discussed in the scheme, will
of necessity, involve a very considerable addition, not perhaps
immediately, but ultimately, to the council's present expenditure
on the service of education.

The council will understand, therefore, that if there is some
delay before the scheme is submitted, it is due to its far
reaching character; to the fact that the proposals are
concerned not simply with the educational needs of to-day
and to-morrow, but with developments which will take many
years to mature."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1920 p. 204)

The last sentence of the above can be interpreted in more than one
way. It could be argued that it shows that the committee, having
adopted a set of proposals, was prepared to work steadily towards their
full implementation over a very long period. As will be shown,
the evidence suggests that this interpretation is probably the correct
one. However, the alternative interpretation should also be noted:
the minute could be seen as a bland statement of the committee's

nominal commitment to change which also ensured that expectations in the county would be modest and that, as a consequence, any changes which did take place would appear to represent notable progress. In either case, the authority evidently considered that implementation of change over a very long period would be acceptable.

In January, 1921, the Board called for the submission of a scheme. In May, 1921 the committee stated that it planned to implement "when expedient and possible" proposals to establish (a) senior schools or divisions, with courses of advanced or practical instruction, (b) practical instruction centres where re-organisation was not possible and (c) to employ more teachers, with the intention of reducing class-size to 40 pupils or less (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1921, p. 75). These proposals, although they did not fulfil all the ambitions of the 1918 Act, would have constituted real progress in school organisation.

THE SET-BACKS OF 1921.

Ironically, before the 1921 scheme had even been finally approved, financial difficulties halted further progress. In February, 1921 a Board of Education communication effectively brought implementation to a halt:

"owing to a request from the Board of Education (following a decision by the Government that 'except with fresh Cabinet authority schemes involving expenditure not yet in operation are to remain in abeyance'), that pending further communications from the Board relating to proposals of the Authority which have been made for the extension or development of the educational system, the Authority will not incur or commit themselves to incurring any new expenditure which may be affected by that decision."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1921 p. 280)

The cuts of 1921 were, in Northumberland, a blow to change and progress in school organisation. The 1922 - 1923 minutes contain references to economies, including the closure of two

small schools and in August, 1923 the Council's Expenditure Committee recommended further savings. 1921 also saw a major strike in the coal-field; causing a further deterioration in the local financial situation. (Kirkup, 1993 p. 212). It would, however, be unwise to conclude that all the progress in organisation advocated by the 1918 Act came to nothing as a result of the 1921 cuts. As has been noted above, the 1918 Act did bring about several useful reforms. Moreover, the Act had a lasting influence upon inter-war developments in school organisation, most notably in the many proposals which aimed to improve provision for older children in elementary schools. In the locality of this study, two particularly important developments can be linked to the Act. Firstly, in August, 1919, the council proposed to found a new secondary school for 150 boys and 150 girls at either Ashington or Bedlington (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1919 p.91). The scheme proceeded and in 1926 Bedlington Secondary School opened, which greatly extended the opportunities to secure a secondary education for children from the Ashington area and Bedlingtonshire (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1926 p. 516).

in May, 1919 the committee reported that it was

"establishing in premises to be provided at Ashington by the Ashington Coal Company, Ltd., day classes in mining for boys and youths employed at the collieries of the Company, the cost of maintaining the classes being divided between the committee and the company."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1919 p.31.) A1

This scheme, clearly inspired by the 1918 Act, proved to be a great organisational and educational success. From a modest beginning in the Priestman Memorial Hall, Ashington, the classes moved in 1931 to a purpose built Welfare Educational Institute (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1931 p.199). Selected boys attended classes on two days a week for three years and were prepared for various technical certificates and could also sit for the Durham School Certificate, only otherwise obtainable locally through attendance at a

secondary school. Time spent at the school was paid for by the company as part of the working week (Ashington Collieries' Magazine, July, 1922 pp. 211-213). Mr.W. Straker of the Northumberland Miners' Association commented:

"While education of the workers' children is being attacked at the present time, on the ground of economy - or false economy - yet it is a great satisfaction that in connection with a number of industries employers have recognised the need and responsibility of establishing higher educational classes for the children of their workpeople.

Among these employers I am glad to find the Ashington Coal Company occupying a foremost place. The scheme of that colliery is that of a 'Day Continuation School for Apprentices and Other Employees.'"

(Ashington Collieries' Magazine, July, 1922 p.211)

FRESH ATTEMPTS AT RE-ORGANISATION AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF CENTRAL SCHOOLS.

By February, 1925, the low-point of 1921 had been passed and the council again attempted to improve the organisation of the elementary schools. Conscious that funds for a county-wide scheme were not available, the committee envisaged re-organisation as part of a solution to specific local problems:

"In order to meet normal developments and partly to give effect to the requirements of the Board of Education for a reduction in the size of unduly large classes in elementary schools, additional school accommodation is urgently needed in several urban districts. The committee is of the opinion that the deficiency can best be met by the provision in those populous districts of central schools for older scholars."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1925 p. 477.)

The schedule associated with the above statement included the following information relevant to the study:

"A. NEW SCHOOLS NOW IN COURSE OF ERECTION.

DISTRICT	ACCOMMODATION
ELLINGTON, LINTON.	360
LYNEMOUTH	360
B. SITES ACQUIRED FOR NEW SCHOOLS AND EXTENSIONS TO EXISTING BUILDINGS.	
ASHINGTON, NEW HIRST PARK	800
NEWBIGGIN-BY-THE-SEA.	250

C. NEW SCHOOLS CONTEMPLATED, FOR WHICH SITES HAVE NOT YET BEEN ACQUIRED.	
ASHINGTON BOTHAL	400
LYNEMOUTH	720"

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1925 p. 182.)

It is clear from the minutes that the authority was, in 1925, particularly concerned with the education of the older children in elementary schools and that organisational changes were regarded as an important means of bringing about progress. The scheme was clarified in May, 1925:

"The type of central school contemplated is one that will offer suitable educational facilities for two classes of pupils, selected at the age of eleven or thereabouts from other elementary schools in the given area, viz.:-

- (a) Children above the average in ability and attainment who have displayed an aptitude for book learning and for whom a curriculum of advanced elementary education with instruction in special subjects would be provided.
- (b) Children below the average in attainment and ability for whom an appropriate course of elementary education would be designed, supplemented by systematic training in hand-work and in activities likely to develop their capabilities and enlist their interest.

The committee recognises that schools so organised would be largely experimental, but it is of opinion that the experiment is well worth trying. Generally speaking, the results of the national system of elementary education leave a good deal to be desired, mainly because the necessity for adapting the curriculum to the varying needs of different groups of children - and particularly children over the age of 11 - is insufficiently recognised.

From the point of view of the community and the production of responsible citizens, it is as important to make special provision for the appropriate educational training of those who do not readily respond to the ordinary elementary school process, as for pupils who possess in a degree above average the ability to do so. The central school, which is organised only for the reception of children who have attained some particular standard, leaves the contributory schools with all the children below that standard. Under the arrangement proposed, the contributory schools, while they would be deprived of the children who had attained the prescribed standard, would also be relieved of the children considerably below it, and consequently the educational problem of these schools would be simplified and their work improved."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1925 pp. 28-29.)

The minutes above disclose something of the Education Committee's general attitude towards the nature of its educational provision.

The proposed development of central schools would ultimately lead to the classification of pupils at about the age of 11 into four categories: secondary, central (academic bias), elementary and central (practical bias). The committee clearly believed that such an arrangement would improve the elementary system, which they considered, was not producing the best possible results as there was insufficient recognition of the different courses of study required to meet the needs of pupils of differing ability. The committee also perceived a duty to help to produce "responsible citizens." In commenting upon the various alternatives proposed in 1925, it is perhaps useful to recall the limited objectives the 1904 Code assigned to elementary schools, quoted on p. 9 above: "training in followership rather than leadership training, suited to the working class."

The proposals of the above minutes were immediately put into effect, as the building plans noted after them show. In addition to the new school planned for Linton, the New Hirst Park School was again named as a Central School and the new Ashington Bothal School, the need for which was noted in 1915 and reiterated in 1924 was also planned as a Central School, costing £11,014 with accommodation for 300. Press reports suggest that the schools built at this time were of a high standard and of much superior design to those of the nineteenth century. Linton's new school of 1926 was carefully described in the Ashington Collieries Magazine, its plan, lighting, ventilation, heating, facilities and play-grounds being praised by "Dominie" who commented:

"If one of the 'flogging' schoolmasters of the 'good old days' could walk some moonlight night along the cool and cloistered corridors of the new schools at Linton, he might find it difficult to realise that he was actually within the precincts of an 'elementary' school. Yet, such would be the case. Very vividly would return to him recollections of the bleak and barren barracks in which he was condemned to work out his own salvation."

(Ashington Collieries Magazine, July, 1926 p. 253.) ^{A 2}

A similar account of the new school at Lynemouth appeared in the Ashington Collieries' Magazine of April, 1927, (p. 103) which included the comment that

"Few schools can, in the nature of things, have the excellent facilities we enjoy."

The press reports show that the opening of such new schools as those at Linton and Lynemouth was welcomed in the locality, but one of the local Members of Parliament expressed an opinion that, whilst progress was being made in elementary education, it was too slow:

"It was quite true that they were not satisfied with the elementary education which their children were receiving, but he disagreed with those who said that the school children of today were not better educated than what the men and women of today were when they left school....

They had been offered Central Schools, but they should have had those long ago."

(G.H.Warne, M.P. , quoted in "The Morpeth Herald," 6th. March, 1925.)

The above schools were planned in 1925 when government support to implement the L.E.A.'s proposals appeared likely to be forthcoming. In November, 1925, however, the Board informed the L.E.A. that expenditure was to be limited (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1926 p.153). The L.E.A. objected to this change, but partly as a result of the miners' strike of 1926, which lasted from May to December (Kirkup, 1993 pp. 176-181), the Board gave a final refusal to support re-organisation through building improvements, noted by the committee in November, 1926:

"The Board of Education have intimated that in view of the present industrial situation they have been in consultation with the Ministry of Health with regard to building proposals of the local education authority for the year 1926 - 1927 and that on the facts before them the Board are reluctantly obliged to take the view that they would not be justified in giving final approval to any new capital expenditure on school buildings until the probable effect of the industrial situation on the Authority's area becomes clearer."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1926 p. 399.)

The years 1925 - 1926 were, therefore, a period when the L.E.A.

again attempted to improve elementary school education through re-organisation. As has been shown, financial restrictions were a constant hindrance to change. Despite this, it could be argued that some progress was made. The table of new schools being planned or built and the aim to improve provision for older pupils, discussed in the proposals for central schools, could be regarded as indications of progress. The 1925 proposals continue the themes of progress of the 1918 Act, themes which can be traced throughout the inter-war period, despite changes in terminology. Some material progress was made between 1925 and 1926, but perhaps more importantly the theoretical basis for re-organisation was developed.

THE PERIOD OF THE "HADOW" REPORT OF 1926.

Undaunted by the economic crisis, the Northumberland L.E.A. displayed determination in pursuing the policy of re-organisation. In May, 1926, a sub-committee was appointed to examine arrangements for secondary education and the potential of central schools or senior departments. In November, 1927 it was noted that the county policy

"of establishing such [central] schools is confirmed in the recent report of the Consultative Committee on the Education of the Adolescent in which it is proposed that existing secondary schools (to be known as 'Grammar Schools') should be supplemented by (a) 'Modern Schools' providing a four years' course of post-primary education from the age of about 11, with due provision for differentiation between pupils of different capabilities, and (b) by 'Senior Classes' within public elementary schools, providing a similar course."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1927 pp. 135-136.)

In 1928, the L.E.A. stated its policy on re-organisation in the light of the "Hadow" report. The statement shows how the L.E.A. had adhered, despite financial difficulty and lack of concrete support from the Board, to a remarkably consistent policy from 1918 onwards. It shows how the "Hadow" report's recommendations were based upon the existing good practice of certain authorities and also the extent to which

Northumberland's policy was in accordance with that recommended for national implementation. In Northumberland, the "Hadow" proposals did not mark a great transition but rather extended existing policies. Two items of terminology used in the statement are of interest to a study of school organisation. Firstly "modern" is substituted for "central." Secondly, "primary" is used to describe education up to the age of about 11: in 1918, "primary" was used as an alternative to "elementary." The statement of February, 1928 comments:

- "1. In May, 1926, the committee reported that it had appointed a Special Sub-Committee and they have held several meetings and have issued their report. During their deliberations, the report of the Consultative Committee on 'The Education of the Adolescent' was published by the Board of Education and the findings of that Committee confirmed the preliminary conclusions of the Special Sub-Committee and simplified their task. The recommendations of the Special Sub-Committee, which have been approved by the Education Committee, may be summarised as follows:-
- (1).. That Primary Schools should be concerned with the education of children up to the age of eleven.
 - (2).. That children when they reach the age of eleven years should, according to their aptitudes and abilities, have the opportunity of attending either -
 - i. A Secondary School for a course of five or six years' course of literary or scientific teaching.
 - ii. A Modern School giving a three or four years' course of education 'with a realistic trend,' provision being made for differences of aptitude and capacity.
 - iii. A Senior Division at the Primary School affording, according to the resources available, similar facilities to those provided by a modern school."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1928 p.175)

Section 3 noted the merits of the admission tests for secondary schools. Section 4 resolved to restrict admission to secondary schools to pupils who had attained the necessary academic standard and to increase the number of available free places. Section 5 decided that local tests would be appropriate for pupils not proceeding to secondary schools.

By 1928, therefore, with the 1918 Act, the recommendations of the Consultative Committee and of its own committee in mind, Northumberland Education Committee had a definite scheme of re-organisation for its

area formulated. As has been shown, definite progress had been made towards re-organisation in the locality of the study, such as the development of new central schools at Hirst and Newbiggin, but such progress had been limited by financial difficulty and few new schools had been built unless absolutely necessary. It should be noted that until 1931, the population of Ashington Urban District, which included Hirst, was increasing (29,388 in 1921 to 29,418 in 1931) and that Lynemouth was a completely new colliery village, developed from 1923 onwards (Leach, 1986 p. 81). Linton was also developing, but in its case the need to replace a poor-quality nineteenth century building was probably an important consideration behind the building of the new school:

"The school was not very substantial, having only a corrugated iron roof, but it lasted until 1925...."

Leach, (1986) p. 79.

Thus, the fact that several new schools were built in the area with re-organisation in mind should be regarded as an illustration of the authority's commitment to bring about change whenever possible but not as proof that a major rebuilding project commenced in 1925.

ATTEMPTS TO IMPLEMENT "HADOW" RE-ORGANISATION.

In 1928 the authority began to address the problem of implementing proposals for re-organisation. The decision in principle of that year to fund projects on a county-wide basis represented a real attempt to finance change. Previously, $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ of costs had to be found by the area the school was to serve (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1928 pp.84-85). In February, 1929, the committee discussed the particular problems of re-organising schools in rural areas. This question was further considered in November, 1929, at which the committee noted a further factor with a bearing upon plans for re-organisation: the intention of the government to raise the

leaving age to 15 on 1st. April, 1931. The Education Committee was particularly concerned by the problems of rural change: it believed that at least 60 pupils were needed to make a senior school viable and that the alternatives were either to close several small all-age schools and to educate all pupils in a single school for each area or to transfer older pupils to a senior school and retain the others for infants and juniors only. It observed that:

"this question of the re-organisation of schools in rural districts is not one that can be determined hurriedly, and that before recommending a definite policy it will be advisable to endeavour to try experiments where the conditions are favourable."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1929 p. 188.)

In March, 1930, the Education Committee had before it a plan for a county-wide scheme for re-organisation. After reviewing post-1918 developments, the report commented:

"In pursuance of the 1927 programme, some progress has been made in the re-organisation of schools, notably in the erection of a new type of Senior School at Ashington, Shiremoor and Newbiggin."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1930 p. 259.)

Thus, of 3 new central schools opened between 1927 and 1930, 2, those at Hirst Park and Newbiggin, were situated within the area of this study. The aims of re-organisation were set out in some detail:

"The proposals include new schools or extensions likely to be required, (a) to supply normal deficiencies in accommodation, (b) to provide for the additional number of pupils assuming the age of compulsory attendance to be extended to 15, and (c) to afford appropriate training for boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 15"

"Educationally there can be no question of the advantage of large rather than small schools for the training of older children. [As noted above, the committee in 1929 expressed the opinion that 60 pupils were needed for a viable senior school]. To be effective they should provide different courses for at least two if not three grades of pupils. The pupils will represent four age groups and will be of both sexes. It is obvious, therefore, that the organisation of a senior school is simplified, and will more efficiently and economically discharge its function if it is large rather than small."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1930 p. 259-260.)

In 1930 it appeared as if the Board was keen to assist re-organisation through finance and the government undertook to make further support available "provided contracts are made before 1st. September, 1932" (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1930 p. 260). The Northumberland Development Programme, 1930 - 1933, dated 7th. November, 1929 and laid before the committee on 6th. March, 1930 reflected further upon re-organisation and took pride in the fact that county policy was in advance of the latest recommendations:

"The intention of His Majesty's Government to promote legislation, with a view to raising the school leaving age to fifteen as from 1st. April, 1931, emphasises the necessity of proceeding with re-organisation in accordance with the policy already adopted in this County. The Education Committee has agreed to the expediency, where practicable, for all the pupils on reaching the age of eleven, or thereabouts, to be transferred to schools affording special facilities for their appropriate training. The schools already organised for this purpose at Hirst, Shiremoor and Seaton Delaval, are justifying expectations. And if school training means, as it ought to mean, something more than an opportunity for boys and girls who have an aptitude for book learning, to develop their abilities and augment their attainments, it is of paramount importance for suitable educational processes to be devised for the larger number of children who may not possess the aptitude.

Confronted with the training of eleven year old boys and girls, widely varying in degrees of attainment and mental capacity, the school is obliged to plan courses of work and activity for different groups of individuals. Even the dull and backward pupil, if the demand made upon him is within his powers, succeeds. Moreover, in the art of doing rather than learning, he may excel. He ceases to be troubled by the inferiority complex; he gains in self respect. This must beneficially influence the whole of his life."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1930 p. 262)

The preface also identified the age of buildings as an obstacle to re-organisation, a particular problem for the voluntary bodies, whose schools occupied some of the oldest buildings:

"Many of the buildings, it should be noted, are old, were erected when classrooms were planned for 60, or even 70, children. As no class in Infant or Junior School should exceed 50, or in a Senior School 40, allowance has been made for a necessary reduction in recognised accommodation."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1930 p. 263)

The authority planned to overcome the problem of old buildings and

re-organisation in rural areas by adopting a flexible attitude about the age of transfer, by planning practical instruction centres with meals and by using visiting teachers. All but the most isolated schools in the L.E.A. area were included in the 1929 scheme. The sections of the scheme relevant to this study are noted and discussed below. The proposals, in addition to showing what was planned in 1929 also illustrate the progress towards re-organisation made by that year.

"PROVISIONAL RE-ORGANISATION PROPOSALS.

3. ASHINGTON URBAN DISTRICT

(a) ASHINGTON, BOTHAL:-

Accommodation			Scholars			Estimated
I	M	Total	I	M	Total	No. 14-15
332	780	1112	292	735	1027	108

Estimated Requirements.

Infants and Juniors		Seniors	
5-11	5-12	11-15	12-15
715	825	440	330

A site has been secured for a new Infant and Junior School and plans drawn for an accommodation of 950. A new school for 750, planned for extension, will be sufficient. [£26,000]. Plans for remodelling the old school building, for 440 Senior pupils have been prepared. [£11,110],"

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1930 p. 271.)

In 1930, Ashington Bothal School was organised and housed as it had been in 1918, with the exception of the division of the mixed school into boys' and girls' departments. The L.E.A. minutes note that as early as 1915 the school had been recommended for replacement, a call reiterated in 1924. The need for improvement is illustrated by the fact that in 1927 the managers agreed to transfer the school from Church of England to L.E.A. control as they were unable to fund the required improvements. There do not appear to have been any significant local objections to the transfer. Little and Parker, (1973) p. 34 suggest that the transfer resulted from the difficulty the school subscribers experienced following the 1921 and 1926 strikes. The cost of the proposed renovations, when compared with the cost of the proposed new infant and junior school is a reflection upon the condition of the building. The lack of funds available to the managers, the age of the building and the L.E.A.'s considerable expenditure upon school building

projects in the Hirst ward of the Ashington Urban District perhaps explains why little progress towards elementary school re-organisation had taken place in Ashington between 1918 and 1929. The fact that a site for a new school had been obtained does at least show that by 1929 change was likely.

"ASHINGTON, HIRST.

	Accommodation			Scholars			Estimated No. 14-15
	I	J	S	I	J	S	
North	450	1,200		443	1,218		
South	340	690		397	755		
East	362		560	446		458	207
Park			800			532	240
	<u>1,152</u>	<u>1,890</u>	<u>1,360</u>	<u>1,286</u>	<u>1,973</u>	<u>990</u>	<u>447</u>
	3,042			3,259			

Estimated Requirements

Infants	Juniors	Seniors
5-7	7-11 7-12	11-15 12-15
1,250	2,000 2,500	2,000 1,500
<u>3,250</u>		

Infants and Juniors.

The recognised accommodation for Infants at both the North and South Schools should be written down [i.e. reduced: c.f. figures above] to -

North	400
South	300

It is advisable to contemplate using the Infants school building at the East School for the purposes of the Senior School, and, if this is done, [£2,000] the Infant School accommodation for an estimated number of 1,250 pupils would be 700. A new Infants School should, therefore, be erected for 500 pupils, and in connection with this two or three classrooms might be provided for the special purpose of training retarded Junior children. [£ 26,400].

Seniors.

If the Infant School building is used for the purposes of the East Senior School, and additional workrooms provided, its accommodation could be increased to 800. This, with the Park Schools, would provide for 1,600 of the 2,000 places estimated to be required.

It will probably be advisable to contemplate the erection of a new Senior School at the South end of Hirst - which would be convenient for Senior pupils now attending North Seaton - for say 500. [£ 23,865].

North Seaton	Estimated Requirements			
	Infants	Juniors		Seniors
		5-11	5-12	11-15 12-15
	95	152	190	152 114."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1930 pp. 271-272.)

As the above statement shows, marked progress towards re-organisation had been made in Hirst by 1929. This was partly the result, as noted above (p. 3) of the rapid expansion of Hirst. The Hirst North School (founded in 1896) and Hirst South (1908) were augmented by a new school, Hirst East, in 1913 and by Hirst Park in 1927, one of the first three central schools established by the L.E.A. By 1929, Hirst North and Hirst South consisted only of Infant and Junior pupils, whilst a further infant school was situated at Hirst East. All senior pupils attended either Hirst East Senior or Hirst Park Central (Modern) schools. This represented a notable change and particularly with the opening of Hirst Park School, a definite degree of progress in provision. A commitment to make further improvements in provision can be seen in the proposals to erect a new infant school to reduce overcrowding, to make special provision for retarded junior children and to build a new senior school which would be of benefit to the pupils of North Seaton in addition to those of Hirst.

