A study of elementary education in Malta and the problems affecting its development

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A STUDY OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION IN MALTA AND THE PROBLEMS AFFECTING ITS DEVELOPMENT.

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Due to the kindness of Dr, Laferla, the Director of Education, opportunities for personal observation were made possible. In addition, Dr. Laferla permitted me to see copies of Colonial Office Reports which concerned Education in Malta.

INTRODUCTION.

The Maltese Islands are small and, in spite of their being densely populated, the number of people who live in them is no more than the population of a large provincial town in England. None the less, the Islands constitute a country and the Maltese are a nation. They have their own fascinating history, their own great traditions, their own language and institutions. Moreover, they have their own problems.

This study is an attempt to explain one of these problems - the problem of education. To do so is not easy. Conditions in Malta are, in many respects, peculiar and those under which education has developed are no exception. Many factors; economic, social, religious, political and financial are involved. Each has had a direct bearing on the schools and each will play its part in shaping their future.

The work has been limited to the Government Elementary Schools as these affect the vast majority of the people and as the development of other schools depends largely on the state of primary education. A history of education in Malta and a resume of the present position are followed by chapters devoted to the factors and problems which influenced the progress of education. Throughout, these chapters lead up to the years immediately preceding the present war but an additional chapter deals with the repercussions of the years 1939-1942. It is hoped that this arrangement will serve to give a clear picture of the subject.

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CHAPTER I.

THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN MALTA.

The history of Malta is largely dominated by the rule of the Knights of the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. They had been expelled from Rhodes in 1522 by Soliman and had journeyed to Italy where they settled at Civita Vecchia and Viterbo pending the provision of a permanent home. During this period of eight years, Clement VII ascended the Throne of St. Peter's. He was himself a member of the Order and it was at his request that the Emporer Charles V of Spain offered the Island to the fraternity. This he was able to do, as the Spanish dominions included the Kingdom of Sicily. Malta had been united to this Kingdom since 1090 when Count Roger of Normandy landed, at the invitation of the Islanders, and brought to an end two hundred and twenty years of Arab domination and oppression.

Philip Villiers de L'Isle Adam arrived in Malta in 1530. He had been Grand Master of the Order at the time of the evacuation of Rhodes and was the first of the Grand Masters in their new home. Their rule was destined to extend to 1798 and, in all, twenty eight Grand Masters were to preside over the Order in the Island. It was during the reign of the ninth of these Masters, Hugh de Verdala (1581-1595), that Malta's education system had its beginning. In 1577, Tommaso Gargallo, Prior of the Conventual Church, had entertained the idea of establishing a college and inviting the Jesuits to come and teach in it. Gargallo became Bishop of Malta shortly afterwards and his plans bore fruit. The Society of Jesus was summoned to the Island from Sicily and it speedily established itself under a Father Caspano. In 1561, it had been given powers, in a Bull from Pope Pius VI, to confer the degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Divinity. Verdala granted a licence for the building of what was to be known as the "College of Jesus" and twelve of the Jesuits were detailed to teach Grammar and Humanities. The Bishop's palace was used as a temporary building but a gift of 2,000 scudi from the King of Spain and the bequest of a sum, equivalent to £4,000, by Verdala allowed work to be started on the College proper

in 1595, Grand Master Garzes (1595-1601) being present at the laying of the Foundation stone. The building was completed and occupied in 1602.

The next appreciable advance in education occurred in 1655 when the scope of the College was considerably extended. Grand Master John de Lascaris (1636-1657) arranged an annuity which permitted the appointment of a teacher of Mathematics. The Knights of Provence, Auvergne and France made it possible for French to be taught. Finally, Pope Alexander VII secured for the Jesuits a sufficient income to allow a School of Arabic to be established. This last innovation had a particular interest in that Arabic had great affinity with the language of the Maltese.

It was, incidentally, during Lascaris' tenure of office that the Jesuits were, for the first time, expelled from the Island. In 1639, at Carnival time, a number of young Knights impersonated members of the Society. Protests brought punishment to the offenders but they retaliated by sacking the College and the disturbances which followed led to the Jesuits' expulsion. The Pope was, however, deeply offended and they returned shortly afterwards, as a result of his intervention, to continue their invaluable work.

A new branch of organised studies was introduced into the Island in 1676 when Nicolas Cotoner, the Grand Master, established a School of Anatomy and Surgery. This was attached to the Hospital of the Order and had no connection with the College but it was destined, in time, to become an integral part of the University of Malta.

