The comprehensive school: its theory and history: its foundation and split

Andrews, R.G.H.

THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL; ITS THEORY AND HISTORY.

BY R.G.H. ANDREWS

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Supervisor: Professor E.J.R. Eaglesham.

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INTRODUCTION.

This study is an attempt to trace the development of the comprehensive, or common, school. Since the passing of the Education Act of 1944 there has been more controversy over two topics - the establishment of comprehensive secondary schools and the "eleven-plus" examination - than any other aspect of education in this country. These two topics are not unrelated because the advocates of comprehensive schools maintain that such institutions would make the much-criticised eleven-plus examination unnecessary. This is because at the age for transfer to secondary education all children would go automatically to the local comprehensive school without being classified as "grammar", "technical", or "modern" types.

It is an unfortunate fact that when comprehensive schools are being discussed, many of the arguments put forward either for or against their adoption are on grounds other than educational. Ottoway (1) comments on this when he writes that comprehensive schools have been discussed at local government level on political party lines and that it is "difficult to find arguments on purely educational grounds which are not mixed with feelings derived from the wish to preserve or gain social status".

This point was made again in 1954 at the annual conference of the Association of Head Teachers of Secondary Technical Schools. The Director of Education for Liverpool, Mr. H.S. Magnay, stated (2) that the "arguments advanced for comprehensive schools are political and social and if you like, economic; they are not fundamentally educational".

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(1) A.K.C. Ottoway, "Education and Society", 1953, p. 55.

(2) "Education", 2nd April, 1954, p. 587.

Miss A.M. Bozman, in her Presidential Address at the 1957 annual conference of the Association of Head Mistresses, expressed what must have been the feelings of most people who were concerned with the educational aspects of comprehensive schools (1):-

"It is right that Local Education Authorities should experiment with comprehensive, co-educational, bi-lateral, single sex schools where their experiments are dictated by a sincere desire to find the type of school best suited to local educational needs; where the experiment seems the outcome of political ideology or mistaken economic expediency we can welcome it less warmly."

A study of the educational press in this country since the end of the Second World War reveals disagreements about the merits or demerits of these schools, even among those who have had first-hand experience of them either as teachers or taught (2).

After seeking to define the key terms "secondary", "comprehensive", "common" and "multilateral", this study will indicate the basic concepts of the true comprehensive school. Then will be shown where and how these originated and developed.

Part of the history of the development of the comprehensive school in this country is the story of how the ideal of "secondary education for all" was born, matured, and finally became accepted. Much of this story has been related by H.C. Dent in his book "Secondary Education for All", which was published in 1949.

Before the notion of the comprehensive secondary school was conceived, schools which were partly comprehensive were ~~conceived~~ advocated; these were given various names - "multi-bias", "omnibus", "multilateral" and others. This was all part

(1) "The Forward View", Association of Head Mistresses, 1957, p. 3.

(2) See, for example, letters in the "Times Educational Supplement", by P. Grant 22-3-1957, A.R. Barnes 11-10-57, and "Demos" 18-8-61.

of the move towards comprehensive secondary education. But before the idea of comprehensive secondary schools had been put forward, demands for common primary, or elementary, schools had been made, mainly in the nineteenth century.

Many people in this country are under the impression that the idea of comprehensive secondary schools originated with the British Labour Party. That this is not the case was indicated by Croft in 1950 (1):-

"The comprehensive school movement in England is often popularly identified with the Labour Party. It seems curious therefore that it escaped notice in Dr. R.H. Tawney's 'Secondary Education for All', published in 1921, so that the first reference we appear to have is contained in the National Union of Teachers' evidence to the Hadow Committee on the provision of a multi-bias type of post-primary school....apart from an interesting but enigmatic statement of Mr. Baldwin's in 1929, the comprehensive school is not featured again until a publication of the National Association of Labour Teachers in 1930. Thereafter the topic becomes common currency....but the question is yet unanswered of how the notion of a comprehensive school seeped into English educational thought, whence it came and when. I believe we must look back further to such innovations as the sending of the Moseley Commission in 1903 to the United States, and perhaps even to the Technical Commission of 1887; the direct results of these enquiries were developments in the neglected field of technical education, but it is also reasonable to suppose that the seeds of the comprehensive idea infiltrated from across the Atlantic to lie dormant for years until they grew up as a conscious political expression."

In fact, the American common elementary school was featured in both official Government documents and private documents in this country considerably earlier

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(1) John Croft, "The Roots of the Comprehensive School", "The New Era", May, 1950.

than 1887, and a number of people had in mind ideas for secondary education which were contained some of "the seeds of the comprehensive idea".

Two very important landmarks in the story of how the notion of the common, or comprehensive, school came to this country, and which will be dealt with in detail, were the National Education League, which was formed in 1869 in order to press for compulsory, free, unsectarian, elementary education for all classes of the community, and among whose members were some who were more far-reaching than this in their educational aims, and the Mosely Educational Commission to the United States of America which Croft mentions above. This Commission had not a little influence on the decision of the London County Council to introduce comprehensive schools to London as a consequence of the Education Act of 1944.

Although many of the seeds of comprehensiveness can be found years back in the writings of educational reformers and in the schools of the past, the two countries which had the most influence on this country were Scotland and America. Therefore a section of this study has been devoted to the educational systems in these countries.

In a study of this nature it would be impossible to go fully into why all the local education authorities which have adopted comprehensive schools have done so, because their reasons for doing so are very varied. But a study of how one such authority-the London County Council - came to its decision is related.

Then will be shown why some authorities preferred either a complete or partial system of comprehensive schools to the wholly tripartite system, and then a review of the position of such schools from 1961 to 1963. Much of this information was gained from questionnaires sent by the author of this study to local education authorities in 1960 and to comprehensive schools themselves in 1961.

Although many people for many years favoured schools for all sections of the community, the idea of common schools lay dormant until the emergence of the "working classes" as a united political and industrial force to be reckoned with, and also the passing of an Education Act which proclaimed "secondary education for all" without restricting the meaning of "secondary" to a particular kind of education and without specifying the type of schools which should be established. In fact, comprehensive schools could not become reality until "secondary education for all" was an accepted ideal in education.

SECTION I - DEFINITION OF TERMS.

Since the passing of the Education Act of 1944, there has been much confusion regarding the use of certain terms concerned with "secondary education". The first section of this study will therefore endeavour to clarify the meanings of these terms.

The comprehensive secondary school, with which this study is concerned, arose out of the ideal of "secondary education for all". This ideal was made a reality by the Act of 1944. But what exactly is "secondary education"?

Although the term had appeared in the Board of Education Act of 1899 - the first time it had appeared in an Act of Parliament - it was not until the 1944 Act that it was statutorily defined for the first time (1):-

"....secondary education, that is to say, full-time education suitable to the requirements of senior pupils, other than such full-time education as may be provided for senior pupils in pursuance of a scheme made under the provisions of this Act relating to further education."

The following was added to the above definition in the Education (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1948 (2):-

"and full-time education suitable to the requirements of junior pupils who have attained the age of ten years and six months and whom it is expedient to educate together with senior pupils."

Section 114 of the 1944 Act defines a "junior pupil" as "a child who has not attained the age of twelve years" and a "senior pupil" as "a person who has attained the age of twelve years but has not attained the age of nineteen years".

Apparently the first time that the words "primary" and "secondary" were used

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(1) "Education Act, 1944", section 8 (i).

(2) Section 3 of the Act.

with reference to education was in France in 1792. That year Antoine - Nicolas de Condorcet proposed setting up "école primaires" in villages and "écoles secondaires" in Departments in the "Rapport et projet de décret sur l'organisation générale de l'instruction publique" which was submitted by him to the Legislative Assembly. The terms were used in a French Education Act ten years later.

As is well known, it was Matthew Arnold who introduced the term "secondary" into the sphere of English educational thought; this was in the mid-nineteenth century. At this time education was a matter of class distinction in this country. "Elementary" education such as existed was for the lower classes of society; "grammar" school education was for the higher social orders.

Arnold found the term "secondary" being used in France, where it meant education above the primary level and below university level. When Arnold used the term he gave it the same meaning. In fact, he often spoke of the three parts of a comprehensively organised education scheme as "primary, secondary and superior".

However, like the majority of ~~people~~ people in the age in which he lived, Arnold did not regard secondary education as being the right of all classes of society. It was for the upper and middle classes; the lower classes had their elementary, or primary, education.

The term "secondary" was, however, used in 1869 with reference to education for <u>all</u> classes of society. At the first general meeting of members of the National Education League at Birmingham, a Mr. Alfred Field read a paper entitled "Free Schools", during which he stated that his hope for education in the future in this country was that "the new national school system will grow and be a complete and connected system of graded schools - primary, secondary, and high schools - all free". Mr. Field's thinking on education, which will be dealt with later in this study, was in advance of most educational thinkers of his day.

In spite of the obvious meaning of "secondary", the "grammar", or "secondary" school was not a second stage of education. It was education of a certain type which was required for entry into certain professions, and later, at least in England, as Dent (1) put it, became "more and more a ritual, a kind of prolonged initiation ordeal necessary for the acquirement or indication of superior social status".

In the "Report of the Royal Commission on Secondary Education, 1895" (the Bryce Commission Report), the Commissioners, on pages 135-136, gave a wider definition to "secondary education" than had up till that time been generally accepted. They defined the term so that it included "technical instruction". Their oft-quoted definition reads:-

"Secondary education....is the education of the boy or girl not simply as a human being who needs to be instructed in the mere rudiments of knowledge, but it is a process of intellectual training and personal discipline conducted with special regard to the profession or trade to be followed....culture is not an end in itself: it makes the private person of more value to society and to the State. All secondary schools, then, in so far as they qualify men for doing something in life, partake more or less in the character of institutes that educate craftsmen. Every profession, even that of winning scholarships, is a craft, and all crafts are arts. But if Secondary Education be so conceived, it is evident that under it technical instruction is comprehended. The two are not indeed identical, but they differ as genus and species, or as general and particular name, not as genus and genus or as opposed terms. No definition of technical instruction is possible

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(1) H.C. Dent, "Secondary Education for All", 1949, pp. 1 - 2.

that does not bring it under the head of Secondary Education, nor can Secondary Education be so defined as absolutely to exclude from it the idea of technical instruction....Secondary education, therefore, as inclusive of technical, may be described as education conducted in view of the special life that has to be lived with the express purpose of forming a person fit to live it."

The recommendations of the Bryce Commission concerning bringing technical education under the general heading of "secondary education" were ignored in the "Regulations for Secondary Schools, 1904-1905". The Regulations also ignored the secondary-type curricula of the higher grade schools which had been formed from ex-standards of the elementary schools and which were being absorbed into the secondary school system set up by the 1902 Act (Education). These Regulations were in fact based on the grammar and public schools' traditions. The Regulations define a secondary school as "a Day or Boarding School offering to each of its scholars up to and beyond the age of 16, a general education, physical, mental and moral, given through a complete graded course of instruction, of wider scope and more advanced degree than that given in Elementary Schools". The principal subjects to be taught in secondary schools were listed: English language and literature, geography, history, at least one other language, mathematics, science, drawing, manual and physical exercises, and practical housewifery for the girls.

The fact that for many people, prior to the 1944 Act, the terms "secondary" school and "grammar" school were synonymous was to a great extent the fault of the "Regulations for Secondary Schools, 1904-1905". This point is made on pages 71-72 of the "Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education with Special Reference to Grammar Schools and Technical High Schools, 1938" (the Spens Report):-

"Perhaps the most striking feature of the new Secondary Schools provided by local education authorities, which have so greatly increased in numbers since 1902,

is their marked disinclination to deviate to any considerable extent from the main lines of the traditional grammar school curriculum. That conservative and imitative tendency which is so salient a characteristic in the evolution of English political and social institutions, is particularly noticeable in this instance. The natural tendency, however, to keep within the ambit of the grammar school tradition was greatly re-enforced, and in a sense fostered, by the Regulations for Secondary Schools issued by the Board of Education in 1904-1905 and succeeding years."

Although the 1902 Education Act and the Secondary School Regulations quoted above did nothing to change the conception of a secondary school as one which provided a certain type of education, it did in fact cause local authorities to consider the relationship between elementary schools and secondary schools. At this time it was becoming more and more obvious that some children from the elementary schools, children of the working classes, could benefit by secondary education.

With the institution of the Free Place system in 1907, more and more children of the "lower orders" obtained places in secondary schools. At last the idea that secondary, or grammar, schools were only for the higher classes gradually broke down. But for most people "secondary" education still meant education of a certain type and while this was the case secondary education for all was meaningless because it was obvious that all children could not benefit from such schooling.

There were, however, during the early years of the twentieth century, certain people who did not regard secondary education as referring to a certain type of school, but rather to a stage in the educational process for all children. For example, in 1923 Fred Clarke wrote (1) that everybody needed secondary

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(1) Fred Clarke, "Essays in the Politics of Education", 1923, p. 87.

education and that this should be "a new type in which there is great diversification of types".

Another well known educationalist, R.H. Tawney stated (1)

"What the educationalist means by 'secondary' and 'primary' education has nothing to do with class stratification and the curious educational ritual which is annexed to it. It is adolescent education, and education which is preparatory to adolescent education....The younger the children the more precarious and unreliable the classification of them according to the test of examination. Hence all classifications made (as in examinations for free places) should be purely provisional; no child should be excluded from a secondary education as a result of them; all children should pass as a matter of course at the appropriate age to the secondary school, just as all children have passed up to that age through the primary school."

But in 1925 most people still believed that there was a difference between "secondary" and "post-primary" education - even some Members of Parliament. Part of a resolution recorded in HANSARD, 8th April, 1925, reads:-

"....adequate provision may be made for secondary or some form of full time post-primary education for all children up to the age of 16...."

In 1926 the Report of the Consultative Committee entitled "The Education of the Adolescent" (the Hadow Report) was published. This Report advocated some changes of terminology in the field of post-primary education. After "primary" education, which would end at the age of eleven or twelve, the Committee proposed (page xxi), "To the period of education which follows upon it we would give the name secondary; and we would make this name embrace all forms of post-primary

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(1) R.H. Tawney, "Secondary Education for All: A Policy for Labour", copy undated but probably 1921.

education, whether it be given in the schools which are now called 'secondary' or in central schools, or in senior departments of the schools now termed 'elementary'. If the term secondary is thus given a wider sense, some new term will be needed to denote the schools which now have the monopoly of the name 'secondary'; and we suggest that they should be called by the name of grammar schools."

The Committee, after hearing the evidence of several witnesses, came to their third conclusion, which equated the terms "post-primary" and "secondary" - "....the schools dealing with the post-primary or secondary stage of education...." (page 79)

The beginning of the Committee's seventh conclusion read as follows:-

"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." (page 95)

Thus the Hadow Committee gave to the word "secondary" its obvious and logical definition, but in spite of this the term was still used in two senses in this country. This is shown in page one of the Report of the Secondary School Examinations Council on "Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools", published in 1943:-

"The term 'secondary', as is well known, is used in at least two senses in England. On the one hand it is used to denote the education given in those schools which fall under the Regulations for Secondary Schools....On the other hand 'secondary education' is used in a much looser sense to mean any kind of education which follows upon 'primary' education, and therefore has reference to a stage in educational progress corresponding to the particular years in a child's life rather than to the precise nature of the instruction."

On page fourteen the Council point out that officially "secondary education"

still means "the education provided in Secondary Schools which inherit the Grammar School tradition" and then add that in the forty years since the beginning of the century "secondary education has gradually altered its meaning so as to denote a stage in the educational process rather than a type of educational programme".

But right up until the 1944 Act numbers of people still insisted that "secondary" and "grammar" were interchangeable terms. As long as this was so "secondary education for all" could never be realised, but as soon as it became officially a name for the second stage in education, embracing all kinds of schooling including academic, practical, technical, and so on, this ideal could become a reality.

And so, as has been shown, until the 1944 Act statutorily defined the term "secondary education", there was endless confusion over its precise meaning. It was this definition in the Act that took the comprehensive school out of the field of theory and made it a practicable proposition.

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During the 1930's the terms "multi-bias" and "multilateral" were being used quite frequently in educational circles in this country. The Spens Report of 1938 discussed the possibility of establishing multilateral schools which, being streamed into separate "sides", would offer secondary education of all kinds. However, this type of school did not find favour with the Committee who formulated this Report because they thought it would be a large school and that there would be difficulties in finding a suitable head teacher for such an institution.

Confusion over terminology arose during the 1940's. In the Norwood Report of 1943 ("Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools") it was stated that the term "multilateral school" had been used quite often in evidence to the

Committee but was a term which few witnesses used with the same meaning. The Report (pp. 18-19) stated that to some witnesses "the larger Secondary Schools (grammar schools) of today are already 'multilateral' in the sense that they offer alternative courses of study; others would carry further the diversity of courses so as to include curricula which would offer specialised courses in preparation for particular occupations; others again would extend the range of a multilateral school to include technical work such as is now undertaken in a Junior Technical School and also the curriculum appropriate to the existing Senior School. The vagueness of the phrase has in our opinion been responsible for much confusion of thought and statement, and in the interest of clarity we propose to avoid it, even at the risk of using a clumsy nomenclature".

From then on right up to 1947 the terms "common", "comprehensive" and "multilateral" were used as though they were interchangeable. On 15th February, 1947, the "Times Educational Supplement" commented on this in a leading article, pointing out that in a recent article in that journal a contributor had used the three terms in this manner.

The writer of this leading article then attempted to clarify the position by suggesting definitions for these terms, suggestions to be used as a basis for discussion:-

"The multilateral school is a secondary school offering a specified variety of courses, more than two in number, and receiving only pupils judged capable of profiting by one of the courses offered....

"A comprehensive school, then, is a secondary school offering every variety of study and activity judged appropriate for the formal education of pupils during the secondary stage....It could be selective or non-selective, according as to whether or not it was determined to restrict it to given levels of ability....

"The fundamental characteristic of the common secondary school is that it

accepts an unselected entry."

According to these definitions, the multilateral school would be selective. The interesting point about these suggestions is that at this time the Labour Party were advocating multilateral schools on the grounds that they were not selective schools, and this fact must have been known to the writer of the "Times Educational Supplement". In fact, at this period there was heated discussion within the Labour Party because although there was a Labour Government in this country the Minister of Education had not advocated an out-and-out system of multilateral non-selective schools.

However, in the same year, the Ministry of Education issued its Circular 144 (16th June, 1947) in which these various terms were officially defined. The various types of school over which there was so much confusion were defined as follows:-

"(a) a bilateral school means one which is organised to provide for any two of the three main elements of secondary education, i.e. modern, technical or grammar, organised in clearly defined sides;

"(b) a multilateral school means one which is intended to cater for all the secondary education of all the children in a given area and includes all three elements in clearly defined sides;

"(c) a comprehensive school means one which is intended to cater for all the secondary education of all the children in a given area without an organisation in three sides;

"(d) a school base (or 'campus') means a group of schools, usually unilateral, in separate buildings and each with its own headmaster or headmistress, catering for all the secondary education of a given area, but having certain common facilities and possibly sharing staff resources.

"4. The phrase 'common school' is also sometimes met. This can have a

variety of meanings but its most appropriate use would appear to be as a term covering the genus of (b) and (c) above.

"It seems likely that the comprehensive school, if it is to provide the desirable varieties of education to cater for all the senior children in a given area, may settle down to an organisation very little different from that of the multilateral school, except that the terms grammar, technical and modern will not be used, and its size must be about the same as a multilateral school."

In spite of this official definition, there was obviously still confusion in some quarters over the terms. For example, in 1950 J.H. Newsom wrote (1):-

"....many people advocate the 'comprehensive' or 'multilateral' school, to which all children would go at eleven...."

In the same year, this question was brought up in the House of Commons by Mr. James Johnson, Member of Parliament for Rugby (2):-

"In many people's minds there is confusion and misunderstanding about the difference between the comprehensive and multilateral school.

"The multilateral school is simply the old tripartite system in disguise. I would suggest that in such schools one has the academic block, the modern block, and the technical block in separate buildings on the same campus, and that the scholars merely enjoy mutual amenities, such as ~~pal~~ playing fields, swimming pools, and sometimes a school canteen. We should like to see more comprehensive schools."

However, eventually the definitions of Circular 144 were accepted. From 1948, the year after the publication of the Circular, the Labour Party, the

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(1) J.H. Newsom, "The Child at School", 1950, p. 83.

(2) HANSARD, Fifth Series, Volume 478, Column 647, Debate on Comprehensive Schools, 26th July, 1950.

chief advocates of comprehensiveness in this country after the Second World War, abandoned the term "multilateral", which they had hitherto used, and demanded "comprehensive" schools for all.

One of the first organisations in this country in the twentieth century to advocate a system of non-selective secondary schools for all pupils with no division into "sides" (i.e. "comprehensive" schools according to the definition of Circular 144) was the National Association of Labour Teachers. They were advocating such schools at a time when other organisations of similar political leanings were advocating multilateral schools. This organisation, in 1959, agreed with the definition of a comprehensive school as outlined in Circular 144 (1):-

"To the natural question 'What is a comprehensive school?' no answer can be provided better than that which the Ministry of Education provided on June 16th, 1947, in its Circular 144....

"....the comprehensive school takes all children and organises them into classes irrespective of the so-called educational type - grammar, technical or modern - to which they are alleged to belong.

"Ideally and by definition, therefore, a comprehensive school should take both boys and girls; but not every school which is officially known as comprehensive is, in fact, a mixed school."

Yet, strange as it may seem, in 1960-61 when the author of this study sent questionnaires to local education authorities and to comprehensive schools, there was still some confusion as to what exactly constituted a comprehensive school in some circles. This will be discussed later in this study.

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(1) Peter Ibbotson, "Secondary Education Without the Eleven-Plus", 1959, p. 12.

The term "comprehensive school" having been statutorily defined to the satisfaction of all interested parties in education, what can therefore be stated as being the basic concepts of such a school?

They are as follows:-

(1) It is a local, or neighbourhood, school, supplying all the secondary educational needs of its prescribed area.

(2) It must, therefore, be attended by all children of secondary school age in the area it serves.

(3) Attendance must be compulsory in order to ensure that all children of the appropriate age group do, in fact, attend.

(4) Taking all the children of a given locality, it must of necessity be a co-educational school.

(5) Internally, there must be no "sides" or rigid classification of pupils, and for the first two years it must provide a "common core" of studies.

Why are comprehensive schools local schools? The reason for this is not educational but social. It is argued that under the tripartite system (separate grammar, technical and modern schools) children attending different schools become "class conscious", for example, grammar school children, in general, tend to feel that they are "better" than those at other schools, while modern school children tend to feel rejected and inferior. This is carried on into adulthood and these artificial class distinctions, started at school, are usually kept up throughout life. In addition to this, it is usually the case that more children of the middle and upper classes are deemed suitable for the grammar schools than children of the working class. Comprehensive schools, it is claimed, will help to create social harmony.

The Labour Party commented on this point in a duplicated pamphlet entitled "Comprehensive Schools" in 1956. This stated that "Schools reflect the society

of the adult world. The pre-war dichotomy between the education for the better off and that of the poor reflected the class conscious society of that period. The comprehensive school is a reflection of the classless society towards which socialists are working, where children of rich and poor, professional man and labourer mix together as equals, if not in talents, at least in status".

Several writers (1) have emphasised this social aspect of the local school and the fact that it is 'democratic' in that it helps to break rigid class stratification outside the school. A publication of the English New Education Fellowship (2) put it thus:-

"The sociological significance of the Comprehensive School is that it is capable of becoming a function of its community in a way that the segregated or the 'type' school cannot; for the Comprehensive School is coterminous with the community; it is the whole community at a certain age and stage.

"This close identification of the school with its whole community makes it a far more effective field for training in citizenship than the selective and segregated school."

Other writers and educationalists, however, have seen what they believe to be a flaw in this argument that the local school helps to break artificial class barriers by the mixing of all the local children of secondary school age. They have pointed out that if children in selective schools are chosen from all classes of the community a movement towards a more homogeneous society is under way and that often, because of their local character, the mixture of differing social groups in a comprehensive school will be smaller than in other

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(1) See, for example, "University of London Institute of Education Studies in Education No. 6: The Problems of Secondary Education Today", 1954, p. 66.

(2) "The Comprehensive School", undated, but about 1950, pp. 16-17.

types of school. It is pointed out by these writers (1) that in many districts, for example in predominantly working class areas or predominantly middle class areas, this social mixing could not take place because the people in these areas would all be from the same class, background and, possibly, culture.

This situation has arisen, in many instances, because existing comprehensive schools have been serving catchment areas which had previously been drawn for schools under the tripartite system. It could be overcome in some cases by a re-drafting of catchment areas to ensure, as far as is possible, that children from differing social groups do attend the same comprehensive school.

Some critics of the comprehensive school have pointed out what they feel is another danger in the so-called classlessness of these schools. They point out (2) that class distinctions may be created <u>inside</u> comprehensive schools because the children themselves and their teachers will know the differences between various groups, for example, the children who intend leaving school at fifteen years of age and those who will be staying on until eighteen.

Following from the second and third basic concepts of the comprehensive school, it is obvious that in order to supply <u>all</u> the secondary educational needs of <u>all</u> the local children, other types of school must be suppressed. There could not be private and public schools, denominational schools, grammar, modern and technical schools serving the same locality. Unless these schools were suppressed, the comprehensive school could not claim to be <u>truly</u> comprehensive.

This point has been discussed, particularly by the Labour Party, who state that if and when they are returned to power in this country they will require

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(1) See, for example, Eric James, "An Essay on the Content of Education", 1949, p. 100, and A.D.C. Peterson, "Educating Our Rulers", 1957, p. 47.

(2) William A. Robson in an article in the "Journal of Education", February, 1952, for example; "The Labour Party and Comprehensive Schools".

local education authorities to adopt the comprehensive principle with all reasonable speed. They also state that "comprehensive education does not imply one type of comprehensive school". (1)

At their annual conference at Scarborough in 1958, during a debate on education, Mrs. Renee Short declared (2) that "As long as the private sector is allowed to exist, so long will you stab in the back the comprehensive system that you will be trying to put over".

The following year the grammar school came under discussion (3). Miss Alice Bacon, M.P. stated, "One criticism is that we are destroying the grammar school. We are doing nothing of the kind. We want to adapt the grammar schools to present-day needs." During the same conference, Councillor J. Wood of Birmingham took up this point. "I must criticise the National Executive Committee for saying we will not abolish grammar schools in 'The Future Labour Offers You'. Unless we abolish them we will never have a fully comprehensive system."

Although the official definition of a comprehensive school is that it takes all the children of a particular locality, it is always taken for granted by writers on the subject that "all" does not include educationally sub-normal and other handicapped children. For example, Robin Pedley in "The Comprehensive School", 1963, assumes these children will not be in attendance at a comprehensive school, and in the Labour Party pamphlet referred to above ("Comprehensive Schools") it is stated that all children attend these schools,"only children

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(1) Labour Party, "Learning to Live", 1958, p. 33.

(2) Labour Party Conference Report, 1958, p. 100.

(3) Labour Party, "Fourth Annual Conference of Labour Group Representatives, January 31st and February 1st, 1959", pp. 17 and 22.

requiring special education of some kind would not be included".