"NEWBIGGIN URBAN DISTRICT

	Accommodation			Scholars			Estimated No. 14-15
	I	M	Total	I	M	Total	
WEST C.	134	200	334	178	263	441	
EAST C.	150	588	738	134	501	635	113
C. of E.	155		155	73	29	102	
"		160	160		139	139	25
	<u>439</u>	<u>948</u>	<u>1387</u>	<u>385</u>	<u>932</u>	<u>1317</u>	<u>138</u>

Estimated Requirements			
Infants and Juniors		Seniors	
5-11	5-12	11-15	12-15
975	1,125	600	450

The effective accommodation in the West and East Council Schools, for Infants and Juniors, is 1,000. The C. of E. School provides unsatisfactory accommodation which cannot be regarded as sufficient for more than 280 Infants and Juniors. These schools together, therefore, provide ample accommodation for Infants and Juniors 5-11, and sufficient if the dividing age is increased to 12.

The new Senior School provides for 360 pupils. If the age is extended to 15, it will be insufficient for the estimated number of pupils 11-15, but if the temporary buildings are retained would accommodate pupils 12-15."

The position at Newbiggin in 1929 was, therefore, not entirely satisfactory

in terms of school organisation. The condition of the Church of England school was regarded as "unsatisfactory" and constitutes a further example of the problems the voluntary bodies experienced during the period in maintaining adequate buildings, particularly at a time when an improvement in the facilities they offered was being looked for. It will also be noted that 29 "mixed" scholars were attending classes at the infant school, presumably because suitable accommodation was unavailable at the mixed school. More surprising is the statement that the new senior school (planned as a central school) could not accommodate the numbers resulting from raising the school leaving age to 15 and had only sufficient accommodation for pupils aged 12-15 if temporary buildings were retained. It is therefore clear that despite building projects in the 1920s, organisation remained a problem at Newbiggin in 1920, even though there had been progress since 1918, most notably the establishment of the new central school (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1930 p.280).

"MORPETH RURAL DISTRICT

	Accommodation	Estimated Requirements		Proposals
		I & J	S	
Lynemouth C.	360	312	192	A new school for 240 Senior pupils is required at Lynemouth. [£10,000].
Ellington C.	94	65	<u>40</u>	
			<u>232</u>	
Linton C.	270	117	72	The school recently erected at Linton could accommodate Seniors from Longhirst. [£1,900].
Longhirst C.	138	52	<u>32</u>	
			<u>104</u>	
Pegswood C.	600	377	<u>232</u>	This school will require the addition of at least two workrooms. [£1,900]."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1930 p. 297.)

The report shows that in the rural area covered by this study change and progress towards re-organisation had been slow. Despite the fact

that new buildings had been erected at Linton and Lynemouth in 1926 (partly as a result of an increase in the local population and partly due to the poor condition of the Linton school), Lynemouth required an additional school for seniors and Linton evidently required work if it was to accommodate seniors from Longhirst. The chart does not accurately reflect the 1929 situation at Pegswood where infants attended a separate Church of England school and pupils from Standard I upwards attended a mixed council school, which the report considered to be in need of rooms for practical activities. Many of the rural schools occupied old buildings, such as that at Longhirst (1859). Pegswood's schools were younger (1895 and c.1901) but as will be shown, were not entirely satisfactory. The L.E.A.'s proposals appear to have been almost entirely based upon the recommendations of the Education Committee's own sub-committee on school organisation and those of the 1926 "Hadow" report. The reports of H.M. Inspectors on Longhirst School, Pegswood Mixed School and Pegswood Infant School have all been examined and do not appear to have exercised a strong influence upon the re-organisation proposals: organisation is commented upon in the reports and poor accommodation noted (e.g. at Pegswood Mixed School in 1923 and at Pegswood Infant School in 1932) but the need to provide new buildings or to undertake major re-organisation is not addressed. The Inspectors' views may have been made known to the L.E.A. by means other than their reports on individual schools, but on the evidence of those reports Inspectorial influence upon proposals would appear to have been limited. The rural schools in the area, therefore, experienced varying degrees of change and progress in organisation between 1918 and 1929. Without doubt, change in the rural area was much less marked than in the urban areas during the same period. In the interests of completeness, it should be noted that the single Roman Catholic school in the area, St. Aidan's at Ashington was erected in 1894 and was in use in 1929, although it was not included in the scheme of re-organisation. Local R.C. provision was not improved until years later (c.f. pp. 81-82 below).

The optimism of the 1930 proposals continued throughout 1930. In May, 1930, the Committee noted fifteen places where schools were being built or sites acquired. In August, 1930 a development plan for 1930 - 1933 identified priorities and commented that even in 1933 work towards implementation would remain. (The similarity of the objectives of 1930 and those of 1921, noted above, is marked and is worthy of notice. The similarity shows how, whilst the objectives were similar, progress towards implementation had been limited).

"In circular 1397 the Board of Education state that the main lines of development are as follows :-

- (a) a reorganisation designed to secure for all pupils a break at 11+ and a fresh start at that age on a definitely new stage in education;
- (b) the reduction of classes to a maximum of 50 on the roll for infants and juniors, and of 40 on the roll for seniors;
- (c) the replacement, reconstruction or repair of all defective school premises on the Black List."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1930 p. 146)

The report stated that the Board had called for these problems and proposals to be handled as a single issue and that because of

"the existing uncertainty as to the raising of the school leaving age, and as to the future of Non-Provided Schools, it is probable that much of the work foreshadowed in that report will be uncompleted in March, 1933, even if sites are bought, plans prepared and approved, and contracts let before September, 1932, in order to secure the additional building grant."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1930 p. 147.)

The 1930 plan also provides useful information on other aspects of organisational change, as the following tables show:

"	Head	C.A.	U.A.	S.	Dom. filling & Hand. vacancies	Supply	Total Establishment
31st. March, 1927	361	563	402	109	24	8	1,467
31st. March, 1930	360	465	376	75	44	22	1,522
Increases	—	82	—	—	20	14	55
Decreases	1	—	26	34	—	—	—

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1930 p.147.)

In three years, 1927 to 1930, the L.E.A. had added 82 certificated assistants to its staff, in addition to 20 practical teachers and had also replaced 60 uncertificated or unqualified teachers. The plan comments:

"The increase of 55 in the number of teaching posts has been accompanied by a fall in the number of children on the registers from 52,260 to 51,085 . reducing the average number of pupils per teacher from 35.6 to 33.5."

Number of Pupils in Class	31st.Mar.,1927	31st.Mar.,1930	Increase	Decrease
No class *	55	96	41	-
40 or under	785	878	93	-
41 to 45	161	162	1	-
46 to 50	170	176	6	-
51 to 55	173	156	-	17
56 to 60	113	53	-	60
Over 60	10	1	-	9
	<u>1,467</u>	<u>1,522</u>	<u>141</u>	<u>86</u>

* Head Teachers and Practical Instruction Teachers."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1930 p. 148.)

The above chart shows that Northumberland L.E.A. had, between 1927 and 1930, made a real effort to improve school organisation. In 1930 the number of head teachers had only fallen by one from the 1927 figure, but the number of head teachers without a class had risen from 55 to 96, a reflection upon the formation of large senior schools. The increase in the number of practical instruction teachers during the same period from 24 to 44 shows that the committee had made practical activities available to many more pupils. Progress towards reducing class size is also clear: in 1930 only 54 classes had 56 or more pupils, as against 123 in 1927.

The 1930 plan also covered various medical and administrative matters and noted that:

"Under the scheme of reorganisation, more particularly in the rural districts, the provision of facilities for meals is essential. A satisfactory arrangement would be for a simple meal to be made available at all schools, and for the parents who were in a position to do so, to pay the cost of the food."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1930 p. 149.)

The 1930 proposals also showed how the L.E.A. was prepared to consider new ideas, e.g. the proposal to appoint a Psychologist

"to assist teachers in the task of appropriately classifying pupils, and advising in regard to suitable methods of training for sub-normal children."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1930 p. 149.)

The reader of the 1930 documents discussed above cannot doubt that Northumberland L.E.A. had done its utmost under the circumstances to improve the organisation of elementary education in the area of this study. The 1930 plans show how those of 1927 and earlier date had pursued courses of policy recommended for national implementation by the "Hadow" report of 1926. The documents show that progress had been made even after the set-backs following the 1926 strike, towards reducing the size of classes and employing more trained, certificated teachers. Furthermore, in some parts of the area, mainly in the urban districts, building projects had progressed to the extent that further work was not an urgent priority. There had been change and progress, particularly between 1927 and 1930 and further progress appeared to be likely.

THE CUTS AND SET-BACKS OF 1931.

The optimism of 1930 was short lived. The financial crisis of 1931 led to the formation of a National Government and calls for economy (A.J.P. Taylor, 1965 pp. 361-371). The L.E.A. minutes of 1931 contain many references to economy, which greatly set back plans to improve school organisation:

"In their circular relating to reductions in educational expenditure the Board of Education ask for a statement of developments with which the Local Education Authority desires to proceed during the eighteen months ending 31st. March, 1933. The Committee has accordingly reviewed the programme for reorganisation and provision of elementary school accommodation during the years 1931-32-33 with a view to determining which proposals might be regarded as necessary during that period."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1931 p. 197.)

The authority accordingly resolved to submit proposals for only the next eighteen months and proposed that:

"The various works included in the Programme for 1931-33 and involving an estimated expenditure of £224,100 and also the proposals for re-organisation in rural districts, estimated to cost £81,465, be deferred."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1931 p. 197.)

The cuts of 1931 constituted a major set-back to progress in the area of this study. As the 1930 survey showed, re-organisation required new or improved buildings in Ashington, Newbiggin and the rural district. The schedule dated 5th. November, 1931 only included one proposal for work in the study's area: a £1,000 project to improve sanitation at Ashington Bothal Council School. The three-year programme did not include any projects aimed to improve the rural schools of the area. The three-year programme made the following proposals for work in urban areas:

"Financial Year 1931-32	Estimated cost of
(i) Work now in progress-	Sites, Buildings etc.
1. Ashington, Bothal, new School for Juniors	£21,000..
(ii) Work to be put in hand during financial	
year 1931-2	
16. Newbiggin, extension of Senior School	£ 5,500.
Financial Year 1932-33	
18.- Ashington, Bothal, adaption of school	£ 11,125
for Seniors	
19.- Ashington, Hirst, new school for 800 Seniors	£ 47,450
Financial Year 1933-4	
[No projects within the area of the study]."	

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1932-33 pp. 128-129.)

The Education Committee, although committed to the implementation of elementary school re-organisation, found itself unable to proceed as it intended in 1931, as a result of financial restrictions. The years 1931, 1932 and 1933 were years during which little progress towards re-organisation was made in the Bothal and Woodhorn area, with the exception of projects which were well advanced when the cuts were made. In 1932, for example, Wansbeck Road Junior and Infant Council Schools were completed: from that date, Ashington children attended **new** and attractive schools from the ages of 5 to 11 and in the main proceeded to Bothal Senior Council School, the original National School opened in

1873, which was modestly renovated as a 11 to 14 senior school.

(Little and Parker, 1973 p. 53).

THE REVIVAL OF PROGRESS, 1934.

As has been shown, re-organisation did not altogether cease between 1931 and 1934, but progress was much limited and new building almost ceased. From 1934 onwards, L.E.A. documents suggest that constraints were easing. Early in 1934, £360 was spent on converting and £140 on equipping a Domestic Subjects room at Bothal Council School instead of the previously proposed £200 for

"fitting up a room temporarily for the purpose."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1934 p. 256.)

In November, 1934, a scheme for re-organising provision in a large part of the rural area covered by this study was proposed. Since it was not accepted, it need not be fully discussed, but its existence confirms that attempts to make progress were being revived in 1934.

The scheme commented upon

"the lack of adequate facilities for practical instruction at Pegswood Council School, and the poor condition of the Pegswood Colliery Infants School."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1934.p. 236).

The above extract shows that little real building improvement had been made at Pegswood by 1934. It was intended to centralise provision for seniors in a single new school and to make improvements for younger children by closing the poorest buildings. This process was resented in some areas as "decapitation." The 1934 scheme's proposal that

"The Junior and Infants Schools will be ultimately in charge of Head Mistresses"

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1934 p. 236),

is a further illustration of the committee's concern with economy, as headmistresses received smaller salaries than headmasters. The 1934

scheme also considered problems associated with transport and meals, a further instance of the new demands laid upon L.E.As. as a consequence of re-organisation.

Four resolutions passed by Northumberland L.E.A. in February, 1935 show how keen the committee was to implement re-organisation and a leaving age of 15 and the particular problems faced by rural areas. The need for a lead from central government and for further financial support suggests that Northumberland and the other L.E.As. which supported the resolutions were anxious to make progress but lacked the finance required to achieve it:

- "1. That this Committee is of opinion that the School Leaving age should be raised to 15 years so soon as is practicable having regard to the necessity for providing adequate school accommodation, including Special Subjects rooms for the initial age-group in properly re-organised schools or classes and particularly in the Rural Schools of the County.
2. That the School Leaving Age should be raised by Government legislation and upon a national basis.
3. That the Government should be urged to fix a date on which the higher leaving age should come into operation in order that the Local Education Authorities may have time to make necessary provision.
4. That exchequer grants on a 50 per cent. basis should be made in respect of new buildings and the transport of children with the raising of the age."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1935 p. 319)

In May, 1935, whilst L.E.As. awaited government action, two further schemes of improvement were sanctioned which are of relevance to this study. The fact that the proposals were made at all shows that by 1935, even without greatly increased government support, the local economic and financial situation had improved to the extent that the authority was in a position to contemplate such proposals.

The first scheme decided

"to establish, as accommodation permits, special classes each with not more than 25 pupils in Junior and Senior Elementary Schools in Ashington for backward pupils determined by the

Committee to be incapable of receiving benefit from the ordinary school instruction, the teachers in charge of the classes to be paid an additional salary equal to one scale increment."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1935 p. 54.)

This proposal is not only an indication of the committee's development plans; it also implies, by its very existence, that the committee considered that the organisation of elementary education in Ashington had improved to the extent that attention and resources could be directed towards other aspects of the school system.

The second scheme proposed was a second attempt to deal with organisational problems in a large part of the rural area addressed by this study:

"(a) Pegswood, Longhirst, Ulgham and Stobswood- The re-organisation of school accommodation in this area so as to make provision for the senior pupils of Longhirst and Pegswood at Pegswood and the senior pupils of Ulgham and Stobswood at Stobswood."

"(1) The extension of the Pegswood Council School by five class rooms and two practical instruction rooms at an estimated cost, including furniture, of £10,660."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1935 p. 55.)

The Pegswood scheme included the purchase of the council school building, the teacher's house, caretaker's house and eight acres of land for a playing field and garden, the total cost being £8,600. (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1935, p. 55.)

The improvement in the financial situation is further exemplified by the fact that in November, 1935, the salary cut of 10% resultant from the National Economy (Education) Order, 1931 was finally made good, 5% having been restored earlier, the cost being met

"by an increased Government Grant since the National Exchequer received the benefit of the deduction."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1935 p. 212.)

Projects with elementary school re-organisation as their goal continued in 1936, an example being the decision in May, 1936 to fund the travel

costs of pupils transferred to Longhirst when Ulgham school closed. In November, 1936, a site was purchased for the proposed new senior school for Hirst (South) (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1936 p. 228), and in February, 1937 four further proposals were made towards the completion of re-organisation in Hirst. A boys' senior school, a girls' senior school, both housed in new buildings, the remodelling of Hirst East Senior Boys' and Girls' departments into an infant school and small junior school and the closure of one department at Hirst North School to provide space for two halls and two craft rooms were the changes proposed (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1937 pp. 331-332).

From 1934 onwards, therefore, local authority initiatives towards bringing about progress and change in school organisation were being made in the area of this study.

THE EDUCATION ACT, 1936.

Whilst local initiatives towards improvement continued from 1934 onwards, a need for national leadership was felt, as the L.E.A. resolutions of February, 1935, noted above, show. Such calls contributed towards the Education Act, 1936. The 1936 Act most notably planned to raise the leaving age to 15 and to assist those responsible for non-provided schools to improve them and thus contribute towards re-organisation. The L.E.A. noted that the 1936 Act

"raises the compulsory school leaving age from 14 to 15 years but empowers Local Education Authorities to grant certificates permitting the employment or withdrawal from school, in certain circumstances, of children between 14 and 15 years of age. Local Education Authorities are also empowered to make grants of from 50 to 75 per cent. of the total cost of building, enlarging or improving Non-Provided Schools."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1937 p. 329.)

"Schedule I", dated 4th. February, 1937 considered the implications of the Act and noted that the "appointed day" for it to come into

force was 1st. September, 1939. The schedule commented :

"Its passage into law will have far reaching effects on Elementary Education in this area and will, no doubt, bring increased expenditure upon the Committee, together with a considerable increase in administrative detail into the Education Department."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1937 p. 336.)

As the implications of the 1936 Act were being discussed, in November, 1937 the Committee noted a statistic which shows how local initiatives were improving organisation before the new act was operational:

"In connection with the policy of the Committee for the reduction in the size of classes in elementary schools, the Board of Education have expressed satisfaction that on the 31st. March, 1937, there were no classes in the County area with over 50 children on the roll."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1937 p. 258.)

It will be recalled that in 1927, 296 classes had 51 or more pupils and that in 1930, 210 classes remained in that category.

By February, 1938, schemes of improvement for non-provided schools, under the terms of the 1936 Act were being considered. A proposal dated 5th. May, 1938 related to the provision of a new Roman Catholic Senior School for Ashington,

"... on a site of six acres at Ashington for about 200 pupils, to replace the senior accommodation in the present Ashington R.C. School where there are about 144 seniors, and the building is old and unsatisfactory, is without a school hall and facilities for practical instruction and could not be converted into a modern Senior School. It is proposed to retain the present schools for infants and juniors. The estimated cost of the new Senior School is: ... Total, £21,300."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1938 p. 65.)

The proposal relating to Ashington R.C. School is of double significance. Firstly, it shows what was expected of a new senior school in 1938: the 1918 Act and 1926 report had emphasised the importance of practical activities. Clearly, by 1938, such provision was considered essential. Similarly, the absence of a hall would not have been considered a handicap in 1918, particularly as the school adjoined the R.C. church,

but in 1939 a hall, with its potential for use as a corporate and cultural centre of school life was clearly considered important, even when, as at Ashington R.C. School, a church was available for the school to use for acts of worship. Secondly, the proposals for Ashington R.C. School are of note because they constitute the sole example, within the area addressed by this study, of a scheme for the improvement of a non-provided school under the terms of the 1936 Act. This is a reflection of the fact that until 1936 the only course of action open to the managers of a non-provided school required by circumstances to spend substantial sums on the building or otherwise which they were unable to afford was to seek its transfer to the L.E.A. Bothal C.E. School and Longhirst C.E. School passed into L.E.A. control in 1927. (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1927 p. 33 and L.S. Log, 9/11/1927 p. 103). In addition, Linton C.E. Infant School was closed in 1926 and replaced by a new council school (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1925 p. 41) and in 1939 Pegswood Colliery C.E. Infant School was similarly superseded (P.C.I.S. Log, 6/4/1939 p. 146). The inter-war years, therefore, witnessed the transfer of almost all the voluntarily supported schools in the area to the L.E.A. or their closure and replacement by new council schools. Whilst such transfers had taken place from the foundation of the authority in 1902 onwards, it is probable that the transfers of the inter-war years were due to a combination of local economic factors and rising costs. The 1936 Act, it may be concluded, had only a limited effect upon progress and change towards elementary school re-organisation in this study's area, chiefly because so many of the church schools had already closed or had been replaced or improved by the L.E.A.

THE CONTINUATION OF LOCAL INITIATIVES, 1936 - 1939.

The 1936 Act did not interfere with local authority initiatives aimed to improve organisation. In August, 1938 a new council school for 320 senior pupils from Lynemouth and two other villages was proposed, at a cost of £25,960. The L.E.A. intention was to complete

re-organisation at Lynemouth by then converting the existing school into an infant and junior school. At the same meeting, changes in the proposals for re-organisation at Pegswood were made, the essence of which was to include accommodation for 100 infants in the renovated junior school rather than in a new separate infant school. This proposal was considered to be economically and organisationally advantageous (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1938 p. 160).

In November, 1938 it was resolved to

"develop still further the creation of 'Special Classes' in appropriate schools and to train more teachers to take charge of those classes."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1938 p. 277).

The committee believed that 46 pupils from the Ashington, Morpeth, Bedlington and Pegswood areas would benefit from inclusion in the scheme. (In his report of 1938 on Pegswood Mixed School, Mr. Crewe, H.M.I., had suggested the formation of a "special class" in the school.) The L.E.A. proposals for special classes represents a marked improvement upon the individual school arrangements which prevailed for such pupils in 1918. The attention given by the committee to such schemes and projects such as that in February, 1939, to provide a school gymnasium for Hirst Park Senior School suggests that by 1939 the authority was confident that elementary school organisation had improved to such an extent that more specialised needs could be considered (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1939 p. 374).

THE APPROACH OF WAR.

Whilst many schemes of improvement continued during 1939, as early as February, 1938 the County Council had sanctioned the use of certain schools as first aid and cleansing stations in times of "National Emergency" (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1938 p. 278). During 1939, the council and committee devoted time to matters relating to schools air-raid precautions and evacuation. On the 1st. September,

1939, the "appointed day" upon which the 1936 Act was to come into force, the administrative county received evacuees from Tyneside. War was declared on 3rd. September and on 2nd. November, 1939, building work virtually ceased. Sites could be acquired, but only in the most pressing cases would the Board permit building (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1939 p. 256 and p. 263).

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.

Assessing the extent to which progress (as defined on pp. 10-11 above) was made in elementary school organisation in the area of the study between 1918 and 1939 is difficult. Whilst, as has been shown, a considerable volume of material exists in the form of Education Committee minutes and reports, much is not of a nature which lends itself to systematic comparison, e.g., annual figures for class-size or the numbers of pupils in re-organised schools are not available. With the above limitations in mind, the following conclusions can be drawn from L.E.A. documents.