Although the Jesuits had long been established in Malta, it was not until 1727 that they were in a position to confer the degrees of Master of Philosophy and Doctor of Divinity which were specified in the Bull given them by Pius VI. In that year, the Rector of the College approached Grand Master Manoel de Vilhena (1722-1736) with a request for permission to institute the necessary academical courses in Theology and Divinity. The request was granted and the courses duly established.

At this juncture, it appeared that the future of education under the Jesuits was bright. With the possible exception of the

incident during the time of Lascaris, the College had been free from serious intervention and disturbance and had progressively widened its scope. After one hundred and seventy six years of work, however, the Jesuits were destined to leave Malta. During the reign of Grand Master Emmanuele Pinto (1741-1773), they were expelled from the Island in 1768, Pinto confiscating their property which was valued at £15,000. The Grand Master and the Bishop of Malta subsequently entered into correspondence with the Holy See on the advisability of using the money appropriated to endow a University and a College of Studies. By a Brief, Pope Clement XIV authorised the establishment of these institutions and the conferring of degrees in Arts, Law and Theology. Thus Pinto, in effect, became the founder of the University proper. He endowed it with an annual income of 1,900 scudi and issued statutes governing it; statutes which brought it largely under the control of the Knights. The College of Jesus became the College of Studies and was housed in the University and placed under a Rector.

The rule of Pinto's successor, Francois Ximenes (1773-1775), was characterised by his mismanagement of the affairs of the Island; a mismanagement which resulted in the famous "Insurrection of the Priests". Education during his time was bound to suffer. To complicate matters, the endowment of Pinto ceased on his death and the consequent financial troubles led to the closing of many classes and the reduction of the salaries of the professors who remained. Emmanuel de Rohan (1775-1795) was, fortunately, in happy contrast. He redressed many of the wrongs of his predecessors and enriched the depleted treasury with considerable sums of his own money. He instituted a code of laws, known as the Rohan Code, which survived, in measure, until 1868. Moreover, he greatly endowed the University which he made autonomous in 1779. Two new classes were formed in Navigation and Mathematics and the facilities for training in Medicine were greatly extended. It now became possible to read for a Diploma as Pharmacist, Physician or Surgeon. Candidates in Pharmacy were able to study in the Hospital of the Knights, while two Chairs were established by the Grand Master for Physiology, Pathology, Semeiotics, Hygiene and Therapeutics.

Unfortunately, the star of the Knights was setting. In de Rohan's time, a large proportion of the income of the Order dwindled away. Its property in France, which was estimated to bring in a sum of £50,000 a year, was doomed. Spain and Portugal, threatened with attack by the French Republic, appropriated large sums belonging to the Order to make preparations for war. Destitute Knights flocked to the Island from France and increased the general distress. It was only as a result of the munificence of the Emperor Paul I of Russia, who assumed the title of "Protector" of the Order, that the Knights did not find themselves in the direst straits. This relief could not avert the inevitable end of the regime however.

To Ferdinand von Hompesh (1797-1799) fell the melancholy distinction of being the last Grand Master of the Order in the Island. Malta fell to the French in 1798. Little resistance was offered to Napoleon. Under de Rohan, who was of French extraction, a considerable body of the Knights had become sympathetic to the Republic. This lack of unity led von Hompesh to exhibit a degree of indecision that was fatal. Contrary to the wishes of the Maltese, who were prepared to defend their homes but whose co-operation he had not invited or utilised, he capitulated on June 12th and signed the Articles by which the Order gave up the City and Ports of Malta and renounced all sovereignty over the Island. Five days later he left for Trieste with the remnants of his Knights.

The period during which the Grand Masters ruled in Malta and which drew to a close in this way, cannot be said to have been favourable to education. It must be remembered that the Order, generally, kept very much aloof from the people of the Island and little was done to provide any amelioration of their extreme poverty and less was done to provide any cultural and educational facilities. The reforms of Pinto were of dubious value; the loss of the Jesuits was serious in the extreme, while the Grand Master's rapacity casts doubts on any suggestion of real generosity in his endowment of the University. De Rohan, who exhibited some measure of sympathy for the people, came too late in the day. The times

themselves were too turbulent for those activities which are best fostered in peace. The threat of invasion of the Fortress was ever present and became a reality in the Great Siege of 1565 when the Knights and the Maltese, under the great Jean de Vallette Parisot (1557-1568), held out against the hordes of Soliman the Magnificent. The Grand Masters were obliged to spend vast sums of money on the erection of the massive fortifications which bear their names; money which might have been devoted, in altered circumstances, to more pacific purposes. Other scourges played their part. More often than not, the Maltese were living in a state of destitution. Not once, but several times, plague swept through the Island and famine was rife. In 1675, to quote an isolated instance, 11,000 people out of an estimated population of 66,000 died.