Although it is quite true that many handicapped children will seldom or never mix with ordinary children and adults when they leave school, this cannot be said about all educationally sub-normal children. Most of these, in fact, do take their places in the normal outside world when they leave school. And one of the reasons for advocating comprehensive schools, as stated above, is that of social coherence and solidarity.

On this point of the mixing of the bright and the backward, Mr. W.G. Cove, M.P. wrote in an article in "The Schoolmaster" dated 8th May, 1947:-

"It is good for the child of ~~re~~ordinary capacity - and even the dullard - to mix in the same school community with the bright child....If the school is to prepare boys for life then it must contain all sorts within it."

In fact, along these lines, the case for educating educationally sub-normal children in the comprehensive school is a strong one.

In this connection it is interesting to note that in the Isle of Man there are no special schools for educationally sub-normal children and that they do attend the Island's "comprehensive" schools. The author of this study wrote to Mr. J.R. Smith, M.A., Headmaster of Castle Rushen High School, Castletown, Isle of Man, on this subject.

In a reply dated 8th October, 1963, Mr. Smith stated that at his school in the past eight years there had been two definitely E.S.N. children. These were placed in the school's Junior Backward Form and "By kindness they eventually reached the Senior Backward Form, but they could not properly read or write or attempt numeration". Mr. Smith continued, "We have two teachers with experience of backward children who did their best with the E.S.N. pupils, but we do not have the special equipment that is so essential".

Mr. Smith added that these children were accepted by the rest of the school

community, being neither scorned nor pitied. It was his personal opinion, however, that educationally sub-normal children, because of their special problems, should go to special E.S.N. schools.

The essential difference between a comprehensive school and a multilateral school is that the former has no rigidly defined "sides" but that the latter does. In addition to no classification into "sides", certain educationalists - in particular Robin Pedley and Brian Simon - maintain that in a true comprehensive school there should be no "streaming" either. This point is not conceded by all advocates of comprehensive schools. Yet in a pamphlet issued by the Conservative Party Bow Group (1) the very opposite is maintained:-

"....a bright boy is certainly held back in an unstreamed school, but streaming is an integral part of the English comprehensive school, where the bright boy has classmates of the same intelligence as would be the case if his area were served by a grammar school."

That the "common core" of studies should occupy all pupils during their first two years at the comprehensive school is agreed by all its advocates(2). This, of course, does not mean that all pupils will be taught by the same methods and proceed at the same uniform pace or even be with the same group of pupils for all lessons. After this first two years, in most schools the pupils begin to specialise.

The five points enumerated on page 19 of this study, then, are the basic concepts of the true comprehensive school. It is interesting to note, however, that the term "comprehensive school" has been used in a slightly different way

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(1) "Willingly to School", 1959, p. 29.

(2) Examples are as follows:- "Education", 11th January, 1946, p. 86; "Journal of Education", April, 1949, p. 196; Brian Simon, "Intelligence Testing and the Comprehensive School", 1953, p. 103.

recently, as Pedley (1) indicates:-

"Recently it has been more loosely used, e.g. in the Crowther Report and by the London County Council, to indicate schools which provide suitable courses for a wide range of ability but which do not necessarily take practically all local children."

Just before making this statement, Pedley himself defined a comprehensive school as "taking practically all the children" - not "all the children" - and apart from exempting the educationally sub-normal and physically handicapped, also exempted "those attending independent schools".

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(1) Robin Pedley, "The Comprehensive School", p. 211.

SECTION II - SCOTLAND AND AMERICA.

Some of the features of the educational systems of Scotland and America have influenced the advocates of comprehensive schools in this country. So much so, as will become evident later in this study, that it is worth looking at these systems in some detail. The American system has had the greatest influence on the comprehensive schools in this country but in the past the local, or neighbourhood, schools of Scotland have also had some effect on educational reformers.

The concept of a neighbourhood school can be traced back several centuries in Scotland. In addition to this, the Scottish people have for years had the type of educational institution where children of all social classes are educated side by side.

In Scotland, as in this country, the early Church can claim credit for the foundation of the educational system. The physical nature of the country has also had its effect upon the type of education provided for the Scottish people. Wade (1) points out this fact that the mountainous and irregular features of Scotland had until a few decades ago made communication difficult in the Highlands and in parts of the Southern Uplands. As a result of this villages had to become self-supporting to a great extent. "In education these conditions have operated to make the parish and village school of supreme importance to the community, and have emphasised its development as a composite school, a school to serve the entire educational needs of both sexes together below the university".

For many years in Scotland the Roman Catholic Church was the only educational body; there were no schools outside its jurisdiction. From these educational efforts of the early Church rose the famed Scots "parish" school. It is possible, of course, that the seeds of this school are as old as the Church itself.

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(1) Newman A. Wade, "Post-Primary Education in the Primary Schools of Scotland, 1872-1936", 1939, p. 11.

It was round about the twelfth century, when the parish became the unit of ecclesiastical and social organisation, that the "parish" school took on definite shape.

The "burgh" schools of Scotland are just as famous as the "parish" schools. It is possible that these too originated with the early Church. But however they originated - whether from the Church or from the people themselves - schools were established in all reasonable sized towns in Scotland by the close of the fifteenth century. A witness (1) of the House of Lords' "Select Committee appointed to inquire into the duties, emoluments, and present condition of the Parochial Schoolmasters in Scotland" (1845) stated that "burgh" schools are really "grammar" schools; in some instances these "burgh" schools may have been as the "parish" schools but in 1845 "burgh" schools were devoted to the teaching of the classics.

These "parish" and "burgh" schools, then, could claim to possess some of the seeds of comprehensiveness; they were open to all and they were essentially neighbourhood schools. For centuries the Scottish people have attached great value to education - far greater than the English people - and class-consciousness has never existed to such a degree in Scotland as it has in this country.

In 1560 Scotland missed its opportunity to organise and maintain an educational system which was virtually comprehensive. That year, John Knox's "First Book of Discipline" was presented, in draft form, to the Council of the Congregation. The chapter in his book which was devoted to education outlined a graduated system of educational institutions.

Under Knox's scheme, the system originated by the Roman Catholic Church where there was a school connected with each parish church in sparsely populated country-districts

(1) Dr. Muir. James Kay Shuttleworth discusses this Select Committee's Report in his book "Public Education", 1853, pp. 327 et seq.

country districts was to be carried on. The minister or reader of each parish would organise and conduct the school, in which the children would be taught the rudiments, with emphasis on the Catechism. The children would attend these schools from the age of six to eight years.

Larger villages and smaller towns were to contain grammar schools maintained by the local church at its own expense. The master in these grammar schools would give instruction in grammar, Latin and the Catechism. The children would attend these grammar schools from the age of eight to twelve years.

The point of real interest about these schools is that attendance was to be compulsory for both rich and poor, for "it must be carefully provided that no father, of what estate or condition he be, use his children for his own phantasy, especially in their youth-head; but all must be compelled to bring up their children in learning and virtue". ("First Book of Discipline")

Morgan, commenting on Knox's scheme of education, writes (1):-

"The Book of Discipline proposed that in Scotland there should be a complete educational highway from the Elementary School to the University; that there should be one system of education for the son of the laird and the son of the labourer; that education should not be the privilege of a class, but the common need and right of all; and that there should be free scope and assistance, where necessary, for the upward movement of ability in every rank of society. Had the proposals of the Book of Discipline been adopted, Scotland would have forestalled its educational progress by centuries."

Knox, of course, advocated what today's protagonists of comprehensiveness in this country would like to see. He wanted local schools where children of all classes of society could be educated together, and this education was to be

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(1) Alexander Morgan, "Makers of Scottish Education", 1929, p. 54.

compulsory; education was not to be a privilege but the right of all and he required that children should stay at school until the talents by which ~~he~~ they could best serve the community could be discovered. Although the scheme of Knox did not come to fruition, it was certainly magnificant in its intention.

On the 10th December, 1616, the Privy Council directed that a school should be set up in every parish of Scotland and a "fit person" appointed as teacher. In 1633 this act of the the Council was ratified in Parliament. These schools were to be maintained at public expense. The reason for the establishment of such institutions was the anxiety of the king that the "true religion should be advanced and established in all parts of the kingdom".

Parish schools were well established in Scotland by the eighteenth century. They were remarkable because they promoted knowledge among peoples of all kinds; children from the highest to the lowest classes attended them and were taught together.

These parish schools often offered elementary and secondary education in the same building . As they were attended by all social classes, thus education of varying standards was given to children from these social groups, and numbers of children left these schools to go straight to the universities. The parish schools were by no means confined to the education of boys, girls were educated in them too.

In the towns the schools which provided grammar school education were the burgh schools. Many of these, like the parish schools, were co-educational. Not all of them had very high standards of education, however. These burgh schools were attended by children from families widely separated in the social scale, and they charged very low fees. Morgan (1) comments on this social mixing as being "beneficial to the whole tone and intellectual work of the

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(1) Alexander Morgan, "Rise and Progress of Scottish Education", 1929.

school" and states that it "created a valuable bond of union in a democratic community". He adds that although schools in the larger burghs only taught the classics till the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the smaller burghs these schools gave instruction in nearly every subject; in fact, they were doing practically the same work in the burghs as the parish schools were doing in the country.

No better summing-up of the work of the parish schools of Scotland can be given than the evidence of Dr. William Pyper, Professor of Humanity in St. Andrew's University, to the Select Committee of the House of Lords in 1845 (see page 27 of this study):-

"The Parochial Schools of Scotland perform the functions of three classes of Schools on the Continent. In the first place, they are Primary or Elementary Schools, properly so called; in the second place, they are Burgher or Commercial Schools, where more extended instruction, but generally excluding the ancient languages, may be obtained; and thirdly, they serve the purpose of Grammar Schools throughout Scotland." (1)

Thus it can be seen that the parish and burgh schools of Scotland provided a pattern of local, classless schools which certainly were in line with some of the basic concepts of comprehensive schools as envisaged in this country today. Many of these schools offered both primary and secondary education to rich and poor alike and in them the "academic" type of pupil has always been encouraged to make the most of his talents, irrespective of his parents' financial and social status. Yet one important question must be answered: with this example of seemingly "democratic" education, as it were, on her very doorstep for all to study, why did England not adopt the same or a similar system?

There would appear to be several answers to this question. First of all,

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(1) As reported by James Kay Shuttleworth in "Public Education", 1853, p. 335.

for centuries in Scotland education has been regarded as the right of all and not as a privilege of a favoured few. It was otherwise in England because of the very high degree of class-consciousness that pervaded the country. The "lower" orders, it was maintained, had no right to education at all but should be thankful for any elementary education that was provided for them. As will be shown later, however, there were a few reformers even in England who did not subscribe to this theory.

Secondly, many of the pupils of the Scottish parish schools received what was a grammar school education and went straight from these schools to the university. In these same schools elementary education was also provided. In other words, primary and secondary education have never been so divorced from each other in Scotland as they were in England, where elementary education was for one social class and secondary education for another.

Thirdly, and probably most important of all, the Scottish people as a whole attached very great value to education; not so the working classes in England. For example, even after the Elementary Education Act of 1870, in which Mr. W.E. Forster attempted to "fill the gaps" in the field of elementary education in England, by ensuring that elementary schools were available wherever there were none at the time, numbers of the poorer people in England did not desire their children to attend school. Obviously much of this antagonism towards education was because of the poverty of these people; they would rather see their children contributing in some small measure to the family finances from their wages than see them at school and making no such financial contribution.

But although nothing was <u>done</u>, as will be indicated later, some of the ideals behind the Scottish system did drift into this country and, it must be assumed, did influence educational reformers who were dissatisfied with education as it was here.

It is a fact that the "common elementary schools" and the "comprehensive high schools" of America had the greatest influence on the comprehensive schools in this country today. Before discussing the American system, it will be advantageous to see just how it differed from the Scottish system which has just been dealt with in this study.

In 1939 Wade (1) compared the theories of education in Scotland and America. He points out that in Scotland intellectual ability and achievement have been emphasised with financial help to those children who possess academic ability. But in the United States of America secondary school opportunities have been provided at public expense and there has been no direct financial assistance to any children. The opportunities of secondary education have been "sufficiently wide to include all children alike". In Scotland "post-primary education has been organized to a considerable extent, less in the last few decades, to give the select few an opportunity to obtain a thorough education," while in America this education has been organised "to meet the needs of the majority of pupils". He concludes that "The Scottish tradition has encouraged an individualistic competitive outlook in education; the American tradition, a more socialized outlook".

The point made by Wade, above, that in the American high school the most capable academic children have been often comparatively neglected, is often put forward during discussions on the comprehensive school, although sometimes it is strenuously denied (e.g. W.T. Stevenson, article "The Multilateral School", in the "Journal of Education", November, 1946, p. 600). Naturally, when this point is put, advocates of comprehensive schools either deny it or say that what is

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(1) Newman A. Wade, "Post-Primary Education in the Primary Schools of Scotland, 1872-1936", 1939, pp. 31-32.

true of America need not necessarily be true in this country. But G.C.T. Giles (1), while admitting that this charge may be true, wonders if it is really a defect in the system:-

"....its (the comprehensive school of the U.S.A.) critics argue that the standards of attainment are two years behind that of our grammar school. This may well be, since it is a non-selective school, and caters for almost one hundred per cent of the school population, whereas our grammar schools cater for a carefully selected minority, and offer a somewhat restricted curriculum. Is it necessarily a grave defect, if a lower standard of academic attainment is balanced by a more leisurely acquisition of knowledge, and a wider training in other activities?"

The American common school - one that would educate children of all social classes and religious faiths together and would be free of charge - had its origins in Massachusetts. In 1789 the first state-wide school law was passed; schools had to be maintained by small towns for at least six months of the year and maintained by the large towns for the whole year.

The common school was originally an elementary school and later the comprehensive high school developed from it. Even today most Americans hold that the common school is the most democratic of institutions in their country. In the nineteenth century - at least in the later years of it - it was the common school of America that was the inspiration of many educationalists in this country and many of them advocated that a similar scheme should be started in this country.

In America the Government has no control over the educational systems of the various states. And there is no part of the United States where there is

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(1) G.C.T. Giles, "The New School Tie", 1946, pp. 77-78.

no public (not the meaning of the word as used in this country but meaning open to the people) school. All districts have a common, or public, school of some sort, ranging from one-room rural schoolhouses (rapidly on the way out) to institutions catering for about 9,000 pupils of varying aptitudes and abilities.

The elementary schools take children from four or five years of age to the ages of twelve, thirteen or fourteen - the variations depend upon local organisation of education. The elementary school aims to give its pupils certain basic knowledge and to develop their individual abilities.

After eight years at the elementary school, children proceed to the high school for four years. However, over the past few years, a number of states have introduced the junior high school; with this system, the child completes six years at the elementary school, three years at the junior high school and three years in the senior high school.

In the first years of high school the children take English, social sciences, mathematics, applied science and physical education. There may also be a choice of foreign languages, fine arts or vocational subjects. During the final two high school years children have a choice of additional subjects.

Judges (1) writing in 1954 of the American system stated that the comprehensive high schools in parts of America reflect the "characteristic democratic spirit" of their localities, but then adds that "in the Deep South, in New York City and in Chicago, very different experiences have followed the setting up of large omnibus schools. You might almost say from American experience that each locality gets in the comprehensive high school the degree of racial and economic antagonism it deserves".

But in theory all America has a system of education which is comprehensive; free, local schools open to all people irrespective of the social grouping they

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(1) A.V. Judges, "The Comprehensive School", article in "University of London Studies in Education No. 6", 1954, p. 71.

come from. Obviously, however, such a system is not perfect. E.J. King in "World Perspectives in Education", 1962, points out that in the United States, with its thousands of autonomous school districts, obviously some are better than others. Although in theory there is equality, in fact most Americans know that certain localities provide better facilities than others. Reasons for this state of affairs are social or geographical. But so fluid is American society generally and people are both educationally and socially mobile so that these advantages are often temporary ones. King adds that Americans take all this for granted when discussing their own system of education but that outsiders reading American books, articles, etc., on this system usually are unaware of it.

In addition to the public schools, there are, in America, a number of fee-paying schools. Several of these prepare students for entry to a particular college; some of these schools are supported by religious denominations.

The American comprehensive high school, then, minus the alleged defect of not catering for the intellectually gifted child, is the model school in the eyes of most enthusiasts for the comprehensive school in England. In spite of this alleged defect, the points that appealed to educational reformers in this country were that they were local, free and open to all.

SECTION III - "THE SEEDS OF COMPREHENSIVENESS" UNTIL THE END OF THE 19TH CENTURY.

Although the school systems of America and Scotland had the most influence on the comprehensive school movement in this country, some of "the seeds of comprehensiveness" - or the basic concepts of the true comprehensive school - can be discerned in schools of this country and other countries in the past. Writings of certain educationalists of the past also contained some of these seeds. However, up until the end of the nineteenth century there is no real connected story of the development of the comprehensive school; these seeds of comprehensiveness can be detected here and there.

The earliest glimmerings of some of the basic concepts of the comprehensive school can be seen in some of the schools of the ancient world. Although there was nothing resembling the present-day state system of education in this country in ancient Athens, there was indeed a mixing of the children of the wealthy and the poorer Greeks in the schools of those times. The ages for beginning and ending school life were not fixed by statute - they depended, in most instances, on the financial position of the boys' parents. The sons of rich parents went to school earlier than sons of poor parents and they stayed there longer. The reason for this was that the poorer parents naturally wished their sons to contribute to the family income as soon as was practicable. Nevertheless, the fact remains that boys of differing social backgrounds did mix together in the same schools.

Early Roman education took place within the family circle; this was because of the power which Roman fathers possessed over their children. According to Barclay (1) some form of "organised" system of schooling in Rome arose round about the middle of the third century B.C.

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(1) William Barclay, "Educational Ideals in the Ancient World", 1959, p. 159.

This form of Roman education apparently consisted of three stages. First, there was the school of the litterator, which was the elementary school (ludus); then the school of the grammaticus, or the teacher of grammar and literature; finally, there was the school of the rhetor, or the teacher of rhetoric.

It was in the elementary schools - which sometimes took in girls as well as boys - that one of the seeds of comprehensiveness was to be found, as in the Athenian schools mentioned above; the mixing of all ranks and classes. Children started attending these schools at the age of six or seven and left at about the age of twelve or thirteen. In earlier times this elementary school had been the only school at all in Rome. The instruction received there was generally of very poor quality and in the main was confined to reading, writing and counting.

Thus it can be seen that these ludi of the Romans sometimes had one, and sometimes two elements of comprehensiveness - they were attanded by all social classes and sometimes they were mixed. There is no evidence that this mixing led to any form of social integration as is claimed for the present-day comprehensive school, although what happened in two states so utterly different from twentieth-century England could hardly be expected to have much resemblance to what might happen here.

What of "neighbourhood" schools? Where did this conception arise? In fact, such schools date back a long time in history. For example, the Jewish people established such community, or local, schools soon after the Exile.

To the Jews, education was always religious education; the task of primary education was to prepare the child for reading the Law and further education was the study and reading of it. Jewish education was also centred in the home. In fact, prior to the Exile there is no mention of schools as institutions at all.

The synagogue was, after the Exile, the earliest educational institution.

Originally the synagogue would be used on the Sabbath and on feast-days as a place of instruction and later it was, in many cases, used as a centre to teach any boys who could get parental permission to attend.

It is still an open question as to when these schools (elementary) first became universal. The ordinance of Gamala (64 A.D.) required that every community establish one or more elementary schools, and these schools were always to be found in the synagogue or in the master's house.

When there was an abundance of these elementary schools, however, there was no guarantee that every boy would receive a religious education. Therefore it was legislated that one or more elementary schools be established in every community and attendance was compulsory for boys who were over seven years of age. It is very likely that only reading, writing and simple arithmetic were taught in these elementary schools.

Although some of the basic concepts of the comprehensive school of today can be found in the ancient world, the schools discussed above could not be called "comprehensive" in the sense in which the word is understood in this country today. Children were not educated in local schools to combat class distinction; the mixing of different classes, when it took place, was in all probability just fortuitous. As regards the Jewish people, it was obviously of vital importance to them that their youth should be instructed in their religion and what simpler and more obvious way of ensuring this than to set up community schools?

The idea of local schools can be discovered in the organisation of the early Church in this country. The early Church set great store on education - mainly for religious purposes - and it is out of the parochial system of the early Church that the local, or neighbourhood, school developed in this country. According to Drane (1) the first mention of the establishment of rural parishes

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(1) A.T. Drane, "Christian Schools and Scholars", 1881, pp. 11 & 110.

with their parish priests was made in 528 at the Council of Vaison, and he also states that the Saxons regarded the education of the children of parishioners as one of the principal duties of a parish priest.

In this country, until the Reformation, education was in the hands of the Church and, as mentioned above, it is to the Church that the idea of a local or neighbourhood school is owed. The district over which a priest had spiritual oversight was the "parish" and the parish was, in effect, the "catchment area" of the early schools. There is not universal agreement as to how the parochial system began in this country, but it has been argued that the Saxon "tun" was used as the unit of ecclesiastical organisation and became known as the "parish". On the other hand, Alexander Morgan (1) points out that the Church passed from a tribal to a territorial basis with the advent of feudalism and that under this a system of episcopal dioceses under the control of bishops was organised by the Church. The parochial system came into being with this diocesan organisation. Morgan agrees that there is no full agreement as to how the parochial system came into existence, but points out that the word "parish" seems at one time to have been applied to a bishop's diocese. Later, when this district became too much for one person to cope with, it was sub-divided into smaller areas called "parishes" each parish being under the care of a priest.

The main, possibly the only, subject taught in these early local schools was Latin. Latin was the language of the Church and most people did not know it, therefore to participate fully in the worship of the Church it was important to gain a knowledge of the language if at all possible. The custom thus quite naturally arose that a "school", or rather Latin class, should be organised for those people who wished to learn the language. The obvious person to turn to

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(1) Alexander Morgan, "Rise and Progress of Scottish Education", 1927.

for instruction in this language was the local parish priest and so he became the teacher in the local "school" and his parishioners were his "pupils".

Apart from the fact that the local parish priest was probably the only educated person in a neighbourhood, travel was difficult and transport problems almost insuperable in the days of the early Church. Thus the local schools arose quite through accident and circumstances prevailing; there was nothing deliberately planned about them.

Boyd (1) makes reference to what would appear to be one of the first, if not the first, cases of a school in this country attended by people from different classes of society, not necessarily from the same locality, although the reference is rather a doubtful one:-

"Alfred began his reforms by encouraging education in the Church; and, if we are to believe the romancing pseudo-Asser who wrote Alfred's 'Life' a century later, he expended an eighth of his income on the maintenance of a Palace School, which was attended by many boys of noble birth and even by boys of humbler rank."

Adamson (2) remarks that in the thirteenth century mention was made in both episcopal charges and decrees of councils that parish priests should organise and run schools and teach parishioners freely. There are not many details concerning these schools available but Adamson feels that they may possibly be compared with the instruction given by Sunday schools or the parish priest's catechising of his parishioners' children today. Another important point about these local "schools" was that girls as well as boys were allowed to attend them.

The monasteries in this country in the Middle Ages also showed a disregard for social class in their selecting of members. The monks believed and taught that "Christian men are brothers, whether high or low, noble or ignoble, lord or

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(1) William Boyd, "The History of Western Education", ~~2nd~~ 6th edition 1952, p. 123.

(2) J.W. Adamson, "A Short History of Education", 1922, p. 11.

slave". If any boys showed vocation and some ability, they were admitted to the monasteries and given the finest education the monks could offer; social status was ignored.

There is evidence that neighbourhood schools existed at the time of the Reformation, and many of these educated local children freely. Much of this evidence is quoted in a celebrated book by A.F. Leach - "English Schools at the Reformation 1546-8", 1896 - in which he makes use of and quotes from actual documents ("Being Commissions, Extracts from Certificates and Warrants Under the Chantries Acts 37 Henry VIII. c. 14 and I Edward VI. c. 4.")

From "Durham, Bishoprick of. Certificate 18 (Henry VIII)" concerning "The Guylde of the Trinitie in Bernard Castell": "A preste....to kepe A free Grammer scoole and A songe scoole for all the children of the towne." (Leach, p. 61)

From "The Parishe of Bembridge" in "The Hundred of Stratford": "Certeyn landes and tenementes gyven to the fyndynge of A prest, to celebrate one masse wekely at the said alter, and to be a scole master to teache chylderne borne within the said parishe Frely." (Leach, p. 94)

From "The Parishe of Cannok": "And the same priest thise 30 yeres past hath kept a grammer scole in the same parishe, and taught children of the said parishe for the most parte freely." (Leach, p. 202)

From "The Chauntery of Kyngeley": "The incombent is bound by the foundacion to teche frely children of the said parishe, whereupon he hath yerely gyven to the fyndyng of a scolemaster there, 31s. 8d." (Leach, p. 206)

At this stage the seeds of comprehensiveness can be discerned only in odd places here and there; there is no logical connection anywhere. For it is a fact that, in general, education was not regarded as the right of every person in the community until much later in history. In spite of this, the Church was responsible for a number of schools being set up for all people in a particular

locality and later a number of educational reformers - both in this country and from abroad - did advocate a system of schools in which most definitely some of the basic concepts of comprehensive schools can be seen.

One of these reformers who wanted a "system of education as free and unrestricted as the Gospel he preached: indifferent, like the Gospel, to distinctions of sex or social class" (1) was Martin Luther (1483-1546). Luther valued education that was given by parents but he also maintained that schools should be set up for all children and that these schools should be financed by the municipalities. Luther also desired compulsory attendance at these schools.

A man who was born towards the end of Luther's life - an Englishman - was Richard Mulcaster (circa 1532-1611). Mulcaster became the first headmaster of Merchant Taylors' School. He wanted everybody to be taught how to read and write but did not regard higher education as the right of everybody; in fact he sought ways and means to keep the number of the learned down. He did, however, advocate several principles which today's advocates of comprehensive schools would agree with wholeheartedly. For example, in his "Positions" (1581), he is disussing those who are thought to be most fitting to serve the State in the matter of learning, and says (2):-

"Often those who give least promise at first turn out most suitable in the end; wherefore the absolute rejection of any, before maturity is reached, not only does an injury to those who are rejected, but would be an evidence of rashness in those who reject."

Placed in the context of a discussion of the eleven-plus examination of today, those who oppose this examination - and they include all the supporters

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(1) William Boyd, "The History of Western Education", 6th edition 1952, p. 189.

(2) Richard Mulcaster, "Positions", p. 150 of R.H. Quick's edition.

of the comprehensive school principle - would most definitely echo these sentiments of Mulcaster's!

Another important point about Mulcaster, which is mentioned by Oliphant (1), is that he was the first Englishman seriously to aver that every child in the community should receive education as a right and not as a privilege.

Oliphant points out that Comenius is generally credited with the first notable attack on the medieval idea of the commonalty and the gentry being clearly separated and that the only kind of education the former should have was that which made them directly serviceable to their betters. "But it must be remembered that half a century before his time, and in a country where the regime of social status has always held a firm position, a strong protest against educational exclusiveness was raised by Richard Mulcaster, who maintained that the elements of knowledge and training should be recognised as the privilege of all, irrespective of rank or sex, and without regard to their future economic functions." (1, pp. 221-222)

The next reformer, in point of time, who must certainly claim a foremost place in the early educational thinking which eventually led to the development of the present-day common school was John Amos Comenius (1592-1671). Comenius, a Moravian, was far in advance of his time in his educational thought. In his scheme of education, Comenius proposed four stages, not all of which would be taken by all children. These stages were:- (i) for infancy, the mother's knee; (ii) from six years until twelve all children should go to the public vernacular school; (iii) then the Gymnasium, or Latin school; (iv) then to University and travel to finish the course of education. All classes alike were to use the public schools and girls as well as boys were to be admitted.