1. POLICY.

The documentary evidence shows that the policy of Northumberland Education Committee between 1918 and 1939 was essentially forward looking and in harmony with or ahead of national policies which aimed to bring about improvement. The authority qualified most of its statements with a reference to what was practicable given the available financial resources but was never hostile to legislation or Board policy which had the improvement of the elementary system as its aim. Set-backs during the period appear to have largely resulted from government restrictions upon expenditure.

The Education Committee, as has been shown, adopted a positive attitude towards the 1918 Education Act. This is illustrated by the statement of

its objectives of August, 1919, noted above, which called for improved provision for older children through the formation of a Senior Division. The aim of the Senior Division was to give "a definite purpose" to the child's last years at school by offering "scholastic" education, training in arts and crafts, organised games and opportunity to develop hobbies and interests. It was proposed to develop Senior Divisions in existing buildings, to provide "Central Schools" in new buildings when the growth of population or the nature of available accommodation required change and to form Senior Divisions in certain rural schools to serve pupils from a wider area. A simplification of the curriculum was proposed for the Junior Division. The L.E.A.'s commitment to change in 1919 was, as has been shown, clear and found further expression in the plans of May, 1921, which proposed senior divisions in elementary schools, with advanced and practical courses, instruction centres to serve schools without practical instruction rooms and an aim to have no more than 40 pupils in a class. The L.E.A.'s willingness, in 1919, to co-operate with a continuation school scheme for employees of the Ashington Coal Co. Ltd. illustrates the authority's readiness to adopt policies perceived as being progressive. The objectives of 1918 clearly remained influential throughout the 1918-1939 period, despite the fact that the cuts of 1921 placed financial restrictions in the way of implementation.

A progressive policy of building central schools in populous areas was reiterated by the committee in 1925, which aimed also to reduce the size of classes. As a result of the strike of 1926 the Board refused to sanction expenditure on many building projects, but a policy of re-organisation advocated by the L.E.A. committee formed in 1926 was confirmed by the 1926 "Hadow" report. This fact again confirms the opinion that Northumberland's policy was a forward-looking one. The 1927 programme aimed to implement such policies: that of 1930 had

similar objectives and included a careful consideration of the problems of re-organisation in the rural areas. As in 1921, progress was set back in 1931 by a policy of national economy. From 1934 onwards, local schemes of re-organisation were advocated by the committee and in 1935 the authority associated itself with calls for national leadership in raising the leaving age and for exchequer grants of 50 per cent. for new buildings. In the wake of the 1936 Act, Northumberland L.E.A. co-operate with schemes to improve non-provided school accommodation. The late 1930s also saw proposals made to tackle the problems of meals and transport for pupils caused by re-organisation, to develop further "special classes" for pupils in need of such tuition and to provide schools with adequate gardens and playing fields.

The conclusion can be reached, on the basis of the policies advocated in the available minutes and reports, that Northumberland L.E.A.'s policy between 1918 and 1939 consistently favoured change with the intention of bringing about progress. The L.E.A. recognised and attempted to adopt the organisational improvements advocated by government in the 1918 and 1936 Education Acts, by the 1926 "Hadow" report and by its own advisory sub-committee. The implementation of such policy was not hindered by local reluctance to make changes but by restrictions upon expenditure and exchequer support, most notably in 1921, 1926 and 1931.

2. THE IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY.

The years 1918 to 1939 without doubt witnessed many attempts by national and local government to improve the educational experience of elementary school pupils. Whilst an improved theoretical framework for the organisation of elementary education was clearly developed by Northumberland L.E.A. and a policy of progress and change advocated, the extent to which change took place in the area addressed by the study is

difficult to assess.

The 1918 Act established a leaving age of fourteen years for all pupils and contributed towards the idea of dividing the elementary school into Junior and Senior Divisions, objectives which, with varying nomenclature, were consistently worked towards in Northumberland between the wars. In addition, in the area of this study, the opportunity to benefit from a secondary education was extended by the decision to establish a council secondary school to serve the Bedlington/Ashington area. The day continuation classes for youths employed by the Ashington Coal Co. Ltd., established jointly by the company and the L.E.A. in 1919 were clearly inspired by the 1918 Act. As noted above, the classes proved to be very successful and moved in 1931 to a purpose-built centre.

The "pre-Hadow" re-organisation, commenced in 1925 and developed further in 1927 and 1930, also led to notable organisational improvements in the area of the study. Between 1926 and 1930 new schools were opened at Lynemouth and Linton and of the three new central schools established by the L.E.A. between 1927 and 1930 two, those at Newbiggin and Hirst Park, served the area of this study. By 1930, the children of Hirst were all educated in separate infant, junior and senior schools and from 1932 Ashington's children were in a similar position, when Wansbeck Road Junior and Infants Council Schools were opened and Bothal School remained open for seniors only, being renovated and provided with facilities for practical work. The 1930 proposals for rural areas show that less organisational change had occurred in those areas between 1918 and that date, but after 1934 efforts towards rural re-organisation were renewed and in 1939 were largely completed, when the unsatisfactory Pegswood Infant School was closed (the building was considered to be in "poor condition" in 1934; c.f. Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1934 p. 236), a new block was added to the

mixed school for seniors and Longhirst School transferred its seniors to Pegswood.

Progress towards a reduction in the size of classes was also an ambition of the inter-war years. Whilst the objective of reducing the size of classes to 40 pupils or fewer, expressed in the proposals of 1921 was not attained, considerable progress was made: as discussed above, 123 classes had 56 or more pupils in 1927; by 1930 only 54 classes fell into that category and by 31st. March, 1937 classes of over 50 pupils had been eliminated in the area of Northumberland L.E.A. The 1930 development programme, it will be recalled, spoke of classrooms intended for 60 or 70 children in the older buildings.

Staffing was a further issue identified as one requiring attention in 1921. Figures are limited, but as has been discussed above, between 1927 and 1930, a period when the number of registered pupils fell, the number of teaching posts was increased by 55, the number of certificated teachers had increased and the number of uncertificated teachers had declined.

The evidence of L.E.A. documents shows that change and progress in the organisation of elementary education in the area under consideration did take place between 1918 and 1939. Whilst the objectives of 1930 were almost the same as those of 1921, a fact which implies that in the county as a whole much remained to be done, in the locality studied, more rapid progress had been made. In the urban districts, the schools were almost re-organised by 1930, a process completed in 1932. Rural progress was slower, but by the end of 1939 was almost completed. The figures for the improvement in staffing and the reduction in the size of classes show an improvement in the L.E.A. area as a whole. In terms

of building improvements in the area, it should be recalled that, as discussed above, the population of Ashington Urban District was an increasing one until 1931 and that Lynemouth was a new village. It should also be noted that the new buildings at Linton and Pegswood both replaced buildings considered to be in some degree unsatisfactory.

In order to obtain a different perspective upon the question of change and progress in elementary school education, the issues are examined and discussed below in terms of the experiences of schools in two nearby but contrasting villages, both of which were situated within the ancient parish of Bothal: the mining village of Pegswood and the rural village of Longhirst.

CHAPTER SIX. PROGRESS AND CHANGE IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ORGANISATION,
1918 - 1939: . THE EXPERIENCE OF PEGSWOOD MIXED SCHOOL AND LONGHIRST SCHOOL.

The following section of the study aims to consider the extent to which, if at all, progress and change took place in the organisation of Pegswood Mixed School and Longhirst School between 1918 and 1939. Firstly, in both cases, organisation is discussed in terms of staffing, class-size, class arrangement and re-organisation. The fact that Pegswood Mixed School was by far the larger of the two schools is reflected to some extent by the arrangement and discussion of the evidence derived from documentary sources. Secondly, the extent to which change and progress was made in the provision of buildings is discussed, including a consideration of school accommodation, sanitation, water supply, lighting, heating, ventilation, the provision of specialist facilities and miscellaneous improvements. Again, since the amount of material relating to Pegswood is more substantial than that from Longhirst, the evidence is presented in a slightly different format, although the topics covered are similar.

CHANGE AND PROGRESS IN ORGANISATION: STAFFING, CLASS-SIZE AND
ARRANGEMENT AND RE-ORGANISATION.

(I). PEGSWOOD MIXED COUNCIL SCHOOL.

Changes in the organisation of Pegswood Mixed Council School are recorded in the school log, managers' minutes (from 1921) and the reports of H.M. Inspectors. Organisation at Pegswood can be conveniently discussed in terms of staffing, class-size and arrangement and re-organisation.

(i). STAFFING AND CLASS-SIZE.

In 1918, Thomas Hutchinson was headmaster of Pegswood Mixed Council School. The log for 1918 contains many references to staffing problems (e.g. P.M.S. Log, 22/2/1918, p. 125 and 26/4/1918, p. 129). It was not

until 1919 that the headmaster could record that

"This is the first week for years that we have been really fully staffed."

(P.M.S. Log, 16/5/1919, p. 148)

In August, 1920, Mr Hutchinson attempted to

"equalise the size of classes."

(P.M.S. Log, 30/8/1920, p. 164.)

Nine mixed classes covered Standards I to VII (i.e. pupils aged from 7 to 13). The headmaster himself did not have a class. The nine teachers consisted of two men (both certificated) and seven women (three certificated and four uncertificated or supplementary). Of the nine classes, six had between 60 and 64 pupils, the remainder having 41, 44 and 53 pupils respectively. The staff was under-strength in April, 1921, when the Headmaster stated:

"No teacher absent this week, though the staff is incomplete. Though the Educ'n. Com. has advertised for months for an Uncertificated Assistant not a single application has yet been made."

(P.M.S. Log, 4/3/21, p. 174.)

It is probable that the difficulty experienced at Pegswood in filling the vacancy was at least in part a consequence of the 1914 - 18 War. In the area covered by the Northumberland L.E.A., which excluded at that time the towns of Berwick and Blyth and most of Tyneside, 41 head-masters of elementary schools served in H.M. Forces, of whom 2 were killed in action and 1 resigned from teaching. 122 assistant teachers also served, of whom 19 were killed in action, were missing or died of wounds or otherwise. Eleven teachers resigned from county employment. Thus, 33 members of the county's staff left the authority's employment as a result of the war: 9 of the teachers who resigned had attained commissioned rank and presumably sought alternative post-war employment (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1919 pp.94-101).⁶ In addition to the casualties, the war led to a marked reduction in the number of teachers being trained.

Bede College at Durham was closed for most of the duration (Webster, 1973 p 50.) as was St. John's College at York (Mc. Gregor, 1991 p.114).

Mr. Hutchinson retired in 1921 after 42 years as headmaster and was succeeded by Mr. Robert Joice⁷ (P.M.S. Log, 4/4/1921 p.175). The new headmaster, who assumed responsibility for a class, noted that the school roll stood at 551, whilst the "staff-value"(c.f. pp. 27-28 above) was 440. The classes were arranged as follows:-

			Staff value	No. in class
"STDS. VII & EX VII	Head Teacher	C	35	64
VI	Mr. Hine	C	60	58
VA	Miss Turnbull	C	60	64
VB	" : Weatherley	C	60	54
IV	" Nichol	C	60	69
III	" Wardle	U	35	65
II	Mrs. Thompson	U	35	69
IA	Miss Elliot	C	60	57
IB	" Brown	U	35	51
			<u>440</u>	<u>551</u> "

(P.M.S. Log, 4/4/1921, p.175).

Thus, in 1921, all the classes had over 50 pupils, five of the nine classes had over 60 pupils and only three classes had numbers within the official staff values. The staff-values reflect the confidence the Board had in trained, certificated teachers to teach large classes and also recognised that the nature of a head's duties justified a reduction in the teaching commitment to be expected of him. Three staff, as opposed to four, in 1920 were uncertificated. The only notable difference between 1920 and 1921 was the expansion of Std. VII and the formation of a category designated "Ex VII": these changes were the result of the raising of the school leaving age to 14 required by the 1918 Act. Mr. Joice called again for the addition to the staff of a further uncertificated teacher and in May, 1921, an appointment was made (P.M.S. Log, 9/5/1921, p. 177). In the same month, Mr. Joice re-arranged standards V, VI and VII into two boys' classes with male teachers and two girls' classes with female teachers. (P.M.S. Log,

23/5/1921, p. 177). This change brought Pegswood into conformity with the prevailing arrangements in most comparable local schools. The size of some classes in September, 1921, led to the transfer of some pupils to classes composed of older children, a decision recorded by the headmaster as being against his "better judgement", (P.M.S. Log, 2/9/1921, p. 181). In 1922 the school had nine classes. Seven of the teachers were certificated. The oldest pupils were grouped into "Ex VII," a class intended for pupils who had progressed to and beyond Standard VII. An attempt was also made to give all classes some access to a class-room. Class numbers for 1922 are not recorded, but with a roll of 499 a figure of 55 pupils per class is not an unreasonable estimate. Whilst the roll had fallen from the level of 1921, the number of classes and teachers had remained the same (P.M.S. Log, 3/4/1922, p. 189). A list of classes for 1924 showed that of ten classes, one had 31 pupils, one 45 pupils and the remainder 49 to 60 pupils (P.M.S. Log, 1/4/1924, p. 220). The nine classes of 1925 each had between 52 and 60 pupils (P.M.S. Log, 1/4/1925, pp. 233-234). After 1925, individual class-sizes are not regularly recorded in the log. However, in 1927, the school had a roll of 438 and nine classes, suggesting a rough figure of 48 pupils per class (P.M.S. Log, 25/4/1927, p. 259 and 20/12/1927, p. 266). It should be noted that the 1929 H.M.I. report states that the four junior classes each had over 55 pupils, whilst the five senior classes were smaller, which suggests that an emphasis was being placed upon reducing the size of the senior classes at that time. Few figures are available for the 1930s, but it will be recalled that by 1937 no classes in the county had more than 50 pupils. After re-organisation was completed in 1939, the size of classes in the new Pegswood Senior School was recorded as follows:-

"Form I (First Year)	40
Form II (Some First and Some Second)	37
Form III (Second Year)	40
Form IV (Third Year)	21"

(P.S.S. Log, 17/4/1939, p. 1.)

The children below the age of 11 from the old council Mixed School and the separate Church of England Infant School from 17th. April, 1939 occupied the former council school, which was re-modelled for the purpose. Class sizes were not recorded but with a roll of 304 pupils and eight staff a figure of between 43 and 37 pupils per class (depending upon the inclusion of the headmistress) appears to be likely (P.J.I.S. Log, 17/4/1939, p.1).

An examination of the evidence of the log shows, therefore, that between 1918 and 1939 great progress was made towards reducing class-size at Pegswood. From a maximum of five classes with over 60 pupils in 1921, class-size probably fell to below 50 by 1927 and had certainly done so by 1937. Finally, by 1939, numbers had fallen below 41 in all the senior classes and probably below 43 in all the junior and infant classes.

The extent to which the level of staff qualifications and their teaching ability improved, if indeed it did, between 1918 and 1939 is a more complex question than that of class-size. The reports of H.M. Inspectors and the minutes of the meetings of the School Managers complement the log as sources of information for this investigation.

In 1920, Standards V to VII were all in the hands of certificated teachers (P.M.S. Log, 30/8/1920, p. 164). In 1921 Standards IV to VII were taught by certificated staff (P.M.S. Log, 4/4/1921, p. 175) but thereafter the allocation of staff to classes and their qualifications is difficult to trace. By 1939, when Mr. M.D. Henzell was appointed headmaster of the new senior school (P.M.S. Log, 1/6/1938, p. 380) all his staff were certificated for their particular duties: Mr. W. Forsyth, Mr. A.M. Kerr, M.A. and Miss M.A. Hall (certificated assistants), Mr. R. Armstrong (handicrafts) and Miss M. Brotherton (domestic science &c. P.S.S. Log, 17/4/1939, p. 1). It should be

noted that during the period in question, possession of a degree permitted an individual to qualify as a certificated teacher without further training. Whilst graduate teachers had undertaken supply duties at Pegswood from 1923 (P.M.S. Log, 13/11/23, p. 215), from 1929 graduates began to join the permanent staff. Miss W.M. Thompson, B.A., was noted as a teacher in 1929 (P.M.S. Log, 11/2/1929, p. 279). Later, in 1929, Mr. A.M. Kerr, M.A. from Edinburgh joined the staff (P.M.S. Log, 25/11/1929, p. 292). He was followed in 1930 by Miss C. Bruce, M.A., from Aberdeen (P.M.S. Log, 3/3/1930, p. 295) and in 1932 by Miss C. Porteous M.A. (P.M.S. Log, 1/2/1932, p. 318) and Mr. G. Cook, B.A. (P.M.S. Log, 22/8/1932, p. 322). Miss Bruce left in 1933, but Miss Porteous remained until 1937, Mr. Kerr until after 1939 and Mr. Cook until 1938 (P.M.S. Log, 30/11/1933, p. 336; 30/4/37 p. 368; 26/10/1938, p. 390 & P.S.S. Log, 17/4/1939, p. 1). The addition of such staff may have prompted the re-organisation of the staff onto a more specialist basis in 1930, which year also witnessed the introduction of "subject rooms"

"A new Senior Time Table has been prepared. This is necessitated by the provision of a separate Science Course for the Senior Girls, which will be taken by Mr. Hymen, the Geography being taught by Mr. Kerr, Miss Bruce continuing with the History. Mr. Forsyth, who is specially qualified, will take Gardening and the Rural Science Course."

(P.M.S. Log, 29/9/1930, p. 300)

"Next week we are trying Subject Rooms instead of teachers moving children will move."

(P.M.S. Log, 10/10/1930, p. 301)

Whilst the graduate teachers no doubt possessed sound subject knowledge, professional training, as noted above, was not required by a graduate in order to obtain recognition as a certificated teacher. The following note from the managers' minutes shows that the graduate teachers did not always easily adapt to elementary school work:

"In response to the Rector, the Headmaster stated that Miss [] was likely to do well, but that Mr. [] is disappointing. He had no idea of teaching, though he is willing to take advice. And besides, he had no Science."

(P.M.S.M. Minutes, 20/5/1930, p. 107.)

Staff were also able to benefit from attendance at courses, noted at Pegswood on at least two occasions:

"Miss Bruce is absent this week and next attending a History Course at Cambridge under the Board of Education."

(P.M.S. Log, 12/7/1933, p. 332.)

"School closed to-day to enable whole staff to attend refresher course."

(P.M.S. Log, 1/4/1938, p. 377.)

Records show, therefore, that some improvement took place in the staffing of Pegswood Mixed School between 1918 and 1939. In 1920, of nine class teachers, five were certificated. When Pegswood Senior School opened in 1939, as noted above, all five teachers on the staff were certificated or otherwise qualified for their specialist duties. The period also witnessed the appointment of graduate teachers to the staff, which appears to have contributed towards a greater degree of specialisation, although it will be recalled that not all such appointments were an immediate success. The development of courses for serving teachers during the period also suggests that opportunities for further training or study were extending. The question of whether or not the quality of the staff's teaching improved during the same period is a separate one and can be discussed to some extent with reference to the five reports of H.M. Inspectors on the school, each of which was prepared by a different individual.

The 1923 report commented that the headmaster had a class of senior children and that:

"For some time past the staffing has been unstable and cannot yet be regarded as strong though all the members are loyal and reasonably industrious."

(P.M.S. Log/ H.M.I.R., 15/4/1923, p. 205.)

The work of the headmaster was also praised:

"He has prepared suitable schemes - not too pretentious but set out in clear detail. His examinations have been systematic and thorough and his reports frank and helpful to the class teachers....

The standard of attainment being reached by the scholars in many subjects is not as high as should be expected....

The Head Master deserves credit for his steady effort to improve the condition of the School, but has still a heavy task in front of him."

(P.M.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 15/4/1923 p. 205.)

The headmaster, Mr. Joice, emerges from the 1923 report as a dominant force for improvement in the school: methods of examination and schemes of work had been criticised in his predecessor's time (c.f. the reports of H.M. Inspectors for 1913 and 1914: P.M.S. Log pp.60-61 and pp. 86-87).

Progress can also be identified in the 1925 report, in terms of staffing and attainment:

"This school continues to improve under the wise and sympathetic direction of the Head Master. His staff work well, and the children are clean, eager to please and easy to interest.

It is necessary, however, to say that the teacher in charge of the older boys (Standards VI and VII), a most important class, should take his work much more seriously. He apparently does not expect his boys to take a real pride in their work, and his supervision of the notes written during the private study lessons is discreditable.

In marked contrast the attitude of the older girls, and their work in general, deserves much praise.

Reading aloud is good and for the most part intelligent. Tests set in arithmetic met with a satisfactory response except [in two standards]

The remainder of the work seen reaches a reasonably satisfactory standard."

(P.M.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 2/4/1925 p. 234)

The 1925 report, therefore, suggests that some progress had been made since 1923, as the opening sentence suggests. The headmaster and his staff were praised and only one of the nine teachers criticised. (The managers' minutes record that the headmaster was asked to "have a talk"

with the teacher in question (P.M.S.M. Minutes, 22/4/1925, p. 63).

In fairness, it should be recorded that the criticised teacher may have been ill at the time of the inspection; his death is recorded in the log one year later. (P.M.S. Log, 29/4/1926, p. 248). The report shows that in most classes the inspector was at least satisfied that the children's work in English, arithmetic and the other subjects was "reasonably satisfactory".

The 1929 report also praised the headmaster and commented upon the teachers and their work:

"The Head Master supervises and examines the school thoroughly and, in addition, takes a part in the regular teaching, being responsible for some of the Mathematics in the top class. His critical reports and schemes of work indicate that he is acquainted with modern methods of teaching and organising. He is loyally supported by a competent staff.

In each of the Junior Classes there is a considerable section of children of poor mental calibre which accounts for the fact that the attainments, though satisfactory on the whole, are very uneven....

In the Senior Division the teaching is mainly on a specialist basis. Two of the classes-the "B" forms-in which are grouped the duller children follow a slightly different course, but, in view of the fact that many of these children are making but little progress, in spite of much hard work on the part of the teachers, it would appear advisable to modify the syllabus. The work of the "A" forms, on the other hand, is distinctly promising. Arithmetic and written English are sound, and Music and Geography are well taught but it is perhaps in History that comparatively the best work is being done - the children certainly get a thorough training in note-making."

(P.M.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 7/5/1929, p. 283.)

Comparison between the 1925 and 1929 reports suggests that the staff and the quality of their teaching had improved. The headmaster and staff are praised, specialist teaching had developed and no teachers were identified for particular criticism. The children were clearly considered to be making satisfactory progress, except in the senior "B" forms.

The brief 1932 report commented:

"Apart from the Head Master himself and two of his assistants the staff of this school has completely changed since 1929 - the report of that date however still largely applies. The staff as a whole is certainly not of more than average ability and there is no work of outstanding merit; but as a result of conscientious effort on their part and effective supervision by the Head Master there is no serious fault to find with the efficiency of the school in the main subject of the curriculum."