Thus Malta's debt to the Jesuits is a great one. They brought education to the Island and for a century and three-quarters triumphed over all the difficulties of a disturbed day and age. Patiently, they extended their work in its scope until their expulsion. Fortunately for posterity, their institutions lived on after they had gone and, as a result, Malta has had a system of education, which they initiated and so long maintained, from 1595 until the present day.

A radical change came over the scene with the advent of Napoleon. Had he held Malta for a sufficiently long period, the effects on education might have been far reaching. The University and the College were immediately suppressed and the richest and most influential people in Malta were ordered to send their children to France. They were to be educated in Paris and were, presumably, to return to their native land sympathetic to France and to French culture. In all probability, they were also to be potentially useful as hostages; ensuring the loyalty and support of the most important people of the Island. From the wider educational point of view, however, the significance of the short period under Napoleon lies in the fact that the interests of the masses, which had hitherto been completely ignored, did receive some attention. By his very first decree, Napoleon provided for the establishment in Malta of fifteen elementary schools in which "French, the

Elements of Mathematics and Pilotage, and the Principles of French Morality of the French Constitution" were to be taught.

This decree was destined to become a dead letter, for the French were driven from Malta in 1800, the Maltese playing no small part in their expulsion. For some years afterwards, the fate of the Island was in doubt. By Article X of the Treaty of Amiens of 1800, it was agreed by the major European powers that Malta should again pass into the hands of the Knights and so have an independant status. For political reasons, however, the English did not evacuate the Island as they were obliged to do under the terms of the Treaty. They maintained that a government of the Knights would be a burden to the Maltese as regards finance and national freedom. Moreover, the true extent of the designs of Napoleon was becoming more apparent and the value of Malta as a base more keenly appreciated. In Malta, the party in favour of the restoration of the Knights was small and, through the enthusiasm of Censu Borg ("Braret") and Canon Caruana, the Maltese rose up all at once in favour of the British Government in Malta. In May 1802, England declared war on France, the Island being the direct cause of the outbreak of hostilities. Peace was not to be established until 1814 when, under the Treaty of Paris, Malta was handed over "in full authority and sovereignty" to the British.

These eventful and disturbed years again did not contribute greatly to the advance of education but there was some evidence of a new and more progressive spirit. Sir Alexander Ball, who had been present at the expulsion of the French and who became Civil Commissioner in 1803, reopened the suppressed institutions; the University and the College. He appointed the anglophile Canon Caruana as the Head, Rector and Director. The studies at this time included Latin, Italian, Mathematics, Physics, Drawing, the Humanities, Logic, Metaphysics, Dogmatic and Moral Theology and Civil and Canon Law. The School of Anatomy and Surgery, founded by Nicolas Cotoner in 1679, was now transferred to the University. Ball also decided to institute a Chair of English and an English teacher came to the Island in 1803. Arabic also reappeared, a School for that language being established. No

move was made to introduce elementary education but there is evidence that Ball was anxious to start schools for the people. The time was not yet ripe for any definite developments, however, and the Commissioner was preoccupied to a large extent with difficulties in the organisation of the Government Departments, the provision of corn, the economic plight of the Island and the ousting of his enemies and critics. None the less, the view was gaining ground that the education of the lower classes was of the utmost importance to the permanent security of the Empire.

Malta's needs in education at this time were indicated by Miege, a contemporary historian, and, incidentally, a critic of Ball. From his account; out of every hundred Maltese, only nine could read and write with any degree of fluency, twenty two had the merest rudiments of learning and the remaining sixty nine were completely illiterate and ignorant.

Ball died in Malta in 1809 and Sir Hildebrand Oakes (1810-1812) succeeded him as Commissioner. In 1812, as a result of considerable political agitation, a Commission was appointed to enquire into the Civil Government, the Laws, the Judicial procedure and the Revenue of the Island. The report of this Commission was not published but it is probable that it influenced the instructions given to Sir Thomas Maitland on his appointment as Governor of Malta in 1813.