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(1) James Oliphant, "The Educational Writings of Richard Mulcaster", 1903, p. 220.

There can be no doubt at all that the writings of Comenius influenced the advocates of the comprehensive school in this country in this century. Quoting from "The Great Didactic" of Comenius, written between 1628-1632, Adamson writes (1):-

"Comenius's protests against the neglect to instruct girls, to educate the poor and those of but modest intellectual power are the more prominent, when compared with the common opinion of his day, which he dared to brave in words like these. 'With God is no respect of persons, as He Himself so often protests. If, therefore, we admit some to intellectual culture, excluding others, we wrong not only those who have the same nature as ourselves, but we also wrong God.... That some seem naturally dull and stupid is no objection, but rather a reason for commanding and urging this universal culture of minds. The slower and the less endowed by nature one is, the more he needs to be helped, that he may be delivered, as far as may be, from his brutish dullness and stupidity. Nor can anyone be found whose intellect is so unfortunate that it cannot be somewhat amended by culture....Some wits are precocious, but soon become feeble and blunt, others, dull at first, grow sharp and penetrating....Why, therefore, should we wish that only precocious and quick wits should be tolerated in the field of letters? Let nobody be shut out save him to whom God has denied senses or a mind.'"

Comenius believed that the correct age for starting school was six years. He wanted a public vernacular school <u>in every community</u>. The public vernacular school was indeed a common school; there would be taught there a minimum common curriculum to all children. Social class distinctions must not be recognised or encouraged in the public vernacular school and, so Comenius taught, at the age of six it is impossible to say for what particular job or profession in later

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(1) J.W. Adamson, "Pioneers of Modern Education 1600-1700", 1905, pp. 59-60.

life a boy is suited.

Comenius, rather than putting boys of the "better" classes into the Latin school for their primary education and letting the children from the lower classes receive education in the vernacular, desired to send all children to the public vernacular school so that they should become thoroughly conversant with their mother tongue. Comenius believed this to be beneficial to all children on both social and educational grounds.

Thus it can be seen that Comenius was many years ahead of his contemporaries in his educational thought. Although his public vernacular school would be more on a par with an English primary school than a secondary school - at least in the lower classes - several of the basic concepts of the comprehensive school are clearly seen in its design. It would be a local, or community, school, catering for all the children of the neighbourhood. It logically follows that to ensure education for all children at this level, compulsory attendance would be enforced. It would be co-educational as Comenius believed in treating girls educationally in the same way as ~~girls~~ boys. There would be a common curriculum.

Two other writers of the seventeenth century ~~of the seventeenth century~~ who were thinking along similar lines to Comenius were Sir William Petty and Charles Hoole. In 1647, Petty proposed a scheme of "literary workhouses", where children of all classes could learn to read and write and also learn some handicraft which might be useful to them in earning their living in later life. Concerning these "literary workhouses", Petty wrote (1):-

"That all Children of above seven yeares old may be presented to this kind of Education, none being to be excluded by reason of the poverty and unability

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(1) William Petty, "The Advice of W.P. to Mr. Samuel Hartlib for the Advancement of some particular Parts of Learning", 1647, p. 4.

of their Parents, for hereby it hath come to passe, that many are now holding the Plough, which might have beene fit to steere the State."

Petty proposed forms of scholarships or sizarships for the intelligent but poor children to enable them to profit by the education he envisaged.

Charles Hoole wished to see rich and poor alike educated together in his "Petty School", which was really a school for children preparatory to going to the grammar school. He also envisaged "petty schools" as being neighbourhood schools.

In chapter six of the first treatise of his book (1) - the first treatise is entitled "The Petty School" - Hoole defines this school as "the place where indeed the first Principles of all Religion and learning ought to be taught". On page 29 he writes:-

"Yet if any one be desireous to contribute towards such an eminent work of charity, my advice is, that he erect a Schoole....and that he endow it with a salary of (at least) twenty pounds per annum, in consideration whereof all such poor boyes as can conveniently frequent it, may be taught gratis, but the more able sort of neighbours may pay for childrens teaching, as if the Schoole was not free."

In the eighteenth century, the famous political economist Adam Smith published his celebrated treatise "The Wealth of Nations" (1776). In this he expresses concern for the common people's lack of educational opportunity in England. He does not propose a mixing of the various social groups for he believes that the education of the wealthy classes is best left as it is. He does, however, propose a system of publicly-provided parish schools, based on

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(1) Charles Hoole, "A New Discovery of the Old Art of Teaching Schoole, in four small Treatises", 1660.

the parochial schools of Scotland, for the poorer people. This is probably the first time that the Scottish parish schools are advocated for this country: during the next century they are the topic of many educational proposals.

Smith advocates a school being set up in every parish or district where children can be taught for a small fee and the master is partly paid by the public. "In Scotland the establishment of such parish schools has taught almost the whole common people to read and a very great proportion of them to write and account." (p. 267, Everyman edition, 1910)

Although by the nineteenth century many of the old endowed grammar schools in this country had fallen into disrepute and the endowments were being misapplied, some were still offering local children education of varying standards and, being schools open to local children, there was the distinct possibility that some of them did indeed cater for mixed classes. Most of these schools had been founded by wealthy and/or religious persons for local boys - and sometimes girls. In 1818 Nicholas Carlisle published his "A Concise Description of the Endowed Grammar Schools in England and Wales" in which this fact is brought out. To obtain the information for his book, Carlisle had written to all these schools throughout the country. For example, concerning the Grammar School at Wallazey, near Great Neston, in Chester, which was founded in 1656-57 (p. 128) - "The School is free to all the boys of the Parish, who are now taught English, writing, and arithmetic, and the useful branches of the mathematics."

On pages 181-2, concerning the Free Grammar School of Culgaith and Blencarn, near Temple Sowerby, in Cumberland, is found - "....founded in the year 1775.... The School is open to all Children whose parents reside within the Townships of Culgaith and Blencarn, indefinitely, free of all expense. Few, except free Scholars, attend. There is no particular form of admission, nor any limitation as to age."

On page 241, concerning the Grammar School, Ashburton, in Devon - "The School is open to the boys of the Town and Parish indefinitely, free of expense. They are admitted at any age, and remain as long as their Parents please."

On pages 408-410, concerning the Free Grammar School, Brentwood, in Essex - "....founded by Letters Patent....dated the 5th of July, 1557....All boys who can read and write printed and written hand, and are of the age of eight and under eighteen, and living within three miles of the School, shall be taught and instructed freely, in virtue, learning, and manners....The boys are instructed in Latin, Greek, English, mathematics, writing, and arithmetic....There are now between 60 and 70 boys daily attending the School, all of them upon the Foundation, and received without any expense whatever to themselves or friends - no one who has applied, and been qualified for admission, has ever been refused - no other boys are admitted."

In the early years of the nineteenth century the upper classes did not favour the idea of the lower orders receiving education as a right. Certain people, however, during this period, tried to establish a system of schools in order to help these lower orders get at least a basic education. In 1807, for instance, Samuel Whitbread unsuccessfully endeavoured to get the sanction of Parliament for his Bill to establish a system of parish schools in England.

Henry Brougham (later Lord Brougham) was a keen advocate of the dissemination of knowledge amongst all classes of people. He was behind a Bill for "the education of the Poor in England and Wales" in 1820. This Bill was opposed by the Church and the Nonconformists, and Brougham withdrew it after the second reading. The Bill wanted a school erected in every parish at public expense The school would be controlled by the local clergyman and the teacher would be a member of the Church of England. Brougham emphasised that it was not necessary for any religion to be taught by the schoolmaster. The inspiration behind this

Bill of Brougham's was the Scottish parish school. It is interesting to note that Brougham wanted these schools to be kept under the control of the Church; it was this "religious question" that later in the century saw the formation of the National Education League, which played a prominent part in the infiltration of the idea of the American common school to this country.

One of the reasons for the infiltration into this country of the idea of common and local schools - at first to provide elementary education but some people had in mind education higher than elementary - was the organisation of the working classes into some form of unity.

The Chartist movement, for example, arose during the nineteenth century and produced men who were passionately concerned with educational problems. During the time of this Chartist agitation, the Liverpool Rational School Society was formed (in 1839) by a number of people of both the working and middle classes in order to give their children a "superior education".

The laws of the Liverpool Rational School Society gave the aims of the rational schools. "Useful" knowledge is to be taught, as is the "Rational Religion" which means "promoting to the utmost extent in our power the happiness of every man, woman, and child without the least regard to sect, party, class, country or colour". The schools will endeavour to promote "the full development and temperate exercise of all the physical, intellectual and moral powers" of the pupils. "All will be trained in the same manner and to the same extent without any distinction except what is rendered necessary from the peculiar natural organisation of each child."

Simon (1) states that it is difficult to know how widespread this movement was because details are wanting. But, he concludes, their path was not easy because they were obstructed by religious, political and financial difficulties.

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(1) Brian Simon, "Studies in the History of Education 1780-1870", 1960, p. 242.

Two of the leaders of the Chartist movement, William Lovett and John Collins, were sent to prison, where they wrote a book. This book, written in Warwick Gaol, was published in 1840. On pages 72-73 can be seen the ideas of a comprehensive system of education (1):-

"Convinced of the importance of an improved system of education, we think there needs little to convince anyone of the necessity of its being made as general as possible...." and "If the blessings of education were generally diffused - if honesty and justice were daily inculcated among all classes of society, it would, ere long, lead to a more just and general diffusion of the blessings of industry."

Lovett proposed a common school system: there should be infant schools for children from three to six years of age; preparatory schools from six to nine; then high schools. He wanted the State to provide the school system, but locally elected committees to organise and run the schools.

In the third and fourth decades of the nineteenth century numbers of people were advocating a national system of elementary education as opposed to the efforts of the Church and other voluntary agencies in supplying this basic instruction. Some of these people desired to see a national system which was also purely secular.

In the later years of the century the school systems of Scotland and America are mentioned on several occasions in this country and, on many occasions, similar systems for this country are advocated.

In 1853, Sir James Kay Shuttleworth, who had been secretary to the Select Committee of the Privy Council which had been formed in 1839 to "superintend

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(1) William Lovett & John Collins, "Chartism; A New Organization of the People", 1840.

the application of any sums voted by Parliament for the purpose of promoting Public Education", published his book "Public Education". In this he devotes a whole chapter to Scottish education and commends the parish schools of that country (p. 335).

Many of the people in the nineteenth century who were concerned in the agitation for common elementary schools, were not concerned in this for political reasons but were advocating such schools because they honestly believed they were necessary for the country and its youth on educational grounds. Other people were actuated on humanitarian grounds; they saw that most children at elementary schools were not getting a really satisfactory education and that other children were not getting any education at all. Other people advocated such a system of schools on religious grounds, believing that all men are equal and as such should have at least equal rights as far as elementary education was concerned. Many of these people, who wanted these common schools to be attended by children from all social groupings, did so because they realised that if these schools were established, the higher classes would ensure that they were most satisfactory in every way before entrusting their own children to their care, and so the poorer children who would also attend them would receive a satisfactory education as well. But the main difficulty in education during these years was the "religious question" - which at times seemed almost insoluble.

A reference to the American educational system, with alleged reasons why such a system would not be a practicable proposition in this country, is to be found in an official document in 1861. In that year the Report of the Newcastle Commission was issued. This Commission, under the Duke of Newcastle, had been instituted to "inquire into the present state of education in England, and to consider and report what measures, if any, are required for the extension of sound and cheap elementary instruction to all classes of people". Although the

Commissioners indicated some defects in the educational system as it was, on the whole they were satisfied with what they saw.

In the first volume of their report, the Commissioners discuss the system of parochial rating and enumerate the difficulties that would arise from such a system. Then appears (1) the following paragraph:-

"Without expressing any opinion as to the success of the common schools in the United States of America and Canada, it may be well to point out that their establishment affords no proof that a similar system could be introduced into this country. In those countries there is no established church, and thus the difficulty as to the position of the clergy does not arise. Besides this the different classes of society are much more on a level than is the case in this country, and the common schools which are supported at the expense of all are made use of by all."

This "difficulty as to the position of the clergy" arose, of course, because historically the Church had had control over education throughout the country. Although by this time a large body of Nonconformists was a force in the country and opposed the established Church in many ways, on the question of education both they and the Church agreed - it must be based on the teaching of religion. Although it must be added that there were at this time both Nonconformists and members of the Church of England who would have liked to see control of education taken out of the hands of organised religion; they were, however, not strong numerically. There were also people attached to no organised religious body who would have liked to see the State control education and do away with religious teaching altogether, or at least make such teaching undenominational. But once again they were not powerful in the land. Therefore at this particular time it

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(1) "Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the State of Popular Education in England", 1861, pp. 306-307.

would have been almost impossible to have instituted a system such as the American one.

In 1861 another Commission - the Clarendon Commission - was set up to inquire into "the nature of the endowments, funds, and revenues belonging to or received by" certain schools and colleges. Also to inquire into "the Revenue and Management of Certain Colleges and Schools, and the studies pursued and instruction given there". In 1864 the Commission issued its report.

By the time this report was issued, education throughout the country had been brought to people's attention. In the same year, 1864, yet another Commission was set up - the Schools Inquiry Commission (known as the Taunton Commission). This Commission was required to inquire into the education given in schools which had not been investigated by the Newcastle and Clarendon Commissions. They also had to "consider and report what Measures (if any) are required for the Improvement of such Education, having especial Regard to all Endowments applicable, or which can rightly be made applicable thereto".

The Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission was issued in 1868. One of the methods of the Commissioners had been to send Assistant Commissioners to various countries in order to make reports on the educational systems of these countries, and to compare them with the system prevailing in this country. Countries covered by these Assistant Commissioners included America, France, Germany and Scotland.

One Assistant Commissioner, the Rev. James Fraser, went to America and Canada to study the education given in those countries. He issued a report of some 435 pages. This report was quoted frequently in discussions about common schools later in the century. Naturally, in a report of such length he wrote in great detail about the educational systems of the two countries. On page 203 he explained why, in his opinion, a common school system was not a

possibility in this country (1):-

"There are two great difficulties in the way of our adopting a common-school system in England. In America, as we have seen, such a system is based upon a theory of social equality, which seems to suppose not only an equality of rights but an equality of conditions, and a theory of religious freedom which fancies itself obliged, or by a necessary corollary, to exclude religious teaching. In England there are both sharper lines of class distinction and sharper tones of class feeling. The system, as remarked, is more suitable to a community where wealth, the great modern creator of social differences, is equably than where it is unequably distributed. And if there is one sentiment more than another upon which all practical educators in England, whether churchmen or dissenters, are agreed, it is that education ought to be religious - meaning by the term not merely that it ought to awaken religious emotions, but that it ought to teach a religious creed; and how to do that without infringing the rights of conscience or introducing the elements of sectarianism is one of the unsolved problems of the day."

It is noticeable that the Rev. Fraser's report is along the same lines as the extract from the Report of the Newcastle Commission (page 52 of this study); that class differences are greater in England than America and the question of religious teaching. One point of particular interest is the assumption made by Fraser that "all practical educators in England" are "churchmen or dissenters", for at this time the number of non-Christians who wanted education to be provided on unsectarian lines was increasing - and many of these people were "practical educators". In addition to this, many churchmen and dissenters, as has already

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(1) James Fraser, "Schools Inquiry Commissions. Report on the Common School System of the United States and of the Provinces of Upper and Lower Canada", H.M.S.O., 1866.

been shown, were also of the opinion that denominational religion should not be taught in schools.

At this time, many of the more extreme Liberals wished to see undenominational education and in the year following the publication of the Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission, the National Education League, which was pledged to fight for non-denominational elementary education, was formed.

It is obvious from a close study of the Schools Inquiry Commission's Report that many of the reports concerning education in foreign countries were studied by people in this country who were dissatisfied with the existing system and elements of the comprehensive idea were to be found in several of these Assistant Commissioners' reports. In fact, in an important publication of the National Education League, issued in 1875, the author of the publication assumes that the Rev, Fraser's report on the United States' educational system has been read by many educationalists.

In the first volume of the Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission, Fraser's report is discussed, and the point is made that most parents in the United States prefer to send their children to the "public" (common) schools, although some of the richer people prefer private schools (1):-

"The public schools are intended for, and to a great degree are filled by all classes. There are indications here and there of a tendency among the wealthier to send their children to private schools as more select; but the great majority prefer the public schools. In many instances the schools are attended not only by all classes but by both sexes."

Here, of course, was the type of school for educational reformers to aim at; one in which the majority of parents, whatever their social background, would wish

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(1) "Schools Inquiry Commission", 1868, p. 52.

to have their children educated.

Another of the Assistant Commissioners was Matthew Arnold. He had visited Switzerland and made a report on the education provided in that country. It had what could almost be a system of common schools. Discussing Arnold's report, the Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission (pp. 72-73 of vol. 1) says:-

"The system begins with the communal school, which takes the child at six and keeps him till he has completed his twelfth year. To this school every parent is compelled to send his children under penalty of a fine, or to satisfy the school authorities that the children are getting as good an education elsewhere. ...As the schools are really good few go elsewhere, and one finds all classes of society mixed in them."

Then there was the report of Assistant Commissioner D.R. Fearon. He reported on the Scottish educational system and stressed the mixing of different social groups within the same schools, commenting (p. 59 of vol. 1):-

"Of the value of the mixture of classes it is needless to speak; there can be no doubt that it largely contributes to that general diffusion of intelligence for which Scotland is remarkable."

Writing of the system in England, the Commissioners stated that the scholars in the endowed schools came from various social backgrounds and that in some schools almost all ranks meet. But in most such schools either the higher or lower classes are found, but there is little mixing. They add that the unwillingness of social classes to mix varies in different parts of the country and seems to them to be greater in the south of England (p. 111-112 of vol. 1).

On page 126 of the same volume it is pointed out that many of the schools under consideration by the Commissioners were founded to give free education to children of the parish or of the neighbourhood, but children not resident in the localities were sometimes also allowed to attend them.

On the same page, the Commissioners sum up the aim and purpose of the grammar school:-

"If we sum up briefly the purpose of the grammar schools, we may describe it to be, an education higher than the rudiments, conducted under religious influences, put within the reach of all classes, with an especial preference for the poor boy who is apt to learn, and frequently also for some particular locality."

In spite of what the Assistant Commissioners had reported about foreign countries, the Commissioners did not feel that they could recommend this country to adopt any of their systems of education. They admitted that England could learn from other countries on the matter of education, but that was as far as they went. They felt that a national system of education was required and then proceeded to define the three grades of secondary school that they recommended should be instituted - schools roughly corresponding to the social divisions in the country.

It would appear that the Report of the Schools Inquiry Commission - in particular Fraser's report on the American school system - was the first official document that really set the minds of educational reformers and others interested in education thinking along the lines of a system of common schools for this country. It was certainly quoted far more than the earlier Report of the Newcastle Commission which also mentioned the American common school.

In 1869, the Scottish parish schools come up again in discussion; this time in the House of Lords. The Duke of Argyll stated (1):-

"It is the universal custom all over Scotland that men in very different classes of society should be educated together in the parochial schools. You will have the children of the poorest labourer sitting beside the children of

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(1) HANSARD, 3rd series, vol. 194, p. 294 - Dec 10th 1868 - Mar 23rd 1869.

the farmer who employs him, the children of the clergyman of the parish, and even in some cases of the landed gentry, sitting on the same bench and learning from the same master the same branches of instruction."

It can be seen, then, that during the second half of the nineteenth century education came to the forefront of many thoughtful people's minds. The greatest problem was that of providing elementary schools for the children of the working classes. Those that were in existence were not State schools but owned by voluntary agencies; arising from the question of the provision of these such schools and the arguments as to whether they should provide denominational religious teaching or not, the National Education League was formed and this body played a very important part in bringing to the notice of people in England the existence of the American common school. Although the primary aim of the League was to bring about elementary education for all classes, several of its members had more ambitious ideas. It played such an important part in the development of the comprehensive idea in this country that it is deserving of close study.

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The educational situation in 1868 was that many more elementary schools were required to provide places for all children of primary school age. Whether a child received any form of education other than elementary depended, in the main, on the social class to which he belonged.

Several societies which were concerned at the state of the elementary education provided for the children of the poorer people had been formed, such as the Education-Aid Society of Manchester and the Birmingham Education Society. Out of the latter was born, in 1869, the National Education League.

The founder of the Birmingham Education Society was Mr. George Dixon, M.P.; its principal objects were to pay school fees for the children of the poor, to

raise funds for the building, enlargement and maintenance of schools, to take steps to obtain local rating for education, and to collect and disseminate information on education in general.

In October, 1868, Jesse Collings, who was to become honorary secretary of the National Education League when it was formed the following year, read a paper entitled "On the State of Education in Birmingham" at a Social Science meeting in Birmingham. During the reading of his paper, Collings mentioned a visit paid to Boston, Massachusetts, by Mr. Alfred Field, Chairman of the Birmingham Chamber of Commerce, in the summer of 1867. Field apparently had been impressed with what he had seen in America; he was the gentleman mentioned on page eight of this study who, at the first meeting of the National Education League, expressed his hopes for a "connected system of graded schools - primary, secondary, and high schools - all free".

The first general meeting of the National Education League was held at Birmingham on October 12th and 13th, 1869. The object of the League was "The establishment of a system which shall secure the education of every child in England and Wales." (1) The means of attaining this object were as follows:-

"1. Local Authorities shall be compelled by law to see that sufficient school accommodation is provided for every child in their district.

2. The cost of founding and maintaining such schools as may be required shall be provided out of the Local Rates, supplemented by Government Grants.

3. All schools aided by Local Rates shall be under the management of Local Authorities and subject to Government Inspection.

4. All Schools aided by Local Rates shall be Unsectarian.

5. To all Schools aided by Local Rates admission shall be free.

6. School Accommodation being provided, the State or the Local Authorities

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(1) "Report of the First General Meeting of Members of the National Education League", Birmingham, 1869.

shall have power to compel the attendance of children of suitable age not otherwise receiving education."

At the time of the first general meeting, the membership of the League was approaching two thousand five hundred "persons of influence, including forty members of the House of Commons, and between three and four hundred ministers of religion". (Report, p. 26) New members, it was claimed, were joining every day.

Mr. Jesse Collings, the honorary secretary, stated at this meeting that the League would, via its branches all over the country, collect and disseminate, by all means at its disposal, all information concerning education. It would also endeavour to influence Members of Parliament through their constituents and "to promote the adoption by the Legislature of measures which shall ensure the education of every child in the country, and which shall provide instruction so accessible and so graduated that the child of the poorest artisan shall have it within his power to fit himself for any position capable of being attained by a citizen of the United Kingdom". (Report, p. 27)

So at this early stage of the League's history, the secretary at least was looking further ahead than simply to the provision of a State system of elementary schools, which was the aim of most members of the League.

George Dixon, M.P., founder of the League, was elected its Chairman and the Council of the League consisted of a great number of people, including forty-five Members of Parliament (listed on pp. 41-42 of the Report), several local councillors from various parts of the country, ministers of religion - both of the established Church and the Nonconformists -, professors and other members of universities, and a smattering of Inspectors of Schools. In view of this body of influential opinion, the policies of the League were certain to be listened to with respect and to be broadcast far and wide.

A resolution was passed at this meeting that the Executive Committee be

instructed to prepare a Bill embodying the principles of the League and that the Bill should be introduced during the early part of the following session. The League were aware that it was the intention of the Government to introduce a Bill that session and agreed that if it fulfilled their requirements they should withdraw their own one.

A Mr. Simons of Merthyr Tydvil, during the discussion period at the meeting, stated that he, as a member of the middle class, desired an educational system that would put the two classes on the same footing - "I am an advocate for the application of compulsion to every class" (Report, p. 86). He also desired the institution of imperial universities for, "after we get compulsory education, how long will it be before the people ask for a further opportunity of advancing and brightening the intellects of their children, and of fitting them to occupy any position in the world, even up to that of the Lord Chancellor?"

One of the points that came in for much discussion was the element of compulsion to attend elementary schools that was advocated by the League. Mr. R. Applegarth, secretary to the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, pointed out that under the voluntary system many children were denied the chance of elementary education either because there were no schools in the districts in which they lived or because of the attitude towards education of their parents. What was required was a system both compulsory and free. He added, "I have seen the school systems both of America and Switzerland, and I never came across a man in either of those countries who felt that he was not doing his duty because he allowed his children to go to a free school". (Report, p. 88)

The common schools of America were mentioned in discussion; for example, a Sir C. Rawlinson stated that he would make these schools the foundation of this country's schools if he were in power (Report, p. 92)

Several papers were read dealing with compulsory attendance at school; most

of these were read on the second day of the meeting. One was read by Alderman Rumney of Manchester. He, like the other speakers on this topic, agreed that to provide school places for all children and not to make it compulsory for them to be filled would be valueless. Rumney also mentioned the American system as opposed to the English system and pointed out that the results of the American system would challenge comparison with anything that could be produced in England.

Mr. Alfred Field, in a paper already mentioned, pointed out how people visiting America were amazed at the wide knowledge and quick intelligence of all classes of society in that country. Most of the American people, he added, had been educated in the public schools. He went on (Report, pp. 148-155):-

"The only way in which we can get the mass of the people of England educated, as quickly and efficiently as will meet the awakened demand of the country, is by a complete national system similar in principle to that in America....The beginning, of course, would be the establishment everywhere of the sadly-needed efficient primary school. We must start with primary schools. But then let each school district, as fast as it pleases, build on them a system of secondary and high schools....I appeal to everyone, acquainted with schools and education, whether, to give a good education to all the children of England, and one higher and more extended to the capable and diligent, it is not necessary that we should have a connected system of graded schools, through which the pupils shall rise by examination....The public school system of the United States is a model for the general education of a people....It is a firm and safe position for our League that we advocate no untried scheme, that we can point to the complete, and grand success of it in America."

Field's opinion of the American system was completely different from that of the Newcastle Commission and the Rev. James Fraser. The reason for this was that the Newcastle Commissioners and Fraser could not conceive of a system of

schools without denominational religious education forming part of the curriculum, whereas Field had in mind schools released from the religious bodies altogether. Field's paper was certainly forward-looking for his day and contained many of the features that the comprehensive school advocate of today would uphold; local schools, education to be free to all children, all children to receive a good education, and those whose abilities show them able to profit by it would receive a more academic education. Field also used the word "secondary" in the sense of a stage of education following on the primary stage of education and not as a type of education for a particular social grouping. Mr. Field - not an educationalist, but a businessman - certainly showed forethought in his educational blueprint for this country!

Many of the clergymen who were supporters of the National Education League were so because of dissatisfaction with the voluntary schools. These schools, it was claimed, were not reaching large sections of the population, therefore compulsory, unsectarian schools were called for.