(P.M.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 5/12/1932, p. 325.)

In making comparisons between the reports, it should be remembered that each was prepared by a different inspector or inspectors. With this limitation in mind, it could be concluded that the staff of 1932 was possibly weaker than that of 1929: unlike the previous report, none of the teaching is identified for particular praise and the staff was considered to be of no "more than average ability". The comments of 1932 may be related to the fact that between 1929 and that date all but three of the staff had changed.

The final pre-1939 report on Pegswood Mixed School was made in 1936 and provided only brief comment upon the staff:

"The Head Master, who is contemplating retirement, has spent the whole of his teaching career under this authority and has been in charge of this school since 1921. He has shown always a high sense of duty and the teachers in the County will remember with gratitude the work he had done willingly for many years in their interests.

The general condition of the school remains substantially as it was at the time of the last report....

At present the schemes in History, Geography and Mathematics are too academic "

(P.M.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 30/6/1936, p. 360.)

It can be inferred from the 1936 report that the headmaster had continued to give his school leadership and firm direction, as he had done since 1921. The comment that the 1936 situation was very similar to that of 1932 suggests that the staff were conscientious but not of outstanding ability. The tendency towards a too "academic" approach in certain subjects, noted in 1929, evidently persisted.

It is interesting to note that in 1929 H.M.I. Osborne gave particular praise to the teaching of history and the thoroughness of note-making in that subject. In 1936, H.M.I. Crewe expressed the view that the scheme for history was "too academic". Miss C. Bruce, M.A., who joined the staff in 1930 and left in 1933, as noted above, was responsible for teaching history in 1930 and in 1933 attended a Board of Education course at Cambridge on history. It is possible that Miss Bruce may have favoured a more academic approach to the subject than her predecessor and contributed towards the scheme in place in 1936. Her attendance at a Board course in 1933 suggests that she would have been aware of the recommendations of the 1926 "Hadow" report on the teaching of history. (The principal recommendations of the report were discussed in chapters two and five above.) The importance of discussion, visits, local history was stressed in the report and that

"Besides attractively written text books a library of some kind is essential, and it should contain, besides a few good works of reference, books which would serve to amplify the text book outline and to illustrate contemporary conditions at different periods; historical novels, good historical maps, a sufficient number of copies of a good historical atlas; and a generous supply of good illustrations."

"The Education of the Adolescent," 1927 p. 203.

The report also stated:

"...whatever division is made, the main thing is to secure that no large factor should be entirely omitted. This does not imply a general uniform syllabus, but it does imply that the whole period, at least from the time of the Romans to the present, should be covered in some form."

"The Education of the Adolescent," 1927 p. 200.

Bearing in mind the above recommendations and the likely level of resources available at Pegswood during the early 1930s, it is not surprising that the method of history teaching adopted fell somewhat short of the ideal.

It should be noted that the post 1918 period witnessed the development of staff support in the following subjects and that pupils were able to

benefit from specialist teaching available at the Morpeth practical instruction centre:-

1. Gardening. First post-1918 visit from an organiser recorded in 1925 (P.M.S. Log, 8/5/1925, p. 237).
2. Handicrafts. First post-1918 visit from an organiser recorded in 1926. (P.M.S. Log, 27/5/1926, p. 248).
3. Needlework First post-1918 visit from an organiser recorded in 1920 (P.M.S. Log, 9/1/1920, p. 155. Later designated "domestic subjects").
4. Physical Training. First post-1918 visit from an organiser recorded in 1920 (P.M.S. Log, 30/1/1920, p. 157).

CONCLUDING COMMENTS.

In conclusion, it appears that the 1918 - 1939 period at Pegswood Mixed School witnessed an improvement in the level of staff qualifications and the development of specialist subject teaching for older pupils. The school was, in the view of inspectors, led by an able headmaster in Mr. Joice, between 1921 and 1937. The fact that six different inspectors were of this opinion is a testimony to this view. The extent to which the ability of the teachers changed or remained static is more difficult to assess. The evidence of inspectorial reports suggests that a general improvement after a period of instability took place between 1923 and 1929 but that from 1929 the staff changed rapidly and did not improve markedly between 1932 and 1936. The topics addressed in the reports varied, making overall comment upon teaching difficult. In both 1923 and 1925 the work of the older girls was praised. Miss Weatherley was responsible for this age-group and was, in 1922, appointed "Chief Woman Assistant" by the managers, her appointment to this post perhaps being linked to her success as a class teacher (P.M.S.M. Minutes, 11/10/1922, p. 35). In 1923 Arithmetic was praised: weekly tests in that subject prevailed in the school at that time and may well have helped the pupils to perform creditably at the time of inspection (P.M.S. Log, 16/6/1921, p. 179). Reading appears to have improved in the



school between the visits of 1923 and 1925, which, with the "satisfactory response" in arithmetic noted in 1925 (P.M.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 2/4/1925, p. 234) suggests that careful attention was paid to these areas of the curriculum. Having considered the material available, it seems likely that the staff of 1939 was stronger than that of 1918.

(ii). CLASS ARRANGEMENT AND RE-ORGANISATION.

Changes in the organisation of Pegswood Mixed Council School between 1918 and 1939 can be found recorded in the school log, managers' minutes and the reports of H.M. Inspectorate. The question of whether such changes represented progress can be considered in the light of this evidence.

In 1918, the school was a mixed council school. Pupils were received from the Pegswood Church of England Infant School at the age of seven and passed through Standards I to VII in mixed classes until they left at the age of thirteen. The only exceptions were those pupils who passed the tests for entry to a secondary school, usually Morpeth Grammar School or Morpeth High School. (A search of the school admission registers for the 1918 - 1939 period has shown that in total 21 girls and 16 boys proceeded to such schools)

The first notable post-1918 change occurred in 1921 when, at the time of Mr. Joisce's appointment as headmaster, a group of pupils described as "Ex-VII" was noted (P.M.S. Log, 4/4/1921, p. 175). These pupils had thus completed their progression through the seven standards before reaching the age of thirteen and were thus undertaking some form of further study before leaving. In May, 1921 a further change was made when, in accordance with the custom in most larger schools, a division was made into boys' and girls' classes. At Pegswood, the division applied to Standards V, VI and VII. The boys' classes were taught by male teachers and the girls' classes by female teachers (P.M.S. Log, 23/5/1921, p. 177).

In 1922, the leaving age was raised to fourteen, without exception, as required by the 1918 Act and was duly noted by the managers:

"A circular notifying managers that on and after July 1st. no scholar w^d. be permitted to leave school before he or she was fourteen years of age, and even then must remain at school till

the end of the term in which his or her birthday occurred."

(P.M.S.M. Minutes, 7/6/1922, p. 26.)

A further indication of improved organisation was the introduction of class record cards in 1922 (P.M.S.M. Minutes, 15/3/1922, p. 22), followed by individual reports in 1926:

"The term examination has now been concluded and for the first time Term reports have been issued for the three top classes."

(P.M.S. Log, 16/8/1926, p. 250.)

A characteristic of Pegswood Mixed School during the period was concern to improve provision for older children. The managers observed in 1926 that whilst arrangements had been made for post-Standard VII education, this could not be fully developed, as no pupils were likely to stay at school beyond the minimum leaving age:

"The forecast of organisation for 1926-27 includes provision for the introduction of Ex-Standard VII children, inasmuch as they are taken deeper into the subjects already in operation, but no new subject is considered seeing that there is no likelihood of any scholars remaining at school till the age of 16."

(P.M.S.M. Minutes, 13/1 1926, p.71)

A further change during this period was made in 1923 when it was decided to form a class

"from the backward children of Stds. III & IV."

(P.M.S. Log, 22/1/1923, p. 199.)

The idea of grouping backward pupils together into a single class is a reflection of the tendency during the period to group children according to ability. Bernbaum notes that "streaming" according to ability was in large measure due to the prestige conferred upon schools which secured a high proportion of grammar-school places for their pupils at 11+:

"The system developed therefore, of arranging children in groups according to an assessment of their academic ability. In this way the ablest children in an age group would be taught together. The practice received some sort of theoretical justification from psychologists, who claimed that such a classification was both possible and meaningful."

Bernbaum, (1967) p. 84.

Bernbaum also notes that "streaming" was supported in both the 1926 and 1931 "Hadow" reports and in the "Handbook of Suggestions for Teachers" of 1937 (Bernbaum, 1967 pp. 84-85).

The H.M.I. report of 1923 made little reference to organisation, except to comment upon the limitations of the building and to observe that the headmaster had

"a heavy task in front of him."

(P.M.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 15/4/1923, p. 208.)

Efforts to improve provision for older pupils resulted in arrangements being made in 1926 for 18 girls to attend classes at Morpeth Cookery Centre (P.M.S. Log, 25/8/1926 p. 251). In 1927, at the headmaster's request, the county handwork organiser visited the school to

"advise on the choice of Handwork subjects which we propose to introduce at an early date."

(P.M.S. Log, 11/4/1927 p. 258.)

In 1927, changes to improve class arrangement and organisation were made which show how Northumberland L.E.A. was pursuing a policy of re-organisation before the "Hadow" proposals were widely implemented:

"I have been preparing a scheme for the complete re-organisation of the Senior Department on the lines suggested by the Director. The main outlines are settled but not the details. We will however start work on it after the holiday and gradually shake down...."

... SENIOR SCHOOL		JUNIOR SCHOOL	
FORM III	A	CLASS (STD)	4
"	II A	" "	3
"	I A	" "	2
"	II B	" "	1
"	I B		

Handwork (except Gardening) has not yet been introduced, but we hope to make a start as soon as the Stock ordered has come to hand."

(P.M.S. Log, 12/4/ 1927 & 25/4/1927 pp. 258-259.)

The above scheme shows that at Pegswood in 1927 active steps were taken in order to create a definite "break at 11" and to make the last years of pupils' elementary schooling more distinctive. This is shown by the adoption of the title of "school" for the senior and

junior departments, the partial replacement of old "standard" titles and the introduction of the terms "class" and "form," the latter suggesting that the senior department was intended to have something of the atmosphere of a secondary school. The "A" and "B" class system, a further example of the development of "streaming" was intended to offer alternative courses to pupils based upon ability. The headmaster also had assistance from inspectors in planning the re-organisation of 1927:

"Mr. Adams, the Chief Inspector visited school... he also discussed with me the new scheme of organisation and gave me much valuable advice. Miss Harrison also attended and talked over an advanced scheme of Needlework Instruction."

(P.M.S. Log, 12/5/1927, p. 260.)

"Miss Brown H.M.I. attended to-day and went into the Science Scheme: she made certain suggestions which will be carefully considered."

(P.M.S. Log, 13/5/1927, p. 260)

The advice available from inspectors in planning re-organisation shows how the role of the inspector was developing from that of an examiner to an adviser also during the period. Dunford provides a useful summary of duties of the inspectorate noted in a Board report of 1922 :-

"... the inspection of schools, work with L.E.As., conduct of examinations and general advisory work. Into this last category came the programme of short courses for teachers, through which members of the Inspectorate brought examples of good practice to the attention of many thousands of teachers....

The advisory role also formed an important part of the inspection of schools and, whatever was later said in the written report on a school, it was often through the informal discussions which took place during an inspection that the most lasting effect was made on the life and work of an institution."

Dunford, (1992) p. 29.

In 1927 the log records the use of an intelligence test for school purposes: (an intelligence test had formed part of the county scholarship examination from 1921 onwards: c.f. p. 31 above)

"I am giving an Intelligence Test to Form IA this week - the Simplex by C.A. Richardson, H.M.I.
The girls prove to have a wider range than the boys - from I.Q. 141 to 88 . boys from 129 to 91. The result is not very helpful."

(P.M.S. Log, 14 & 17/11/1927, p. 265)

The log does not record if the results were used as the basis for a class re-organisation, but the use of the tests shows that attempts were being made to organise classes or work other than by the results of formal examinations alone. Mr. Joice persisted in their use, as in 1932 when he noted

"I have just completed the testing - Dr. Ballard's One Minute test - of the children sent up from the Infant School."

(P.M.S. Log, 16/9/1932, p. 323)

In 1927, the headmaster considered that the December transfer of pupils from the infant school caused disruption in the lower classes (P.M.S. Log, 20/12/1927, p. 266) and in 1929 addressed a document to the L.E.A. complaining about the impact of mid-year changes. The letter commented upon :-

- "(i) the organisation of the School.
- (ii) mid-year transfer of children from the Infant School with the resulting promotions of the Junior classes, and
- (iii) the adverse effect of (ii) on the progress of the children and the work generally."

(P.M.S. Log, 2/5/1929, p. 283)

The Director of Education concurred with Mr. Joice's complaint and ruled that in future only one transfer of pupils from the Infant School would take place each year (P.M.S. Log, 28/6/1929, p. 287). The fact that the Director acted upon Mr. Joice's request suggests that this change was regarded at the time as being an organisationally advantageous one: an L.E.A. of the present time might well have taken a different view.

As discussed above, the 1929 H.M.I. report noted that the school was organised in Junior (7 - 11) and Senior (11+) divisions and that in

the Senior Division "A" and "B" classes existed, to which pupils were allocated according to ability and which followed "slightly different" courses, the inspector considering that the "B" syllabus should be altered further. In 1929 the schemes of work were praised by the inspector, but a need was perceived for more "sectional" teaching:

"More sectional teaching, particularly in Standards I and II would enable the brighter children to make more rapid progress."

(P.M.S. Log/ H.M.I.R., 7/5/1929, p. 283)

Thus, within two years of the development of "A" and "B" classes, calls were being made for more "sectional" teaching. The fact that these calls were being made in connection with Standards I and II suggests that the proposal may have been made with scholarship examination in mind (c.f. Bernbaum, 1967 pp. 84-85). As discussed elsewhere, in 1930 steps were taken to develop specialist subject teaching and specialist class-rooms for senior pupils, which constitutes a further example of organisational progress. The brief H.M.I. report for 1932 (P.M.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 5/12/1932, p. 325) suggests that school organisation changed little between 1932 and that date. The final pre-1939 report, that of 1936 (P.M.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 30/6/1936, p. 360) implied that the condition of the school was much the same as in 1932. Comment was, however, made about the proposed re-organisation:

"The premises are shortly to be enlarged and extended with a view to making full provision for senior work. These changes will, doubtless be accompanied by considerable alterations in the scope and content of the curriculum. At present, the schemes in History, Geography and Mathematics are too academic and the time allotted to Physical Training for the seniors is insufficient. It should also be considered whether there is really a case for the formation of a 'special' class in this school."

(P.M.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 30/6/1936, p. 360)

The 1936 report, therefore suggests that even in 1936, what was considered to be "full provision" for senior children had not been made at Pegswood, despite the changes which had taken place. The view

that the syllabi of some subjects were too academic and that inadequate time was being devoted to Physical Training shows how, during the 1930s, the movement towards practical activities in senior schools was gaining in momentum. The comment regarding the formation of a "special" class is also of interest. It is not clear from the report if a class had actually been formed at the time of the visit, but the remark shows that by 1936 the formation of a special class for backward pupils was organisationally possible. Earlier evidence (P.M.S. Log, 22/1/1923, pp. 199-200) had made reference to such a class but such groups had not been recognised in earlier H.M.I. reports.

An account of the 1937 Coronation celebrations refers to a

"cup given by Lord Joicey which was won by the Red House."
(P.M.S. Log, 12/5/1937, p. 369.)

This reference shows that by 1937 another organisational change had taken place: the development of "houses." The introduction of such a concept into a senior school is a further indication of the influence of the inter-war movement for "secondary education for all" and shows how the traditions of the grammar school (which themselves owed much to those of the public school) were being adopted by senior schools. Later in 1937 the new senior school project, strongly advocated by the managers in 1935 (P.M.S.M. Minutes, 7/3/1935, p. 141) commenced on 5th. July. (P.M.S. Log, 5/7/1937, p. 370). Progress was slow due to the "difficulty of securing materials" (P.M.S. Log, 30/9/1937, p.371) and the old school was still in use when Mr. Joicey retired in December, 1937. His final log entry suggests that his years as headmaster had been ones of stability for the school during a period which had witnessed much local hardship:

"To-day I terminate my appointment as Headmaster. I wish to place on record the unfailing kindness and assistance I have received from Managers, parents, teachers and children alike during the 16½ happy years spent in Pegswood."

(P.M.S. Log, 23/12/1937, p. 374.)

Mr. M.D. Henzell was appointed headmaster in June, 1938 (P.M.S. Log, 1/6/1938, p. 380) and in that month agreed that

"Std. I teacher could spend a day...with the Infants who are due to come into Std. I after the Summer holidays."

(P.M.S. Log, 29/6/1938, p. 381)

The above arrangement suggests that by 1938 greater care was being taken to ensure an easy transition of pupils from the Infant School but is also noteworthy in that it shows that the term "standard" was still in use in that year.

By September, 1938 the new school was completed, the re-organisation then only requiring the renovation of the old council school building for juniors and infants. The headmaster approved further moves towards the specialist teaching of nature study and singing and with Mr. Forsyth

"compiled a scheme of Science in Std. IV to take the place of the present scheme. The new scheme is designed to stimulate observation and enquiry and to lay the foundations for work in Biological and Physical Science in the Senior School."

(P.M.S. Log, 6/9/1938, p. 386.)

The headmaster also arranged to visit other Senior Schools

"before reorganisation is effected at Pegswood."

(P.M.S. Log, 6/9/1938, p. 386.)

The log notes the existence of a sports hut (P.M.S. Log, 29/9/1938, p. 283), a woodwork room (P.M.S. Log, 29/9/1938, p. 388) and a domestic science room (P.M.S. Log, 19/12/1938, p. 394) in the new building. Early in 1939, the school was visited by gardening, handicraft, domestic science and physical training organisers, (20/1/1939, p. 395, 7/2/1939, p. 397, 3/2/1939, p. 395 and 20/2/1939, p. 398).

The visits show the extent to which the degree of external support available to schools had developed since 1918, when outside guidance, other than from inspectors, was minimal.

On 6th. April, 1939, Pegswood Mixed Council School closed (P.M.S.

Log, 6/4/1939, p. 401). In its place was a new Senior Council School, for pupils aged 11+ to 14+, housed in a purpose-built senior school which opened on the 17th. April, 1939 (P.S.S. Log, 17/4/1939, p. 1) and a Junior and Infant Council School, housed in the renovated mixed school building (P.J.I.S. Log, 17/4/1939, p. 1). At the same time, the Pegswood Church of England Infant School closed and its building of 1895 ceased to be used for school purposes (P.C.I.S. Log, 6/4/1939, p. 146). Re-organisation in accordance with L.E.A. policy and the "Hadow" recommendations was thus achieved, but only months before the outbreak of the 1939 - 1945 War. In due course, the senior school had to accommodate 50 pupils and the junior and infant school 62 pupils from R.C. schools on Tyneside (P.S.S. Log, 11/9/1939, p.5 and P.J.I.S. Log, 11/9/1939, p.3). One final organisational change was noted before 1939 was over:

"Today the school canteen opened. The meals are taken in the hall, and today 98 children and staff sat down to dinner."

(P.S.S. Log, 4/12/1939, p. 9.)

CONCLUDING COMMENTS.

The available documentary evidence shows that between 1918 and 1939 a considerable amount of re-organisation took place at Pegswood, all of which represented, in the contemporary view discussed above (pp. 10-11), progress. In 1918, a basic system of Standards, from I to VII, with individual class teachers, formed the basis of school organisation. In 1921, the "Ex-VII" class was formed to provide a further course of study for pupils who had proceeded through Standards I-VII. In 1927, a major internal re-organisation took place. "Forms," in a senior school and "classes" in a junior school replaced the old standards, at least in name. Attempts were made to develop hand-work and practical activities. "A" and "B" classes were formed to cater for pupils of differing abilities. Intelligence tests were used for internal purposes from 1927 and in 1923 a class existed for backward pupils. Further

improvements in organisation were made in 1930, when subject rooms and specialist teaching for older pupils were developed and by 1937 a form of "house" system had been introduced.

The above changes of 1921 to 1937 represented progress, but organisation was much improved with the opening, in 1939, of a new and well-staffed senior school, complemented by a separate junior and infant school in a renovated building.

Significant progress was, therefore, made in the organisation of elementary education at Pegswood between 1918 and 1939.

(II) LONGHIRST SCHOOL (CHURCH OF ENGLAND UNTIL 1927 AND COUNCIL THEREAFTER).

Changes in the organisation of Longhirst School are recorded in the school log, managers' minutes (from 1927) and the reports of H.M. Inspectors. Organisation at Longhirst can be conveniently discussed in terms of staffing, class-size and arrangement and re-organisation.

(i) STAFFING AND CLASS-SIZE.

In 1918, Longhirst School had a staff of two: Mr. John Kennedy, headmaster for 44 years and one assistant. The only other assistance in 1918 was from the Reverend Mr. Parry, Vicar of Longhirst, who on occasion taught scripture and assisted during the assistant's absence (L.S. Log, 13/12/1918). Mr. Kennedy left in 1919 (L.S. Log, 13/4/1919) as did his colleague in 1920 (L.S. Log, 30/4/1920, p. 7). Mr. John Graham was appointed headmaster in 1920 (L.S. Log, 28/4/1919, p. 1) and was joined in that year by a supplementary teacher (L.S. Log, 9/6/1920, p. 7) and a student teacher, who was to attend classes at Morpeth High School on one day each week: an illustration of how the pupil-teacher system had changed by 1920. (L.S. Log, 8/10/1920, p. 9). The staffing pattern of a certificated head-teacher, two uncertificated assistants and a division into three classes continued, with a brief exception, until 1939. In 1928 H.M.I Osborne commented that

"It would be well to take this opportunity to strengthen the staff by appointing a certificated woman teacher,"

(L.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 12/7/1928, p. 113),

but this was not done. In 1933 the staff was reduced to two as a result of falling numbers (L.S. Log, 20/1/1933, p. 155) but reverted to three in 1934 when the neighbouring school at Ulgham was closed, the school's teacher transferring at the same time (L.S. Log, 29/10/1934, p. 165). The extent to which the teaching ability changed or improved during the period is a separate question. Some light can be thrown upon it by making an examination of inspectors' reports.

The 1923 report is as follows:

"This school is not in a satisfactory condition. The Headmaster is a man of intelligence and much of the work that he does is interesting enough, but his control of the school is not effective and he has far to go before he has brought the children's work up to the standard which it is fair to expect. In particular the result of the tests in Arithmetic set to the older scholars (Stds IV and VII) was very low & the work was badly set down and often hardly intelligible. Very poor progress is being made in both the lower classes, where the teachers acquiesce in poor work & themselves show little resource or brightness in dealing with the problems before them. The children are backward and lethargic. The Headmaster is, indeed, badly served, but he has made little attempt to help his assistants. Their record books show no reports or criticisms by him.