Maitland was the first Governor of the Colony. He had had wide experience in administration, particularly in Ceylon, and was ideally suited to the task which faced him in Malta. He arrived to find the plague raging and the country in chaos. He took vigorous action and by September 1814, he had surmounted the plague and a vast number of other difficulties as well and had restored the Island to a more orderly state which was likely to be helpful to progress. In his instructions from the Secretary of State, Lord Bathurst, Maitland had been charged to effect a gradual improvement in the conditions and education of the people, to diffuse the English language as far as possible and to establish schools with the support of the Government; simple and economical schools on the lines of those in existence in England.

About this time, the British Government had in mind the idea of a "Greek College" through which to propagate British culture in the Mediterranean and the Near East. The site originally proposed was in the Ionian Islands but, ultimately, this was not considered satisfactory. It was suggested, in 1815, that the University in Malta be moved to the sister island of Gozo and become, in effect, this new institution. Maitland was not in favour of the proposal. He investigated conditions in the University and found them deplorable. He made many recommendations including the reformation of the studies and instruction in the "modern" manner, the increasing of the salaries of the professors and the provision of bursaries for poorer students. He was supported by the Chief Secretary to the Government, Sir Richard Plaskett, but many of his plans were not approved by the Secretary of State. He did, however, do much to introduce English as the principal language of the Colony and an innovation of considerable significance was his sending of two Maltese youths to England to receive their education. This latter experiment was not, unfortunately, an unqualified success.

The greatest importance of Maitland's decade of administration, however, lay in the fact that it saw elementary education come into being at long last. The beginning was modest enough and was a private venture. In 1819, a Normal School Society was formed and its first school was opened in Valletta, a second being opened shortly afterwards in the populous Three Cities. These institutions were under the protection of the Government and it is likely that the sites they occupied were granted free of charge. For the rest, they were maintained by subscriptions. The subscriber of five scudi was allowed to place a child in the schools. A committee was entrusted with the task of appointing teachers and framing regulations and two inspectors were detailed to visit the schools twice weekly. From reports, it appears that children were admitted at the age of six years except when the classes were cramped for room, in which case the age was raised to eight years. They had to attend "properly washed and with their hair cut short and combed" and, in class, they were instructed in the three Rs,

la morale and, in the case of girls, needlework. These schools were an immediate success and the attendance rose to more than two hundred by October 1821.

Unfortunately, subsequent progress was slow. A third school was eventually opened in Gozo but little else was done to further elementary education in the next fifteen years. The term of office of the Marquess of Hastings as Governor, 1824-1826, saw a revision of the courses of study in the University and the formation of a Council, of which he was the Chancellor, to control it. Maltese was introduced, largely through the interest of Hookham Frere, the Chairman of the Council, and Mikiel Anton Vassalli, who first reduced the vernacular to a grammatical system, was the first occupant of the Chair. Italian, too, was re-established at this time.

A memorial of 1832, complaining of mal-administration, led William IV to grant a legislative assembly to the Island. The new Council of Government was approved in 1835. The state of education continued to be a cause of bitter complaint. Sir Frederick Ponsonby (1827-1836) was inclined to blame the ecclesiastical authorities for the poor standard which prevailed. The Government was Protestant and the people were exclusively Roman Catholic and there was a consequent lack of co-operation and trust. The University at this time was in a most unsatisfactory state. There seemed to be no plan of instruction in the lower schools while irregularity throughout rendered many of the courses of the upper school superficial and resulted in a low standard of attainment. The Council of the University were in favour of turning the lower schools, the direct descendants of the College of Jesus, into a public school with an up to date system of teaching. Nothing came of the idea at the time though it was destined to be put into effect later, the Lyceum being the new institution.

A great change came over the scene in 1836. The Government took over the elementary schools on the eve of a Royal Commission which came to the Island to investigate matters relating to the Legal code and the state of education. Sir Henry Bouverie was now Governor, Ponsonby having resigned in 1836. The Commissioners

were John Austin and George Cornwall Lewis and they spent a year and a half in the Island. Austin, who was to report on matters relating to the Laws, was a brilliant jurist and the friend of such notable figures of the day as Jeremy Bentham, James Mill and Carlyle. Lewis, a young man, had already served as Commissioner in Ireland on education and the state of the poor. He was destined to occupy high Cabinet rank in England.

Lewis found education in Malta in a bad state. There were still only the three elementary schools; in Valletta, Senglea and Gozo. 728 children attended the first two and an inconsiderable number attended the third. The Government expenditure on elementary education was £400 a year, £250 being spent on the Valletta school, £100 on the Senglea school and £50 on the school in Gozo. The instruction given was found to be small in quantity and poor in quality. The state of affairs in the University was on a par. The total expenditure on education was only £1,725 a year and the salary of a professor occupying an important chair was as low as £25.