One clergyman, the Rev. F. Barham Zincke, Vicar of Wherstead, Suffolk, and Chaplain-in-Ordinary to the Queen, put forward the following revolutionary ideal for those days (Report, pp. 157-158):-

"Our beau ideal of a national system of education is, that it should be so organised as to place within the reach of every child in the country, free of all cost, the most complete and thorough training our present knowledge admits of, whatever his employment or profession is to be....and that no bounties should be given to, and special preferences shown for, any particular callings or professions, but that the circumstances of the parents, and the disposition and aptitude of the child, should alone decide in each case what the calling or profession is to be."

Another speaker, Mr. Follett Osler, F.R.S., of Birmingham, described a

visit he had made to America and the impressions his visits to American schools had made upon him; he admitted to being very impressed with that country's system of free schools. During the course of his speech he outlined what he would like to see happen in this country concerning education and proposed what was virtually a comprehensive system (Report, p. 185):-

"I should like it to be possible for a child to enter into the lowest class, and gradually progress to the highest education that can be obtained in this country. I mention this because a desire has been expressed by some persons to have schools for the working classes only, to give them an elementary education, and when they have reached a certain grade say, 'You are going to be artisans, what need for anything further?' I think all should be on one system of general education, embracing even the higher departments of knowledge; so that while all go on together, each pupil may be able, as he advances, to study such special subjects as his abilities or the circumstances of his case may render advisable."

Yet another speaker, the Rev. H.W. Crosskey, hinted at the possibility of schools of all grades for all children. He expressed surprise that no speaker had alluded to the Scottish educational system and protested against the proposals of some people who were at the meeting to make the new unsectarian schools for the working classes only. He stressed the point that in Scotland there was a free road from the public schools to the universities, and demanded that in this country there should be national schools to which children of all classes should be sent. He finished his speech with the words, "The only boundary we can place to this movement, is to furnish every child born within this kingdom with fair opportunities for cultivating all the faculties God has given it". (Report, p. 191)

It can be seen that the importance of the National Education League lay in the fact that it was the first influential organised body in this country to press for a system of elementary schools for all children, schools which should be free,

unsectarian, open to all classes, and at which attendance would be compulsory. It also, in opposition to the Newcastle Commission and the Rev. Fraser, held up the common school system of the United States as a model to be followed in England. In addition, as has been shown, several of its members were thinking along the lines of a system of primary, secondary and high schools which would be open to all children. Field, at the meeting of the League referred to above, indeed suggested that his system of "primary, and secondary, and high schools" might be "connected with the large endowed schools of the country, and perhaps, by a system of scholarships, with the Universities".

Another very important point to be made about the National Education League is that, in effect, some of the speakers at the first general meeting (Field, Osler, Crosskey) were advocating what was really secondary education for all. Field wanted a graded system of schools where scholars would rise upon passing examinations; Osler wanted all children to be embraced by the one "system of general education" and for each pupil to study special subjects "as his abilities or the circumstances of his case may render advisable"; Crosskey, in wanting to see all children have the opportunities "for cultivating all the faculties", envisaged something similar to the public schools of Scotland.

It is noteworthy that members and supporters of the National Education League included a number of the most well known leaders of the working classes of the time, for example, Messrs. Applegarth, Odger, Cremer, Connolly, Potter and Howell, most of whom attended the first general meeting of the League. In the previous year to the founding of the League, 1868, the Trades Union Congress had been formed. At the Trades Union Congress in 1869, which was held in Birmingham, there were a number of applicants who wished to read papers to the delegates. Mr. Hunter of Birmingham moved that the papers should be taken after the delegates had read their papers. One of the applicants was Mr. Charles

Hibbs of Birmingham "on behalf of the National Education League, on the request of Mr. G. Dixon, M.P." (1)

Another paper entitled "The Disorganisation of Labour" was read by G. Potter of the London Working Men's Association, during which he stressed the importance of education for all. Hibbs read his paper on the National Education League, in which he outlined its aims and generally pointed out the value of education for all. After this, three resolutions on education were put and the one finally accepted was Mr. Cremer's (London) (2):-

"That this Congress believes that nothing short of a system of national, unsectarian, and compulsory education will satisfy the requirements of the people of the United Kingdom, and expresses a firm hope that the Government will not allow the next session of Parliament to pass away without dealing with the question, upon the basis above suggested; and that copies of this resolution be sent to the Right. Hon. W.E. Gladstone, the Premier; and the Right Hon. W.E. Forster, Vice-President of the Council on Education."

Another resolution was passed (Report, p. 196) "....recommending the trades unions to support the National Education League in their efforts to carry out the foregoing resolution". This referred to a resolution by Mr. Howell of London which urged the unions to advance ~~ed~~ national education and support the National Education League.

Although the members of the Trades Union Congress who had attended the League's first general meeting had listened to and endorsed pleas for a system of elementary education for all classes, they had also heard certain speakers - referred to on page 65 of this study - with a much wider scheme of education in

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(1) T.U.C. Report, 1869, p. 15.

(2) T.U.C. Report, 1869, pp. 193-194.

mind. In addition, schools for all children, whatever the grade of school, was something quite revolutionary in the eighteen-sixties, but exactly what the comprehensive school advocate of today desires to see. Although it was not until later in the century that the Trades Union Congress advocated secondary education for all children, it is distinctly possible that the ideas did at least infiltrate in the year 1869.

So in the same year, 1869, two organised bodies - the National Education League and the Trades Union Congress - were advocating the same policy of free, unsectarian, elementary schools for all.

Also in 1869, the honorary secretary of the League, Jesse Collings, wrote a pamphlet about the American common school system. A new edition of this was published in 1872. Collings uses Bishop Fraser's (Fraser was Bishop of Manchester by this time) report on the American system as the basis of his description of the common schools.

In one section of his pamphlet Collings asserts that readers of descriptions of the American system must come to the conclusion that the Americans are soundly and universally educated. Collings then points out that it is the duty of the State to provide education for all children and that this education must be free. The schools so provided must be popular and "regarded with an affectionate interest by all classes". If they were not free - except to the very poor - then "class distinctions in school life" would be created.

"With good graded schools, as in America, divided into Primary, Grammar or Secondary, and High Schools, all classes would have their money's worth." If these schools are good, points out Collings, then equal advantages would be available to all classes of society.

It is therefore apparent from this pamphlet that Collings had something more in mind, as in his remarks at the meeting of the League reported on page 60 of this

study, than the majority of the League's members.

Collings recognises that different social classes would have different views of a free universal system of education and realises that the problems of the mixing of the classes would be a difficult one. The middle classes, he asserts, would not object to paying for a system which gave their own children a good education as well as the children of the industrial classes. The richer people would be quite happy because their children would attend the high school and be prepared for the universities.

The lower middle classes and the industrial classes would use the primary schools if they were both free and good, continues Collings. But perhaps the richer people would object to their children mixing at this level; then they could educate them at the primary stage at their own expense and thus enable them to ~~enetr~~ enter, if qualified by examination, into the "grammar or secondary schools".

Although Collings wanted schools to be open to all sections of the community, he pointed out that, as things were in his time, many poor people would take their children from school at an early age because of financial stress and comparatively few poor children would, in fact, enter the secondary school.

In his summing-up in this pamphlet (1) he writes, "A comprehensive system of education is needed that shall apply to the whole country".

Although the League did not accomplish its primary object, to bring about the establishment of a system of free, unsectarian, compulsory, primary schools open to all, via the Education Act of Mr. Forster in 1870, it still continued its campaign. This was carried on by means of public meetings held in many parts of

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(1) Jesse Collings, "An Outline of the American School System; with Remarks on the Establishment of Common Schools in England. To which is added, A Reply to the Statements of the Manchester Education Union with respect to the Common School System of the United States", 1872.

the country, letters to newspapers and magazines, delegations to meet Members of Parliament, and pamphlets.

The American common schools seemed to dominate the educational thinking of many of the members of the League. In 1875, the secretary wrote a book of over three-hundred pages dealing with the American system. This book, by Francis Adams, was entitled "The Free School System of the United States". It is worth quoting at length from this book because it deals with many of the criticisms of the American system that were being levelled at it by its many critics in those years.

"The aim of the following pages is to supply for English Educational reformers the means of insight into the operation of the American system of Elementary Education....

"That the United States furnishes valuable lessons for England the writer trusts will be made clear. Notwithstanding the differences which exist in the circumstances of the two countries, the type of the inhabitants is essentially the same. Nor are the ideas to which Americans attach the greatest importance in education foreign to England." (p. 5)

Thus the author openly avows the purpose of his book; to enlighten English educationalists as to the organisation of the American system. But did anybody need any further enlightening in view of the extensive campaign which the League had been pursuing during the previous five or six years?

On pages 92 and 93 Adams deals with the criticism of the common schools that, in fact, parents who can afford to do so prefer to send their children to private schools. "There will be found, of course, in every community a certain number who will prefer to educate their children in private schools; but that neither in North nor South, East nor West, in large cities nor in rural districts are the schools regarded as the schools of the poor, is a fact capable of easy

demonstration....

"The Superintendent (of Boston) says, in a late report (of 1874): 'If there are Boston citizens who desire that the schools should be kept down to a pauper level, and that they should be attended only by the children of the poor, they never give public expression to such sentiments. A high English educational official, while on the way with me to visit one of our grammar schools, enquired about the social grade of the children in the public schools; he wanted to know especially if professional gentlemen sent their sons to them. My answer was, 'At the school to which we are now going, you will find the son of the Chief Justice of the Commonwealth; at a school not far from it you might find the son of the Governor, and at another the son of the Mayor of the city'."

Adams writes of the "grading" system in America - similar to much present-day streaming in this country. He admits that in the very small schools it is difficult to grade the ~~schools~~ children according to their capabilities, etc. This was being overcome at that time, however, by "union" schools. "The plans of American school architects are commonly adapted for a high school and schools of a lower grade in the same building. These 'union school-houses' are now amongst the most familiar objects of the country."

Thus the work of the National Education League can be seen to have been important in the story of the later demand for comprehensive education in this country, and not the least of its merits was the bringing to the notice of all educationalists in this country the ~~the~~ fact that even the highest forms of education should not be reserved for people simply because they were born of wealthy parents. It can also be asserted with certainty that the League did ensure that almost everybody in this country was aware of the American system of education - both its alleged advantages and disadvantages.

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What of the attitude of the Trades Union Congress for the remainder of the nineteenth century? That this body was interested in the problems of education is evident from a study of their annual reports. In 1871 a resolution was passed that "primary education should without delay be applied to every child in the kingdom" and that technical education should be open to all who were connected with the country's industry.

It has been pointed out in this study that comprehensive schools could not become reality in this country while there were separate Codes of education and while "secondary" was regarded as being synonymous with "grammar". "Secondary education for all" - not to be confused with "grammar" - was a prerequisite of the comprehensive school. A step towards this conception was in fact taken at the Trades Union Congress in 1880; it was brought up in an address which many of the delegates stated was the best one they had heard in their lives. It was entitled "Work and the Workman" and was given by Dr. Ingram, F.T.C.D. He stated (1):-

"....elementary education has, until quite of late, occupied most of the public attention, and absorbed the largest share of individual effort; and justly so, for it is the necessary foundation of all else. But contemporary opinion seems to be altogether in favour of the ~~provision~~ gradual provision of a higher and wider instruction for working people; of opening to them a larger access to scientific and aesthetic culture....The principles which should guide us in determining the right general education of working men are identical with those that should be applied to the solution of the same question for other classes."

Here, in germ, although it was not put in the form of a resolution, is the principle of equality of opportunity being put, which would do away with "class" education and place "higher" education, or education above the elementary stage, within reach of all people.

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(1) T.U.C. Report, 1880, p. 27.

Banks (1) states that the idea of secondary education for all dates back from at least the eighteen-nineties. In fact, the germ of the idea is there in 1880.

In 1895 Mr. Will Thorne declared that the educational needs of the country were not being supplied by the State education system and wished to see it re-modelled on "such a basis as to secure the democratic principle" and to make all children worthy citizens (2).

The following year Mr. Pete Curran put the resolution of 1895 again, asking for the educational system to be re-modelled:-

"They needed equality of opportunity. Where certain honours and privileges were conferred upon the children of the middle class, as a matter of course the children of the workers had to compete, and show special genius before they had access to such honours and privileges....Upon the broad and comprehensive education of the younger generation lay the future state of society....They wanted, therefore, to equalise opportunity and to open the highest forms of education to the children of the workers as well as to the middle and upper classes." (3)

In 1897 the Trades Union Congress wanted to see "the highest educational advantages which the country affords" made available to all children. For the next two years the Congress passed resolutions demanding equality of opportunity; education was very much in their minds at this period.

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(1) Olive Banks, "Parity and Prestige in English Secondary Education", 1955, p. 116. "....the idea dates back from at least the 1890s, when it emerged as part of the programme of the Trade Union movement. In a resolution 'emphatically' condemning 'the education policy of the present Government', the Trades Union Congress in 1897 demanded 'equality of opportunity'." Apart from the germ of the idea being planted at the T.U.C. in 1880, as stated above, it was embodied in a resolution of 1896.

(2) T.U.C. Report, 1895.

(3) T.U.C. Report, 1896, pp. 48-49.

It is clear, then, that up to the end of the nineteenth century some of the basic concepts of the comprehensive school can be espied. Local schools were common in this country, chiefly because they grew quite naturally out of the parish system of the early Church. As has been indicated, some of these schools were for girls as well as boys.

It has also been demonstrated how the educational systems of Scotland and America influenced some educational thought in this country.

Up until the end of the nineteenth century the seeds of comprehensiveness could be seen only here and there but during that period the recognition that all men and women had a right to at least some education became generally admitted. It was one thing to acknowledge this but quite another to formulate a policy that would be acceptable to all the parties concerned with education. There were three main stumbling blocks; the religious organisations in the country, the "class" stratification of the country and the apathy of the mass of the people towards education.

The religious bodies believed that the education of the young was their prerogative and would not agree to the provision of education unless they were brought into such provision. England, being so class-conscious, had an upper class that, by and large, did not believe that education should be given freely to everybody for fear that the "masses" received ideas above their "station" in life. Unlike the people of Scotland and America, the people of this country were not passionately concerned with education.

The Elementary Education Act of 1870 was an attempt at a compromise between the point of view of the religious bodies and the attitude of people such as had formed the National Education League.

It was in the National Education League that people were to be found who believed in something much more radical than mere elementary education for all

classes. In fact, the first rumblings of "secondary education for all" came from the League. This theme was taken up by the Trades Union Congress and eventually this organised body of workers demanded complete equality of educational opportunity. This cry was eventually taken up by the newly-formed Labour Party in the twentieth century and it was from this party and other political left-wing organisations that the demand for comprehensive secondary schools chiefly came.

SECTION IV - THE TWENTIETH CENTURY.

In the early years of the twentieth century the educational system of America was featured in official publications, debates in Parliament and was the object of inquiry of a privately financed educational commission to the country. It was, of course, the American system that became the model, in parts, for the comprehensive school in this country.

At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, the Board of Education, which had been set up by the Board of Education Act of 1899, published a number of Special Reports; these covered a wide variety of topics and several of them were descriptions of the systems of education in foreign countries. These were issued under the general supervision of Michael E. Sadler, Director of Special Inquiries and Reports. Three of these Special Reports, all published in 1902, are of particular interest in the study of the development of the comprehensive idea.

In the first report (1) the author points out that there is much interest in and controversy over secondary education and that educational reformers are more and more divided among themselves as to the answers to the problems involved in educational reform. On page three is stated:-

"The real questions at issue are what ought schools to aim at producing, and for what kind of social order in the future ought they to prepare the rising generation."

The report contains a section on America and the common schools of that country are discussed. However, in the conclusion it is recommended, not that there should be any great changes in England's educational system in the direction of the "democratic" one of America but that "the varieties of educational effort....

(1) "Board of Education Special Reports on Educational Subjects" - Vol. 9 - "The Unrest in Secondary Education in Germany and Elsewhere", H.M.S.O., 1902.

should rise together to a higher level of efficiency". (p. 163)

Once again, in an official document that mentions the American system no movement towards a system of education that will offer equal opportunities to all citizens is seen. But in two other Special Reports of 1902, both written by Americans, a bias towards the American system is seen and in the second report the word "comprehensive" is applied to secondary education.

Volume ten of the Board's Special Reports was entitled "Education in the United States of America" and contained an article by Professor D.L. Kiehle, Professor of Pedagogy at the University of Minnesota, called "A Sketch of the Development and Present Condition of the System of Education in the State of Minnesota". Kiehle points out that the distinguishing characteristic of the American schools is their unconcern as to the social status of their pupils, and that the schools are "by the people and for the people". "They are not devised by a wiser and a better class for their good; neither are they for any class to the exclusion of any other class."

In volume eleven (1) appears an article by Professor Paul H. Hanus, Professor of Pedagogy at Harvard University; in this the author outlines his ideas of what a democratic educational system should provide. In fact, in this article is found the nearest likeness to the present-day comprehensive advocates' ideal than has been found in any document up to 1902. It is worth quoting extensively from this article as almost all of it would be endorsed today by the contemporary advocates:-

"....a democratic society provides equal educational advantages for all its members, on precisely the same terms; that is, to ensure the appropriate cultivation of every grade of ability and the discovery and development of superiority wherever

(1) "Board of Education Special Reports on Educational Subjects" - Vol. 11 - "Education in the United States of America", H.M.S.O., 1902, from a paper, "Secondary Education in a Democratic Community".

found, and to guard against the possible monopoly of education by the wealthy and socially superior classes, it makes education free." (p. 23)

In other words, equality of educational opportunity, which in this country up to this time had been called for by comparatively few voices.

Hanus points out that education must be compulsory up to a certain stage:-

"....in order to guard against the blindness of ignorance, it makes education, up to a certain point, compulsory." (p. 23)

He does not object to private and endowed educational institutions because they sometimes meet educational needs as yet unprovided for by public education. Today, of course, comprehensive advocates would aver that the schools they propose do cater for all educational needs at the secondary stage therefore other types of secondary school are unnecessary.

On page twenty-six he condemns the existing system of education in England by denouncing the "class" system in education:-

"To plan an education consisting of reading, writing, and ciphering for 'the masses', while we plan another of extended scope and continuity for 'the classes', is to promote artificially the perpetuation of social distinctions, is to destroy at a blow the very foundation of a democratic society."

Hanus stresses that in a democratic community a pupil's school career must not be hastened or retarded in order to make him advance at the same pace in all subjects or to make all pupils advance in all subjects at the same time.

"Education in a democratic community should, therefore, possess scope, continuity and flexibility - a scope as wide as human interests, as continuous as human development and the equal opportunities of all require, and as flexible as human capacities require and permit." (p. 28)

Then follows (pp. 40-41) the most striking and, at that time, revolutionary proposals of all. It is almost a blueprint for the comprehensive school system:-

"Shall we have two or more different kinds of independent secondary schools for the realisation of these aims of secondary education, or shall we have a comprehensive institution consisting of closely related inter-dependent departments which, whenever necessary, may be carried on in separate buildings? I declare unhesitatingly for the single comprehensive institution. To establish separate schools is to promote, artificially, social stratifications. As long as a certain course of study - the course of study represented in the classical school - affords the exclusive, or the preferred preparation for college, while the other courses of study represented in all the other secondary schools do not - and in spite of recent progress, it will be a long time before any other subjects will be regarded as good as Latin, Greek, and mathematics for the purpose - so long, no matter how good intrinsically those other subjects may be, will the non-classical schools be relegated to an inferior rank....

One who believes, as I do, that such artificial social segregations are prejudicial to the best interests of democratic society, will resist the differentiation of secondary education into separate and independent kinds of schools.

"My plan is, therefore, that secondary education in a democratic society shall be organised so as to consist of co9ordinate departments, all with the same articulation to the earlier work, and so intimately related to each other that a constant interchange may take place among the pupils in the separate departments in accordance with the tastes and needs of each pupil as they appear. Otherwise we endorse and promote the arbitrary relegation of one pupil to one social class, and another to another, in advance of knowledge as to which class he really belongs to."

These Special Reports were mentioned in the House of Lords on a few occasions, for example, in a debate on the 4th December, 1902, concerning the Education Bill,

the Bishop of Newcastle mentioned them. He was pointing out the value of having one authority to co-ordinate the several branches of education and spoke of the free system of New York. He then added that the Board of Education had recently published two volumes concerning the American system (1).

During a later discussion on the Education Bill in the Lords, the Bishop of Hereford drew attention to Sadler's Special Reports (2):-

"I have wondered again and again whether the members of the Government have ever read their own Yellow-books on the subject of higher education in other countries, which are published under the direction of Mr. Michael Saddler."

The Special Reports referred to above appeared in the same year as the famous Balfour Education Act, which abolished the school boards and substituted for them local education authorities. At this time, education other than elementary was uppermost in the minds of most people who were at all concerned about education. Among other things, the Act empowered the newly-created local education authorities to co-ordinate elementary and higher education. The "scholarship ladder" was also made possible by the Act, but the "secondary" school was still regarded as the school which provided a special kind of education rather than one which provided the second stage of education. Nevertheless, one of the important consequences of the Act was that the children of the working classes could more easily obtain admission to the grammar schools.

The passing of the Education Act of 1902 was one of the reasons why Mr. A. Mosely, a businessman, planned to take an Educational Commission to the United States of America. Mosley himself, in his Commission's reports, points out that

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(1) "The Parliamentary Debates", 1902, vol. cxv, columns 1245-1246.

(2) "The Parliamnetary Debates", 1902, vol. cxvi, column 343.

the Act, by giving certain powers to local education authorities to be responsible for education within their own areas is working on lines similar to the American system where each state is responsible for its own education. Mosely wrote (1) that he believed that his Commission came at an opportune moment and should be able to help mould public opinion on education on points where it required enlightenment.

As will be shown in the next section of this study, Mr. Mosely and his Commission had an influence on the London County Council in their creation of a comprehensive system and his Commission and their findings were well known to the School Board for London and the London Technical Education Board. It was also a well known and much publicised event at the time.

Mosely had also been responsible for the Mosely Industrial Commission to the United States in 1902. Why this great interest in America?

According to Mosely, in the early eighteen-eighties he had been in South Africa, engaged in mining operations, and a number of American engineers had arrived in that country. They transformed things in Africa and, in Mosely's opinion, it was largely due to their efforts that the South African diamond mining industry became so successful.

Mosely then became intensely interested in the country that could produce such remarkable men. He visited America and decided, from what he saw, that it would eventually play a most important part in the world and would also influence industries in this country. He also came to the conclusion that credit for much of the success of America was due to its system of education. He then decided to gather together a body of educational experts to visit America to see if they agreed with his belief. Hence the formation of the Mosely Educational Commission.

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(1) "Reports of the Mosely Educational Commission to the United States of America, October-December, 1903", 1904, p. iv.

"Payment by Results", inaugurated in 1862 by Robert Lowe, had come to an end by this time but the "strangulating" effect that this system had had upon the elementary school teachers was still present to a great degree in the early years of the twentieth century. For a description of a school suffering from the legacy of "Payment by Results", the reader is referred to "What Is and What Might Be" by Edmond Holmes (Constable, 1911, pp. 87-149).

Apart from the elementary infant schools, which had not suffered from Lowe's system, no - or very few - schools developed the children's individuality. One of the purposes of Mosely's Commission, therefore, was to investigate "The development of individuality in the primary schools".

Secondly, and this is most important from the point of view of this study, the Commission set out to study "The social and intellectual effects of the wide distribution of secondary education".

The other points being investigated by the Commission were, "The effect of specific instruction given (a) in business methods; (b) in applied science," and "The present state of opinion as to the value of professional and technical instruction of university rank designed with special reference to the tasks of business life".

Apart from Mosely himself, the Commission numbered twenty-six members; these included a number of professors, the president of the National Union of Teachers, members of various education committees, the Rev. A.W. Jephson, a member of the London School Board, and A.J. Shepheard, the chairman of the London Technical Education Board.

Mr. Arthur Anderton, representative of the County Councils' Association of England and Wales, in his report (Reports, pp. 1-6) points out the difference in nomenclature between American and English schools: primary and grammar schools combined are equal to English elementary schools, and high schools are equal to

English day grammar and organised science schools. He adds that many schools in the cities are very large, sometimes accommodating from 2,000 to 3,000 pupils.

He points out the way the social groups mix in the schools:-

"The free schools are largely used by all classes. The son of the wealthy man sits in the same class with the son of the labourer. In Washington, we saw the son of the President of the United States, two grandsons of the late President Garfield, and many children of members of Congress sitting and working in the same classes as the children of coachmen, gardeners, labourers, etc. Not the slightest difference is observed in regard to these children; they mix in the classes and playgrounds on terms of perfect equality."

Professor Henry E. Armstrong noted that in England there is no general belief in education but that ~~in~~ the common schools of America were highly esteemed. He emphasised the importance of the mixing of the social groups "as affecting the social outlook".

Mr. A.W. Black, chairman of the Nottingham Education Committee, observed that the American people believe in education and are willing to pay for it, whereas in England people are only half-persuaded of the value of it.

Mr. W.P. Groser, for the Parliamentary Industry Committee, regarded the high school system as excellent and in his conclusions wrote:-

"....equality of opportunity is a sentiment which appeals to everyone. But United States conditions are very different from ours, and I for one am not prepared to say that such a system,were it feasible, is desirable for England at present."

His reasons for this were not educational but simply that in England there was much work to be done which did not require high educational standards and there were many people available to do this work. So "However ardently we may desire equality of opportunity....we in our different circumstances may revolve with

advantage how far we can afford to sacrifice collective efficiency to distributive justice". (Reports, pp. 192-193)

The Rev. A.W. Jephson was another Commissioner who was impressed with the general keenness and enthusiasm for education of the American people as a whole. "This may be partly accounted for by the fact that the whole community uses the public schools; all classes meet in the common school, consequently all classes agree in supporting education." (Reports, p. 212)

Jephson stated that the giving of education free of charge to all who want it "is the one feature of U.S.A. education which I desire to see reproduced among ourselves". (Reports, p. 215) He also advocated a well-organised system of high schools for this country because in the present system in England some children who ought to carry on with some form of higher education were prevented from doing so.

The Rev. T.L. Papillon also noticed that education in America rested upon the fact that equality of opportunity was given to all citizens, irrespective of social class. He also believed the schools to be "a great unifying force in the life of the nation". (Reports, p. 250)

The high schools, declared Papillon, give an equal chance of a sound education to all pupils and, in general, are successful. On the other hand, they do not give as much attention to the training of special ability. This country provides for the children able to profit from a "good" education but generally neglects the majority of ordinary children, he believed.

Papillon wanted this country's new educational authorities to provide, under suitable conditions for England, something analogous to the high schools of America; he did not, however, wish education given in these schools to be free as in the United States.

Professor H.R. Reichel, who was the representative of University Colleges

of Cardiff, Aberystwyth, and Bangor, was particularly interested in manual training. He writes of a talk he had with Professor Hanus (Reports, pp. 284-285), who was the author of the challenging article in the Board of Education Special Report referred to on pages 76-78 of this study. Hanus told Reichel that he was in favour of manual training for several reasons including the fact that "the modern high school should have every side of work, so as to discover latent talent which might otherwise lie undeveloped and be lost to the community". Hanus also stated that he thought the high school was becoming an elective institution with a number of departments, which included manual training and believes this to be better than separate specialised schools because "Specialised schools would tend to become class schools" and "a general school maintains a wider outlook and better sense of proportion".