There is no reason why this school should not be as good as any other country school and I look forward to a very great improvement in its condition."

(L.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 31/1/1923, p. 55)

In 1923, therefore, the quality of teaching and organisation in the school fell below the expected standard, the responsibility for which shortcomings was, in the inspector's view, that of both the headmaster and his assistants. Not surprisingly, Mr. Graham left in 1923 and Mr. David Brown was appointed acting headmaster (L.S. Log, 1/11/1923, p. 30), Mr. J.R.A. Hine being appointed headmaster in 1924 (L.S. Log, 1/5/1924, p. 43). The concern of H.M. Inspectorate about the condition of the school in 1923 is reflected by the fact that a further inspection was conducted in 1925, following the appointment of the new headmaster and assistants:

"The new Headmaster and the two new supplementary teachers have worked hard to improve the efficiency of this school and have met with considerable success. Much of the work now reaches a good level and the children are learning to apply themselves to their lessons."

(L.S. Log, 21/1/1925, p. 56.)

In the view of the inspectorate, a clear improvement had thus taken place in the quality of teaching between 1923 and 1925. That the period was one of progress in staffing is confirmed by the report of H.M. Inspector for 1928:

"The school is now in a satisfactory condition. The Headmaster

has given special attention to the foundation work in English and Arithmetic and the results of tests set in these subjects at the time of inspection prove that his methods of teaching and supervising have been successful....

The schemes of work for the upper part of the school are being revised and it is hoped that Rural Science will form a more important part of the curriculum especially as the headmaster attended the Board's course in this subject at Cambridge in 1927....

(L.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 12/7/1928, p. 113.)

Thus, in the inspector's view, the quality of the teaching and the organisation of school work had improved between 1923 and 1928. The reference to the headmaster's attendance at a course at Cambridge is noteworthy, as it is the first reference to a Longhirst teacher of the period undertaking further study. It is clear, however, that the inter-war years did not witness uninterrupted progress, as reference to the 1931 report shows:

"... the school generally is orderly, the children mannerly and self respecting and on the whole the visitor's first impressions are quite favourable.

But at the moment the children's actual performance under inspection is less distinguished than one might reasonably expect. It is true that the frequent absence through illness of the Infant's teacher entailing a succession of 'supply' teachers and a run of epidemic sickness have affected progress particularly in the lower class; but the older children fell short mainly in their unusual reticence when questioned on their class work.... On paper they made a better show even though there is still room for improvement.

Class 2 barely rose to the standard indicated in their recent class examination, and the teaching though no doubt conscientious does not appear to have been remarkably stimulating....

The teacher of class 3 (who was absent) is also responsible for the needlework of the school & of the senior class in particular. Her absences may explain but do not altogether condone, the fact that on the day of the visit only four girls of the ten in the class had a garment in hand.

Reference has already been made to Gardening - if this work is to produce the best results complete records should be kept."

(L.S. Log/ H.M.I.R., 6/2/1931, p. 140.)

The 1931 report, therefore, shows that in the inspector's opinion, there were deficiencies in the quality of teaching in all three classes and also that in gardening the recording of results was

unsatisfactory. The minutes of the meetings of the school managers are available for the period after 1928 and show that the report of 1931 concerned them. In the interests of progress, the managers attempted to make changes:

" if changes were made in the two lower Grade Teachers it would be of considerable advantage to the school."

(L.S.M. Minutes, 12/3/1931, p. 27.)

The managers considered that in one case the teacher's extended absence had been detrimental to class progress and that in the other the teacher was unsuitable:

"They do not consider that Miss [] has quite the personality to obtain the best possible results from her class."

(L.S.M. Minutes, 12/3/1931, p. 27.)

The 1934 H.M.I. report considered that the staffing of the school had improved, although it expressed concern about attainment:

"The reduction of the staff from three to two has eliminated the weakest member and although the extra responsibility has thereby been thrown on the Master by the inclusion of the middle class in his own, he will find some compensation in the fact that the Infants Class which is now taught by the Uncertificated Assistant is at last in better hands. It is perhaps significant that Std. II the highest class is relatively the weakest. In the masters class some unevenness was laid bare which was not unexpected in view of the retardation of some of the children in their earlier school life. Even so, the class as a whole is still rather unimpressive under test for although much of their routine work would pass, their oral response quite inadequately reflects the amount of work which the master appears to have put in."

(L.S. Log/ H.M.I.R., 12/2/1934, p. 160.)

The inspector's view of staffing and teaching in 1934 was possibly more optimistic than that of 1928 but the position must have deteriorated by 1936. The report for that year has not survived in the school records and to date has not been located elsewhere. Its nature can, however, be appreciated from the 1938 report and the following managers' minute:

" The managers have considered carefully H.M. Inspectors Report & his criticism is as much regret to us as to the Master; the latter explained in person his future attitude would take him to consider the recommendations made by the Inspector and had

determined to do all in his power to rectify the matters referred to."

(L.S.M. Minutes, 18/2/36, pp. 41-42).

The 1936 report was presumably the work of H.M.I. Birch, who visited the school in January, 1936 (L.S. Log, 13/1/1936, p. 172). The 1934 report had been prepared by H.M.I. Paget (L.S. Log, 12/2/34, p.160).

The final pre-1939 report, that of 1938, suggests that real progress was being made with regard to both teaching and the level of attainment being reached by the pupils:

"In the report on this school in Jan., 1936 pointed criticisms were made of the condition of the master's own class. These he has clearly set himself to meet, and though some further improvement may be looked for in certain minor directions, the general standard of attainment is now satisfactory.

The work is adequately supervised and the children take a greater interest in their tasks. Particularly is this so in History, Geography, Nature Study & the theory of gardening where the keeping of well arranged and illustrated notebooks is a commendable feature.

CLASS 2 reaches a very fair level of attainment in the fundamental subjects and reading is particularly confident and clear. The History and geography syllabus might well be lightened to allow for the introduction of some simple form of note-making by the older children.

CLASS 3 has suffered somewhat through the absences due to sickness in the early part of the year. Steady progress however is being made under the experienced guidance of the Supplementary teacher, who is clearly on excellent terms with these young children."

(L.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 6-7/7/1938, p. 195)

In conclusion, it would appear from an examination of inspectors' reports that the 1918 - 1939 period did not witness a sustained improvement in the quality of the staff at Longhirst. From a low point in 1923, improvement was noted in 1925 and 1928. The 1931 report noted certain deficiencies which appeared to have been remedied by 1934, but a notable deterioration had evidently taken place by 1936. Finally, a favourable impression of the staff was noted in the 1938 report. The concern of the inspectorate is reflected by the fact that between 1923 and 1938, seven inspections took place; during the same period, only

five inspections were conducted at the very much larger Pegswood Mixed School. Longhirst undoubtedly faced certain difficulties as a result of its position as a small rural school. The headmaster, being fully responsible for a class, had little opportunity to develop an awareness of the progress of the school as a whole. The time available for planning would have been limited and given the size and nature of the staff, it would have been impossible to develop specialist subject teaching for older pupils. Resources were limited, and it was clearly a hard task to maintain existing elementary school standards, let alone to implement the recommendations of the "Hadow" report.

It should also be noted that during the inter-war period the staff was complemented by visits from county organisers in the following subject areas. The first recorded visits by organisers during the period are as follows:-

- Gardening: first post-1918 visit recorded in 1919
(L.S.Log, 23/9/1919, p. 4).
- Physical Training: first post-1918 visit recorded in 1922
(L.S.Log, 10/5/1922, p. 20).
- Needlework: first post-1918 visit recorded in 1923
(L.S.Log, 9/10/1923, p. 30).
- Handwork: first post-1918 visit recorded in 1924
(L.S.Log, 19/2/1924, p. 37).

(ii) CLASS-SIZE.

The average size of classes is not recorded in the Longhirst documents.

The size of the schoolroll at various dates was as follows:-

- 1918: 64 (L.S. Log, 24/11/1918).
 1920: 57 (L.S. Log, 28/6/1920, p. 7).
 1925: 76 (L.S. Log, 2/7/1925, p. 47).
 1928: 85 (L.S. Log, 14/5/1928, p. 110).
 1931: 65 (L.S. Log, 13/4/1931, p. 143).
 1938: 60 (L.S. Log, 1/2/1938, p. 60).

It will be recalled that the school had a staff of three for almost the entire 1918 - 1939 period (c.f. p. 113 above). Without knowing the precise ages of the pupils the exact size of each class remains uncertain, but it is probable that they were not unduly large throughout the inter-war period.

CLASS ARRANGEMENT AND RE-ORGANISATION.

In 1918, when Longhirst School had a staff of two, the school was organised into two divisions, as the following entry shows:

"Miss Young absent &. so have had to look after lower division as well as my own, but work has gone on quite smoothly."

(L.S. Log, 29/11/1918.)

From 1920 onwards, excepting 1933-1934, the school had three teachers and three classes. Some idea of the divisions can be discerned from log-book evidence:

"Staff having been reduced, Miss Primrose now has charge of Infants, I &. II &. the Head Tch. III-VII."

(L.S. Log, 30/1/1933 p. 156.)

"Miss Jackson commenced duties in charge of the Infants &. I, while Miss Primrose has been transferred to Sd. II, III &. IV."

(L.S. Log, 29/10/1934, p. 165.)

The 1928 H.M.I report hoped that an additional certificated teacher would be appointed and that

"It will then be possible to reorganise the school so that only children of 11+ are in class I."

(L.S. Log/ H.M.I.R., 12/7/1928, p. 113.)

The concern to have a class only of 11+ children reflects the general concern of the period, exemplified by the 1926 "Hadow" report, to improve provision for older children. As noted above, an additional certificated teacher was not appointed, but from 1920 onwards, excepting 1933 - 1934, the school was divided into three classes broadly consisting of infant, junior and senior pupils, in accordance with "Hadow" recommendations. The H.M.I. report for 1931 observed that

"the top class now consists of only senior children."

(L.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 6/2/1931, p. 141.)

Whilst this aspect of the "Hadow" proposals was adopted, it should be noted that even in 1939 reference was made to "standards" (L.S. Log, 18/9/1939, p.202). The division of the school into three classes and, more generally, the introduction of practical instruction centres to be attended by children from rural areas and visits from county organisers were all measures of organisational progress but were also largely temporary solutions to the problem of providing adequate opportunities for older children in small schools. Longhirst School managers were clearly unenthusiastic about the re-organisation proposed by the L.E.A. in 1929:

"SUGGESTED GROUPING OF SCHOOLS.

The managers had before them a letter from the Director of Education in the proposed raising of the School leaving age, also grouping of Schools for older Scholars attending Elementary Schools, the Managers after fully discussing this letter & further consulting with the Chairman it was decided that no further steps be taken at the present date the matter to be left in abeyance."

(L.S.M. Minutes, 17/12/1929, p. 23.)

The above minute shows that by 1929 "grouping" was seen as a way of

improving elementary school education in rural areas and equally shows that at Longhirst it was not considered by the managers to be a priority. The reasons for this lack of enthusiasm are not obvious. However, the fact that the school had recently passed into L.E.A. control and had been renovated and that the H.M.I. report for 1928 had been a favourable one may have contributed towards a reluctance to make further changes. In addition, the managers may have considered that the removal of older scholars and the consequent reduction in numbers would threaten the long-term viability of the school or otherwise have a detrimental effect upon it. Re-organisation was proposed again in 1934 (the year in which Ulgham School closed, leading to an increase in the numbers at Longhirst) and accepted by the managers (L.S.M Minutes, 21/6/1934, p. 35), but a different scheme, proposed by the L.E.A. and accepted by the managers in 1935 with little hesitation was eventually implemented:

"PROPOSED REORGANISATION OF ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS.

Letter from the Education Committee saying that owing to difficulties arising as regards a site for new schools at Longhirst they are about to submit a scheme for the extension of Pegswood Council School. In the event of this scheme being agreed upon the managers feel that a suitable means of transport should be provided."

(L.S.M. Minutes, 15/3/1935, p. 39)

This scheme was put into effect in April, 1939, as the log records:

"School reopened. Owing to reorganisation all Senior children from this date attend Pegswood Senior School - travelling by contract bus & this school remains open as a Junior and Infant School. "

(L.S. Log, 17/4/1939, p. 199.)

One teacher was transferred to Pegswood, leaving the headmaster and one assistant at Longhirst. War disrupted these arrangements, the senior children returning to Longhirst in September, 1939 (L.S. Log, 11/9/1939, p. 202) but from 1940 the move to Pegswood was permanent (L.S. Log, 8/1/1940, p. 205).

The evidence of surviving documents shows that during the 1918 - 1939 period several changes in the organisation of Longhirst School took place. The increase in staff, the extension of the support available from county organisers and the division of the school into infant, junior and senior classes can all be regarded as measures of progress. It also appears that classes were never unduly large throughout the period. The 1939 re-organisation, whereby full provision was made for older pupils by transferring them to a new senior school was also a notable advance. The area in which least progress was made was in staffing the school with satisfactory teachers, but there is some evidence that by 1938 some progress was being made towards this objective.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS.

A comparison between Pegswood Mixed School and Longhirst School serves to illustrate how nearby schools, within the area of the same L.E.A., could have very different experiences of progress and change in organisation between 1918 and 1939. As has been shown, the period was one during which Pegswood Mixed School experienced, at least to some extent, an improvement in staffing, a fall in the size of classes and a re-organisation in accordance with local and national recommendations. This progress is reflected in the reports of H.M. Inspectors. At Longhirst, the experience was somewhat different and accorded with the national pattern of reorganisation being generally more difficult and slower in less populous areas (Musgrave, 1968, p. 97). Whilst some progress, discussed above, did take place, there was a continuing concern on the part of H.M. Inspectors about the staffing and progress of the school. The small size of the school meant that the transfer of its older pupils to a senior school was an almost inevitable consequence of the contemporary concern to improve provision for older children. The experience of both schools serves to show how significant an influence could be exerted over the development of an elementary school by a single head-teacher during the period : the example of Mr. Joice at Pegswood is a notable instance of this.

CHANGE AND PROGRESS IN SCHOOL ORGANISATION: THE SCHOOL BUILDING.

As shown earlier, in the examination of evidence derived from local authority documents, attempts to improve school buildings constituted an important aspect of the over-all policy to improve elementary school organisation between 1918 and 1939. The following section of the study aims to examine, through the evidence of the school log-books, the minutes of managers' meetings and the reports of H.M. Inspectors, what, if any, change and progress took place at Pegswood Mixed School and Longhirst School towards improving the school buildings.

- (I) PEGSWOOD MIXED COUNCIL SCHOOL.
- (i) THE EVIDENCE OF THE SCHOOL LOG-BOOKS.
- (A) ACCOMMODATION.

Pegswood Mixed Council School was only about seventeen years old in 1918. Its chief defect was the lack of class-room accommodation: in 1919, the roll was 501 and the building's capacity 415 (P.M.S. Log, 1/4/1919, p. 145). The lack of space had been a problem even in 1913, when two classes were housed in the hall (P.M.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 2/7/1913, p. 60). The inter-war years saw many attempts to improve accommodation in this respect. In 1919, it was proposed to house one class in the Wesleyan Sunday School. (P.M.S. Log, 13/6/1919, p. 149) but it is not recorded if this proposal was put into effect. In 1921 the school hall was in use:

"...the Central Hall needs some alterations. I think that classes need some protection from one another as the teacher is labouring under unfair conditions.

R. Henry Grey." [Manager].

(P.M.S. Log, 24/5/1921, p. 178.)

Four classes were based in the hall in 1922 but the headmaster stated that

"... an effort will be made to allow them the use of classrooms for some lessons."

(P.M.S. Log, 3/4/1922, p. 189.)

In 1923 the headmaster complained that

"There had been more noise than usual in the hall this week."

(P.M.S. Log, 7/9/1923, p. 212)

It was not until January, 1925, that the headmaster was able to record that:

"A screen has been fixed in the hall during the holiday, greatly to the comfort and convenience of all."

(P.M.S. Log, 5/1/1925, p. 229)

Whilst the erection of the screen in 1925 constituted a slight improvement upon the previous situation, it cannot be regarded as a real mark of progress, as the school was thus deprived of a hall, a disadvantage commented upon by Mr. Joice in 1931:

"The usual service was held this morning for Remembrance Day. The want of a hall is sadly felt on occasions like this."

(P.M.S. Log, 11/11/1931, p. 315)

A reference to the partition being taken down before 1939 has not been found: it may therefore be presumed that the school hall was unusable between 1925 and 1939. A more satisfactory, although also temporary measure to reduce overcrowding was made in 1923 when a hut was erected:

"St. VI & VII Girls (Miss Weatherley) have been moved into the hut. It seems quite comfortable, and lighting and ventilation are satisfactory."

(P.M.S. Log, 8/1/1923, p. 199.)

The log contains no further references to measures being taken to alleviate overcrowding until the erection of the new senior school and the renovation of the old school in 1939. Pegswood Mixed School can, therefore, be regarded as having a basic accommodation problem throughout the 1918 - 1939 period and whilst attempts were made to overcome the problem, none were more than temporary solutions and significant progress was not made until the opening of the new school in 1939.

(B) SANITATION, WATER SUPPLY, LIGHTING AND VENTILATION.

The school log provides useful evidence to show how marked progress was made during the inter-war years in the provision of basic services. The following entry shows that Pegswood Mixed School had water-closets by 1921 (unlike several other local schools) and is also an illustration of the extent to which the village was dependent upon the pit, from which water was obtained:

"There is not water in the village. The school is not heated: the closets cannot be flushed: there is no water for toilet purposes. Fortunately, the weather is fine."

(P.M.S. Log, 4/4/1921, p. 176, at the time of the miners' strike).

The change to water supplied by Tynemouth County Borough Council in 1937 (P.M.S. Log, 2&8/3/1937, p. 366) therefore constituted a considerable improvement.

The lack of adequate lighting was a considerable hindrance to progress at the beginning of the period. In November, 1919, it was noted that

"Owing to darkness setting in so soon in the afternoon and to us having artificial light for one room only, we have had to resort to our Winter time table of past years."

(P.M.S. Log, 25/11/1919, p. 154)

Nine years later, no progress had been made towards solving this problem:

"It has been very dark today, and practically the whole of both sessions has been lost so far as reading and writing are concerned. Lighting is very necessary."

(P.M.S. Log, 11/12/1928, p. 278)

The introduction of electric lighting in 1929 was thus a considerable advance (P.M.S. Log, 7/10/1929, p. 291). No complaints about lighting have been found after that date.

Throughout the inter-war period, the school was heated by coal.

In 1919 the lack of coal prevented the school from opening on the

7th. February (P.M.S. Log, 7/2/1919, p. 142). In 1926, improvements were made:

"...the heating apparatus has been overhauled and a radiator placed in each of the North rooms, which are now comfortably heated."

(P.M.S. Log, 25/10/1926, p. 253)

The heating of the school thus improved during the period, as after 1926 no regular complaints are recorded about its defects. Ventilation was, however, a problem:

"The south rooms are almost unbearably hot and there is a serious lack of ventilation."

(P.M.S. Log, 6/9/1921, p. 182)

"The day is very mild, the rooms are hot and the atmosphere is too stuffy for words."

(P.M.S. Log, 7/11/1922, p. 196)

An attempt to deal with the problem was made in 1928, when some rooms were fitted with "hopper window frames" (P.M.S. Log, 16/4/1928, p. 270), but the problem persisted in some rooms:

"The atmosphere in her room is vile and really unfit for anyone to breathe."

(P.M.S. Log, 16/11/1931, p. 315.)

The problem of securing adequate ventilation may well have continued until the rebuilding work of 1939.

The 1918 - 1939 period thus witnessed significant improvements in the school's water supply, lighting and heating and an attempt to improve ventilation.

(C) SPECIALIST FACILITIES &c.

As discussed above, the 1918 Act and the "Hadow" reports called for a greater emphasis upon practical activities in the curriculum, most notably, perhaps, for older children. Pegswood Mixed School was generally lacking in specialist facilities for practical work. A school garden existed in or before 1925 (P.M.S. Log, 8/5/1925, p. 237) and was improved in 1926 when a tool shed was provided (P.M.S. Log, 12/11/1926, p. 254) and fencing renewed (P.M.S. Log, 14/12/1926, p. 255). A sewing machine was available by 1933 (20/2/1933, p. 328) and a piano was received in 1923, £15 being contributed towards its cost from local funds. (1/3/1923, p. 201).

In order to follow a cookery course, girls attended a centre at Morpeth from 1926 (P.M.S. Log, 25/8/1926, p. 251) and for boys a similar arrangement for woodwork was made in or before 1929 (P.M.S. Log, 30/9/1929, p. 290). In 1931, arrangements were made for a limited amount of woodwork at Pegswood:

"A set of Woodwork tools has been received for the use chiefly of those boys who have completed two years at Morpeth and are still in attendance at school."

(P.M.S. Log, 16/3/1931, p. 307.)

The new senior school, opened in 1939, had a workshop (P.M.S. Log, 29/9/1938, p. 388), domestic science room (P.M.S. Log, 19/12/1938, p. 394), sports hut (P.M.S. Log, 29/9/1938, p. 388) and, in addition to a garden, a playing-field (P.M.S. Log, 9/9/1937, p. 371).

Pegswood Mixed School had a library from the outset of the period.

This originated, during the headship of Mr. Hutchinson, in 1914:

"I have commenced, though on a humble scale, a 'lending library' for the purpose of Stds. iv-v-vi-vii."

(P.M.S. Log, 18/2/1914, p. 67.)

Mr. Joice attempted to develop the library during his headship:

"Received a parcel of books for the School Library valued £8-1-0. From other sources we have £3 worth."

(P.M.S. Log, 14/11/1921, p. 183.)

"A dozen books have been purchased for a Teachers' Reference Library."

(P.M.S. Log, 6/3/1922, p. 188.)

In 1925 Northumberland County Council formed a rural library (J.M. Taylor, 1989 p.230) and by 1932 the headmaster was visiting it regularly to select books for the school (e.g., P.M.S. Log 18/2/1932, p. 318). Thus, the school library developed markedly during the 1918 - 1939 period whilst other more specialist facilities required for hand-work and domestic science were not provided at the school until 1939.

(D) MISCELLANEOUS IMPROVEMENTS.