Conditions in general throughout the Island were appalling. Lewis's letters describe the Maltese as illiterate and ignorant and the English residents as vulgar. There were no schools at all in the casals (villages); there was no tolerable education for the middle classes; there was no Press, no discussion, no cultural life of any shape or form. Everywhere, evidence was to be seen of extreme destitution and squalor. Social conditions were worse than anything produced by the Industrial Revolution in England. An outbreak of cholera in 1837 had claimed 3,382 lives and added horror to the situation. Farmers, fishermen, spinners and other workers were being forced by circumstance to emigrate to Egypt, Barbary, Greece, Spain and Sicily in search of a living. Crime was prevalent and was increasing.

In spite of all the difficulties, the Commission made notable advances. It proposed ten elementary schools; one in Valletta, two in the Three Cities and seven in the villages. These were estimated to cost £850 annually, the total cost of education rising to £4,000 from £1,725. These schools were established before the Commission left the Island. The language recommended

for them was Maltese in the first instance with Italian to be taught in the higher classes. English was to be added only if time permitted its teaching. It was thought advisable, too, to introduce Arabic into both the Lyceum and the elementary schools as a language useful to those who emigrated to North Africa. The University was overhauled. Its governing Council was abolished and a special Council for each Faculty and a General Council substituted. The administration was left largely to the Rector who also was placed over the elementary schools. Bouverie dissented from the proposal to place so much control in his hands and sought to limit his powers. In 1841 therefore, the Lyceum and the elementary schools were placed under a Committee with the Rector as its Chairman.

The work of the 1838 Commission was invaluable. Not only were the Commissioners themselves well chosen; Mrs. Austin, who accompanied her husband, did much for Malta. She was qualified in her own right to assist in the study of the condition of education. Moreover, she interested herself in the economic and social conditions of the Island as a whole. She was a stbunch advocate of the proposal to open schools in the country districts and it was she also who did much to establish the lace making industry and to secure the patronage of Queen Victoria for it. The Commission brought to an end a period which had seen little progress made with the provision of popular education and the ten schools which it set up carried education out into the country for the first time and formed the framework of a system which was ultimately to embrace every town and village in the Island.

In 1845, a link with the past was formed. The Jesuits wished to return to Malta to set up a boarding school. They were refused permission to do so as they were suspected of a penchant for politics. An Irishman, Father Esmonde, did eventually succeed in opening the Boarding School of St.Paul in the same year. He secured the necessary permit by applying as a private individual. The school closed after ten years work, largely as a result of a law suit against its founder. While it was in existence, however, its standard was so high that the Rector of the University was relieved of his charge of the elementary schools, the standard of

which suffered by comparison.

In 1844, the post Director of Elementary Schools was established and in 1850, Canon Pullicino was appointed to the position. He had been sent to Ireland in 1849 by O'Ferral (1847-1851), the Governor, to study education in the National Schools there. He returned to Malta to take up his new post and set about the work of reforming elementary education. He found fourteen schools, each with separate departments for boys and girls, and, in addition, night classes at Zabbar and an orphans' industrial school. The teaching was poor both in quantity and quality and consisted of a little Italian, no English worth mentioning, a little arithmetic and the mechanical repetition of the Catechism.

Pullicino favoured the building of new and adequate schools rather than the renting of premises which were often unsatisfactory and two such schools were built in his time. Moreover, he advocated the adoption of a curriculum with an appropriate industrial bias. In this connection, he was anxious to introduce Navigation and Ship Construction as subjects in the school at Cospicua and to provide training in Domestic Science in the girls' schools. The Government declared its readiness to vote him any reasonable sums but his desire for reform was largely offset by the difficulty of finding suitably qualified teachers to put his plans into practice efficiently.

None the less, a great deal of progress was made and by 1865 seventy one schools were open in the Island and some 6,000 children were receiving elementary education. In that year, Sir Henry Storks (1857-1867), the Governor, appointed a Commission to inquire into the public instruction as taught in the Lyceum and the Elementary Schools of Malta and Gozo. The Commission adopted peculiar methods of procedure and, ignoring the Director entirely, made a series of hasty visits to the schools. Their report was adverse in the extreme. Their recommendations included the adoption of Italian as the written language and the medium of instruction, Maltese for oral work in the lower classes and the introduction of English after the second year. A revision of teachers' salaries was called for, the present scale having been found to be barely sufficient to provide the necessities of life and

insufficient to attract anyone of superior ability. It was considered, too, that a Lyceum training and a course in Method under an English teacher should be prerequisites for admission to the staff of a school. The report on the Lyceum was a shade more favourable but still highly critical. Admission was too easy, the institution lacking in method and promotion haphazard.