Councillor John Whitburn of the Newcastle-upon-Tyne Education Committee, after describing what he had seen in America and giving his impressions of it, made a number of recommendations for this country (Reports, p. 393). These included raising the age for compulsory attendance at school to fifteen or sixteen years and the establishment of free secondary schools, in particular for the purpose of giving commercial and manual training.

The Commissioners as a whole were impressed by the difference in attitude to education of all social classes in America compared with the people of England; the Americans regarded it as essential, the right of all, as a means of bettering themselves, and were willing to pay for its benefits. The Commissioners also noticed that there was a willingness, in some cases a desire, to learn on the part of the scholars.

A further point they noticed, and put in their Joint Report (Reports, pp. xxiii-xxiv), was the fact that there was no religious problem or class prejudice in America and so the work of the schools was made very easy. These two points, of course, had been made in official reports of the American system in the previous century.

For the last point in their Joint Report "they would draw attention to the extent to which the work of education is organised and its various grades co-ordinated, whereby harmonious working is secured and overlapping avoided. The need of effecting such organisation in this country, which was before apparent, now seems to them imperative, in view of the experience they have gained in the United States".

Although members of the Commission were not altogether impressed with the standards of work in some of the schools they visited, the one point upon which they were all agreed and were most emphatic about its value was the mixing of the social classes in the public schools.

The Mosely Commission attracted a lot of attention in 1903-1904; for example, "The Times" thought it warranted sending a "special correspondent" with the Commission to send back reports of its progress. In the first report, dated 20th October, 1903, the writer points out the fact emphasised by the members of the Commission that people as a whole in America were keen on education. "If we in England still lag behind other nations in educational progress, it is because the English people, from peer to peasant, still cares little about it." The "special correspondent" observes that the Commissioners are hoping to observe facts about American education that may help in the solving of educational problems in this country. He adds that the Commission are not going to repeat the facts about American education which have already been reported in the Board of Education Special Reports on the subject.

In his next October report, "The Times" correspondent reports that, in his opinion, the chief lesson to be learned from America is that there is no expenditure of public money that meets with more universal approval than that on education. The tone of the "special correspondent"s" reports ~~are~~ is one of respect for the American system.

In a "Times" report dated 14th December, 1903, Mosely himself is quoted as saying that the Reports of his Commissioners, when they are published, will have "a marked effect on English education". He also believed that splendid results would ensue from the work of the Commission.

It was reported on the 19th December, 1903, that some of the Commissioners had arrived back in the Mersey and that one of them, Mr. H.R. Rathbone, was interviewed. He thought that what had been seen in America would be useful in England and that many things about American methods "were suggestive".

After the Commissioners had returned to this country, there was much discussion of American education in the educational press of this country. For example, the Rev. T.L. Papillon wrote (1) once again of the universal belief in education of the American people. Because religious teaching is excluded from the public schools he adds that "educational issues can be discussed and settled, and educational experiments tried, on educational grounds alone".

He states that some of the Commissioners have criticised the public high schools because they try many things but do few really well: "....it has been frequently noted that the average standard reached by the highest classes is below that of corresponding pupils in English schools".

He points out once again that English schools provide education for a select few but the American ones for all people. "Their aim is to give an equal chance of a sound rather than a showy education to every boy or girl, irrespective of class, creed, or fortune, and on the whole they are succeeding in their endeavour."

He points out that the American educational system is comparatively free from examinations, unlike the English system.

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(1) "School: A Monthly Record of Educational Thought and Progress", January, 1904, Article entitled "The Mosely Commission: Impressions and Results".

Then he states, "We want our new educational authorities to see to it that there is gradually provided all over England something analogous to the excellent high schools open to every young American who wants secondary education, and we want the English nation to recognise the need".

When the Reports of the Mosely Commission were published, in 1904, they were sold for one shilling a copy. On the other hand they were available free of charge to any educational authorities or members of the same, county councillors, local managers, head master or mistress, or registered teacher.

The findings of this Commission must have been considered important at the time and must have been read widely for in the House of Commons a Mr. Thomas O'Donnell asked the First Lord of the Treasury if the Commissions' Reports were to be issued as Parliamentary Papers. To which Mr. Balfour replied that he knew of no precedent for publication of private papers as Parliamentary Papers and he did not think it would be wise to make an exception in the case of the Mosely Commission Reports (1).

So was published in 1904, about thirty five years after the memorable first general meeting of members of the National Education League, to which reference has already been made, an account of many aspects of the American educational system. By this time there could have been hardly anybody in this country who was at all interested in education who did not know of the American system - both its good and bad points - and how it compared with the English one.

What of the attitude of the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party during the early years of the twentieth century? In 1900, the Trades Union Congress

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(1) HANSARD, Vol. cxxxiii, 1904, column 395. 18th April, 1904.

passed a resolution on education, not re-emphasising "secondary education for all", but stressing the importance of the higher-grade schools to the children of the working class. These of course were upthrusts from the elementary schools. The following year, the Parliamentary Committee reported to the Congress; they wanted "elementary and higher education" to "be at the public expense, free...." and demanded that "efficient education for all who require it" should be supplied (1). Later at this same meeting a resolution was passed that the leaving age should be a minimum of fifteen years and that a system of scholarships to secondary schools should be available.

Then, in 1902, the trades unionists condemned the Education Act of that year because no answer was given in the Bill "as to how secondary education may be brought within the reach of the children of the industrial classes". (2) Two years later it was again proposed that a system of scholarships be available.

In 1905 the Labour Party, newly-formed, demanded that all types of education should be free and "placed within the reach of every child by the granting of bursaries and maintenance scholarships to all children". (3)

The Trades Union Congress, in 1906, advocated "secondary education for all" in quite strong tones; a resolution wanted "secondary and technical education to be an essential part of every child's education, and secured by such an extension of the scholarship system as will place a maintenance scholarship within the reach of every child, and thus make it possible for all children to be full-time day

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(1) T.U.C. Report, 1901.

(2) T.U.C. Report, 1902.

(3) Labour Party Conference Report, 1905.

pupils up to the age of sixteen". (1)

The Labour Party has always taken a keen interest in education. In 1906, apart from again demanding equal educational opportunities for all children, they wanted the leaving age raised to sixteen (2). In 1907, a Member of Parliament, Mr. Will Thorne, moved that they should press for a national system of education which, from the primary school to the university, should be free and secular. They also repeated the T.U.C. demands of the pervious year (3).

Educational discussion at Labour Party Conferences for the next nine years or so was, in the main, confined to topics other than the demand for secondary education for all children.

During the First World War, in 1917, this demand was repeated. A Mr. F. Titterington called for "Universal free compulsory secondary education". (4) He wanted this secondary education to last for about three years and wanted no specialisation until the last year of the secondary school course. In other words, he sought a "common core" of studies for the first two years, as comprehensive schools of today provide, and then specialisation at an age when it should be possible to discover any particular "bent" a child may have easier than at the earlier age.

This theme is returned to two years later. Mr. J. Jones, M.P. wanted secondary education to be placed within the reach of <u>all</u> children. He said that equality of opportunity was wanted and that in place of the so-called educational ladder they wanted a "great educational broadway" where each child could make progress

(1) T.U.C. Report, 1906.

(2) Labour Party Conference Report, 1906.

(3) Labour Party Conference Report, 1907.

(4) Labour Party Conference Report, 1917.

according to its capacity. (1)

During this period this demand was pressed again and again. However, in 1925, according to the Conference Report of that year, one of the delegates, a Mr. C.R. King of the Teachers' Labour League, wanted a "revolution in the present type of Education" which would lead to the "establishment of a Socialist Co-operative Commonwealth". Mr. King stated that the existing system of education was competitive itself and fostered the competitive spirit in children, whereas the ideal was to encourage co-operation. No details of how this educational revolution was to be accomplished are given, but this fostering of the co-operative spirit is one of the points about the comprehensive school which is stressed by many of its advocates.(2)

In 1926 the Hadow Report on "The Education of the Adolescent" was made. This advocated a bi-partite system of secondary education, with "grammar" and "modern" schools, the latter being schools similar to the then existing selective and non-selective central schools. This same year the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party issued a pamphlet ("From Nursery School to University") protesting at the different types of school, on the grounds that it would increase class distinctions and the lower grade school would not benefit by being stimulated by the presence of a university class.

Yet in spite of this pamphlet which objected to different types of secondary school, the following year, 1927, both the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party were advocating different types of school. In the T.U.C. Report for 1927 it is stated that children should go to <u>different</u> types of school at the age of eleven. At the Labour Party Conference for that year (3) it is stated that the

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(1) Labour Party Conference Report, 1919.

(2) For example, see Robin Pedley, "Comprehensive Schools Today: An Interim Survey", 1955, pp. 32-33.

(3) Labour Party Conference Report, 1927.

object of the Party is to ensure that all children at eleven shall pass to a separately organised school with a secondary course from the elementary school.

They wished to see the central schools on an equal footing with the grammar schools because they were filling a need, particularly among children of the less academic type. Then is stated another aim of the Party's, which is "to develop a new type of Secondary School which offers a variety of courses suited to children of different aptitudes and capacities, but is otherwise on a level with the present day Secondary School".

At this time, then, the Labour Party were seeking to establish a new type of secondary school which would not embrace the existing grammar schools but would run parallel to them; they also wanted the existing central schools to be placed under the Secondary School Regeulations. Thus, in 1927 a step in the direction of the comprehensive school was taken.

In 1928, the Board of Education Educational Pamphlet No. 56 was published ("Secondary Education in the States of New York and Indiana"). In a prefatory note was stated the fact that the Board thought the pamphlet would be of great interest to all people concerned with post-primary education problems in this country.

It was pointed out that the New York schools offered every type of education of post-elementary standing. And on page ten; "....the term 'Secondary Education' as used throughout the United States covers all types of education suitable to the age range 14-18, and frequently all such types of education are carried on in the same school". Further references to this particular fact are made on pages 49, 54 and 55 of the pamphlet. The writer also stresses the point, made before on so many occasions, that the American school was particularly successful in achieving its social aims.

In the same year the Board of Education issued "The New Prospect in Education", another of its Educational Pamphlets, in which it was suggested that admission to selective schools - central or secondary - in any area should seldom exceed twenty-five per cent of the 11-12 age range. Reasons were that if the number transferred is too great "it will probably be found that some of the children selected are not of a sufficiently high standard, and their presence will then act as a drag on the work of the whole central school". The other reason was that if too many of the brighter children go to selective schools, "the ordinary senior schools are left with a very high proportion of their children belonging to the definitely duller type". The Board stated that it could be argued that these children would gain by attending a school which catered for their specific needs, but this could be answered by the fact that they gain more if they can also "mix on an equal footing with their brighter comrades in the social and athletic life of a school of which they both alike are members".

The National Union of Teachers replied to this contention of the Board's with their pamphlet "The Hadow Report and After", which was published the same year. They pointed out that in fact a case was being put forward for a <u>multi-bias</u>, or multilateral, school:-

"This contention is very reasonable, but the Board apparently fails to see its full implications, for it expresses a principle which is capable of almost indefinite extension, and which might be used with great force by those who do not believe in the separation of the more intelligent 25 per cent from their fellows. It is in fact an argument against any selection at all, and in favour of the relatively large multiple bias school, which would include among others a course of the present secondary type, and which would secure for all pupils of post-primary age that equality in the hygiene of their environment, and in staffing and equipment which is so much to be desired...."

The booklet then states that the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters and the Higher Education Section of the N.U.T. have declared themselves to be for the large multiple-bias school, as also have the Labour Party and the Trades Union Congress. So at this time there was a considerable body of opinion in favour of such schools, on the lines of multilateral schools rather than comprehensive schools.

The ease with which transfer from "side" to "side" of such schools can be carried out is stressed, and the fact that with separate schools "such transfers will always involve grave difficulties".

At this time the two associations of mistresses were also advocating the multilateral principle. Thus there was considerable support for this principle both from educational and political organisations, although it must be remembered that in many instances members of teachers' organisations who were advocating the multilateral principle were also the same people who were advocating it for political and social reasons in political organisations.

The advocates of multi-bias schools at this period were of the opinion that such schools of necessity had to be very large. For example, Godfrey Thomson, writing in 1929 (1) said:-

"My own strong predilection is....for keeping all the children in the one institution, which would then necessarily have to be large if different courses are to be provided within the school corresponding to what would otherwise be separate schools." (p. 209)

The proof that Thomson was thinking along the lines of multilateralism rather than comprehensiveness ~~are~~ is on page 274 where he states that one of the dangers of such large schools was that of "not keeping the various courses sufficiently distinct" and leading to slackening of standards in the academic side. Finally,

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(1) Godfrey H. Thomson, "A Modern Philosophy of Education", 1929.

he decides that the "social solidarity of the whole nation" is more important than any of the alleged defects of the comprehensive high school.

The same year, 1929, the Education Committee of the General Council of the Trades Union Congress reported that, in their opinion, the free place system was harmful to the primary schools and advocated one type of secondary school for all children:-

"This element of competition, which brings with it an unwholesome pressure in the primary school, would be considerably weakened if all children went to the same form of secondary school on attaining the age of eleven and over...." (1)

In 1930 the National Association of Labour Teachers began their campaigning for a multi-bias type of school. They issued a pamphlet (2) in which they advocated schools in which a large variety of courses round a common base would be provided. These schools, it was envisaged, would contain between 800 and 900 pupils. This campaign was backed by the Trades Union Congress in the later thirties.

Two years later the Labour Party were still advocating secondary education for all but the multilateral school was not called for. The Rt. Hon. Sir Charles Trevelyan, who had been President of the Board of Education in the short-lived Labour Government of the 1920's stated (3):-

"We do not want to see secondary education only for the clever sons and daughters of the working class; we want it for the average ones as well, for those who have not yet shown the genius which often lies dormant in the apparently dullest child until the opportunity is given. Let us therefore make up our mind in passing this resolution, that what the Labour Party is determined to have is free secondary education for all."

In 1937 the Trades Union Congress again condemns the free place system and

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(1) T.U.C. Report, 1929.

(2) "Education: A Policy", 1930.

(3) Labour Party Conference Report, 1932.

they assert that secondary education should be provided for all out of public funds and insist that the "different kinds of teaching should be brought together under one roof". (1)

The previous year to this, R.H. Tawney, a prominent educationalist and member of the Labour movement, wrote an article (2) in which he commented on various aspects of education. Concerning secondary education, he wrote:-

"What is really needed with regard to secondary education is to plan it as a whole. It ought to be treated as a large genus forming the second stage of education, and including several different types of school."

Because the concept of a single school offering all types of secondary education under its one roof had been aired so much in the late nineteen-twenties and thirties, it was not unnatural that a report of the Board of Education in 1938 should devote some space to it.

That year, the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education, under the chairmanship of Sir Will Spens, issued its "Report on Secondary Education with special reference to Grammar Schools and Technical High Schools". The Committee came out against the multilateral idea in general and in favour, not of ~~bilateralism~~ bipartitism as had the Hadow Committee in 1926, but of tripartitism; grammar, modern and technical schools. However, the Spens Committee did not reject outright the multilateral principle, because it suggested that in certain areas it might be useful to experiment with such schools. The Committee stated that the schools they proposed should, if possible, have parity of status, and that in effect this means "that the multilateral idea, although it may not be expressed by means of

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(1) T.U.C., "Education and Democracy", 1937.

(2) "Break Down the Walls!", article in "Labour - A Magazine for all Workers," January, 1936.

multilateral schools, must be inherent in any truly national system of secondary education". (Spens Report, pp. xxxv-xxxvi)

This brought a sharp reaction from both the Trades Union Congress and the National Association of Labour Teachers, in the form of pamphlets. The T.U.C. agreed with the Consultative Committee that there should be a single code for secondary education but profoundly disagreed about having three types of school (1):-

"We believe that a policy of multilateral schools - as these schools with different 'sides' are known - is the only practical way of bringing about educational parity and that approach to social and industrial equality which we may properly expect our educational system to contribute to the society in which we live."

The National Association of Labour Teachers also protested about the different types of school and said that "the State should provide a single type for all children Admission should be automatic at the age of 11, without examination...." (2)

So the Trades Union Congress, from the demand for secondary education for all children which was originally to be carried out under a system of different types of school, gradually turned to pressing for this education to be carried out in a single school. Until the outbreak of the Second World War this school was envisaged as being a multilateral school.

The Labour movement, in general, throughout the nineteen-thirties, apart from advocating secondary education for all, had no unanimity of opinion within its ranks. As has been indicated, in the first year of the decade the National Association of Labour Teachers advocated a type of multi-bias school; in 1935 the Labour-controlled

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(1) "T.U.C. Statement on the Spens Report", undated pamphlet.

(2) N.A.L.T., "Social Justice in Public Education", undated pamphlet.

London County Council, as will be shown in the next section of this study, would have instituted multilateral schools had they been able; yet R.H. Tawney, in 1936, still conceived of the secondary stage of education as including several different types of school.

In 1939, the year after the publication of the Spens Report, the Second World War broke out and, as is well known, much of the thinking about post-war education which was done during the war years was along the lines of the multi-bias, or multilateral, school - at least from the Trades Union Congress and the Labour Party.

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At the Labour Party Conference in 1942, during the Second World War, a resolution was moved and carried; it was put by Mr. Harold Clay of the National Executive (1) and called for a common code of regulations for all schools for children over the age of eleven years and called on the Board of Education "to encourage, as a general policy, the development of a new type of multilateral school which would provide a variety of courses suited to children of all normal types". Later Mr. Clay added, "We advocate the application of the common school principle. We believe it is sound that every child in the State should go to the same kind of school".

In 1943 an Education Bill, concerned with education in post-war Britain, was being proposed, and interested individuals, parties and organisations were asked to give their opinions and recommendations to the Board of Education. A Labour Party Research Department Sub-Committee on Education, led by Mr. Clay, waited on the President of the Board in February, 1943, to discuss the proposed Bill and they suggested to Mr. R.A. Butler, the President of the Board, that a "new type of multilateral school should be developed".

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(1) Labour Party Conference Report, 1942.

The same year the Board of Education issued a "White Paper on Educational Reconstruction", which proposed three types of secondary school - grammar, technical and modern - as did the Spens Committee of 1938.

Another important event in the same year was the publication of the Norwood Report (1), which came out in favour of tripartitism, although recommending ~~bipartitism~~ bilateral schools (grammar + modern schools) in certain circumstances. The Norwood Committee reported that the term "multilateral school" had been used frequently in the evidence received by them but was used so as to cover a multiplicity of meanings. "The vagueness of the phrase has in our opinion," they wrote, "been responsible for much confusion of thought and statement, and in the interest of clarity we propose to avoid it, even at the risk of using a clumsy nomenclature".

It seemed at this stage as if the proposed new Education Act would in fact advocate tripartitism in view of the White Paper and the Norwood Report. Yet in 1944, when the Act was passed, this was not the case. As secondary education was now statutorily a "stage" of education following the first stage, it could obviously be provided for in either one school or a number of schools.

Why did not the Education Act advocate a system of separate schools? The Labour Party claimed part of the credit for this. At the Conference of 1950, Miss Alice Bacon ~~said~~ mentioned the deputation of 1943 which visited the President of the Board of Education to advocate multilateral schools. "We sent that deputation to him because the White Paper had talked about three types of secondary education. As a result of our deputation and others the 1944 Education Act did not have the term 'three types of secondary schools' but said that local authorities had to provide efficient secondary education for their children, which left the way

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(1) "Curriculum and Examinations in Secondary Schools", 1943.

open for the comprehensive or common secondary school." (1)

So at the General Election of 1945 the Labour Party were in favour of a system of multilateral schools. Yet although the Party won the election, the Ministry of Education (which replaced the Board of Education) and the Minister of Education, Miss Ellen Wilkinson, appeared to favour, not the multilateral policy of the Labour Party, but the old tripartite system. This was apparent that year when the Ministry of Education published the pamphlet "The Nation's Schools: Their Plan and Purpose", which advocated the tripartite system.

This caused much argument and discussion within the Labour Party. At the Party Conference of 1946 a resolution submitted by the National Association of Labour Teachers was carried. The resolution read:-

"This Conference, in view of the fact that many educational development schemes are being based on the pamphlet 'The Nation's Schools', urges the Minister of Education to repudiate the pamphlet, since the policy laid down in it conflicts with the educational policy of the Labour Movement."

The Minister of Education, Miss Ellen Wilkinson, replied at the Conference that those people who wanted the pamphlet repudiated had misunderstood it. For it was not, she stated, the policy of the Ministry that the schools proposed in it would be first, second and third class schools but they would all be equal. (2)

The argument over this pamphlet was not confined to the Labour Party Conference; it echoed in the House of Commons as well. In July, 1946, Mr. W.E. Cove, M.P., asked (3):-

"Does the Minister subscribe to the provision of multilateral schools? She is supposed to be in favour of them. That is Labour Party policy."

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(1) Labour Party Conference Report, 1950.

(2) Labour Party Conference Report, 1946.

(3) HANSARD, fifth series, vol 424, column 1833.

At the Labour Party Conference in 1946 the Minister of Education had promised that in another Ministry of Education publication would be made clear what was the Party policy. This was issued the following year and entitled "The New Secondary Education". By this time Ellen Wilkinson had died and George Tomlinson was the new Minister of Education. The pamphlet devoted a chapter each to the modern, technical and grammar schools, and mentioned in passing the multilateral school (p. 24):-

"In some places where conditions are favourable the best way of carrying out the new plan may be to combine two, or three, types of secondary education in one school. Current controversy on this subject has shown the disadvantages, as well as the obvious advantages, in such an organisation."

It was obvious, then, that at this time there were doubts and uncertainties about the multilateral school at the Ministry of Education and/or the leadership of the Labour Party.

The Labour Party Conference of that year were still not happy with events in the field of education. They passed a resolution which read (1):-

"This Conference urges the Minister of Education to take great care that he does not perpetuate under the new Education Act the undemocratic tradition of English secondary education; which results in all normal children born into well-to-do homes being educated together in the same type of school, while the abler children in working-class families are separated at the age of eleven from their less gifted brothers and sisters.

"This Conference draws attention to the fact that on four occasions during the last five years it has passed resolutions emphasising the need for the rapid development of a new type of multilateral or common secondary school, taking a

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(1) Labour Party Conference Report, 1947.

complete cross-section of children of secondary school age without selection, and providing a comprehensive curriculum suited to children of varied capacities and tastes. It calls upon the Minister to review the education system in order to give real equality of opportunity to all the nation's children."

It is difficult to understand exactly what is meant by the first paragraph in this resolution. According to the Education Act of 1944 public and private schools were not prohibited so nothing could be done about parents who were able and willing to pay the fees of such establishments in order to have their children educated privately. Secondary schools within the national syatem were not allowed to take fee-paying pupils; children were to be allocated to them, according to the Act, in accordance with their ability to profit by the education offered in them.

One of the main criticisms of the multilateral, or comprehensive, school in 1947 was that of size. It was stated that to provide for all the educational needs of a particular locality such a school would have to be very large indeed, and that in such an institution a head teacher would have great difficulty in knowing most of his pupils, or even, so some critics asserted, most of his staff. The Ministry of Education pamphlet "The New Secondary Education" stated that to offer opportunity and scope for all its children a multilateral school would have to be probably made up of 1,500 to 1,700 pupils.

In 1946 the London County Council had started establishing the first of its experimental comprehensive schools and in the following year the Advisory Council on Education in Scotland came out against the size of school favoured by the L.C.C. (1). They decided that the maximum number of pupils in a secondary school should be six hundred and while they agreed that they could not be too rigid over such a matter, they were not in favour of much larger numbers. "It follows that we cannot recommend the setting up of huge multilateral schools on the American

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(1) "Secondary Education", 1947, p. 24. 31.

model, as favoured by the London County Council, with two thousand or more pupils in each."

Mr. W.G. Cove, M.P. for Aberavon, wrote in the journal of the National Union of Teachers in reply to these criticisms of the multilateral school (1):-

"There never has been any substance in the criticism. I have more than once been amused by the fact that persons who see no disadvantages in the largeness of some of our Public Schools like Eton or the size of a grammar school like Manchester Grammar School have been greatly perturbed at the thought of the bigness of a multilateral school."

Although the terms "multilateral" and "comprehensive" had been used as though they were interchangeable before the publication of Ministry of Education Circular 144, in 1947, different meanings had sometimes been attached to the terms. Both had been used loosely to describe the one school with different "sides" and the common school with no rigid division into sides. It was the National Association of Labour Teachers, in 1948, who really drove home the type of school they had in mind for the nation's children - the true comprehensive school. In 1948 the Labour Party, no doubt prompted by the pamphlet (2) issued by the National Association of Labour Teachers that year, dropped the term "multilateral" and advocated "comprehensive" schools.

This N.A.L.T. pamphlet stated that in a comprehensive school the children must at first "be grouped in classes without any particular grading". Each class begins as a "random selection" of children. The school has to "convert this random selection into a coherent community within the larger community of the school as a whole". Although it may be desirable after a while "to regroup from the classes

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(1) "The Schoolmaster", 8th May, 1947, article "The Multilateral School".

(2) "The Comprehensive School - Its History and Character", 1948.

for certain activities, but the cohesion of the class community should be preserved for most purposes". The first two years in the comprehensive school will be spent on the "core curriculum" without any specialisation. Later, special studies may be taken. There should be no streams or sides in the comprehensive school.

The arguments about the comprehensive school raged on during the latter years of the nineteen-forties and the early nineteen-fifties. One outstanding feature of these arguments is that there was a certain amount of confusion in them; even advocates of common schools could not agree over such problems as whether or not to stream children in them. Even among local education authorities and the Ministry of Education there is still confusion over the use of nomenclature, as will be shown in the final section of this study.

One of the leading critics of comprehensive schools at this time was I.L. Kandel. In one article (1) he stated that by sending all pupils to one school the ideal of equality of opportunity is deprived of all meaning and then issues a warning that "..the history of the cult of mediocrity which has resulted from that form of multilateral school, known in the United States as the comprehensive high school, should provide a salutary warning to those in other countries who have to find a more satisfactory solution of the current problem of implementing the ideal of equality of educational opportunity".

The discussion about comprehensive schools continued in the Labour Party in 1950. A resolution was put and carried at the Party Conference that year which called on the Government - still a Labour one - to implement the party policy of comprehensive schools, and not to withhold permission to build them on the grounds of size alone. (3)

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(1) "Journal of Education", January, 1949, "The Educational Dilemma". Another criticism of comprehensive schools can be found in "An Essay on the Content of Education" by Eric James, Harrap, 1949, pp. 92-95.

(3) Labour Party Conference Report, 1950.

It was obvious that at this Conference the delegates were in favour of comprehensive schools primarily for social reasons and not educational reasons. The mover of the resolution referred to in the previous paragraph, Mr. Geoffrey Woodhall, stated:-

"I believe that in the comprehensive system of education lies the basis of educating the next generation to form a socialist society. We do not need politics to be taught in schools to build a socialist society. What we do need is the comprehensive system of education, which cuts out the class distinction that tends to come from the present tripartite system."

As an indication of the confusion that reigned over terminology, one delegate stated that he did not believe that the Party members or the Government really considered what comprehensive schools are. He had read of a recent debate in Parliament and was amazed to find "that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Ministry of Education used the term 'multilateral school' as if it was the same as a comprehensive school", which he felt showed that people did not know what a comprehensive school was.