In addition to the changes noted above, the log records that several other changes took place in and around Pegswood Mixed School between 1918 and 1939. Taken individually, these changes are perhaps of limited significance but together they show how attempts were made to improve the school environment. In 1923 the walls were "painted and cleaned" (P.M.S. Log, 27/8/1923, p. 211) and in 1928 the exterior, windows were painted and almost all woodwork was varnished (P.M.S. Log, 27/8/1928, p. 273). In 1918 and for years thereafter, the school yards were unmade. The log records problems arising from this. In September, 1922, the state of the playground was such that for three days play was cancelled. (P.M.S. Log, 28/9/1922, p. 194). In December, 1923 the play-grounds were:

"... in places three or four inches deep in mud."

(P.M.S. Log, 10/12/1923, p. 215.)

In June, 1925, it was noted that

"During the past few days there has been much wind and the playgrounds have, in consequence, been swept by dust clouds. Physical exercises have not been taken."

(P.M.S. Log, 19/6/1925, p. 238.)

Steps were taken to solve the problems associated with the yard by cementing sections of it in 1924 and 1926 (P.M.S. Log, 26/9/1924, p. 226 and 23/8/1926, p. 251): the 1924 work was considered to be "a great improvement" (P.M.S. Log, 26/9/1924, p.226).

CONCLUDING COMMENTS.

The evidence of the school log suggests that Pegswood Mixed School's building improved in several important respects between 1918 and 1939, the 1920s being a period which witnessed several changes, but the fact that a new school was built for seniors and the old one completely renovated for juniors and infants in 1939 shows that not all the building's shortcomings had been resolved by that year.

(ii) THE EVIDENCE OF THE MANAGERS' MINUTES.

The minutes of the meetings of the managers of Pegswood Mixed School contain little information on the subject of building changes not to be found in the log. The evidence of the minutes serves to confirm the accuracy of the log and affords, from 1921 onwards, a certain amount of complementary information.

The Pegswood managers appear to have been unwavering advocates of the case for providing the village with a new school:

"Clerk was instructed to write Educn. Com. to say that the Managers thought the time had come when the question of another school being built at Pegswood should be seriously considered."

(P.M.S.M. Minutes, 15/9/1921, p. 8.)

In 1922, the managers called for additional class-room accommodation in preference to the hut allocated by the L.E.A. (P.M.S.M. Minutes, 15/2/1922, p. 17). In the face of continued overcrowding, "A new school altogether" was requested again in 1923 (P.M.S.M. Minutes, 6/6/1923, p. 46). Improvements were called for in 1930, the managers adding that their preference was for

"A new school to accommodate 250 scholars, with staff-rooms and workshops."

(P.M.S. Log, 11/2/1930, p. 102)

Extensions were again requested in 1930 (P.M.S.M. Minutes, 2/1/1931, p. 111) but in that year the L.E.A. made a proposal for a new school (P.M.S.M. Minutes, 19/2/1931, p. 112). The movement for a new school culminated in 1935, when the managers unanimously decided that they were

"strongly of the opinion that the educational needs of the district can best be met by the provision of a separate school to accommodate the Senior children of Pegswood and Longhirst. They suggest that a site be secured if possible, for that purpose."

(P.M.S.M. Minutes, 7/3/1935, p. 141.)

The managers' minutes generally display a continuing concern by the

managers to maintain the existing building and to improve its facilities: in 1921, a piano was requested (P.M.S.M. Minutes, 20/12/21, p. 15), in 1926, a wireless set (P.M.S.M. Minutes, 13/1/1926, p. 70) and in 1929, electric lighting (P.M.S.M. Minutes, 15/1/1929, p. 93). Whilst not all these requests to the L.E.A. may have been granted, the fact that they were made illustrates the desire of the managers to bring about change and progress, a desire fulfilled by the building work of 1938/9.

(iii). THE EVIDENCE OF H.M.I. REPORTS.

The reports of H.M. Inspectors contain surprisingly little information about the school building. The 1923 report does, however, present a clear picture of the limitations of the building and the difficulties of organisation associated with it:

"This school presents considerable difficulties in the arrangement of the work and classes. The premises accommodate 476, in a large hall recognised for 120 children, 5 class rooms recognised for 296 children, and a recently erected hut accommodating 60 children. There are at present 474 children on books. Including the Headmaster's own class of senior children there are 10 classes to be provided for. This has involved the working of four classes in the undivided Central Hall. This is much to be regretted as the congestion prevents really successful work."

(P.M.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 15/4/1923, pp. 205-206.)

It is of interest to observe that, even though the Inspector "regretted" the use of the hall, it was nevertheless recognised for the use of 120 pupils. The only other report to refer to the building was that of 1936 which commented that

"The premises are shortly to be enlarged and extended with a view to making full provision for senior work. These changes will doubtless be accompanied by considerable alterations in the scope and content of the curriculum."

(P.M.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 30/6/1936, p. 360.)

The evidence of the H.M.I. reports suggests that the building of Pegswood Mixed School was not capable of meeting the demands placed upon it in 1923 and that in 1936 it was not adequate for all aspects of senior work, a defect the inspector believed would be overcome when rebuilding took place.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS.

From an examination of the available documents, it is clear that the inter-war period witnessed changes to the building of Pegswood Mixed School and an improvement in its facilities. The 1920s in particular witnessed several changes for the better. However, the fact that a new school was advocated as early as 1921 and that even in 1936 "full provision" for senior work had not been made suggests that great progress did not come about until the school was re-accommodated in new or improved buildings in 1939.

(II) LONGHIRST SCHOOL (CHURCH OF ENGLAND UNTIL 1927 AND COUNCIL THEREAFTER).

THE EVIDENCE OF THE SCHOOL LOG-BOOKS, MANAGERS' MINUTES AND H.M.I. REPORTS.

Longhirst School, founded in 1859, (c.f. p.4 above) did not, on the evidence of the log, appear to have any difficulty in accommodating the number of pupils on its roll between 1918 and 1939. However, in 1918 the general condition of the school was poor:

"The School building gets everyday worse & is a source of trouble and inconvenience in many ways. There is no doubt that Pegswood pit is the cause of it all."

(L.S. Log, 7/6/1918.)

The log subsequently noted that the owner of the pit had paid for repairs to the school and had done

"everything in his power to make good damage."

(L.S. Log, 16/8/1918.)

Despite this, structural trouble continued into 1919:

"there are fresh cracks in all rooms and the south wall of the disused classroom is in a dangerous state."

(L.S. Log, 2/7/1919, p. 2.)

The problem must have been tackled again, as the log recorded that during the summer of 1919 the school was

"thoroughly cleaned and painted - externally and internally."

(L.S. Log, 15/9/1919, pp. 3-4.)

After 1927, when the school was transferred to the L.E.A. (L.S. Log, 9/11/1927, p. 103) building problems are not recorded in the log.

The Education Committee Minutes give some impression of the work undertaken after the transfer:

"The council is also recommended to approve of the expenditure on certain improvements required to the school premises including a new water-supply, heating system and out-offices estimated to cost £750."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes 1926, p. 113)

Between 1918 and 1928 the coldness of the school in winter was a particular problem, frequently commented upon in the log:

"It was bitterly cold on Monday about 30° of frost and as the pipes were still out of order we had to utilize a small disused Classroom & have continued to do so; this has been a severe hardship. Made a point of seeing Co^{nt.}, [i.e. the correspondent, an official appointed by the managers to act as their clerk and general agent] who promised to have them overhauled."

(L.S. Log, 18/1/1918)

The system was repaired in 1918 (L.S. Log, 15/2/1918) but was again causing problems by 1923:

"During this week I have assisted in an endeavour to raise the temperature in school. This has necessitated visiting at 7 p.m. and 10.30 p.m. and also at 6.45 a.m. In spite of this, the thermometer has never registered above 40° at 9 a.m. and 50° at 1 p.m. As this is detrimental to efficient work in school I am notifying the correspondent in order that something may possibly be done to remedy this state of affairs."

(L.S. Log, 21/12/1923, pp. 33-34)

In 1924, temperatures as low as 37° (L.S. Log, 11/1/1924, p. 35) cold pipes and smoking fires which had to be put out (L.S. Log, 27/10/1924, p. 51) are recorded. The following entries from 1925 show the extent to which the cold hindered the work of the school:

"Temp. at 9 a.m. 36°F. I notified the correspondent that the temperature was so low & urged that something should be done in the interests of the children: Efficient work is impossible under such circumstances."

(L.S. Log, 16/11/1925, p. 74)

"The temp^e. in the big room at 9 a.m. was 33°. Mr. Scott visited the school and agreed it was not fit for chⁿ. to have to sit Little real work was done this morning because of the cold."

(L.S. Log, 7/12/1925, p. 76)

The situation deteriorated during the 1926 strike: coal was unavailable and temperatures fell to 38°: pupils were sent home (L.S. Log, 25/10/1926, p. 88). It was further noted:

"Temp. at 9 a.m. 42°. After sitting in cold for 30 mins. I took out III & VII into yard for games & ex. that being the only way for the chⁿ. to be comfortably warm At 10.15 temp. 47 - inside."

(L.S. Log, 8/11/1926, p. 89)

As stated above, following the transfer of the school to the L.E.A., new heating arrangements were made and between 1928 and 1939 the log contains no references to particularly low temperatures or to the cold affecting school work. The need to make this essential improvement and the lack of funds to bring it about may well have contributed towards the decision of the church to transfer the school.

It is clear that the school lighting was not satisfactory at the beginning of the period. No artificial lighting appears to have been available until 1929, when it was the subject of a complaint to the L.E.A.:

"The question of light for holding of meetings also for the school on dark days was discussed & the clerk was instructed to write to the Director of Education pointing out the necessity of having a supply of lamps."

(L.S.M. Minutes, 22/1/1929, p. 20.)

Twelve lamps "without wicks" (L.S. Log, 22/2/1929, p. 120) were duly supplied. The managers hoped to install electric lighting in 1939 "the supply now being in the village"

(L.S.M. Minutes, 5/4/1939, p. 49),

but were presumably prevented from doing so as in 1944 the school was still without electric lights (L.S. Log, 22/4/1944, p. 251).

The inter-war years also saw attempts to improve water supply and sanitation. The managers called for the installation of mains water in 1928 (L.S.M. Minutes, 15/2/1928, p. 3) but this must not have been possible to install. However, the school well was kept in good order (L.S.M. Minutes, 8/4/1932, p. 32) and the water was sampled by a medical officer (L.S. Log, 23/4/1928, p. 110). The county council, as noted above, agreed to provide new "out-offices" in 1928, but in 1944 the headmistress was still able to complain about "the lack of modern sanitation."

(L.S. Log, 24/5/1944, p. 252)

Thus, the general condition, lighting and heating of Longhirst School improved markedly between 1918 and 1939 and efforts were made to improve the water supply and sanitation. Much of the progress was made as a result of the transfer of the school to the L.E.A. in 1927. The improvements since 1928 were commented upon in the report of H.M. Inspector for 1931:

"Considerable improvements to the premises have lately been carried out and there are now three independent classrooms and distinctly better amenities both indoors and out."

(L.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 6/2/1931, p. 140.)

In addition to building improvements, school facilities also improved slightly during the period. In 1919, a school garden was planned under the guidance of

"Mr. Mayhew, Garden Expert of the County"

(L.S. Log, 23/9/1919, p. 4)

and developed throughout the 1918 - 1939 period. In 1927 a successful experiment with wireless was carried out:

"As an experiment I brought loudspeakers into school & allowed top section to listen from 3.30 to broadcast music lesson by Sir Walford Davies. Reception was good & chⁿ. were very greatly interested in the lesson."

(L.S. Log, 7/2/1927, p. 93.)

The log does not record further broadcast lessons, but in view of the success of the experiment it is reasonable to suppose that they took place.

The H.M.I. report for 1928 suggested that the school would benefit from membership of the county rural library (L.S. Log/H.M.I.R., 12/7/1928, p. 114). The proposal was welcomed and implemented by the managers:

"The Managers after going into the matter & having heard the views of the Head Master as to the great benefit that the school would derive from the books supplied, it was proposed by J. Thompson Esq. & seconded by Hon. J.A. Joicey & unanimously agreed that a branch of the rural library be formed."

(L.S.M. Minutes, 26/10/1928, p. 17.)

A rural library was formed and the headmaster regularly exchanged books, (e.g. L.S. Log, 7/12/1928, p. 118).

In 1919, 1920 and 1921 the log records that the senior girls made plum puddings for the school at Christmas (L.S. Log, 18/12/1919, p.4, 23/12/1920 p. 11 and 6/12/1921, p. 18). Otherwise, no cooking activities are noted. From 1929, some girls began to attend classes at Morpeth Cookery Centre (L.S. Log, 11/4/1929, p. 121). It is clear, therefore, that facilities for such work were not available at Longhirst for regular cookery classes.

The absence of practical facilities for senior children may explain why the Longhirst managers quite readily agreed to the proposal that the school's senior pupils should attend the new Pegswood Senior School (L.S.M. Minutes, 15/3/1935, p. 39), a proposal which took effect from April, 1939 (L.S. Log, 17/4/1939, p. 199).

CONCLUDING COMMENTS.

It may be concluded that the documentary evidence shows that Longhirst School's building was improved between 1918 and 1939 and that some attempt was made to improve facilities. Many of the improvements were a consequence of the school's transfer to the L.E.A. in 1927. However, the school did not possess the features regarded, by 1939, as necessary for the education of senior pupils. Longhirst's senior children were ultimately able to enjoy the benefit of access to specialist senior facilities after their transfer to Pegswood in 1939.

The material examined shows that at both Longhirst and Pegswood the managers regarded the maintenance of the school building as a matter of great importance. The Pegswood managers were particularly determined to secure the improvement of school accommodation. The concern of the managers with building matters reflects that of the L.E.A., discussed

in Chapter Five. In view of the nature of many school buildings in 1918, it is easy to see why so much attention was devoted to them and why building improvements were regarded as being essential if change and progress was to take place in school organisation. It is, however, worth noting that the inspectors who visited Pegswood Mixed and Longhirst schools seldom chose to comment in depth upon the school buildings. During the 1918 - 1939 period, of the five reports made on Pegswood Mixed School, only two, those of 1921 and 1936, contain any comment upon the building; at Longhirst, only one report, that of 1931, of the six available makes such comment. The reports tended to concentrate upon the teaching seen, the work and attitude of the pupils and school organisation. It would be wrong to assume that the managers were not concerned with class-room practice (c.f. pp. 97 and p. 115 above), but the differing emphases of the managers and the inspectorate serves to show how alternative approaches to the question of how best to improve school organisation and the experience of pupils existed.

CHAPTER SEVEN. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION.

The foregoing chapters of analysis of documentary evidence have been prepared with the initial research questions constantly in mind and have each endeavoured to present and discuss material which has a direct relevance to those questions.

The findings of this study tend to agree with the views of those historians, discussed in the literature review (c.f. pp. 38-40 above), notably Barnard (1961), Bernbaum (1976) and Dent (1970) who consider that the years 1918-1939 saw, despite many set-backs, definite progress in the organisation of elementary schools, resultant from the 1918 Act and "Hadow" reports in particular, and that progress made before 1939 prepared an important foundation for the 1944 Act and the changes it advocated. The findings also tend to support the view expressed by Curtis (1967) and Jarman (1963) that, to a large degree, progress depended upon the commitment of local education authorities to bring about change: Northumberland L.E.A. clearly stands in contrast to those authorities which Curtis stated

"made no move [towards re-organisation] until pressure was applied by the Board of Education."

Curtis, (1967) p. 351.

The evidence tends to refute Simon's general assertion (c.f. pp. 36-37) that the inter-war years left an entirely negative legacy. Simon's arguments may have validity in a general or national sense but the present study has shown that, at least in some areas, the legacy of the 1918-1939 period was one of some value. The study's conclusions also support the findings of the local studies by J.M. Taylor (1989) and Hogg (1982): their broad comments upon the county of Northumberland as a whole have been shown to be generally applicable to the Bothal and Woodhorn area during the period in question (c.f. pp. 30-36 above).

As commented upon earlier (c.f. p. 42 above), conclusions derived from

local studies have certain limitations. The present study has shown that generalisations by historians about national educational development during the 1918-1939 period should also be considered with care. The legislation and administrative arrangements of the inter-war years, together with local factors, made a diversity of experience in different L.E.A. areas likely. The English tradition of educational provision and administration gave considerable authority and influence to education committees, ecclesiastical bodies and school managers. The enthusiasm or opposition of these groups to change could hasten or retard educational development considerably in a particular area. Curtis' comments (c.f. p.15) that a major weakness of the 1918 Act was the permissive character of many of its provisions and that the Act strengthened L.E.A. powers without similarly strengthening those of the Board of Education are worthy of notice. It is worth recalling that the 1902 Act had permitted the more populous municipal boroughs and urban districts to form L.E.As., independent of those of the administrative counties, to administer part III of the Act, which related to the provision of elementary education (Lawson and Silver, 1973 p. 370). It is therefore possible that, for example, the elementary schools administered by the "Part III" authorities of Blyth and Wallsend could have developed very differently from those administered by the Northumberland L.E.A. Even within a single L.E.A. area, school managers, particularly of church schools, could exert a strong influence upon re-organisation policies. The success of schemes proposed under the terms of the 1936 Act depended to a large extent upon the willingness of voluntary bodies and L.E.As to co-operate. Jarman's comments (c.f. p. 23, above) upon the importance of individual L.E.A. policies to bringing about change during the 1918-1939 period emphasise the importance of local factors. In Northumberland, an area with a local education authority which attempted to implement a policy

of progress and change throughout the 1918-1939 period, progress was often irregular and localised; an area without such a policy would probably have made very little progress indeed. It is, therefore, reasonable to assume that the circumstances of the period led to very uneven elementary school development nationally. Accordingly, the interpretations of historians who use their sense of historical imagination in conjunction with studies limited by period or area to present a national view of events should be viewed with caution.

The following overall conclusions have been reached in the light of the available evidence in response to the questions which arose from the literature review.

1. To what extent did Northumberland L.E.A. adopt a policy of change and progress in the organisation of its elementary schools, with particular reference to schools situated within the ancient parishes of Bothal and Woodhorn, between 1918 and 1939?

On the basis of the policies advocated in the available minutes and reports, it is clear that Northumberland L.E.A. consistently advocated a policy of progress and change (as defined on pp. 10-11 above) in the organisation of elementary schools throughout its entire area, including the particular area addressed by this study. As discussed above, the authority's policy towards the 1918 and 1936 Acts, its response to the "Hadow" reports and its many local initiatives and plans, such as those of 1919, 1921, 1925 and 1929 show that a policy of change **and progress** was favoured by the L.E.A. between 1918 and 1939. Many contemporary concerns regarding the needs of the elementary system can be identified in the policies of the L.E.A. There was a feeling that the duration of a pupil's time in school should be extended, that more distinctive provision should be made for younger and older children, that a broader curriculum with opportunities for practical activities of

various kinds was **desirable**, that school buildings and facilities should be improved, that class-sizes should be reduced, that staffing and the level of teachers' qualifications should be improved and that opportunity generally should be increased. It could be argued, given the ongoing concern of the L.E.A., that the replacement and improvement of school buildings was regarded as a policy of essential importance, without which the successful implementation of most of the other policies would be rendered almost impossible.

The ongoing commitment of Northumberland L.E.A. to policies which aimed to bring about progress at a time when some L.E.A.s made little attempt to move forward was probably the consequence of several factors.

It is clear that an important influence upon policy was exerted by Sir Francis Blake, Bt., C.B., Chairman of the County Council from 1918 until 1940 and a man of wide experience, with a particular interest in educational matters, as the following biographical note shows:

"He was elected to the County Council, representing Northumberland, in 1901 and became an Alderman in 1906. After the Education Act, 1902, he became Chairman of the County Council's first Education Committee and played a major part in the programme of rebuilding, reform and curricular improvement undertaken by the Council. When he became Chairman of the Council he relinquished the Chairmanship of the Education Committee but he continued to take a keen interest in educational matters. Liberal in politics, he was created a baronet in 1907.... He was described by a journalist as the 'right hand man' of Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary from 1906-1916, who was M.P. for Berwick; and when Grey was raised to the peerage in 1916, Blake was elected unopposed to the Berwick seat."

J.M. Taylor, (1989) pp. ii-iii.

Blake's continuing interest in education was apparent in 1922 when he raised questions relating to the provision of a new secondary school for the Bedlington/Ashington area in the House of Commons (J.M. Taylor, 1989 p. 83). It is probable that a considerable influence over policy and development was exercised by Alderman A.E. Bell, who succeeded Blake as Chairman of the Education Committee in 1918 and who still occupied the chair in 1940 (J.M. Taylor, 1989 p. 109).

There is little doubt that Northumberland L.E.A.'s educational policy was influenced to some extent by its long-serving official, Mr. Charles Williams, O.B.E., M.A. Mr. Williams was appointed Secretary to the Education Committee in 1902, his post being redesignated Director of Education in 1919. The following extract from minutes recorded when his retirement was announced in 1933 gives some indication of his role:

"that effect was given to this new Act [that of 1902] without friction or difficulty was to the credit of the administration of which Sir Francis D. Blake, Bart., C.B., was the inspiration. The past thirty years have been a period of constant development. The changes are too numerous to mention, but we may remember that on all questions and on all occasions the Committee has been supplied with well-informed reports and impartial advice.... We believe that the Council has been well and faithfully served by the retiring Director of Education."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1933 p. 189).

In 1934 Mr. H.M. Spink, M.C., M.A., B.Sc. was appointed Director and served until 1953; it is likely that his lengthy period in office also contributed towards consistency in county policy (J.M. Taylor, 1989 p. 90 & p. 172).

The links between several individuals who contributed towards the development of national educational policy and Northumberland should not be overlooked. The influence of these men should not be overstated but it is possible that their local connections may have contributed towards the development of L.E.A. policies. Sir Charles Trevelyan, Bt., President of the Board of Education in 1924 and 1929-31 was a local landowner and an elected member of the County Council, 1904-1919 (J.M. Taylor, 1989 p. 80). He was also, from 1930, Lord Lieutenant of the county. Lord Eustace Percy, President of the Board of Education, 1924-1929 and Rector of King's College, Newcastle, 1937-1952, was a member of the County Council, 1940-1944, his brother, the 8th. Duke of Northumberland, being Vice-Chairman, 1929-1930 (J.M. Taylor, 1989 p. 80 & p. 109). Sir Henry Hadow was Vice-Chancellor of Durham University, 1916-1918, during which time he was also Principal of

Armstrong College, Newcastle (Maclure, 1965 p.179).