The findings of the Commission did not do justice to Pullicino; rather they revealed defects over which he had little control and of which he was probably aware. Poor buildings and facilities and untrained and underpaid teachers were, in all probability, the root of the trouble. The Governor did not attach a great deal of importance to the report of his Commission and he made flattering reference to the Director in the Council of Government. The report did, however, produce some results. It lead to the adoption of the Pupil Teacher system for the training of teachers and a Model School was set up in Valletta in 1867. In the schools themselves, the curriculum was to be cut down to the three Rs and geography to ensure that what was taught was taught thoroughly.

The governorship of Sir Patrick Grant (1867-1872) saw no great developments in the field of education. In 1870, a Dr. Zammit proposed reforms which were based largely on the report of the Commission of 1865 and an unsuccessful proposal of Dr. Sciortino in 1866. These reforms were, in measure, concerned with the language question but nothing came of them. More important than the debating of these proposals was the fact that Grant's administration saw some attempt made to provide additional school accommodation and provision was actually made for fifteen new primary schools. Another interesting development was the sending of a number of Maltese youths to England to complete their education - a venture which had been undertaken, without success, by Sir Thomas Maitland.

A milestone in the history of education in Malta was reached in 1878. In that year, the Secretary of State, Sir Edward Hicks Beach, sent Mr. (later Sir) Patrick Keenan to Malta as a Commissioner to make an enquiry into the educational system. Keenan was the resident Commissioner of National Education in Ireland and was thus well qualified for the work. He made a thorough

investigation of all the educational establishments in the Island and their administration and his lengthy report was published in 1879.

So far as the elementary schools were concerned, the Commissioner found conditions much as they had been represented by the inquiry of 1865 but his criticisms and recommendations were tempered by a more sympathetic understanding of the difficulties under which Dr. Pullicino worked. To remedy the faults in the system he made the following suggestions. The schools were to be decentralised to an appreciable extent and with this in view, local Committees were to be set up, the Parish Priest being invited to become the manager of the schools in his parish. School fees were to be levied at rates to be determined by the means of the parents but free admission was to be accorded to those who could not afford to pay for their education. The training of teachers was dealt with. Pending the establishment of a training institution in Malta, two men and two women were to be sent to England each year for the two year training college course. They were to be selected by competition among the younger teachers in the Islands. It was intended that, after a sufficient number had been trained in England, an adequate staff of competent teachers would be available to take charge of a Normal School in Malta. Improvements in teachers' salaries were called for, expenditure on new schools was strongly urged, and the need for technical education, for industrial schools and for reformatories was stressed. The majority of the Commissioner's recommendations are dealt with fully in the appropriate chapters of this study.

In the University and the Lyceum, Keenan found conditions which could only be described as chaotic and he made elaborate proposals to remedy this state of affairs. What concerned all three sections of education, Primary, Secondary and University, conjointly, were his recommendations on administration. He proposed that all the educational affairs of Malta be committed to the charge of an Education Department consisting of a re-organized and reconstituted Council of the University, The President of this Education Department was to be the Rector of the University and the Lyceum and active head and organizer of the system of Primary Education.

In 1880, Dr. Pullicino was pensioned, the Governor adding his personal tribute to the tribute included in Keenan's Report. The office of Director of Primary Schools was abolished and that of a Director of Education substituted. Mr. Sigismondo Savona was the first holder of this appointment which was vested with the powers that the Commissioner had called for. This marked the beginning of the language controversy which was to play so large a part not only in matters educational but also political in the years following. A special section of this work is devoted to it. It is sufficient to say here that Savona endeavoured to put into operation the Commissioner's recommendation that Maltese should be taught in lowest classes of the schools and that English - and English alone - should be taught after the second year. The opposition encountered led to Savona's resignation though a contributory cause was probably the appointment of a Select Committee by Sir Victor Hely-Hutchinson in 1887 to inquire into conditions in the University. As a result of this Committee's recommendations, the administration of education was altered. A Senate of fourteen members was set up, the Director being an ex-officio member entrusted with the direction of the University, Lyceum and Primary Schools subject to its general control. The Secretary of State felt that the Senate was too large and that it had too much control over Primary schools. Its numbers were accordingly reduced by one and its powers somewhat curtailed. Its final constitution and powers were set down in an Ordinance of 1889.