Miss Alice Bacon, M.P., of the National Executive, agreed that selection of children at the age of eleven was wrong and that the solution of this problem was "the common ~~school~~ secondary school - and I would like to call it the common secondary school, because there has been so much misunderstanding as to what is a comprehensive school and what is a multi-lateral school ~~school~~. Let us call it a common secondary school, where we can cater within that school for all types of children".

Later, she referred to the social effects of the comprehensive school:-

"I have dealt with the educational effects of the common secondary school, but the social effects are even more important. It is undesirable to separate at 11 years the potential factory worker from the office worker or the university

person. This policy creates social barriers and social classes for which there is no room in a democratic society."

In 1951 there was another General Election and the Conservative Party came into power. Their policy was to approve generally of the tripartite system but, on the other hand, approval was given to certain authorities to establish comprehensive schools (1).

In 1956, the Labour Party issued a duplicated pamphlet entitled "Comprehensive Schools". This pointed out the fact that the number of grammar school places provided by different authorities varied and also indicated what its authors thought to be the unfairness of the eleven-plus examination. Then it states that the Labour Party wish to abolish selection of all kinds and develop the Comprehensive High School.

In January, 1958, the Labour Party published "Education in England and Wales", which defined the comprehensive school as "a school which under one roof covers all aspects and levels of secondary education". This, of course, would cover multi-lateral schools as well as comprehensive schools.

The same year the Party issued "Learning to Live", which was a policy for education from the nursery school to university. This document signalled a change from the advocacy of the comprehensive school pure and simple. It advocated comprehensive secondary education, and stated of this that "While insisting upon the principle, we realise that there may be a variety of ways of putting comprehensive education into practice." The document then gives examples of the methods of different authorities of trying to augment the comprehensive principle. Mention is made of the Leicestershire Experiment (see final section of this study), the possibility of creating junior colleges for sixth form work. Then is added, "We

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(1) The story of the establishment of these comprehensive schools has been told in the educational press during this period, e.g. "Times Educational Supplement", "The Schoolmaster", "Education", and will not therefore be discussed in detail in this study.

have also to examine the extent to which the development, favoured by several authorities, of bilateral, multilateral and campus schools, begins to approach the comprehensive principle. It is already obvious from the examples given that comprehensive education does not imply one type of comprehensive school".

The Party Conference that year debated "Learning to Live" and after a long discussion it was accepted. James Griffiths, M.P., for the National Executive Committee, stated that it was recognised that there was a variety of ways in which reorganisation on the comprehensive principle could be carried out. "What we are insisting upon is that there shall be reorganisation on the comprehensive principle, that secondary schools shall provide for all children a wide variety of courses."

Miss B.A. Godwin suggested a new scheme of education; primary schools for children aged five to nine years, intermediate schools for the nine to thirteen age group, high schools for pupils of thirteen and over. Miss Alice Bacon, of the National Executive Committee, replied that she was sympathetic to the idea of Miss Godwin's but that it was only one method that they would wish to put to local education authorities. "...we do not want to give the impression to the local authorities that we are dictating just one form of organisation of secondary education..."

In December of the same year the Ministry of Education issued a pamphlet, "Secondary Education for All - A New Drive", in which it was stated the Government do not wish to abolish experiments with comprehensive schools particularly in sparsely populated country districts and in new housing areas where no schools with long-standing traditions are in existence. It is then emphatically stated that there would be objections if it were planned to destroy an existing grammar school in order to establish a new comprehensive school. The pamphlet also questioned the advisability of creating very large comprehensive schools.

If 1958 saw the change from advocacy of comprehensive schools to that of a

comprehensive secondary education system, 1959 saw this point amplified still more. At the fourth annual conference of Labour Group Representatives, held at Harrogate on 31st January and 1st February, on the first agenda paper was stated, "In considering Labour's policy, however, it is important to think not so much of a comprehensive school but of a comprehensive system. As will be seen, this does not necessarily imply unitary control in a single institution of a complete range of secondary provision. It does, however, remove the barriers between types of education, and gives to all schools the 'parity of esteem' which was one of the main objectives of the Education Act, 1944". (1)

At this conference Councillor R. Spooner of West Bromwich stated that he was alarmed to see schools planned which it is believed are comprehensive but are not in reality. He added, "We are in danger of accepting paternity for all sorts of illegitimates under the name of the comprehensive school".

Alderman J.A. Robinson of Consett stated that at Billingham another system was being tried. A school had been opened that was going to "form part of five on a campus school site. We shall have five headmasters. They will be covered by one governing body and they have absolute right of transfer".

Councillor R. Warburton of Loughborough stated that they must "put the emphasis on a comprehensive system as distinct from comprehensive schools".

In 1959 the National Association of Labour Teachers published another pamphlet (2) in which was discussed bilateral schools, multilateral schools and the Leicestershire schools. The author of the pamphlet decided that for different reasons these schools failed to "provide complete opportunity for every child". He then goes on to describe and advocate the comprehensive school, as defined by the

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(1) Labour Party, "Agenda Papers and Report of Discussion", 1959, p. 7.

(2) "Secondary Education Without the Eleven-Plus" by Peter Ibbotson.

Ministry of Education Circular 144 of 1947, because "Only comprehensive schools can, and do, offer a really full range of courses designed to satisfy all kinds of needs, and relevant to the needs of both society and individual pupils".

By this time, then, the Labour Party had committed themselves to pressing for a comprehensive system of education rather than for comprehensive schools. This is open to a multitude of interpretations. Robin Pedley (1) reports a speech of Mr. Gaitskell, the then leader of the Labour Party, explaining this. He states "Local authorities would be asked to submit plans to abolish the permanent segregation of children into different types of schools at 11, but they would have plenty of latitude as to the way in which, and the speed with which, they did this". As Pedley comments, any education officer in this country, upon hearing that, would confidently assert that in his area there is no permanent segregation of children.

What of the other political parties during this period? The Conservative Party, who had been in power since 1951, in general preferred the tripartite system but, as has been explained previously, did allow comprehensive schools to be built in certain areas.

The Liberal Party in 1958 wanted an all-round improvement in the quality and status of secondary schools. They regarded experiment "as essential to the maintenance of vitality in an educational system". Because of this they thought that the development of comprehensive schools should be watched with interest. But they say (2) "If the children entering them are segregated into streams according to their intellectual ability, then the supposed evils of such a segregation are concealed rather than eliminated. If they are not so segregated, then children of very unequal ability must be taught together, which is educationally unsound, unjust to the more capable pupils, and unkind to those of less ability". They are not entirely satisfied that the ease of transfer, which it is claimed can be accomplished in

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(1) "Forum", Autumn 1958, p. 16.

(2) "A Liberal Policy for Education", 1958, pp. 19-20.

comprehensive schools, is carried out in practice. Other experiments in secondary education, such as campus schools, are welcomed by the Liberals.(1)

The Communist Party at this time advocated "the Comprehensive Secondary School, catering for the children of a given area, providing an all-round modern education with a common basic curriculum for all pupils....

"Only on the foundation of a common curriculum is it sound, in our view, to provide for bias or choice at the later stages of the secondary school course. Premature specialisation is to be strongly condemned." (2)

Therefore in 1958-59 the Communist Party alone advocated the comprehensive school; the Labour Party advocated a comprehensive system; the Conservative and Liberal Parties were generally in favour of the tripartite system, with the Liberals interested in a more comprehensive system.

As was explained on page ninety-three of this study, in the late nineteen-twenties several teachers' associations expressed a desire to see a new type of new multi-bias school, yet since 1944 as Banks explains (3) there has been a movement within these organisations away from multilateralism. In addition to the organisations mentioned by Banks, the National Association of Schoolmasters issued a pamphlet, "Problems of the Comprehensive School", in 1954, which was written by members of the London Schoolmasters' Association. It is admitted that there is not sufficient evidence available to say with certainty whether the problems of secondary education in London can be solved by comprehensive schools but then ~~adds~~ is added, "This Association is not convinced that the ambitious claims of the advocates of the comprehensive school will be completely justified". The Schoolmasters also

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(1) By 1963 the attitude of the Liberal Party had changed. In an Education Resolution adopted by the Liberal Party Council on 23rd February, 1963, it was advocated that the 11+ examination be abolished and that local authorities be encouraged to develop types of non-selective secondary education.

(2) "Education: Communist Party Policy", undated but probably 1958.

(3) "Parity & Prestige in English Secondary Education", 1955, pp. 143-145.

regretted that the London County Council had not agreed to experiment with only a few comprehensive schools at first rather than to establish them on a large scale.

In 1958 the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools also issued a pamphlet ("Comprehensive Secondary Education") in which while welcoming the need for experiment within the secondary sphere of education, stated that the nation should "resolutely resist any developments which might destroy or damage the grammar schools".

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The main argument for comprehensive schools or for an educational system that is comprehensive in character is social rather than educational. The Board of Education Reports for 1902, mentioned in this section, have emphasised this aspect of the American schools.

From the examples of America which the members of the Mosely Commission saw, it was the social aspect of the schools which made the greatest impression on them, rather than the educational aspects which they found wanting, particularly with regard to the more academic type of child. This social aspect of comprehensive education is also stressed by the Labour Party.

As the Mosely Commissioners and other observers of both the American and English educational systems have made clear, at the beginning of this century it was the difference in attitude to education of the two peoples that impressed them very much. This attitude was responsible for the differences in the two systems. It is a fact that even today in this country many people, mainly from the "working classes", do not regard education as something that is essential for every child. This is instanced when these people complain at every mention of raising the school leaving age. It would appear that there is still a difference in attitude to education between the Americans and some English people.

Originally the multi-bias schools were advocated by some of the teachers'

organisations in order to give all post-primary pupils similar environmental conditions, staffing and equipment (see page 92 of this study). Multi-bias schools would also be able to transfer pupils from one side to another easier than separate schools.

Resistance to comprehensive schools appears to have come from these teachers' organisations after the War on three grounds. (1) They were afraid that the adoption of comprehensive schools would mean the end of the long-established grammar schools. (2) They believed they would be so large as to be almost unmanageable educational units. (3) An unexpressed reason, but probably present, is the fact that much of the advocacy of these schools was done on grounds other than educational.

Why the change of policy within the Labour Party from advocating comprehensive schools to advocating a comprehensive system? There are several possible explanations for this. The success of any educational system depends very largely upon the teachers engaged in it. Seeing that some of the teachers' organisations favoured multi-bias schools before the Second World War, which in fact were schools embracing the "comprehensive principle" but which ~~in fact~~ kept the grammar side and other sides distinct, and had turned against comprehensive schools after the War, it might have been thought that a step in the direction of the "comprehensive principle" with the teachers would at least be a move away from tripartitism pure and simple.

Again, some local education authorities have developed and established schools on the comprehensive principle without actually setting up comprehensive schools proper. Perhaps the Labour Party has seen in this development some of the social and educational aims being achieved and would be content, if in power, to encourage these developments.

Since 1944, the secondary education situation in this country has been one

of experiment and partially confusion, as will be shown in the final section of this study. But before discussing this, a study of how London came to adopt comprehensive schools will be made.

SECTION V - POST-PRIMARY EDUCATION IN LONDON.

The chairman of the Technical Education Board of the London County Council in 1904 was Mr. A.J. Shepheard; he had also been one of the members of the Mosely Educational Commission to the United States of America the previous year. In 1904, a number of his colleagues on the Technical Education Board asked him to publish an account of his experiences and impressions of his American visit. This account was published by the London County Council in the form of a six-page pamphlet (1).

Shepheard pointed out that there was a greater desire for education of the people in America than in this country, and that education was the right of all citizens. The State in which a child lived had the duty to give him the education for which he was suited. He added that American children were entitled to free education up to the age of eighteen or nineteen.

He then discusses the manual training which was given in some American high schools. In some schools a little manual training was given, in others a lot, and in the rest none at all. He then repeats a suggestion that he made in his Report which was published with the other Commissioners' reports, proposing that an experiment on certain lines be tried in this country:-

"The ideal experiment would, to my mind, be a grammar school with three sides - ordinary, ordinary and trade mixed, and trade mainly. The students should be of the same general standing, and should have the option as to the side they went to."

Here, then, is the first written recommendation to the London County Council - via its Technical Education Board - that it should, in effect, try an experiment with a multilateral, or multi-bias, school; a school with more than two sides. As early as 1904 the germ of multilateralism was planted in London.

In the same year, a similar happening to the above occurred. Also on the

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(1) "Education in the United States of America", 1904.

Mosely Educational Commission had been the Rev. A.W. Jephson, who was a member of the School Board for London. At a meeting of the Board, held on 28th January, 1904, it was resolved that (1) "the REV. A.W. JEPHSON be invited to prepare and submit a Report to the Board embodying the impressions he formed in regard to the National Education during his recent visit to the United States of America in connection with the Mosely Commission; and that the Report be printed for circulation amongst the Members and Officers".

In reply to this invitation of the Board, Jephson wrote a short book (2) which was favourably reviewed in the "School Government Chronicle" for the 23rd April, 1904, and which apart from being issued to the members of the Board was on sale to the public.

Discussing the educational system of New York, he points out (p. 3) that all the schools are free and are available to, and used by, all the community.

He also discusses the Manual Training High School for Kansas City and the reasons for its establishment (p. 55):-

"There are many pupils in Elementary schools for whom a purely academic course in a High school is unsuitable, and who are more likely to stay for at least a year in a High school if a part of the curriculum includes Manual Training."

At the end of his book he makes a summary of the conclusions he reached after his American visit (p. 78):-

"The American High school system is admirable, and should be copied at home, and every child in one of our Elementary schools should have the chance, if he wishes, and is fitted for it, to go to a higher kind of school."

So from the visit of Mr. Mosely's Educational Commission to America,

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(1) "School Board for London - Minutes of Proceedings - December 1903 - April 1904", p. 364.

(2) "Report on Elementary Education in the United States of America", 1904.

London had two proposals: to experiment with what were really multilateral schools containing grammar, grammar and trade, and trade sides, and to set up a system of schools modelled upon the American high schools. It should be remembered, when reading Jephson's suggestion that children should be able to go to a higher kind of school if they so wish, that in America the high school education was free to all but no compulsion was exercised upon the children to make them attend these schools.

Nothing came of these two recommendations at the time, but the London County Council in 1905 decided to establish "central schools", which came under the regulations for elementary schools. These schools usually had a "bias", namely an industrial one at first, and were intended for pupils who would leave school between fifteen and sixteen years of age. By 1912 a number of such schools had been established, some with an industrial bias, some with a commercial bias, and some with a dual bias.

In 1906, Mr. Mosely - by this time a holder of the C.M.G. - in order to follow up the results of the visit to America of his Commission in 1903, provided facilities for visits of inquiry to American and Canadian schools by teachers from England. He asked the London County Council to give publicity to his proposals. Mosely had arranged that certain steamship companies should take five hundred teachers from all over this country to the U.S.A. and back for five pounds return fare each.

The Education Committee of the London County Council met in July and made a recommendation that twenty people from the L.C.C. be permitted to go on one of Mosely's visits. They added (1):-

"....that applicants should be selected who are prepared to carry out their investigations under a scheme approved by the Council. The scheme would provide

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(1) "L.C.C. Education Committee Minutes 2 - 1906", p. 2160.

for investigations of a general character being made by some teachers and for inquiries in regard to the teaching of special subjects by others."

The persons chosen to go to the U.S.A. made their visits, returned to this country and submitted their reports to the Council. The Education Committee reported in June, 1907, (1) that they had seen the reports and that they had been carefully prepared but they did not think that the reports should be printed as official publications of the Council (2).

In 1908, a pamphlet entitled "The Organisation of Education in London" was issued by the London County Council. This gave an outline of the work of the Council in organising and running London's schools. It is pointed out that a department of a school usually does not have more than 350 children. However, there was one school in London at this time - a large Jewish school in Spitalfields - "of which the boys' department alone has an average attendance of 1,972, the girls' department has an average attendance of 1,153". So even as far back as the first decade of this century large schools were not entirely unknown to the L.C.C.

The pamphlet explains that head teachers are provided for each department in a school and then adds "as an experiment, the Council has recently founded two large mixed schools under one head master with head assistants in charge of the senior mixed, junior mixed and infants' departments. The object of this type of organisatic is to secure greater co-ordination of the work of different departments".

Here, then, is an experiment, with elementary schools, of a kind of multi-lateral school ~~school~~; not with different sides, however, but with three consecutive

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(1) "L.C.C. Education Committee Minutes 2 - 1907", p. 1629.

(2) No copies of these teachers' reports are available at the Records Room, County Hall, London. An exhaustive search to find them was made, but there are none.

stages of education, infants, juniors and seniors.

An interesting sidelight on this is the fact that in December, 1906, the Education Committee of the L.C.C. had recommended that a new school (Shelburne Road, Islington) of which the Council had approved earlier in the year to contain three separate departments, "be organised as a combined mixed and infants' school under one head teacher". (1)

The Council had approved of its being organised as a senior mixed, junior mixed, and infants' school and to provide for five hundred children. The Education Committee's recommendation for its being under the control of one head teacher was stated thus:-

"We find, however, that a school of 500 scholars cannot be efficiently organised with three departments without the employment of a somewhat extravagant staff."

In this particular instance there is no mention of "greater co-ordination" between the different departments. But the fact still remains that the L.C.C. were experimenting with larger schools than was usual at the time and that one head teacher was combining the functions of three heads.

In view of all that had been heard of the American educational system from the time of the publication of the Board of Education Special Reports in 1902, an event occurred in 1908 which might conceivably have had some bearing on the decision of the London County Council in 1934 to investigate the possibility of setting up a network of multilateral schools, based on the American high school, in London. Apart from a few lines in the Education Committee Minutes for 1908, no further reference to the event can be found (2):-

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(1) "L.C.C. Education Committee Minutes 3 - 1906", p. 3901.

(2) "L.C.C. Education Committee Minutes 2 - 1908", p. 1801. Neither the author of this study nor the staff of the Records Room, County Hall, could find any further information about this item anywhere.

"Mr. E.M. Rich, a principal assistant in the executive officer's department, proposes to visit Canada in the summer on private business, and the executive officer is anxious, from the point of view of the work of the office, that Mr. Rich should take the opportunity offered of visiting certain educational centres in Canada and the U.S. and of bringing home for use in the office answers to certain questions which the executive officer has formulated."

The Committee recommended that Mr. Rich should go. The point of interest about this item is that Rich became Education Officer of the London County Council in 1933 and acted in this capacity until 1940 and, as mentioned above, it was during his term of office (1934-35) that the L.C.C. decided to investigate the possibility of instituting multilateral schools in their area. It is an unanswered question as to whether or not Rich had any say or influence on the decision of the Council in 1934 - but an intriguing one.

As has been indicated previously in this study, much of the demand for common, or comprehensive, schools came from the political left of this country. One of the main reasons for this demand was so that class stratification in education could be lessened and perhaps eventually done away with altogether. It was regarded as a step towards the "classless society".

It seems astonishing, therefore, in view of all this and all that had been made known about the American school system, that in 1908, Sidney Webb, the great social reformer and member of the Fabian Society, who was also once a member of the London Technical Education Board and the London Council Council, lightly passed over the social aspect of the common school and declared for a variety of schools, quoting London as an authority which had many kinds of schools.

In May, 1908, Webb gave an address to the Social and Political Education League in London and the following month wrote an article in the "Contemporary Review". The substance of both address and article was published in a Fabian

Tract in 1911 (1). He put forward the proposition that although nineteenth century governments had to deal with the whole people, or at least majorities, twentieth century governments had to deal with minorities, or even individuals. He chose the field of education to give an example of this, pointing out that a hundred years previously education was no concern of government and the necessity was for the least specialised type of school.

"The ideal of advanced reformers was the universal provision of the 'common school', the school common to all," in which children sat receiving, "whatever their intellects, whatever their idiosyncrasies, whatever their opportunities, the same kind and degree of education. We may agree that these enthusiastic Democrats were right in desiring to get rid of purely artificial class distinctions in education....we do not today, in any highly organized community, provide or expect to have provided any monotonous array of such 'common schools'. We recognize now that children have infinitely varied needs and capacities in education. Where many thousands of children are together in the same locality, we have learnt how to avoid the more atrocious of the misfits that were involved in the 'common school'. And thus an Education Authority such as that of London already provides not one kind of school, but several dozen different kinds....We don't yet know how to provide each individual child with exactly the kind and grade and amount of education that its individuality requires. This, however, and not 'common schools' has already become, in education, the Democratic Ideal."

From 1907 until March, 1934, the Municipal Reform Party was in power in London and the several different types of schools under their control continued their existence. However, in March, 1934, the Labour Party won control of the Council. At this time, of course, the Labour Party had declared itself in favour of secondary education for all children and this to be provided in a multilateral

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(1) "The Necessary Basis of Society", Fabian Tract No. 159, 1911.

school. The London Labour Party were also advocating multilateral schools at this period. It was therefore not unnatural that, having won control of the Council, these Labour Party members should decide to see if some form of multi-bias school could be instituted in the London area.

In July of that year the Council asked the Education Committee to report on the different kinds of post-primary schools of London and if they were adequate for their purposes or not.

There was a Joint Section of the Elementary Education and Higher Education Sub-Committees set up which met on several occasions to study this question. On the 19th November, 1934, this Joint Section - R.H. Tawney was present at this meeting - resolved to ask the Education Officer to provide information on twenty-nine points they were interested in. These included the possibility of bringing central schools under the regulations for either secondary or technical education; the possibility of easier transfer from secondary schools to other post-primary schools and vice versa; how far the secondary and central schools are merging; a comparison of the curriculum of central schools with that of secondary schools; and they wanted to know whether the quality of post-primary education was measured by the length of school life.

In February, 1935, the Education Committee reported to the Council on post-primary education in London as it was after the Hadow Report of 1926. It was pointed out that the types of education available were:-

1. Senior schools (entry at 11+);
2. Selective central schools (entry mainly at 11+);
3. Secondary schools (entry mainly at 11+);
4. Junior technical and trade schools, including art and junior commercial (entry at 13 to 14).

These schools were administered, it was pointed out, by <u>three</u> sets of Board

of Education Regulations; senior and central schools under Elementary Regulations, secondary and technical schools under their respective Regulations.

The Joint Section of the Elementary Education and Higher Education Sub-Committees met again on the 18th March, 1935, where it was resolved that the Education Officer submit a "draft report of the Joint Section for consideration at their next meeting setting out in general terms, without recommendations, their aspirations for a unified system of post-primary education and discharging the reference from the Council". (1)

In May of the same year the Joint Section met again and approved a report for submission to the Elementary Education and Higher Education Sub-Committees.

The Education Committee reported to the Council the same month. The Report from the Council Minutes ("L.C.C. Minutes 1 - 1935", pp. 806-807) is worth quoting from extensively as it shows that the Committee had in mind a completely revolutionary system of post-primary education compared with the one then existing.

The Committee point out that they had been investigating the possibility of a system which would function "as an integral whole rather than in separate departments or types of school". They added that they had considered a suggestion from the Chairman of the Joint Section of their Elementary Education and Higher Education Sub-Committees, which had been considering the matter first. This suggestion was that unity might be brought about by "the establishment of a new type of school which would be large enough to provide within its four walls most, of, or all, the activities now carried on in existing types of post-primary school."

These schools would not, however, cover the work given in junior technical schools because the education given in such schools is "highly specialised and requires expensive equipment and workshops".

"With this qualification," they continue, "the new type of school should be organised in such a way that a good general education would be given for the first

(1) Typewritten minutes of the Joint Section at County Hall.

two years of the course, during which the pupils would find their proper level and bent through the adoption of the 'sets' system; thereafter special facilities would be available for differentiation in the curriculum according to the abilities and aptitudes of the pupils. In such a 'multi-lateral' or 'multi-bias' school, it s should be comparatively easy to transfer a pupil from one side to another according to the development of his interests and abilities, without incurring any psychological disturbance such as may arise from a further change in the locale of his school."

An advantage of this type of school, they maintained, would overcome the disadvantages of the transfer of pupils at 11+ to one type of post-primary school and its consequent difficulty of transfer to another type of school.

"Under the present system there are justifiable reasons for not selecting pupils for transfer to junior technical schools at an age earlier than about 13 to 14, by which time many of the best pupils have transferred to secondary schools... We are of the opinion that more fluidity between all types of post-primary school is desirable, in order to secure that every pupil gets the type of education most suitable to his ability and particular bent. We think that the 'multilateral' school might offer a means of achieving this."

The Committee stated that this type of school would take in all pupils at the age of eleven-plus from the junior schools and that there would be no examination for entry to the school. Another point was that this school would remove the disparities existing in the cost, equipment and administration of the different kinds of post-primary schools. "It would also help to break down any prejudices which may exist regarding the relative merits of one type of post-primary education as compared with another."

They point out that they have not examined this proposal for such schools in great detail because they realised that legislative changes might be necessary

and Board of Education regulations regarding school-leaving age, government grant conditions and other matters would have to be changed. They also realised that perhaps much money might be required to alter the existing system. "We are not, therefore, putting forward in this report any concrete proposal for launching an experiment of this kind." They added that arrangements were being made which would lead to greater co-ordination and fluidity between different post-primary schools.

This Report of the Education Committee was discussed by the Council and on the 17th, December, 1935, the Council resolved to ask the Education Committee to consider and report on " (i) as to the nature of the changes in legislation and Board of Education and other regulations which would be needed for the introduction of a unified system of post-primary education" as they had described and " (ii) whether or not, in advance of any change, experiments directed towards the introduction of such a system could, and should, be made".

However, there was an election of councillors in 1937 and it was reported in the Council Minutes of 10th March of that year that in consequence of the election the reference to the Education Committee concerning the possibility of instituting multilateral schools had lapsed (1).

So although the London County Council were unable to provide any form of comprehensive secondary education until after the Education Act of 1944, the idea of so doing was in their minds.

With the passing of the 1944 Act a form of multilateral or comprehensive schooling at last became feasible and in connection with this the name of Mosely crops up yet again in the educational circles of London.

But prior to this, in 1943, the Education Committee were discussing the

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(1) "L.C.C. Minutes, 10-3-1937", p. 312. The author of this study wrote to Mrs. Margaret Cole, a member of the L.C.C., asking why this reference of the Council's had not been proceeded with. Mrs. Cole replied, in a letter dated 4th October, 1963, that "the promoter of multilateral education had been advised informally by the Solicitor that it would involve legislation. This was not challenged, though it might have been."

Board of Education White Paper on Educational Reconstruction. They discussed the organisation of London's secondary education and pointed out that there was a danger of the secondary modern school becoming "a refuge for those who fail to gain admission to grammar or technical schools". They wondered if it would be desirable to consider two types of school. They also welcomed the suggestion in the White Paper that "different types of school may be combined in one building or on one site". (1)

While the Education Bill was before Parliament in 1944, a Report of the General Sub-Committee on Higher Education was put to the Education Committee of the L.C.C. on 19th July, 1944. This dealt with "Reorganisation of post-primary education in the development plan". For under the Act, which became law on the 3rd August, 1944, local education authorities had to prepare and submit to the Minister of Education a "development plan" indicating what these authorities proposed doing in the field of education in their areas.

The Sub-Committee point out that the "multilateral school, such as has been developed in the United States" avoids stratification either according to intellectual ability or parental finances.

They go on to point out (2) that there were three choices of educational system open to London. The first was the tripartite system. The second was "To set up a system of schools each one containing within itself a complete cross-section of the surrounding post-primary population. Such a system of 'omnibus' schools, variously described as multilateral, comprehensive or cosmopolitan is universal in large urban areas in the United States." The third system suggested

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(1) "L.C.C. Education Committee Minutes, 20-10-43", p. 353.