Local circumstances also contributed towards the development of L.E.A. policies. As noted by Dent (c.f. p. 16), there was an increase in demand for secondary school places after 1918, which was at least in part due to a contemporary view that a secondary education often led to secure employment. In an area which experienced great economic difficulties between the wars, such as Northumberland, this consideration could well have helped to promote policies which aimed to improve educational provision generally. Similarly, it is unlikely that without the enthusiasm of the Ashington Coal Co. Ltd. the Day Continuation Scheme established in Ashington would have been the success that it was (c.f. p. 58 above). Finally, it is likely that in some cases local pressures influenced policy. The influence of G.H. Warne, M.P. and of the managers of Pegswood Mixed School has already been noted (c.f. p. 62 and p. 128 above) and it is likely that other influential individuals with an interest in education and managers of schools in need of improvement pressed for change in their localities.

It may be reasonably concluded, therefore, that a combination of factors, including the influence of various individuals and local circumstances contributed towards the development of Northumberland L.E.A.'s policies in favour of progress and change during the years 1918-1939.

2. To what extent was the policy of change and progress, if such existed, implemented by the L.E.A. in the area under consideration?

The available evidence, discussed above, shows that the L.E.A. policies of progress and change were implemented in the Bothal and Woodhorn area. A new secondary school was established to serve the district and the authority contributed towards the development of continuation classes in Ashington. The proportion of qualified staff employed increased and

the number of uncertificated and supplementary teachers employed decreased. The size of classes decreased notably. Several new "central" schools were built, all of which appear to have been constructed with improvement in mind, although in most cases new buildings were developed when a need to provide additional accommodation arose from an increase in population. Several old school buildings were improved. Steps were taken towards improving provision for backward pupils and to employ county organisers who could assist with the development of practical activities within the curriculum. The L.E.A. proposed a system of senior and junior divisions as early as 1919 and made further proposals to extend opportunity and reduce the size of classes in 1921. A scheme of re-organisation was proposed by the authority as early as 1925: in the urban area of this study re-organisation was almost completed by 1930. As in other areas, rural change was slower, but the L.E.A. addressed the problems and by 1939 re-organisation was almost completed in those areas also. In both urban and rural areas, in different ways, the re-organisation improved the provision made for senior, junior and infant pupils. Change did take place and progress was made, but was restricted by financial limitations, particularly in 1921 and 1931. In both cases, progress was virtually halted for years at a time. Periods when notable progress towards re-organisation took place were 1927 to 1931 and 1934 to 1939. Had circumstances permitted the L.E.A. to implement all the policies it advocated and adopted between 1918 and 1939 there is no doubt that even greater progress would have been made towards improving the experience of children educated in the localities' elementary schools. The progress which was made in the area studied was, without doubt, creditable given the circumstances of the times.

Comparisons between different L.E.As' records of implementing change during the inter-war period are difficult to make, as all authorities probably commenced from different starting-points in 1918 and faced

distinctive geographical and economic circumstances. With these limitations in mind, some comparisons can be made.

As noted earlier, (c.f. p. 9 above), "central" schools were established in London in 1911. Dent comments that "a few L.E.As, mainly in the north of England" also established central schools before 1925 but that in some areas little attempt was made before that date to improve provision for older pupils: "most [authorities] had done little and many nothing at all" (Dent, 1970. p. 87). The 1926 "Hadow" report found that only 5.4% of all elementary school children aged over 11 were following some form of advanced course. The report identified nine somewhat overlapping categories of provision which were being made by various authorities to provide advanced instruction ("The Education of the Adolescent", 1927, p. 49 & pp. 57-64). It will be recalled that in 1919 Northumberland L.E.A. expressed its commitment to the improvement of its schools and undertook to develop senior divisions and new central schools (c.f. p. 54 above) and re-stated its commitment in 1925 (c.f. p. 59 above), implementation being much hindered by financial difficulties. Northumberland L.E.A.'s policy had much in common with those of Warwickshire and Durham which were discussed in the report. It is reasonable to assert, therefore, that Northumberland's policy compared favourably with that of other L.E.As.

Musgrave notes that "by 1939 69 per cent of urban and 11 per cent of rural elementary schools had been re-organised so that children of secondary age were no longer in all-age schools but were in separate schools catering solely for those over eleven" (Musgrave, 1968 p.97). In the particular part of Northumberland L.E.A.'s area considered by this study, urban re-organisation according to Musgrave's definition was almost completed in 1930 and, although change was slower, as was the case nationally, rural re-organisation was almost completed in 1939. Whilst

it should be recalled that none of the rural areas were so remote as to render their inclusion in re-organisation schemes unduly difficult and that no particular difficulties were created in the area by the "dual system", it is none the less apparent that re-organisation in the area examined was much further advanced by 1939 than was the case in many other places. It will also be recalled (c.f. p. 32 above) that Northumberland's arrangements for selecting pupils for scholarship places were amongst the first to make use of intelligence tests. Musgrave's comments upon the introduction of intelligence tests by L.E.As. show that Northumberland L.E.A. was the first county authority in the country to make use of the tests in the selection process:

"Soon after the [1914-1918] war Northumberland and Bradford adopted group administered tests of mental ability for their scholarship examinations, and they were followed by other Local Education Authorities."

Musgrave, (1969) p. 99.

Northumberland L.E.A. was not hostile to the concept of day continuation schools, but did not develop them due to financial and other pressures (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1919, p. 75). However, in co-operating with the Ashington Coal Co. Ltd. to open and maintain a school in Ashington for those employed by the company, the L.E.A. was, to some extent, doing more than most other authorities, as Curtis notes:

"After some years the majority of authorities abandoned the idea [of continuation schools] altogether, although some large industrial undertakings established continuation schools for their employees."

Curtis, (1967) p. 347.

As Seaborne comments, some authorities began the inter-war period with well-established policies intended to limit class-sizes:

"by 1912 the L.C.C. and other progressive authorities were able to insist on a maximum of forty-eight for infants and forty for older children."

Simmon, J., (Ed.), (1966) p. 70.

Such authorities were not typical. Bernbaum states that nationally,

in 1927, 19,982 classes had over 50 pupils, 8,571 being in that category in 1931 and 2,100 in 1938 (c.f. p. 23 above). In 1927, Northumberland L.E.A. had 296 classes of 51 or more pupils, in 1930, 209 and in 1937, none (c.f. p. 74 & p. 81 above). Northumberland L.E.A. thus had a record of class-size reduction which compared favourably with that of other L.E.As. during the 1918-1939 period.

The level of qualification of teachers in Northumberland's elementary schools did improve between the wars but not, it would appear, to the same extent as in some areas. As noted above, (c.f. p. 29), nationally, in 1920-1921, 61% of elementary school teachers were certificated, 21% of that total having qualified through the pupil-teacher scheme. By 1938, 79% of elementary school teachers were certificated and the appointment of supplementary teachers had been discontinued (Middleton and Weitzman, 1976 p. 193). Musgrave states that in 1938, 7.3% of elementary school teachers were graduates, only 1.3% of the total being graduates in 1921 and that

"in the late twenties the decision was finally taken to discontinue the pupil-teacher method of training teachers."

Musgrave, 1968 p. 87.

In Northumberland, the level of elementary school teachers' qualifications improved modestly during the inter-war period. In 1927, 52.42% of teachers were certificated, the figure for 1930 being 58.8% (c.f. p. 73 above). The county's pupil-teacher scheme was discontinued in 1926 (J.M. Taylor, 1989 p. 83). The study of Pegswood Mixed School's staffing has shown that in at least one elementary school a significant number of graduates held posts during the 1930s (c.f. p.95). It would appear that Northumberland's modest improvement in staffing during the 1918-1939 years was at least in part due to staffing problems at the beginning of the period. Curtis comments that before the introduction of the Burnham scales in 1921

"There was no standard scale, and wealthy and progressive

authorities, by paying higher salaries, were always able to attract the best qualified teachers."

Curtis, (1967) p. 245.

It is clear that Northumberland L.E.As' salaries were modest in 1919, as in that year a N.U.T. deputation urged the Education Committee to grant an increase:

"the minimum salaries provided by the existing scales are too small to meet the cost of living... in other administrative areas much higher rates of remuneration are available."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1919 p. 89.)

The provisional national salary scales laid before the committee in 1920 were markedly greater than those of the county listed at the same time (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1920 p. 209).

It is therefore likely that given the low salaries available before 1921, Northumberland L.E.A. had more teachers with lower qualifications in its service than did some other authorities and thus had a correspondingly more difficult task to raise standards during the 1920s and 1930s.

Nationally, as discussed above, (pp. 24-25) the 1918-1939 period was one during which new schools were generally better designed than most of those erected during the nineteenth century. Northumberland L.E.A.'s new schools conformed to these nationally high standards (c.f. pp. 61-62 and appendix 13). In 1928 the Committee commented favourably upon schools of "the open-air type, recently erected in Derbyshire", which were particularly well-lit and ventilated. The Committee considered that the schools were

"the most satisfactory yet designed for educational purposes and recommends development on similar lines in the administrative county."

(Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1928 p. 177.)

The "open-air" design was adopted and schools of the open-air type built in the area studied include Wansbeck Road Junior and Infant Council School in Ashington, completed in 1932 and the new Senior

School opened at Pegswood in 1939.

The implementation of building projects was much disrupted by financial difficulties during the 1918-1939 period. As discussed above (c.f. pp. 26-27) the early 1920s and the early 1930s were periods during which the national financial situation much restricted development. Periods of notable advance, particularly by the more progressive authorities appear to have been the mid to late 1920s and late 1930s.

Since building projects depended to a large degree upon national funding, it is not surprising to find that the periods of restriction and progress generally correspond to those considered to apply to the country as a whole. Northumberland, like the West Riding of Yorkshire authority (c.f. p. 27 above) made particular progress during the mid to late 1920s, it being recorded in 1929 that since 1922 4 new secondary schools, 3 new modern schools and 7 new elementary schools had been built and that, in addition, 9 elementary schools had been re-built or extended. Since the L.E.A. was responsible for 166 schools housed in 197 buildings these figures represent a substantial improvement (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1929 pp. 29-30). As has been shown, other building projects later in the period also helped to implement the policy of re-organisation (c.f. pp. 77-83 above).

It would appear that, with the initial cautions about the validity of comparisons in mind, Northumberland L.E.A.'s record of implementation of policies which aimed to improve the various aspects of elementary education considered can be compared favourably with that of other authorities.

3. What impact, if any, did L.E.A. policy have upon the organisation (including buildings and staffing) of individual schools within the area under consideration?

In the two schools selected for individual study, change and progress did take place between 1918 and 1939. As discussed above in Chapter Six, there were important differences between the experiences of Pegswood Mixed School and Longhirst School. Pegswood experienced improvement in terms of staffing (including the introduction of specialist subject teachers and the appointment of teachers with higher qualifications), class-size, class arrangement and organisation (including the 1927 change to junior and senior "schools" within the old building and the 1939 change to a senior school in a new building and a junior and infant school in the renovated old building). School accommodation at Pegswood improved in various ways between 1918 and 1939, culminating in the erection of a new senior school building in 1939 and the renovation of the old building in the same year. Important periods of change, therefore, were the late 1920s and the late 1930s. Whilst L.E.A. policy brought about many of the changes, the importance of other influences should not be overlooked. Mr. R. Joice, headmaster of Pegswood Mixed School from 1921 until 1938 gave his school strong leadership and a sense of purpose throughout most of the inter-war period and made a personal contribution to changes in school organisation. The Pegswood Managers' policy of repeatedly urging building improvements may have helped to bring about change and reflected the importance attached to such projects by the L.E.A. A further significant influence upon change came from the reports of H.M. Inspectors, which usually gave little attention to the nature of the school building but which included important comments upon the teaching they saw and the attitude and attainment of the pupils. The policies of the L.E.A. did, therefore, have a significant impact upon the organisation of Pegswood Mixed School during the 1918-1939 period, but the existence of other influences upon progress and change should not be overlooked.

At Longhirst School, change and progress was more erratic than was the

case at Pegswood. A modest improvement in staffing was made, classes were organised into divisions approximating to infant, junior and senior age-groups and the building was improved. The transfer of the senior pupils to the new Pegswood Senior School in 1939 was probably the most significant improvement made during the period. Most of the organisational improvements made were the result of the implementations of L.E.A. policies. Longhirst School's small size prevented it from developing specialist subject teaching, as was done at Pegswood. The headmaster's complete responsibility for a class meant that, unlike the Pegswood headmaster, he had little opportunity to monitor the progress of the school as a whole. An improvement in the provision made for senior pupils could have been made earlier than was actually the case at Longhirst had the managers encouraged the "grouping" proposals made in 1929 (c.f. pp. 119-120 above); their reluctance to do so is probably explained by the fact that a fall in the roll could have threatened the viability of the school. After a neighbouring school closed in 1934 and the roll increased the managers did not oppose the transfer of senior pupils. The modest improvement made in the staffing of the school was, it would appear, largely due to the continuing concern expressed by H.M. Inspectors in their reports on the school.

It may be concluded from an examination of the available documents relating to Pegswood Mixed and Longhirst Schools that their organisation, buildings and staffing did improve between 1918 and 1939. The material considered shows that L.E.A. policies had a most important impact upon organisation but that other factors, including the influence of head-teachers, managers, H.M. Inspectors and school-size were also of significance. The contrasting experiences of the two nearby schools illustrates how important local circumstances could be in bringing about change, as both were under the jurisdiction of the same Local Education Authority.

During the 1918 - 1939 period, Northumberland Local Education Authority without doubt adopted policies which aimed to improve the organisation of elementary education within its area. As this study has shown, these policies were implemented with some success in the Bothal and Woodhorn area and were complemented by the efforts of those inspectors, school managers and teachers who wished to see change and progress in elementary school organisation. There is evidence to show that the authority's policies led to a real improvement in the structural organisation of elementary education to the benefit of younger and particularly older pupils and to an improvement in staffing, witnessed by the increase in the number of certificated staff employed, the development of specialist subject and practical teaching and the reduction in the size of classes during the period. School buildings were also improved, through both the erection of new schools and the renovation of old, with provision of land, where possible, for playing fields and gardens.

Whilst it is probably true that nationally a certain ambivalence characterised educational development during the inter-war period, in that the significant changes advocated by, for example, the 1918 Act and the "Hadow" reports led to less real progress than might have been expected, largely as a result of financial restrictions, the present study has shown that in some areas notable changes did take place.

Between 1918 and 1939 the organisation of elementary education in the Bothal and Woodhorn area improved markedly in several respects. The fact that this was so and that further progress would have been made but for economic difficulties and the approach of war is a creditable reflection upon the members of the Northumberland Education Committee and those who implemented and complemented their policies during the 1918 - 1939 period.

Appendix 1.

Copy of report of inspection on 14th., 15th., 19th. & 20th. March, 1923 by H.M.I. Mr. A. Mills. (Pegswood Mixed School Log, 1923, pp. 205-208.)

"Organisation.

This school presents considerable difficulties in the arrangement of the work and classes. The premises accommodate 476, in a large hall recognised for 120 children, 5 class rooms recognised for 296 children, and a recently erected hut accommodating 60 children. There are 474 children on books. [Note in margin: "at end of year."] Including the Headmaster's own class of senior children there are 10 classes to be provided for. This has involved the working of four classes in the central hall. The number of children for whom it will be necessary to provide at the beginning of the next school year is estimated at 530, which will mean once again putting 4 classes in the undivided central hall. This is much to be regretted as the congestion prevents really successful work. During the past year there have been breaches of Article 14 of the code in 7 classes and in the cases of Standards I, III and IV, for three-fourths of the year or more.

Staffing.

For some time past the staffing has been unstable and cannot yet be regarded as strong, though all the members are loyal and reasonably industrious.

Schemes etc.

The present Head Master took charge in April, 1921. He has prepared suitable schemes - not too pretentious but set out in clear detail. His examinations have been systematic and thorough and his reports frank and helpful to the class teachers.

Work.

The standard of attainment being reached by the scholars in many subjects is not as high as should be expected:

The subject showing most progress is Arithmetic which has been receiving steady attention and is fairly good.

Reading is satisfactory in the top class girls (VII, VI) but only moderate in VII,VI boys, poor in the Standards III Boys and IIB mixed and very backward in Standard I.

Recitation of VII,VI Boys was only partially known and indifferently rendered. Composition needs much increased effort. On the days of visit good oral lessons were heard in Standards IV and IIb but the lessons in the special class (IV, III) and IIa were disappointing.

The Singing lessons taken by Standard V teacher were poor.

The Head Master deserves credit for his steady effort to improve the condition of the School, but has still a heavy task in front of him."

Appendix 2.

Copy of report of inspection on 16th. & 17th. March, 1925 by H.M.I. Mr.F.W.Cape, following visits by Messers Swanson & Williams. (Pegswood Mixed School Log, 1925, pp. 234-236).

"This school continues to improve under the wise and sympathetic direction of the Head Master. His staff work well, and the children are clean, eager to please and easy to interest.

It is necessary, however, to say that the teacher in charge of the older boys (Standards VI and VII), a most important class, should take his work much more seriously. He apparently does not expect his boys to take a real pride in their work, and his supervision of the notes written during the private study lessons is discreditable.

In marked contrast the attitude of the older girls, and their work in general, deserves much praise.

Reading aloud is good, and for the most part intelligent. Tests set in arithmetic met with a satisfactory response except in Standard VI (boys) and V (where indeed the work was poor). The latter class also made many mistakes in Spelling, in some Dictation, but their response to questions based on work done in Geography was bracing. Standard II write creditable English, and Composition written during the course of inspection was of above average merit.

The remainder of the work seen reaches a reasonably satisfactory standard."

Appendix 3.

Copy of report of inspection on 25th. &. 27th. March, 1929 by
H.M.I. Mr. F.M. Osborne. (Pegswood Mixed School Log, 1929,p. 283-286.)

"The School is organised in two divisions: (a) Juniors (7-11) in four classes, each with **over 55 on the registers**; (b) Seniors (over 11) in five smaller classes. The Head Master supervises and examines the school thoroughly and, in addition takes a part in the regular teaching, being responsible for some of the Mathematics in the top class. His critical reports and schemes of work indicate that he is acquainted with modern methods of teaching and organising. He is loyally supported by a competent staff.

In each of the Junior classes there is a considerable section of children of poor mental calibre which accounts for the fact that the attainments, though satisfactory on the whole, are very uneven. More sectional teaching, particularly in Standards I and II would enable the brighter children to make more rapid progress.

In the Senior Division the teaching is mainly on a specialist basis. Two of the classes - the 'B' forms - in which are grouped the duller children follow a slightly different course, but, in view of the fact that many of these children are making but little progress, in spite of much hard work on the part of the teachers, it would appear advisable to modify the syllabus. The work of the 'A' forms, on the other hand, is distinctly promising. Arithmetic and written English are sound, and Music and Geography are well taught but it is perhaps in History that comparatively the best work is being done - the children certainly get a thorough training in note-making.

The following points were brought to the Head Master's notice at the time of inspection

(a) a broader treatment is needed in teaching literature.

(b) a more suitable Science course should be planned for the Senior Girls."

Appendix 4.

Copy of report of inspection on 11th. & 17th. November, 1932 by H.M.I.
Mr. A.B. Adams. (Pegswood Mixed School Log, 1932, pp.325-326.)

"Apart from the Head Master himself and two of his assistants the staff of this school has completely changed since 1929 - the report of that date however still largely applies. The staff as a whole is certainly not of more than average ability and there is no work of outstanding merit; but as a result of conscientious effort on their part and effective supervision by the Head Master there is no serious fault to find with the efficiency of the school in the main subjects of the curriculum.

Among various points discussed at the time of inspection the most important problem is that of spoken English. The children probably spend too much of their time on written exercises as compared with exercises which call for consecutive oral expression.

It is a pity that in a mixed school of this size there should be no woman manager."

Appendix 5.

Copy of report of inspection on 18th. &. 19th. May, 1936 by H.M.I.

Mr. Crewe. (Pegswood Mixed School Log, 1936, pp. 360-361.)

"The Head Master, who is contemplating retirement, has spent the whole of his teaching career under this Authority and has been in charge of this school since 1921. He has shown always a high sense of duty and the teachers in the County will remember with gratitude the work he has done willingly for many years in their interests.

The general condition of the school remains substantially as it was at the time of the last report.

The premises are shortly to be enlarged and extended with a view to making full provision for senior work. These changes will, doubtless, be accompanied by considerable alterations in the scope and content of the curriculum. At present, the schemes in History, Geography and Mathematics are too academic, and the time allotted to Physical Training for the seniors is insufficient. It should also be considered whether there is really a case for the formation of a 'special' class in this school."

Appendix 6.

Copy of report of inspection on 31st. January, 1923, by H.M.I.

Mr. E. Glasgow. (Longhirst School Log, 1925, pp. 55-56)

"This school is not in a satisfactory condition. The Headmaster is a man of intelligence and much of the work that he does is interesting enough, but his control of the school is not effective and he has far to go before he has brought the children's work up to the standard which is fair to expect. In particular the result of the tests in Arithmetic set to the older scholars (Stds. IV and VII) was very disappointing. The percentage of correct answers was very low & the work was badly set down and often hardly intelligible.

Very poor progress is being made in both the lower classes, where the teachers acquiesce in poor work & themselves show little resource or brightness in dealing with the problems before them. The children are backward and lethargic. The Headmaster is, indeed, badly served, but he has made little attempt to help his assistants. Their record books show no reports or criticisms by him.

There is no reason why this school should not be as good as any other country school and I look forward to a very great improvement in its condition."

Appendix 7.

Copy of report of inspection on 21st. January, 1925, by H.M.I.

Mr. Williams. (Longhirst School Log, 1925, p. 56)

"The new Headmaster and the two new supplementary teachers have worked hard to improve the efficiency of this school and have met with considerable success. Much of the work now reaches a good level and the children are learning to apply themselves to their lessons."

Appendix 8.

Copy of report of inspection on 12th. July, 1928, by H.M.I.

Mr. Osborne. (Longhirst School Log, 1928, pp. 113-114)

"The school is now in a satisfactory condition. The Headmaster has given special attention to the foundation work in English and Arithmetic and the results of tests set in these subjects at the time of inspection prove that his methods of teaching and supervising have been successful.

The number on books has been gradually increasing and as the teacher of class 2 is leaving it would be well to take this opportunity to strengthen the staff by appointing a certificated woman teacher. It will then be possible to reorganise the school so that only children of 11+ are in class 1.

The schemes of work for the upper part of the school are being revised and it is hoped that Rural Science will form a more important part of the curriculum especially as the headmaster attended the Board's Course in this subject at Cambridge in 1927 and as there is a good school garden which can be used for more experimental and practical work. The teaching of Eng. Literature would be helped considerably if a branch of the Rural Library could be formed in the parish.

A word of praise is due to the Head Master for organising school camps at the sea side and for his interest in the children's out of school activities."

Appendix 9.