Dr. Caruana, a noted archaeologist, succeeded Savona as the Director and his difficulties in his office were mainly the results of the fettering control of the Senate, about which he complained bitterly, and the intricacies of the language problem. On his resignation, another Select Committee was set up in 1897. As a result of its findings, the Senate was abolished. The University was made subject to the Governor and placed under a Rector assisted by a General Council. A separate Elementary School Department was set up under its own Head. Dr. Tagliaferro was the first to hold this position. In response to an invitation from the Lords of the Committee of the Council of Education, he prepared a report on the System of Education in Malta at that time.

This report is useful in that it gives a picture of the general situation at the turn of the century.

Primary education was provided by 37 boys' schools and 39 girls' schools. There were four Infants' schools existing separately and fourteen others attached to girls' schools. Thirty night classes were in being and one Technical School. The total roll of the day schools was 12,674 and of the night schools 2,087. A number of children, estimated at least 6,000 were seeking admission to the Government schools, in spite of the fact that 69 private schools were catering for nearly 3,000 children. It was calculated that roughly 35% of the child population of the appropriate age groups were in receipt of education. The cost of primary education was £10,721 out of a total of £16,619.

In the earliest years of the 20th Century, education was seriously affected by the language controversy which reached a critical stage as the result of the "free choice" system which was introduced in 1902. The Education votes were held up and, at one time, the schools had to be closed for a short period. In spite of all the agitation, however, the language question continued to be determined by the parents' choice between English and Italian.

Dr. Tagliaferro retired in 1904 after having served education in one capacity or another for forty-seven years. When he was appointed Director of Elementary Schools, it was felt that it would be advantageous to have them as a separate department and that they would receive more attention as such. On his retirement, however, both Primary and Secondary Schools were brought into one department again and placed under a Director of Public Instruction. The occupant of this new post was Prof. E.Magro who, as an Inspector of Schools, had long been associated with Dr. Tagliaferro.

Prof. Magro remained in charge of the Department until 1913. During his tenure of office no particularly outstanding developments took place. The language question continued to be one of the major issues of Maltese politics but the "free choice" continued to operate in spite of its opponents and no serious clashes ensued. For the rest, while always inadequate, the facilities for elementary education were expanded modestly and the enrolment of 15,563 in 1904 was increased to 18,892 in 1912 and the expenditure

of £23,953 in the former year rose to £28,265 in the latter. The period can, however, only be considered retrogressive rather than progressive as the growth of the schools lagged behind the growth of the population and all the major problems attending education were left in abeyance.

It was not until the last years of Prof.Magro's successor that a new spirit became evident. Mr.F.J.Reynolds assumed control of the Elementary Schools in 1913 when, once again, they became a separate department. The war of 1914 to 1918 followed. During the latter part of the struggle, there was a revival of popular interest in education and the Governor, Lord Methuen, took a very great interest in all branches of education in the Islands and particularly in the Elementary Schools. He paid personal visits to every one of them and, in his speeches, he drew attention to the post-war need for greatly extended facilities and for many reforms. Largely as a result of his activities, plans were drawn up in readiness for the days of peace.

The years 1918 to 1921 were as momentuous for Malta as those which immediately preceded them. As a result of long political agitation, which culminated in disorders in 1919, a Constitution was granted, in 1921, which gave Malta "Quasi-Dominion" status. What had previously been a Crown Colony became a self-governing country. One of the ways in which the national feeling aroused found expression was in the demand for education.

In 1921, the Hon. W.H.Bruce came to Malta, at the request of the Governor, Lord Plumer, and reported on the organization of education. His report, which was non-statistical, reviewed the existing facilities and recommended that the first task should be the expansion of these, in all their stages, to meet the growing needs of the people. He found that there was need, too, for closer co-ordination between the different stages. Other recommendations included the formation of District Committees to foster interest in the schools - an echo of Sir Patrick Keenan's Report - improved salaries and training for teachers, greater opportunity for poor students of promise, a vocational bias in the curriculum and the development of out-of-school activities. The time was not considered ripe for the introduction of compulsory education and the remarks

on the vexed question of language were non-commital.