(2) "L.C.C. Education Committee Minutes, 1940-44", pp. 457-470 discuss this Report.

was that used in some provinces of Canada with two types of secondary school - vocational high schools and schools similar to British grammar schools.

The Sub-Committee discuss the American educational system and then refer to the Mosely Educational Commission of 1903:-

"The Report of the Mosely Commission is a well-known document of nearly 400 pages, which it is difficult to summarise, but in the main the members of the Commission felt that there was no great evidence to show that American methods were a very great contributory cause to the admitted excellence of the men who had so impressed the leader of the Commission. (see page 80 of this study) One contributor considered that the character of the education was an effect and not a cause of the great industrial and commercial progress of the American people, although another felt that the two were reacting each on the other. On the other hand, there are plenty of comments on the social effect of the American system...."

Of course, the social effect of the American system was commented upon very favourably by practically all the Commissioners in 1903. It was the most outstanding point about the system that they had noticed; how the mixing of the pupils in the public schools appeared to eradicate any social differences and how children of different social groups accepted one another on equal terms. This point was bound to be of particular interest to supporters of the British Labour Party in their desire for the "classless society". The majority party on the London County Council being the Labour Party, it was natural that this type of school should appeal to them largely, if not entirely, on social grounds.

The Sub-Committee continued:-

"We tend to love aristocracies, and when the aristocracy of wealth went out of fashion we created a new one which we were pleased to think was an aristocracy of brains, that is, of those who excel in book learning. We need to create a much wider aristocracy - of those who excel in the art of social living.

This, the American school consciously sets out to achieve."

Comments are then made about the charge that in the American schools pupils of above average ability are neglected. Even if the charge is true, the Committee write, it would have to be proved that this was due to the multilateral organisation per se.

They then decide that it seems "indefensible to categorise schools on the basis of intellect only" and that "life in school should promote a feeling of social unity among adolescents of all kinds and degrees of ability".

Finally it was resolved that "the general guiding principle should be the establishment of a system of comprehensive high schools throughout the county". Thus the decision was finally taken to establish such schools - ten years late as far as the London County Council were concerned. (1)

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It has been demonstrated that both the American educational system itself and the favourable impressions of its social aspects gained by the Mosley Commissioners influenced the L.C.C. decision of 1944 to establish comprehensive schools in London. In addition to this, the establishment of comprehensive, or multilateral, schools was a part of Labour Party policy at that time, therefore it was natural that the Labour-controlled L.C.C. should endeavour to implement that policy as best it could.

But what about the proposal for multilateral schools in 1935? Apart from the fact that such schools were being advocated by the Labour Party and the London Labour Party, were there any other reasons why these schools should have been proposed?

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(1) The story of the establishment of the London comprehensive schools has been told many times and the reader is referred to these accounts. Apart from news items and articles in the national and educational press since 1946, several books have dealt with aspects of this topic, e.g. "The Comprehensive School" by Robin Pedley, "Inside the Comprehensive School" issued by the N.U.T. and "The London School Plan" issued by the L.C.C.

To answer that question it is necessary to look at the state of post-primary education at the time. It was very confused. Pupils generally left the senior schools, which came under the Board of Education Elementary Regulations, at the age of fourteen, after a three-year course. They left the selective central schools, also administered under the Elementary Regulations of the Board, at fifteen or sixteen. The secondary schools provided the usual grammar school course, and the junior technical schools' pupils did not start their course until about two years later than children at the other schools.

Many of the selective central schools were doing work of a similar nature to the secondary schools in preparing some of their pupils for external examinations. They could, however, only retain their pupils until they were sixteen years of age.

At the age of eleven the "best" children would be selected for the secondary schools (unless they preferred the central schools, which a number did). The "next best" would be selected for the selective central schools. The remainder would go to the senior schools, when at about the age of thirteen certain others would transfer to the junior technical schools. There was a certain amount of transfer between schools, but not to any great extent, but there was, obviously, a considerable overlapping between the work of the central and secondary schools.

The obvious solution to overcome this confusion would appear to be the school envisaged in 1935. All schools would be administered under the same regulations and administratively would be easier than the existing schools. The two years' "good general education" would postpone transfer into "sides" until the age of thirteen and thus help to discover some "late developers" before they began the course of education for which they were unsuited. Inter-side transfer would be a simple matter.

One of the reasons for proposing multilateral schools is, however, open to question: it was stated that these schools would "help to break down any prejudices which may exist regarding the relative merits of one type of post-primary education

as compared with another". Would the children in the "senior" side not feel just as inferior in certain respects to those in the "grammar" side as they would in separate schools?

The reason given for excluding the work done by junior technical schools from the proposed multilateral schools is certainly not educational but mainly one of cost.

Thus it has been shown that the London County Council had close knowledge of the American educational system since the first decade of this century, together with experience of larger schools than was usual at that time. The seeds of multilateralism, sown in the nineteen-thirties, flowered as a consequence of the 1944 Education Act. But with the L.C.C., as with certain other authorities, one of the main reasons for the adoption of comprehensive schools was social.

SECTION VI - THE EARLY 1960s.

In November, 1960, the author of this study sent a questionnaire to the one hundred and forty six local education authorities in England and Wales. One hundred and thirty four authorities replied, either fully completing the questionnaire or explaining why they were unable to do so.

Using the information gained from the answers to the questionnaire and further information gained from the "Education Committees' Year Book, 1961", in June, 1961, the writer sent a questionnaire to all comprehensive schools in England and Wales (with the exception of one authority's schools because permission to send this questionnaire was refused). Questionnaires were not sent to those schools which the local education authorities had stated had not been in existence long enough for any conclusions to be drawn from their experiences. In all, seventy eight questionnaires were sent; forty five were completed. One school - the Joseph Leckie School, Walsall - is "no longer a comprehensive school". No reason for this was given.

Information gleaned from the local authority questionnaire showed the position of comprehensive secondary education at that time to be as follows:-

(a) twenty three local education authorities were operating what was claimed to be either a complete system of comprehensive education or a number of comprehensive schools (three of these authorities did not complete the questionnaire or give any information about their schools);

(b) ninety three authorities stated that they had no comprehensive schools and that none was planned;

(c) eighteen authorities (as shown below) were either considering comprehensive schools or experimenting with bilateral and multilateral schools, and at least in one instance the Ministry of Education appeared to be confused as to the difference between bilateral and comprehensive schools.

The first question on the questionnaire to local education authorities was:-

Are there are comprehensive schools in your area at present or any plans for them in the near future?

The eighteen authorities referred to under (c) above answered as follows:-

BERKSHIRE; "One is planned."

BRADFORD; No. "One school is expected to become fully comprehensive in 1962."

BUCKINGHAMSHIRE; "One such school...in very early stage of its development...In fact it is at the moment more of a secondary modern school."

CARDIGANSHIRE; "Four of our schools were planned as bilateral schools (Modern & Grammar) but appear in the Ministry's lists as comprehensive schools....The reason for setting up such schools rather than separate Grammar and Modern schools was the desire to avoid undue travelling distances in an area of scattered population."

ESSEX; "One only and that opened too recently to enable any useful comment to be made."

GLOUCESTERSHIRE; No, but two bilateral schools (Grammar & Modern). This seems to the Education Committee "to provide the solution for secondary school education where the population is scattered and the selective entry for a wide area is consequently small....the Committee have no intention of developing this kind of school as a general policy."

KENT; No. "The Authority propose to build a school of this type at Swanley within the next few years....Conditions in the Swanley area are favourable for the establishment of a comprehensive school, e.g. growth of population requiring the provision of a large new secondary school; no existing grammar school in the immediate vicinity. But the new school (when built) will not be used to deny grammar or technical school education to those who otherwise would qualify for it at the nearest grammar or technical school."

KINGSTON UPON HULL; No. Three to be built in the near future.

LIVERPOOL; "Yes. One in course of development. Three more are about to be built."

MIDDLESBOROUGH; No. Original development plan being reviewed.

MONMOUTHSHIRE; No. "A multilateral school is planned for Abergavenny."

NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE; One opened a few months ago "but as it is in effect not yet a true comprehensive school" very little of value can be said about it.

OLDHAM; None. "All to be according to development plan."

PEMBROKESHIRE; "There are three schools in the area which are comprehensive in the sense that they admit all the 11+ children in their districts, but they are organised on Bilateral/Grammar/Modern lines....The reason for the establishment of these schools in this county is geographical in the sense that it is better to have one bilateral school of 600-800 rather than two small schools of 250 or 450 or thereabouts."

SHEFFIELD; "This Authority is in process of establishing one comprehensive school as an experiment. The school is in no sense fully operative yet."

SUNDERLAND; "No, but a Mixed Grammar School will transfer to new buildings in Sept. 1962 which are the first stage of a Comprehensive School. Another is projected at a later date and it is my Committee's policy to develop others subsequently."

WARWICKSHIRE; "....there is only one school in Warwickshire which might be regarded as in any sense comprehensive....however, that does admit some children on a selective basis as a result of grammar school admission tests and is, in reality, organised more on multilateral lines."

WEST SUSSEX; No. Three bilateral (Grammar/Modern) "working on lines similar to a comprehensive school."

The twenty three authorities which claimed to have comprehensive schools

were as follows (Authorities such as Liverpool and Essex, where comprehensive schools were only just establishing themselves and had not been in existence long enough to draw any conclusions about them are not included in the list):-

ANGLESEY	LONDON
BIRMINGHAM	MANCHESTER
BRECONSHIRE	MIDDLESEX
CAERNARVONSHIRE	NEWPORT, MON.
CARMARTHENSHIRE	NOTTINGHAM
COVENTRY	OXFORDSHIRE
CUMBERLAND	STAFFORDSHIRE
DEVON	STOCKPORT
DURHAM	WEST BROMWICH
ISLE OF MAN	WESTMORLAND
LANCASHIRE	YORKSHIRE (WEST RIDING)
LEEDS	

As has been stated previously in this study, most of the demand for a system of comprehensive secondary schools has come from the Labour Party. Therefore the local authorities with such schools were asked, "Which political party was in control of the local council when the decision to adopt comprehensive school(s) was made?" The answers to this question (plus any comments made) where given, are as follows:-

ANGLESEY; "No politics enter into council decisions on education."

BRECONSHIRE; "The Council has an Independent majority."

CAERNARVONSHIRE; "No political party - mostly independent & liberal in character."

COVENTRY; "Labour."

CUMBERLAND; "....the decision to provide comprehensive schools has been taken in each case for educational, and certainly not for political reasons. The

Labour Party was not in control of the County Council when these decisions were made."

DURHAM; "Labour."

ISLE OF MAN; "In the Isle of Man only the Labour Party is organised as a political group and they were not and never have been in control."

LEEDS; "Labour Party."

MANCHESTER; "The Labour Party was in control of the Council when the decision was made."

NEWPORT; "LABOUR."

NOTTINGHAM; "The Labour Party."

OXFORDSHIRE; "The very great majority of the council were, and still, are independent."

STAFFORDSHIRE; "Socialist when the first three schools were proposed but an Independent administration decided that a comprehensive school was the only possibility in the circumstances for the fourth school which had begun life as a modern but for which area there were insufficient pupils to maintain a separate grammar school."

STOCKPORT; "Conservative."

WESTMORLAND; "The Council is not divided in terms of political parties."

WEST BROMWICH; "Labour."

Of the sixteen replies to this question, then, <u>eight</u> councils were under Labour Party control at the time it was decided to establish comprehensive schools; fifty per cent.

What were the reasons for these authorities deciding to establish comprehensive schools? The local authority questionnaire asked, "<u>Were there any special reasons why your authority adopted comprehensive schools?</u>" The answers, where they were received, were as follows:-

ANGLESEY; "The idea of comprehensive education goes back many years in Anglesey and the 1944 Act enabled the Authority to put the idea into practice. The unfairness of the 11+ test (recently overmagnified) was, I should say, the least of the reasons. Anglesey geographically and socially is best served by comprehensive schools."

BRECONSHIRE; "The Committee probably had in mind the fact that in an area of a low figure of population per square mile the segregation of children into separate schools would leave these schools as very small independent units."

CAERNARVONSHIRE; "a) For experimental purposes - other five areas are organised on Grammar and Modern School pattern.

b) Regional considerations in so far as the five chosen areas are comparatively self-contained.

c) In two areas, there were in existence two Central Schools located within 100 yds of the existing Grammar Schools."

COVENTRY; "Unfairness of 11+ system. Wider variety of courses possible in large school - thus permitting consideration of each individual's aptitude."

CUMBERLAND; "The organisation of secondary education in Cumberland is designed to meet the different needs of the children in the various localities. The isolated communities of the market town of Alston and of the area immediately around it in the east of the county are served by a small comprehensive school of about 200 children, opened in September 1957 as an enlargement of the small existing grammar school. Similarly, the comparatively isolated communities of the town of Millom and of the villages to the north of it in the far south-west of the county are served ~~are served~~ by a comprehensive school opened in September 1959 as an enlargement of of a small two-form entry grammar school....There is with the Minister of Education at the moment a proposal for a third comprehensive school for about 1,600 children to serve the combined Egremont and Seascale areas between Millom

and Whitehaven. The Authority settled on a comprehensive organisation at Alston and Millom because of the peculiar isolation of the ~~communities~~ localities, and of the comparative inviability of the separate school units under a bipartite system. On the other hand the decision to propose a comprehensive system in the case of the Egremont/Seascale school has been taken largely on account of the difficulty of forecasting for an appreciable period ahead the proportion of children of the highly qualified employees of the United Kingdom Atomic Energy Authority establishments in the area who will be found suitable for an academic course."

DURHAM; "To see what advantages and disadvantages this form of education had."

ISLE OF MAN; "The reasons for the adoption of a comprehensive system were complex.

(1) and perhaps most important, when the decision was made in 1946 there were available two large new buildings designed as senior schools. It was to make the fullest use of the existing secondary provision and to meet the new concept of secondary education as embodied in the 1944 Act.

(2) The competition in the primary schools for grammar school places had become quite unhealthy and was having an adverse and stifling affect on the development of education in the primary schools.

(3) The introduction in 1945 of a new Burnham Scale, whereby a teacher's salary was no longer determined by the type of school in which he or she taught made much easier from an administrative point of view the adoption of a comprehensive system."

LEEDS; "The Education Committee were anxious to provide a variety of schools so that parents could choose the type of education they felt was most appropriate for their children."

MANCHESTER; "It was decided to supplement the existing provision of grammar, technical high and secondary modern schools (the majority of which have five-year courses leading to external examinations) by a number of comprehensive schools

offering a variety of courses from the age of 11 - 18."

NEWPORT, MON.; "Educational, psychological & social:-

1. Uncertainty of eleven plus selection & need for greater flexibility.

2. Variety of courses in comprehensive school appropriate to capacity and rate of development of children.

3. Psychological effects of 'failure' & segregation.

4. Need to emphasise social unity rather than differences.

NOTTINGHAM; "The Education Committee are anxious to provide the best possible type of education for the children under their care and, to this end, believe in a policy of wise experiment.

"The decision to build this Comprehensive School was not the result of any preconceived doctrinaire beliefs but a genuine seeking after the most suitable type of school for the area."

OXFORDSHIRE; "A comprehensive scheme was adopted because this seemed the most satisfactory basis on which the secondary schooling of the thickly populated rural area in question could be organised. On reorganisation of the all-age primary schools in the area, the seniors were therefore added to the very small local grammar school, of XVI century foundation but no longer a viable unit."

STAFFORDSHIRE; "Frankly, at first as a matter of political policy in 1947 when the Development Plan was drawn up BUT with me it was a matter of educational theory and conviction. The schools were unusual in that they were to accommodate only a 5 F.E. though pressure has required them to expand to 7 F.E. for the moment. We are all convinced that this is probably the ideal size. Even so, you note they are not the usual 'factory' type of 2500 pupils."

STOCKPORT; "Expressed wish of representatives of area referred to above."

WEST BROMWICH; "General educational advantages."

WESTMORLAND; "Sparsity. If you have numbers sufficient to make a single-stream

grammar school and a three-stream modern school in a rural area, is it not sensible to put them together?"

Advocates of comprehensive schools make much of the point that these schools would help the mixing of the social classes (1) and also help to break down class barriers. They will also, it is claimed, prevent children who would attend grammar schools under the tripartite system and feel "different" and "superior" to those in modern schools from in fact doing this. Yet in the replies quoted above only two authorities allude to this: Anglesey "socially is best served by comprehensive schools" and they are in Newport to "emphasise social unity rather than differences". The commonest reason for adopting some form of comprehensive schooling, judging from the sixteen replies quoted above, would appear to be (a) experimental, in order to give these schools a chance and to discover what they can achieve and then (b) for geographical reasons.

In November, 1960, the author of this study wrote to the Ministry of Education, asking for a list of comprehensive schools in England and Wales. In a reply dated 23rd December, 1960, the Ministry stated that they had no record of individual schools but gave a list of authorities, all of which were supposed to have comprehensive schools in their areas. Three authorities <u>not on the Ministry list</u> (Durham, Isle of Man and Stockport) stated in reply to the local authority questionnaire (dated November, 1960) that they did have one or more of these schools. In addition, the following authorities, <u>listed by the Ministry as having comprehensive schools</u>, replied in answer to the questionnaire that they did not have any such achools:- Denbighshire, East Riding of Yorkshire, Merioneth and Montgomeryshire. There would, then, appear to be some confusion in official circles as to what exactly constitutes a comprehensive school. Although this is

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(1) Shena Simon, "Three Schools or One?", 1948, writes on p. 55, "The mixing of social classes was the first ground on which multilateral schools were urged."

not really surprising when apparently it is possible for a school to be comprehensive "in a sense" and bilateral at the same time, as will be shown in a later reference to one of the schools of the Isle of Man.

But what of the actual comprehensive schools themselves in this country? Before seeing if they do in fact conform to the basic concepts of such schools as stated on page nineteen of this study, it will be profitable to survey them as a whole.

Judging by the answers to the school questionnaire, one primary fact is outstanding about the schools that call themselves comprehensive: there is in practice no standard type of comprehensive school. In fact, most of them differ in several ways from how their keenest advocates envisaged them and most of them are beset with difficulties that prevent them from functioning fully as comprehensive schools.

One of the most prolific writers about, and keenest advocates of comprehensive schools is Robin Pedley. Writing in 1955, Pedley expressed dissatisfaction with much of what was wrong, in his opinion, with existing comprehensive schools (1):-

"At the moment it seems that already, before it has well begun, the comprehensive school movement is beginning to follow the pattern of much greater revolutionary changes in history. 'The tumult and the shouting dies' - and, a necessary adjustment to a changing society having been made, the work of education goes on much as before. One or two exceptions indeed there are....But much remains to be done, and for the most part the idealist is left gazing with troubled eyes at the new homes of old follies: prefects and prizes, authoritarian discipline and individual competition, artificial house systems, crowded timetables, and formal

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(1) Robin Pedley, "Comprehensive Schools Today: An Interim Survey", pp. 32-33.

examinations."

What information can be gleaned from the school questionnaire about the schools as they are? First, there is some confusion over nomenclature in a few cases. For example, Caernarvonshire, as requested, gave the author of this study the names and addresses of the five comprehensive schools within their boundaries, stating at the same time that "other five areas are organised on Grammar and Modern School pattern". Three of these "comprehensive" schools completed the questionnaire and all claimed that they were mixed bilateral schools, organised on grammar/modern lines. These schools were:-

(a) Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen, Bethesda, Bangor, (475 pupils),

(b) Dyffryn Nantile Bilateral School, (530-540 pupils),

(c) Ysgol Bryurefail, Llanring, (503 pupils).

Westmorland stated that Windermere Grammar School was one of their three comprehensive schools. According to the school itself, it became a bilateral school in 1945 and in 1961 had 260 pupils (boys) on roll. In answer to the question asking if children were streamed within the school, the answer was "2 main streams divided into 3 for English & Maths."

Kirkby Stephen Grammar School (Mixed), Westmorland, states, "We are comprehensive in that we accept every child except E.S.N. from the upper Eden valley; bilateral in that we run 2 courses, G. and M. Only vocational course is commercial for girls."

The West Riding of Yorkshire classify Tadcaster Grammar School as comprehensive for its immediate area but it also takes selective children from a wider area. It is a mixed school and contained 1140 pupils in 1961. The school's catchment area measures 24 miles from east to west and 22 miles from north to south. "From roughly 4/5ths of that area we admit to the School only those children who have passed Grammar School Selection tests. From the remaining approximate 1/5th we

admit all of the children at 11+." The school has quite intentionally an academic bias, and in the headmaster's words, "....this School does not permit of precise classification."

Castle Rushen High School, on the Isle of Man, claims to be bilateral in the sense that there are Academic (grammar school) and Non-Academic (secondary modern) streams and no distinct technical stream. On the other hand, it claims to be comprehensive "in the sense that it takes ALL the children of Secondary School age within a specified locality and caters for their educational requirements." This particular school was referred to as "the smallest comprehensive school proper" by Robin Pedley in 1958 (1).

This apparent confusion on the part of some local education authorities and schools is difficult to understand in view of the Ministry of Education's Circular 144, previously mentioned, and the fact that the true comprehensive school was defined in "The Education Authorities Directory and Annual", in 1953/54 (p. lix):-

"....the term Comprehensive schools is applied to the form of organization which would also provide for the needs of all the children of secondary school age in an area in one single institution, but the various courses would not be organized in definites 'sides' bearing distinctive names."

Many opponents of comprehensive schools criticised them because they would be too big. It was claimed that they would have to contain far too many pupils to make them an efficient educational unit, the head teachers would not be able to get to know all the children, and so on. A.D.C. Peterson has pointed out that the comprehensive school was not the first large school on the educational scene in this country; he instances Eton (1,180 boys) and Manchester Grammar School (1,340)

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(1) "Times Educational Supplement", 23rd May, 1958, report "Comprehensive Advantages".

as examples of large schools and adds (1):-

"It is, I believe, quite true that schools have got far too big for the personal influence of the headmaster or that intensely valuable intangible, the tone of the school, to count as it used to count. But that happened long ago: it is not a new threat introduced by the comprehensive school."

In fact, the numbers of pupils at the schools which completed the questionnaire, excluding those mentioned in the preceding paragraphs, ranged from 721 (Mixed) at Ounsdale Comprehensive School, Wombourn, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire, to 2100 (Boys) at Wandsworth School, London. The former school opened in 1956 and stated that all subjects at G.C.E. 'O' level could be taken by pupils; in 1961 the sixth form had not been fully developed but, "Next year we offer Pure and App. Maths., Chemistry, Physics, Bot., Zoo., Hist., Fr., German, Latin, Geog." Ounsdale would appear to be the answer to the critics who said that comprehensive schools would <u>have to be</u> large institutions.

One of the basic concepts of the comprehensive school is that it is a <u>local</u>, or neighbourhood, school. Another, that it provides for <u>all</u> the children of secondary school age in its catchment area, except those who require special educational treatment through being physically or mentally handicapped. This is just the theory at present. For unfortunately from the point of view of the schools, they are not always purely local schools and not always allowed to provide <u>all</u> the secondary requirements in their areas. Even allowing for the fact that a very small percentage of parents will wish their children to attend fee-paying private or public schools whatever form of secondary education is provided by the

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(1) "Educating Our Rulers", 1957, pp. 45-46.

local authorities, some schools have grammar schools - often of long standing and good repute - in their vicinity. Quite naturally, therefore, those children who "pass" the selection examination at the age of eleven-plus will often have those grammar schools selected by their parents as the institutions to provide their education in preference to the comprehensive schools.

Twenty three of the schools which answered the school questionnaire (just over fifty per cent) are beset with this problem. Most of them do report that the number of "11+ passes" making the comprehensive their first choice of secondary school is increasing each year (1). Allerton Grange School, Leeds, gave details; about half the children in the school had sat the eleven-plus examination and those who passed had a choice of grammar or comprehensive school. The numbers that picked Allerton Grange School as their first choice were as follows:-

1958 - 0; 1959 - 7; 1960 - 13; 1961 - 17.

The school was opened as a secondary modern school in September, 1954, and as a comprehensive school (Mixed) four years later.

In a letter dated 14th July, 1961, to the author of this study, the head master of Duffryn High School, Newport, Mon., Mr. G. Williams, put much of the blame for the situation whereby grammar and comprehensive schools are together on the Government:-

"The government has in many cases succeeded in creating a situation in which it is almost impossible for the Comprehensive schools to flourish, e.g. placing a

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(1) The author of this study was informed that certain comprehensive schools of the L.C.C. are finding that each year more and more "11+ passes" select them as first choice of school. This information was given by Mrs. Helen Bentwich of the L.C.C. Education Committee in an interview with the author at County Hall (Room 171) on 15th October, 1963.

Comprehensive school next to a well-established grammar school without amalgamating them. This happened to this school, although due to circumstances which would not exist elsewhere we have not suffered. In fact the school has achieved a high reputation in two years, so much so, that 40% of our grammar intake of 5 forms chose to come here."

Some schools are not entirely local schools because they take children outside their catchment areas. Two schools in Kirkby, Lancashire, mentioned this fact; they were Ruffwood (C.S.) Comprehensive School (Mixed) and St. Kevin's Comprehensive School (Boys).

Two Birmingham schools (Great Barr Comprehensive School and Sheldon Heath Comprehensive School) also meet with this difficulty. A letter from the Chief Education Officer, dated 6th January, 1961, states:-

"The children who are accepted for the Comprehensive Schools are drawn, for the most part, from the catchment area of the Schools. At the same time parents are free to elect to send their children to one of the Selective Schools, Technical or Grammar, outside the catchment area if their children pass the Junior School Leaving Examination at the age of 11. This has meant that a certain number of able children have elected to go to other Schools and, to counter-balance this, the Education Committee have agreed that each Comprehensive School should have a two-form selective entry of children drawn from outside the catchment area. In this way a reasonable supply of able children will be ensured, and it is hoped that strong sixth forms will develop."

One of the main reasons put forward for the setting up of a comprehensive system of secondary education centres round the so-called "11+ examination", the examination which under the tripartite system is generally used to decide at which kind of school children should receive their secondary education. This examination, comprehensiveness advocates say, is in the nature of a final judgment on a child's

future career. The comprehensive school, it is claimed, does away with making such a "final decision" (1):-

"For children who enter and stay in a comprehensive school, the need for anything approaching a final judgment at the age of 11 is removed. They may still take an examination before leaving the junior school, but the impact of this will be no greater than that of an ordinary school examination, since the child in the comprehensive school will have two or three years in which to show desire to train for a particular type of occupation."

Briefly, the case against the eleven-plus examination is as follows:-

(i) There is no uniformity over the country as a whole as to the percentage of pupils admitted to grammar schools. Instead of children being given the education for which they are supposed to be suited according to the eleven-plus test, the number selected for grammar schools is determined by the number of available grammar school places.

(ii) Attempts to forecast future development by means of tests at the age of 11 are unreliable. In an attempt to look at this point objectively, Alfred Yates and D.A. Pidgeon studied research that had been done on the subject. Summarising the evidence produced by this research on transfer at eleven-plus, they had this to say (2):-

"....with the best available procedure, some ten per cent. of the candidates are likely to be 'wrongly' allocated. 'Wrongly' is placed in inverted commas because the statement does not necessarily imply that, as a result of this apparent error, the children concerned are likely to receive educational treatment

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(1) N.U.T., "Inside the Comprehensive School", 1958, p. 10.