Copy of report of inspection on 6th. February, 1931 by H.M.I.

Mr. Seathorne. (Longhirst School Log, 1931, pp. 140-142)

"Considerable improvements to the premises have been carried out and there are now distinctly better amenities both indoors and out. The master has conscientiously tried to (carry) meet most of the points of the last report - the top class now consists of only senior children; Gardening (Science) has been introduced; and a branch of the Rural Library is centred in the school. Moreover the school generally is orderly the children mannerly and self-respecting and on the whole the visitor's first impressions are quite favourable. But at the moment the children's actual performance under inspection is less distinguished than one might reasonably expect. It is true that the frequent absence through illness of the Infants' teacher (entailing a succession of 'supply' teachers) and a run of epidemic sickness, have affected progress particularly in the lowest class; but the elder children fell short mainly in their unusual reticence when questioned on their class work.

Dramatisation & specific training in exposition might give them confidence and help to reduce their shyness to a minimum. On paper they made a better show even though there is still room for improvement. Class 2 barely rose to the standard indicated in their recent class examination, and the teaching though no doubt conscientious, does not appear to have been remarkably stimulating. A weak standard II has possibly claimed an undue proportion of the teacher's time.

The teacher of Class 3 (who was absent) is also responsible for the needlework of the school & of the senior girls in particular. Her absences may explain but do not altogether condone the fact that on the day of visit only four girls of the ten in the class had a garment in hand.

Reference has already been made to Gardening - if this work is to produce the best results complete records should be kept.

It will probably be necessary for the coming season to include suitable girls in the class.

The master's annual camp at the sea-side seems to be a useful and popular event."

Appendix 10.

Copy of report of inspection on 12th. Februrary, 1934 by H.M.I.

Mr. G.W. Paget. (Longhirst School Log, 1934, pp. 160-161.)

"The reduction of the staff from three to two has eliminated the weakest member and although extra responsibility has thereby been thrown on the Master by the inclusion of the middle class in his own, he will find some compensation in the fact that the Infants Class which is now taught by the Uncertificated Assistant is at last in better hands. It is perhaps significant that Std. II the highest group in the class is relatively the weakest.

In the master's class some unevenness was laid bare which was not unexpected in view of the retardation of some of the children in their earlier school life. Even so the class as a whole is still rather unimpressive under test for although much of their routine work would pass, their oral response quite inadequately reflects the amount of work which the master appears to have put in. Clearly, the first need is to rouse the children to greater effort.

The following points sum up other aspects of the work which were discussed with the master.

- 1). Arithmetic might be more realistic.
- 2). In Recitation the standard of technique is too low.
- 3). Written exercises based on class work are all to the good but require no less exacting supervision than formal composition.
- 4). It is undesirable to brigade the whole class for Science.
- 5). Bee-keeping has now been added to the course in Rural Science and, together with Gardening might well provide these children with the stimulus they need. The vacant room suggests itself for improvisation as a 'Rural Science' room."

Appendix 11.

Copy of report of inspection on 6th. &. 7th. July, 1938 by H.M.I.

Mr. J.S. Wingate-Saul. (Longhirst School Log, 1938, pp. 195-196)

"In the report issued on this school in Jan. 1936 pointed criticisms were made of the condition of the master's own class.

These he has clearly set himself to meet, and, though some further improvement may be looked for in certain minor directions, the general standard of attainment is now satisfactory.

The work is adequately supervised and the children take a greater interest in their tasks. Particularly is this so in History, Geography, Nature Study, &. the theory of gardening where the keeping of well arranged and illustrated notebooks is a commendable feature.

Class 2 reaches a very fair level of attainment in the fundamental subjects and reading is particularly confident and clear. The History and geography syllabus might well be lightened to allow for the introduction of some simple form of note-making by the older children.

Class 3 has suffered somewhat through the absences due to sickness in the early part of the year. Steady progress however is being made under the experienced guidance of the Supplementary teacher, who is clearly on excellent terms with these young children."

Appendix 12.

An account of the Day Continuation School, established at Ashington in 1919 by the Ashington Coal Co. Ltd. and Northumberland L.E.A., by Mr. W. Straker, an official of the miners' union.

THE ASHINGTON COLLIERIES' MAGAZINE

July, 1922, p. 211.

"The object of the school is to assist any boy with ability (within the limits of the scheme) to improve his general education and lay the foundation for technical education which will enable him to qualify for a responsible position, while at the same time he is supporting himself by work at the mine.

Briefly, the scheme consists of a three years' course of study, of two full days per week in English, mathematics, drawing and science. Boys to the number of 40 are selected each year on the joint recommendation of their late schoolmaster and the official under whom they are working. On the result of the first year's work 16 to 20 of these drop out, the remainder carrying on to form a more advanced second year class, and they in turn the following year form a third year class. The result of this is that 80 boys are always attending the school, e.g., 40 in first year, 20 second year and 20 third year.

The standard of education required before joining the school is two years at the County Evening Continuation School [evening classes were organised in several local schools] or two years at a Secondary School.

They attend the school as part of their work at the mines, i.e. their daily wage is paid as though they were actually at work. This is a very important point, as otherwise promising boys whose fathers could not afford to have them absent from work two days a week would be at a disadvantage, and while the scheme is on a comparatively small scale, the very best boys, irrespective of social position, must be procured.

The classes are managed by a committee, half appointed by the County Council, and half by the Ashington Coal Company, Limited, and two qualified teachers devote the whole of their time to the school.

The school consists of two class rooms, one of which is fitted as a laboratory, where the students carry out experimental science studies individually.

.... The standard of education attained at the end of the three years is practically equal to that of the Durham University matriculation, and a further development of the scheme might be encouragement and assistance to the most promising lads to go on to a diploma or degree course at Armstrong College.

During the three years the boys attend the school they are allowed certain privileges in the way of being given a variety of occupations as far as possible, and a limited number chosen on the reports of the head master are given special privileges as apprentices, and for these a course of practical training extending over seven years has

been worked out.

During this period they go through every class of practical work, in order to give them a thorough knowledge of mining, with a view to assisting them in their technical studies which they take up at the local evening technical classes after leaving the school at the end of three years.

.... When the employers in all our great industries recognise a moral obligation and a pleasure in following the example of the Ashington Coal Company, a better state of things will exist among all those engaged in these industries, whether as employers or employees."

An account of the new school at Linton, by "Dominie".

THE ASHINGTON COLLIERIES' MAGAZINE

August, 1926, p. 253

".... GENERAL PLAN.

The general plan of the building is that of a hollow square, around three sides of which are the six class-rooms - lofty, well-lighted and airy. Two sides of each room are practically all windows, every one of which opens...; so that, when outside temperatures are mounting over 90° F., here is delightful coolness of 70° or less, with an abundance of fresh, pure air. But, suppose our visitor arrived when a 'wild north-easter' was blowing, driving damp and cold into every cranny, even of our bones, we would shut ourselves up like the pimpernel at the approach of a storm, turn on the heat, and be as snug as a mole in its burrow. Another advantage of this 'double-lighting,' is that no matter in what position a child is working, ample light is available without overtaxing the undeveloped eyes of young people. Even so if winter comes, the delinquencies of King Sol are fully provided against by the wizard Electricity.

The fourth side of the square is occupied by the big school hall, with its ample light and ventilation also, its polished block floor, and its easily movable seating. Here children and staff assemble at least twice every day, and in hymn, and prayer, and talk, each individual begins to feel part of a greater community, learning to use its powers and reaching out towards the idea of fuller and fairer future. Here, also, almost every afternoon, music, dancing and group activities hold sway, appealing to the artistic senses and higher emotions of plastic childhood.

Connecting all is an open-air corridor (heated beneath), similar to the old monastic cloisters, and opening through arches onto the central square, where the sounds of passing feet escape into the outer air, instead of penetrating annoyingly into adjoining classrooms. Indeed, one of the architectural ideas is the elimination of noise and interference of one class with another. After the central quadrangle has been dug and planted, when children's eyes wander from their books, as they surely will even in the most ideal of schools, they will encounter green sward bordered by gay flowers, and tired eyes will return refreshed for another tussle with puzzling problems.

Outside, to east and west of the main building, are spacious play grounds; and in front, through the generosity of the presiding genius of the Ashington Collieries Welfare Scheme, the school has the use of ample playing fields.

So here, set down amidst the soot and smoke of a Northumbrian mining village, one finds the peaceful spaciousness and thought provoking atmosphere of old university or monastic 'quads.' Here, some Omar Khayyam of the future may brook upon the problems of his world, as that other Omar did of the past, and think with him,

'Ah Love ! could thou and I with Fate conspire
To grasp this sorry Scheme of Things entire,
Would not we shatter it to bits - and then
Re-mould it nearer to the Heart's desire !'"

Appendix 14.

Extract from the "New Code", (Pegswood Mixed School Log, 1910,foreward).

"ART 85

c) a diary or Log Book.

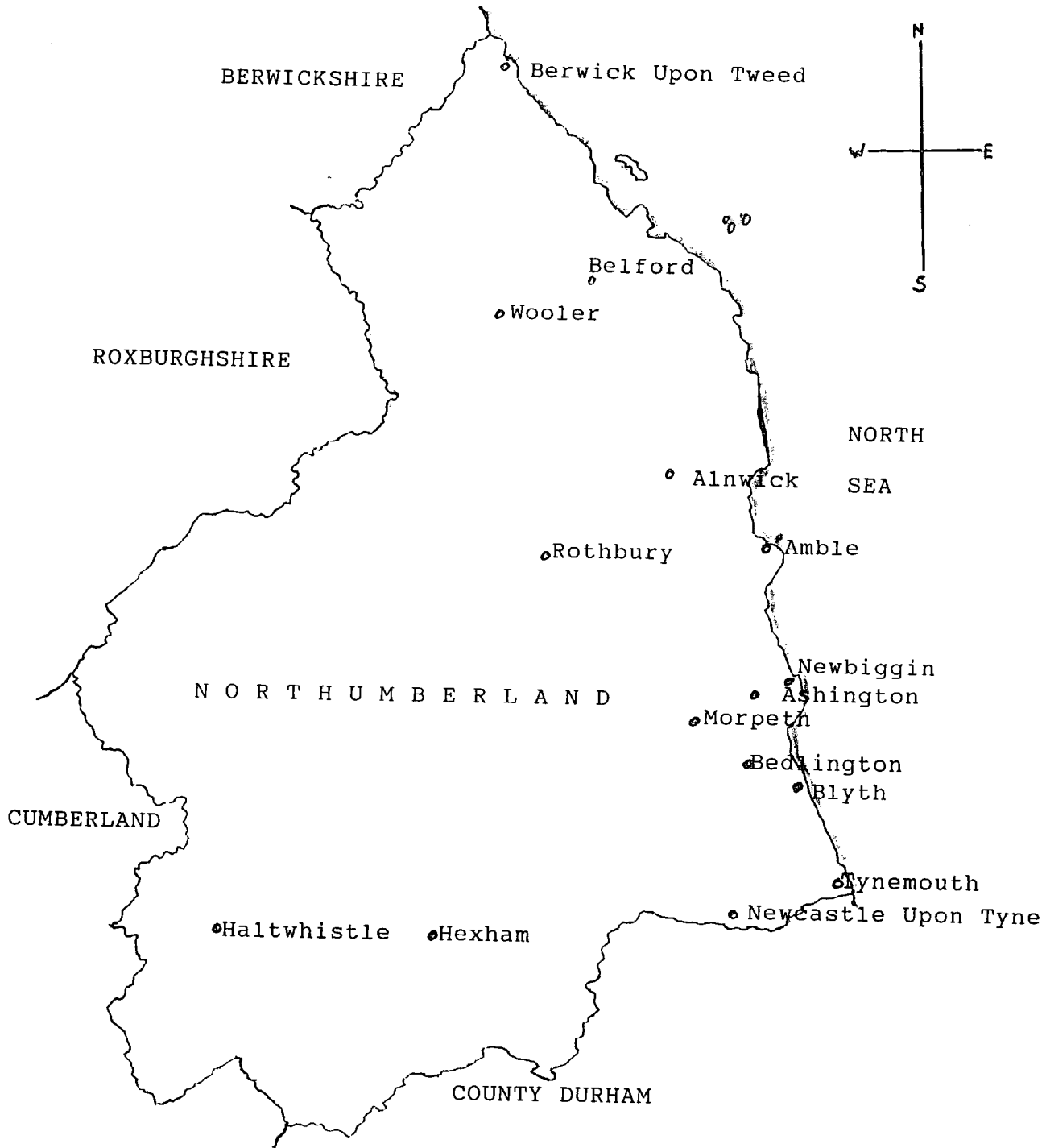
The log-book must be stoutly bound, and contain not less than 300 pages. It must be kept by the principal teacher, who is required to enter in it from time to time such events as the introduction of new books, apparatus or courses of instruction, any plan of lessons approved by the inspector, the visits of managers, absence, illness or failure of duty on any part of the school staff, or any special circumstances affecting the school, that may for the sake of future reference or for any other reason, deserve to be recorded."

" No reflections or opinions of a general character are to be entered in the log-book."

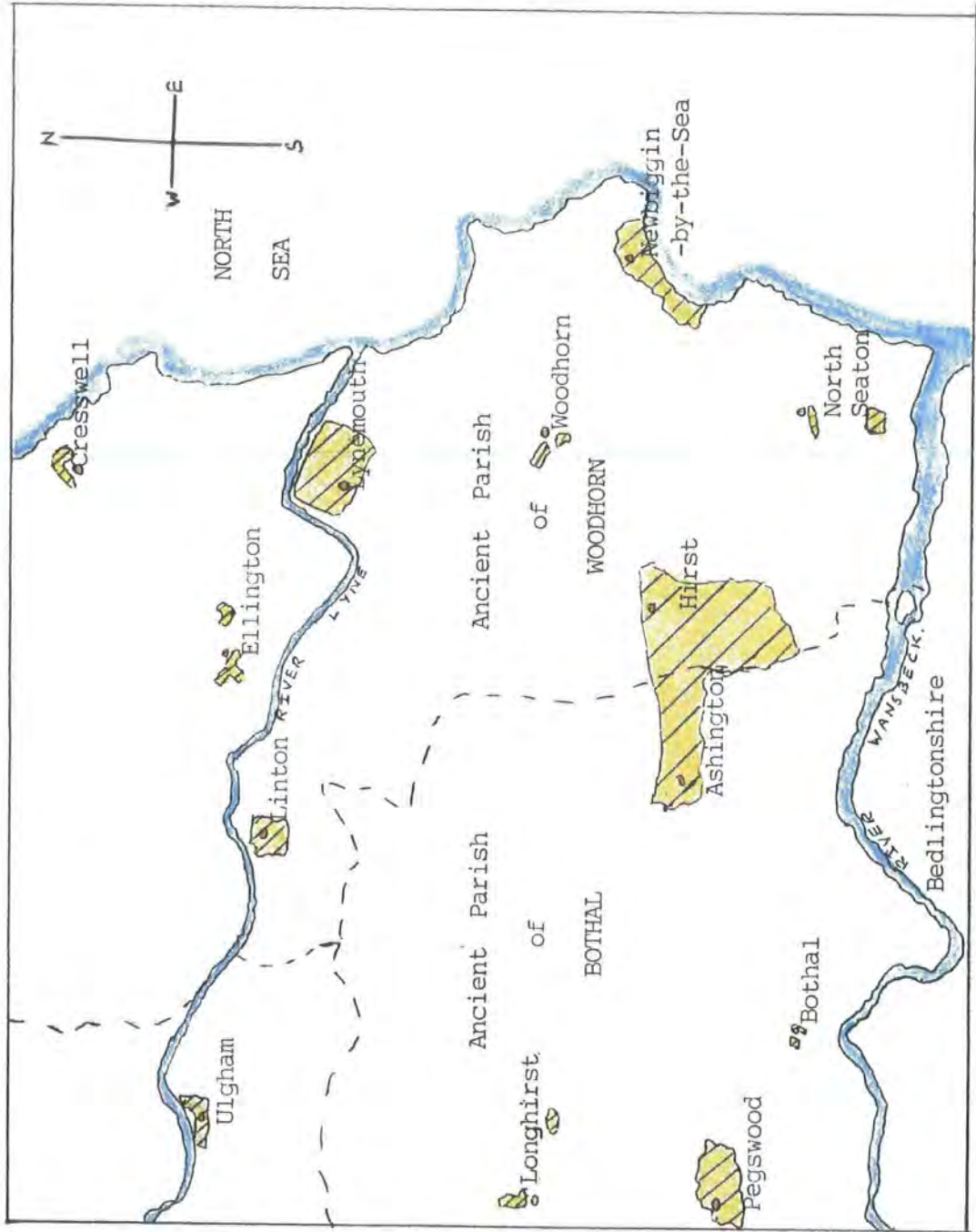
ART 24

"The summary of any report made by the inspector and any remarks made upon it by the Board, must, as soon as received, be copied verbatim into the log-book and signed by the correspondent."

Appendix 15.



MAP OF NORTHUMBERLAND, SHOWING THE LOCATION OF NOTABLE SETTLEMENTS AND ADJOINING COUNTIES (BOUNDARIES &c. OF THE 1918 - 1939 PERIOD).



Notes.

During the 1918 - 1939 period, the area was administered by the Ashington U.D.C., the Newbiggin U.D.C. and the Morpeth R.D.C.

The ancient parish boundary is shown thus: - - - -

Settlements are shaded thus: 

MAP OF THE BOTHAL AND WOODHORN AREA. (APPROXIMATE SCALE ONE INCH : ONE MILE.)

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PRIMARY SOURCES.

1. LOCAL

A. PRINTED.

i. Northumberland Central County Library, Morpeth.

The minutes of the Votes and Proceedings of Northumberland County Council, 1917-1918 to 1943-1944. An annual, indexed volume from 1889 to date

"The Morpeth Herald." A weekly local newspaper, available for the 1918 - 1939 period on microfilm.

ii. Northumberland County Library, Ashington.

"The Ashington Collieries' Magazine." Bound annual volumes are available for 1922, 1923, 1926, 1927, 1928, 1929, 1930, 1931, 1932, 1933, 1934, 1935, 1936, 1938, 1939 and 1940.

B. MANUSCRIPT.

The following documents are all deposited at the Northumberland County Record Office Modern Records Centre at Morpeth:-

- | | |
|---|--------------|
| i. Longhirst School Log Book, 1903 - 1919 | CES 178/2/4. |
| ii. Longhirst School Log Book, 1919 - 1947 | CES 178/2/5. |
| iii. Longhirst School Managers' Minute Book, 1928 - 1964 | CES 178/1/1. |
| iv. Longhirst School Admission Register, 1922 - 1965 | CES 178/3/2. |
| vi. Pegswood Mixed School Log Book, 1910 - 1939 | CES 215/2/4. |
| vii. Pegswood Senior School Log Book, 1939 - 1963 | CES 215/2/5. |
| viii. Pegswood Colliery Infant School Log Book, 1895 - 1922 | CES 215/2/2. |
| ix. Pegswood Colliery Infant School Log Book, 1923 - 1939 | CES 215/2/3. |
| x. Pegswood Schools Managers' Minute Book, 1921 - 1936 | CES 215/1/1. |
| xi. Pegswood Schools Managers' Minute Book, 1937 - 1971 | CES 215/1/2. |
| xii. Pegswood Mixed School Admission Register, 1916 - 1935 | CES 215/3/3. |
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2. NATIONAL.

- i. The Board of Education, (1919) Provisional Code of Regulations for public elementary schools in England. London. H.M.S.O.
- ii. The Board of Education, (1927) Report of the Consultative Committee on the Education of the Adolescent. London. H.M.S.O.
- iii. The Board of Education, (1927) Handbook of Suggestions. London. H.M.S.O.
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END-NOTES.

1. Much of the urban area of the geographical county was administered by the City and County of Newcastle Upon Tyne and the County Borough of Tynemouth.
2. Bothal and Woodhorn parishes were both very extensive until the development of new and rapidly growing mining villages and an expansion of population in the nineteenth century and early twentieth century led to the formation of new, smaller parishes (Prins and Massingberd-Mundy, 1982 pp. 111-120). During the 1918 - 1939 period, the area was administered by three district councils: Ashington U.D.C., Newbiggin by the Sea U.D.C. and Morpeth R.D.C. (J.M. Taylor, 1989 p. 58).
3. T.H. Rowland, 1995, "Wanderings along the River Wansbeck," 1995, Morpeth, Northumberland County Library and Leonard C. Leach, 1986, "The History of Cresswell, Ellington, Linton, Lynemouth and Woodhorn, privately published, are recent and useful general histories of the locality.
4. Population figures are available on a manuscript sheet in the reference collection at the County Library, Ashington, Northumberland.
5. Sir Henry Hadow (1859-1937) was Principal of Armstrong College, Newcastle Upon Tyne and served as Vice-Chancellor of the University of Durham, 1916 - 1918. (J.Stuart Maclure, 1965, p. 179).
6. It is possible that some teachers may have resigned from county council employment for reasons not associated with the war, but the fact that those who did resign had almost all attained commissioned rank suggests that their desire to leave teaching was the result of war service. It is of interest to note that teachers served in all three services and that several women served in the nursing services. A total of seventeen decorations and medals were awarded to members of the staff, who were also Mentioned in Despatches on six occasions.

Three members of the staff received multiple awards: Major A.W. Muir, (D.S.O., M.C. and Bar), Major T. Barrington (D.S.O. and twice Mentioned in Despatches) and Captain R. Sinclair (M.C. and M.M.). All three had worked as elementary school assistant teachers prior to their military service (Northumberland Education Committee Minutes, 1919, pp. 94-101).

7. Mr. Thomas Hutchinson retired as headmaster in 1921 after 42 years' service (P.M.S. Log, 24/3/1921, p. 174). The "Morpeth Herald" for 28th. January, 1921 gives an account of his career. Shortly after retiring as headmaster he was appointed school correspondent and clerk to the managers. (P.M.S.M. Minutes, 2/5/1921, p. 21). In 1937 he resigned as correspondent and clerk, having served the school for a total of 58 years (P.M.S.M. Minutes, 19/5/1937, pp. 3-4). Several other local headmasters completed long periods of office. In 1919, at Longhirst, Mr. John Kennedy retired after 45 years as headmaster (L.S. Log, 1/12/1919, p.4). Mr. W. Wilson served as headmaster of Ashington Bothal School from 1891 until 1920 and was succeeded by Mr. J. Gray, whose headship continued until 1942. Mr. Gray had joined the staff as a certificated teacher in 1899 (Little and Parker, 1973 p. 17 and p. 58).
- A1. See appendix 12 for a fuller account of the day continuation scheme.
- A2. See appendix 13 for a fuller account of Linton School.