(2) "Educational Research", vol. 1, no. 1, November, 1958. "Transfer at Eleven Plus: A Summary of Evidence Provided by Research".

inappropriate to their needs. The differences between children who form the border-zone are often very small. The child who is allocated to a secondary modern school, but who is nevertheless slightly superior academically to one who just manages to secure admission to a grammar school, is not necessarily deprived of opportunities to develop his potentialities. Nor is it by any means certain that his slightly weaker colleagues will derive no benefit from his experience in a grammar school....

"There is little doubt that the eleven plus examination, as developed by many authorities, is the most efficient examination to be found in our examination system... The main criticism that can justifiably be brought against it is that it has at times been required to accomplish the virtually impossible task of segregating into courses which are sharply differentiated, children between whose abilities, attainments and ascertainable educational needs there is a scarcely perceptible difference."

(iii) To segregate children into "types" is bad for them, often leads to frustration and a sense of inferiority and failure is often developed in those who do not enter grammar schools. In 1957 the British Psychological Society published the findings of an inquiry into secondary school selection (1). The following points were made:-

"In general the emotional effects on children are probably less severe than the ill-feeling caused among parents, though the evidence does show that 'll- strain' may be a contributory factor in rare cases of maladjustment, delinquency or breakdown. (p. 170)....

"As to the modern schools, it is generally believed that many children who go there, together with their parents, are disappointed and resentful. The

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"Secondary School Selection: A British Psychological Society Inquiry", 1957, edited by P.E. Vernon.

former have been dubbed failures at an impressionable age (and, some modern teachers, we fear, are apt to rub this in), with the result that any interest in further educational progress is inhibited. Boredom and rebelliousness are indeed only too rife in some modern and unreorganized schools, though the extent of this poor morale is often exaggerated, e.g. in popular articles in the press; and there is no real evidence that it can be attributed to the after-effects of selection." (p. 63)

(iv) Timetables of many junior schools are arranged so that upper streams spend more time than is educationally desirable on "cramming" in order to pass the 11+ test. This is, of course, true and many junior school head teachers are "judged" by parents according to the number of "passes" they can obtain at the 11+ test.

(v) The social class of a child affects his (or her) chance of passing the 11+ and so getting into a grammar school. The British Psychological Society's book, referred to on the previous page of this study, states that it is true that lower-working class children are still under-represented in grammar schools and add that most of the factors leading to success in grammar schools are more favourable in middle class families.

With the establishment of comprehensive schools, it is claimed, the 11+ test can be abolished and all these difficulties disappear. Yet is this really so? Suppose that in a comprehensive school the streams or sets doing advanced work in a subject are over-full, yet there are several other pupils capable of doing the work done by these sets. Perhaps the only way of overcoming this difficulty is by re-writing all or a part of the timetable. It must be admitted that administratively it would be the easiest way out to leave these extra pupils in a lower stream or set.

Or again, in the later years of the comprehensive school children will know, in spite of any internal organisation, whether they are destined to leave school at fifteen years of age, or whether they are staying on until eighteen in order to take advanced examinations. They will realise that some children do homework while

others do not. They will realise that some are academically inferior to others. Will the mixing in houses, on the games field, and in out-of-school societies and clubs really eradicate the feelings of "inferiority and frustration"?

Regarding social class; if most of the factors leading to success in grammar schools are more favourable in middle class families, will not these same factors lead to success within the comprehensive school and will not lower-working class children still be under-represented in the more academic streams, sets, or forms in the comprehensive school?

In any case, at the moment, as stated above, many areas served by comprehensive schools still have grammar schools nearby and the 11+ examination is still prepared for in the junior schools. Therefore many of these junior school pupils, when they see some of their friends choose a grammar school in preference to a comprehensive school, must begin their education at the comprehensive school with a "sense of failure".

What about the children once they are in the schools? How are they organised for teaching purposes? Once again, one primary fact is outstanding: there is in practice no standard pattern of organisation.

Most schools "stream" their children and also "set" for certain subjects. A few, however, do not stream, namely, Forest Hill School (Boys), London, and the Christopher Wren School (Boys), London. At Tulse Hill School (Boys), London, the pupils are not streamed until the age of thirteen. At Mellow Lane Comprehensive School (Mixed), Hayes, Middlesex, there is no streaming for the first two years; in the third year there is a selection for courses, academic, academic technical, technical, commercial, etc.

The practice of streaming within the comprehensive school is frowned upon by many comprehensive advocates, e.g. Brian Simon wrote in 1955 (1):-

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(1) "The Common Secondary School", p. 89.

"....the comprehensive schools still suffer in some respects from a hangover from the past; a tendency to import into the organisation of the single school the outlook, attitudes and practices of the divided educational system. The division of pupils into 'academic' and 'non-academic' classes, for instance, suggests acceptance of psychological theories which these new schools have themselves helped to make ridiculous. But, though such divisions are being recognised as meaningless, there is little corresponding tendency as yet to do away with streaming which, though far less damaging than in the single type school, still has a stultifying effect...."

The comments of the schools themselves on the subject of streaming make illuminating reading. Some stream their pupils on the basis of the 11+ examination; some who do this, re-test after a few months and then "re-stream" if necessary. Where there is no selection examination, for example in Anglesey, the children are tested in the comprehensive school and then streamed according to the results of these tests.

The David Hughes School, Anglesey, state that they test children on entry for "Streaming into Grammar and Modern", whereas Maesydderwen School, Breconshire, say they give attainment tests on entry to obtain homogeneous teaching groups and then emphatically state "No streaming in a C. school for Gr. and Tech. etc."

Other schools take cognisance of junior school head teachers' reports and records, sometimes coupled with tests, to place their pupils into streams. Allerton Grange School, Leeds, stream on the 11+ results and/or primary school records.

With regard to setting, some schools do this early in the children's school careers, others leave setting until the children reach the upper school. There is simply no consistent pattern at all in the streaming and setting activities of these schools.

However, whatever method of classifying or streaming the children is used, comprehensive advocates claim that within these schools the transfer of children from class to class and set to set is much easier than in tripartite pattern schools. In addition to this, it is claimed, these children can still mix and play with their friends because transfer does not mean a new school and therefore a new set of friends.

In 1960 the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools issued a booklet (1) which was not an expression of the policy of the Association but was presented as a "factual and objective document", not trying to pass any judgments of comprehensive schools.

The general picture drawn in the booklet is that after a full-scale examination or at the end of term, transfers are usually made although emergency transfers are made as and when necessary. Transfers from set to set were often regarded as a departmental matter and settled at a departmental meeting.

"Obstacles to transfer include those that are found in a grammar school. In any school an overlarge class is an obstacle to promotion. In some comprehensive schools the policy is to fill top streams to the maximum; in others as a matter of policy top streams begin with numbers that allow for more to be added later. The first makes possible, if it does not encourage, demotion just as the second makes promotion possible." (p. 21)

The members of the I.A.A.M. who have contributed opinions to the booklet speak highly of the process - a very successful one in their opinions - of upward transfer. Often those who are promoted are not those who would have passed the selection examination for a grammar school. They conclude on page 25 that "the late-developers who eventually reach the grammar-stream in a comprehensive school

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(1) I.A.A.M., "Teaching in Comprehensive Schools", 1960.

outnumber by far those who would have got there by transfer from a secondary modern school."

A very important point is made concerning demotion and it is worth quoting in full (pp. 25-26) from the booklet:-

"Transfer to a lower group ('demotion' is an unpopular description) presents difficulties which not even the best-run comprehensive school can completely overcome because they are rooted in human nature. 'The chief danger to be avoided,' says a typical commentator, 'would seem to be the demotion of a child because he or she is lazy and a nuisance. Such a child in a lower form will be able to tackle the work so easily that he will become even lazier or will have time to become an even greater nuisance.' Demotions may be salutary to the few, but in too many they induce apathy. One member goes so far as to say that down-grading is 'psychologically as bad as failing the eleven-plus'. When that is true, others would say, the ground has not been properly prepared. A sense of proportion is needed in considering transfer. One member warns us: 'Once critics are convinced that this opportunity for change of stream exists they begin to suggest that a little game is carried on of pushing children up and down in a kind of educational snakes and ladders. Sound reasons have to be shown for changes and certainly no child would be changed at frequent intervals.'"

The general picture then, going by the I.A.A.M.'s booklet, is that transfer within the schools is fairly easy - at least upward transfers. However, a note of discord was struck in a note from the head teacher of a bilateral school, called a comprehensive school both by the local education authority under whose jurisdiction it lay and by the Ministry of Education in their "List of Comprehensive Schools in England and Wales, 1961". Writing to the author of this study, he states:-

"It is extremely difficult to get the 'C' stream to conform, e.g. in school uniform, payment of sports fees, etc. and all the voluntary things grammar school

children do without any trouble.

"i.b (1st year Modern) are treated as a Grammar form. This helps transfers during 1st year. After 1st year transfers to Grammar stream are very difficult but are done sometimes. Transfers from Gr. to Mod. also occur with a lot of fuss and bother from parents sometimes: much more than the books say and I get more trouble than the heads of separate Grammar Schools in this respect. The books say transfer is easy if all pupils are in one comprehensive school. I do not agree from unpleasant experience."

What about provision for the less-able child in the comprehensive school? All the schools stated that they had one or more teachers specialising in the education of these pupils. It is as difficult for the comprehensive schools to find specially trained teachers to deal with backward children as it is for modern and E.S.N. schools. The reason for this is that at present only very few universities and training colleges offer courses of training for this specialised work. This shortage of specialist teachers for the backward is confirmed in the National Union of Teachers' publication "The State of Our Schools", Part 3, published in September, 1963, and based on answers to questionnaires which the Union had sent to schools.

Six schools which replied to the school questionnaire stated that they had special departments to deal with the problems of backwardness. Battersea County School (Mixed), London, originally had a department for remedial work in the first and second forms only and later extended it to the third and fourth forms.

The head teacher of Sir Thomas Jones School (Mixed), Anglesey, stated that owing to the difficulty of obtaining teachers with specialist qualifications for this work, teachers with primary school experience and qualifications were appointed at his school.

Mr. H. Raymond King, headmaster of the Wandsworth School (Boys), London,

made some observations on the education of backward children in some duplicated notes entitled "Notes on Organisation", under the sub-heading "The more intractable problems":-

"A real attack on the problem of the less able 'secondary modern' has brought out the need for special provision for this group.

(a) A large construction shed for real, often large scale, projects of practical value and social utility. Existing workshops, used up to their maximum availability, cannot be cluttered up with this work.

(b) The combination of teacher youth leader is the kind of master I should like to see dealing with this group. His day time commitment should be lightened to allow for two hours, say, on two evenings per week and some time at the week-end."

Among all that has been written about comprehensive schools, one of the most prominent issues has been concerned with how the "grammar school type" children will fare. Opponents of the schools often admit that "average" children will probably fare better in them than in modern schools, but they insist that the "academic" child will be worse off than in a grammar school under the tripartite system. They point to the American comprehensive high schools as an example where the "average" child is well catered for but the "academic" child is not fully "stretched". This criticism was, of course, made by the Mosely Commission to America in 1903.

This particular point was discussed quite a lot in 1951. For example, Margaret Diggle, recounting her own experiences in America, came to this conclusion (1):-

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(1) "Secondary Education in the U.S.A. and Britain", article in "Journal of Education", November, 1951.

"After teaching freshmen in American State universities, and realising how much intellectual potentiality has lain dormant in the high school, I am certain that any school which does not differentiate between able and less able students serves the community badly."

Another opponent of comprehensive schooling, I.L. Kandel, makes the same point in a book edited by C.H. Dobinson (1):-

"The lessons to be learned from the American comprehensive high school are that individual differences of ability cannot be ignored, that different types of education best adapted to these differences cannot be successfully offered in the same school without sacrificing standards and values."

In the same year, however, A.G. Hughes (2) argued that it was very misleading to argue about what might happen in comprehensive schools in this country, without any practical experience to go on. To use the system of America or Scotland as an example was misleading, said Hughes, because the culture and tradition in those two countries are very different from those in this country.

Of the local education authorities which completed the questionnaire in November, 1960, the following could not make any comment as to the examination results in their schools because the schools had not been in existence long enough for any assessment to be made:-

Cumberland; Leeds; Manchester; Nottingham.

The following authorities, from their own practical experience, claimed that examination results were quite satisfactory:-

Anglesey ("The examination results show improvement if anything on the old grammar school system as those apparently non academic types show aptitude in this direction")

(1) "Education in a Changing World", 1951. Chapter 3, "Educational Reorganisation in Relation to the Social Order" by I.L. Kandel.

(2) "Education and the Democratic Ideal", 1951, pp. 100-101.

Breconshire; Caernarvonshire; Coventry; Durham; Isle of Man; Oxfordshire("The examination results of the grammar stream are much improved and a larger group are taking examinations than would otherwise have been the case."); Staffordshire; West Bromwich.

The schools questionnaire asked, "Do examination results compare favourably with local grammar or technical schools?" Four schools stated that results were not yet available. Four schools did not reply to this question. Thirty two schools replied in the affirmative. The remaining four schools commented as below:-

Sheldon Heath Comprehensive School, Birmingham; "Our first 'O' level results last yr. were above the national average."

Whitley Abbey Secondary School, Coventry; "Comparison is not possible as we are creamed by 2 boys' and 2 girls' grammar schools."

Douglas High School for Boys, Isle of Man; "Examination results are well above the national average in most subjects."

Douglas High School for Girls, Isle of Man; "The results (according to H.M.I.s) are above the national average but there are no local grammar or technical schools for comparison."

The Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools in their booklet which was mentioned earlier on page 149 of this study talk of standards of work in comprehensive schools. In answer to the question asking if standards are maintained they state, "A cautious 'Yes' would be the answer, 'as far as can be seen on what evidence there is'. No school should be judged on one set or two sets of results in external examinations. When all the schools which began life in the 1950's have had several years of second-year sixth-form work, a more confident answer may be given. It is particularly dangerous, if not dishonest, to take the results of boys who were in a grammar school until their last year, when the school became comprehensive, and claim those results as proof of any

aspect of the comprehensive school."

An important point made by the Assistant Masters' booklet is that some comprehensive schools know that they are in the public eye and this acts as an extra incentive to the schools to do well in public examinations because performance in these examinations is how most schools are judged by the public. It would be a good thing, the I.A.A.M. say, if the public ceased scrutinising these schools so closely so that the staffs of the schools could stop feeling they were "performing in public".

Standards should be considered at three levels. The grammar streams: they state "Those with years of experience are sure that standards have been maintained with these children". The second level is the bottom form taking G.C.E. 'O' level subjects: "It can be said with assurance that those able children missed by the eleven-plus examination and brought out, as well as up, in a comprehensive school are fully extended, to the benefit of themselves and of the nation". The third level is the sixth form: "It just will not do to compare the sixth in a comprehensive school with the sixth in a large city school which takes the cream of that city and its environs and insists on very high grades in O-level before it admits a boy". The comprehensive schools, it adds, are rightly proud of their share of county major and state scholarships and are playing a full part in providing entrants to the professions.

The headmaster of Duffryn High School, Newport, in a letter to the author of this study, states that he believes that many comprehensive schools have set their sights too low, especially on the academic side and thus have created a mistrust in the public eye. In his own school the staff are highly qualified even when compared with established grammar schools thus parents now accept the fact that academically the school stands in a high class.

Most of the schools who completed the school questionnaire are aiming high

as far as external examinations are concerned. In some of the newer schools, as stated perviously, the examinations had not been attempted at the time of the completing of the questionnaire. The examinations being attempted were as follows:-

G.C.E. 'O' level.....44 schools,

G.C.E. 'A' level.....44 schools,

G.C.E. 'S' level.....38 schools,

Examinations below G.C.E. (e.g. Royal Society of Arts, etc.).....36 schools.

In 1962 Robin Pedley instituted an enquiry concerning results of different kinds of schools at 'O' level of the G.C.E. (1). He accepted as a "good performance" five passes or more at 'O' level. He made enquiries of fifty nine local authorities and concluded that "in the local secondary schools of England and Wales as a whole, a system based mainly on separate grammar and 'modern' schools, about ten per cent of each age-group proceed to take a 'good' G.C.E. around the age of sixteen".

Assuming that only Anglesey and the Isle of Man have completely comprehensive systems, Pedley stated that in the Isle of Man on average sixteen and a half per cent of the relevant age group obtained a 'good' G.C.E. during the four years 1959-62. The average for 1959-61 for Anglesey was over fourteen per cent.

"To supplement these figures," writes Pedley, "I inquired of twenty comprehensive schools in various parts of the country concerning the later G.C.E. performance of the pupils who had joined them at the age of eleven in 1954. Several of these schools were quite heavily creamed by grammar schools. Even so, fourteen per cent of the age group in question gained a 'good' G.C.E. The same figure, fourteen per cent, emerges from a table compiled by the Secondary School

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(1) Robin Pedley, "The Comprehensive School", 1963, pp. 95-100.

Examinations Council in 1961, based on returns from five comprehensive schools." Pedley is here referring to "The Certificate of Secondary Education" (H.M.S.O., 1961, pp. 19-20).

The picture, then, of the schools which are claimed by their local authorities to be comprehensive in the early 1960s is one of variety, experiment and a certain amount of confusion and problems (1). It can be truly said that no two comprehensive schools are exactly alike - even under the same authority. Some heads believe, along with people like Pedley and Simon, that a comprehensive school by its very nature excludes streaming; the majority of heads obviously believe otherwise.

It has been pointed out in this study that questionnaires were sent, in June, 1961, to schools which were claimed by their local education authorities to be comprehensive. How do the forty four schools which completed the questionnaire conform to the five basic concepts of a true comprehensive school as detailed on page 19 of this study?

The first concept was that "The comprehensive school is a local, or neighbourhood school, supplying all the secondary educational needs of its prescribed area". Ten schools out of the forty four would qualify under this heading. The others are excluded because, in most cases, children at eleven have a choice of schools to attend. A few are excluded because they accept children from outside their catchment area, therefore they are not local schools.

The ten schools are as follows:-

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(1) The varied organisations of comprehensive schools with regard to such matters as house systems, tutorial groups, division into lower and upper schools, sports and social activities have been reported many times and will not be dealt with in this study. Information about these matters may be obtained from, among other publications:- "Inside the Comprehensive School", 1958; Robin Pedley, "The Comprehensive School", 1963; many articles in both national and educational press, including a series entitled "Comprehensive Schools at Work" published in "The Schoolmaster" (December, 1959-March, 1960) and written by heads of comprehensive schools.

Sir Thomas Jones Secondary School, Anglesey.....MIXED

David Hughes Secondary School, Anglesey.....MIXED

Maesydderwen Comprehensive School, Breconshire.....MIXED

Tavistock School, Devon.....MIXED

Wolsingham Secondary School, Durham.....MIXED

Castle Rushen High School, Isle of Man (see p. 140 of study).MIXED

Douglas High School for Boys, Isle of Man.....BOYS

Douglas High School for Girls, Isle of Man.....GIRLS

Kirkby, Brookfield Comprehensive School, Lancashire.....MIXED

Ounsdale Comprehensive School, Wolverhampton, Staffordshire..MIXED

(However, some pupils do go from this last school's catchment area "to Grammar Schools on religious (R.C.) grounds, or because an elder bro. or sister is already there".)

These schools conform to the second and third concepts. The fourth, "Taking all the children of a given locality, it must of necessity be a co-educational school," leaves eight schools, of which two (Castle Rushen and Ounsdale) would be more exactly classified as "practically comprehensive". The six remaining schools do conform to the final basic concept. Thus out of forty four schools claimed as comprehensive by their authorities, six are in fact true comprehensive schools - or 13·6 per cent.

If one were to go further and exclude schools that stream children - as indeed many advocates of these schools would - there would be left the following schools:-

Maesydderwen Comprehensive School, Breconshire (This school wrote on the questionnaire, "Streaming implies multilateralism!")

Tavistock School, Devon (This school has "House Year-Groups (across ability range) with work 'sets' or groups.")

Thus it has been shown that very few schools have the opportunity to be truly comprehensive in the sense of providing all secondary education in their areas. It has already been pointed out (p. 21 of this study) that in order for this to be done all other schools would have to be suppressed. If this were not done, the only other way open to comprehensive schools to be truly comprehensive is to build up reputations and traditions rivalling the best of their competitors' so that in time parents of all, or most, children would select them in preference to other schools. This, however, would be a long process.

As comprehensive schools develop and establish reputations locally, more and more children who are not in academic streams are staying on beyond the leaving age of fifteen years. Although this tendency can also be seen in secondary modern schools, a greater proportion of such children are staying on at comprehensive schools. It would seem that these children and/or their parents are discovering what benefits they can obtain from the comprehensive schools.

In fact, today in this country there are fewer true comprehensive schools than is commonly believed but there are many schools that are partly comprehensive, or comprehensive in character - some of these calling themselves comprehensive schools.

But apart from comprehensive or semi-comprehensive schools, a tendency towards some form of comprehensiveness and a drift away from tripartitism pure and simple can be seen over much of the secondary education system in this country. In some areas it takes the obvious forms of bilateral and multilateral schools. There is also the "campus" scheme. Other areas are making more revolutionary experiments in their efforts to provide "secondary education" for all the children in their care. The first and foremost of these experiments is the Leicestershire Plan.

This system was started in certain areas of Leicestershire in September, 1957.

Children at the age of eleven, without examination, all move into a school which is termed a "high school". They stay there for three years and then any pupil, provided he means to stay at school for at least two years more, can go to the grammar, or "upper" school, without examination. Those pupils who do not wish to proceed to the "upper" school stay at the "high" school until they reach the statutory leaving age. It is obvious that the high school is a comprehensive school in that it is a neighbourhood school and takes in all pupils from the area which it serves.

The originator of the Leicestershire Plan - originally known as the Leicestershire Experiment - is Mr. Stewart C. Mason, Director of Education for Leicestershire. Writing of his Plan in the summer 1962 issue of the "Bulletin of the Liberal Education Association", Mr. Mason says:-

"There is no doubt that the great majority of parents in the areas where the Leicestershire Plan is in operation enthusiastically approve of it and would strongly protest if the Authority were to attempt to reinstate the old system. It seems also clear that other parts of the country are looking forward to its introduction there."

Stoke-on-Trent has gone partly comprehensive by giving the name "junior high schools" to grammar schools and secondary modern schools offering G.C.E. 'O' level subjects. In September, 1963, a report was published by the Chief Education Officer and Chairman of the Education Committee, after they had made a tour of the United States of America. The report recommends that in future secondary education in Stoke should be based on the comprehensive high school for pupils from 11 to 16, and this to be followed by a junior college, which would resemble American junior colleges.

Even those authorities which adhere to the tripartite system are, in many instances, experimenting. The General Certificate of Education at Ordinary Level was originally instituted to be taken by grammar school pupils; the secondary

modern school pupils were not to be concerned about external examinations. Gradually, however, more and more pupils from modern schools were entered for examinations of a lower standard than the G.C.E., organised by bodies such as the College of Preceptors, the Royal Society of Arts, the Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes and the Union of Educational Institutions.

Then, against the wishes of the Ministry of Education at first, modern schools began entering pupils for 'O' level of the G.C.E. The trickle became a flood and now many modern schools run "extended courses" for children to take examinations of all kinds, including G.C.E.

In some areas, Southampton for example, the secondary modern schools have a "bias", e.g., technical, commercial, academic, and pupils can transfer to the school of their choice.

East Ham, a small county borough, have a similar system. The secondary modern schools can transfer pupils to the grammar school without examination at the age of thirteen years. They each run "extended courses" with a "bias", leading to G.C.E. 'O' level. Quite often, a few pupils from these schools, having passed their G.C.E. 'O' level subjects, go straight into the sixth form at the local grammar school.

Indeed, the average secondary modern school today is more comprehensive than anybody could have imagined in the nineteen-forties and early nineteen-fifties. There are often specialist teachers of backward children, ample provision of academic and practical subjects for the "average" children, "extended courses" leading to external examinations. In a few secondary modern schools, some pupils have even begun to study for the 'A' level of the G.C.E.

So the picture of secondary education in this country today is one of unrest, experiment, and a profound interest in what is going on in education on the part of both educationalists and the general public. But the trend is very clear -

it is towards a degree of comprehensiveness, whether expressed in comprehensive schools proper or in some other type of school.

Some of the reasons for this trend seem obvious. Since the 1944 Education Act, the majority of people in this country have become more prosperous materially and the necessity for younger members of families to go to work as soon as possible in order to augment family incomes is not there now. The majority of people of all classes - though not all - recognise the importance of education in life. Young and Willmott bearing this out with regards to the working class (1). As a consequence of this, the apathy towards education which the Mosely Commissioners reported on is there no longer. In addition to this, the class structure is not so rigid as it was just over sixty years ago and people as a whole do not accept class divisions in education - at least within the national system of education. Thus the trend towards comprehensiveness would appear to be logical following the acceptance of secondary education for all as an educational principle.

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(1) Michael Young & Peter Willmott, "Family and Kinship in East London", revised edition 1962. The attitude of working class people from Bethnal Green, London, to education is discussed on pp. 28-30. More than half of a sample of married people with children under eleven wanted their children at the age of eleven to go to grammar or technical schools - "anything other than what one woman called the 'ordinary'".

LIST OF SCHOOLS WHICH COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE.

Seventy eight questionnaires were sent to schools. Forty five were completed but one school - the Joseph Leckie School, Walsall - stated that it was no longer a comprehensive school.

Anglesey	David Hughes Secondary School.
	Sir Thomas Jones Secondary School.
Birmingham	Great Barr Comprehensive School.
	Sheldon Heath Comprehensive School.
Breconshire	Maesydderwen Comprehensive School.
Caernarvonshire	Dyffryn Nantlle Bilateral School.
	Ysgol Bryurefail School.
	Ysgol Dyffryn Ogwen.
Coventry	Whitley Abbey Secondary School.
Devon	Tavistock School.
Durham	Wolsingham Secondary School.
Isle of Man	Castle Rushen High School.
	Douglas High School for Boys
	Douglas High School for Girls.
Lancashire	Kirkby, Brookfield Comprehensive School.
	Kirkby, Ruffwood Comprehensive School.
	Kirkby, St. Kevin's Comprehensive School.
Leeds	Allerton Grange School.
London	Battersea County School.
	Christopher Wren School.
	Elliott School.
	Forest Hill School.
	Garratt Green School.
	Holloway School.
	Kidbrooke School
	Mayfield School.
	Parliament Hill School.
	Sydenham School.
	Tulse Hill.
	Wandsworth School.

Manchester	Plant Hill Comprehensive School.
Middlesex	Mellow Lane Comprehensive School.
Newport, Mon.	Duffryn High School.
	Hartridge High School.
Staffordshire	Ounsdale Comprehensive School.
	The Regis School.
	Willenhall Comprehensive School.
Westmorland	Kirkby Stephen Grammar School.
	Windermere Grammar School.
West Riding of Yorkshire	Calder High School.
	Colne Valley High School.
	Oglethorpe Grammar School, known as Tadcaster Grammar School.
	Elland Grammar School.
	Penistone Grammar School.

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