The Hon. A.V. Laferla became Director of Education in 1920 and, as soon as the constitution was inaugurated (by the Prince of Wales on 1st November, 1921) all education came under a Minister for Public Instruction and Dr. Laferla continued as Director of Elementary Schools. These years were a milestone in the progress of the schools and the subsequent two decades have seen an enormous improvement in the condition of primary education. Steps were taken at the outset to meet, in part, the claims of the teachers to better pay and to provide them with better training. A Training School was started in 1921 and was the origin of a system of training teachers which has developed and improved as the years have gone by and which has overcome to some extent the heritage of unskilled teachers from the pre-1920 days. Every attempt was made to increase the accommodation available in the schools with the result that, in 1924, it was found possible to introduce the first measure of compulsion into education in Malta. The Act which introduced it is dealt with in full later and it is sufficient to say, here, that it laid down that a child, once admitted into a school, was compelled to remain at school until he had completed a full school course. This legislation represented a great advance on anything that had gone before and marked the beginning of a drive towards the introduction of full compulsory education.

Unfortunately, during the early days of Self-Government, the language question again came to the fore. The system under which the parents were free to choose the language for their children was done away with in 1923 when the Party favouring the cultivation of Italian was in power. From that year onward, and until 1933, the pari-passu system was in operation and both Italian and English were obligatory. It is only since 1933 that the schools have been able to free themselves from the shackles of this compulsion.

In 1933, incidentally, on the suspension of the Constitution for the second time, the Ministry for Public Instruction ceased to exist and the Director of Elementary Schools became the Director of Education with control over all the Primary and Secondary Schools.

The developments subsequent to this date and, indeed since 1920, are dealt with in detail under their respective headings later in this work and, in consequence, do not call for comment at this stage.

For the purpose of a summary, the History of elementary education in Malta can be divided into three main periods. The first of these periods commences with the Royal Commission of 1838, which was responsible for the establishment of a system of Government controlled and maintained schools throughout the Islands, and ends with the Royal Commission of 1888. These forty years are largely dominated by the administration and work of Dr.Pullicino who had sole control of the primary schools for twenty-eight of them. The second period dates from the publication of Sir Patrick Keenan's Report to the end of the Great War. It is characterised by dissension over the language question and it saw education drawn into the orbit of Party politics. The progress which was made during it was slight after some initial reforms based on the recommendations of the Commissioner. None of the outstanding problems were tackled and a policy of laissez faire appears to have been followed.

The third period, from 1920 to 1939, has seen a remarkable change and, in the face of great difficulties, improvements have been made in every direction and the standard and tone of the schools altered out of recognition. It is probable that, but for the war, the Islands would now have had full compulsory education. As it is, the last twenty years have seen an increase in the number of children on the rolls of the Elementary Schools from less than 20,000 to more than 32,000 and, in spite of a rapidly increasing population, a marked decrease in the proportion of children who do not attend school.

The present war years have seen a number of developments which are likely to have a profound influence on education in Malta and they form the subject of a special chapter later in this study.

CHAPTER II.

THE PRESENT EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES IN MALTA.

The present educational facilities in Malta consist of the University, the Lyceum, one in Malta and one in the sister island of Gozo, two other Secondary Schools, the Elementary Schools, a Technical School, Night Schools and a number of special schools. These are maintained in full by the Government. There are, in addition, an appreciable number of private schools, several of which are conducted by Religious Congregations and some of which are subsidised by the Government. Although this study is concerned, in the main, with the Government Elementary Schools, it is important that their position in relation to the other institutions should be made clear.

The University of Malta, which is housed in Valletta, is empowered by its Charter to grant the degrees of Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science, Bachelor of Engineering and Architecture, Bachelor of Canon Law, Doctor of Medicine, Doctor of Laws and Doctor of Theology. It also grants the diplomas of Pharmacist, Legal Procurator, Dental Surgeon and Practical Midwife. There are six Faculties; Literature, Science, Engineering and Architecture, Medicine and Surgery, Law and Theology.

Entry into the University is normally by Matriculation and the University has its own examination which is equal in standing to the Matriculation Examinations of Universities abroad. What distinguishes the University of Malta is the fact that it conducts all intermediate education. The Secondary Schools of the Islands stop short at Matriculation and the gap between this standard and the Faculties is covered by a three year course - the Literary Course - which is taken in the University. More will be said of this course later.

The comparatively small numbers of University students - the total has never exceeded two hundred - have resulted in the courses being commenced at intervals of three years. A student may, in consequence, have to mark time for two years before he can begin his University career. This is a matter of some concern to the poorer aspirants to a University education. The University is not,

incidentally, well endowed but the fact that it is supported by the Government has kept the fees low. The present rate of Government expenditure on it is roughly £15,000 a year.

The Lyceum is the direct descendant of the original College of Jesus, founded in the time of Grand Master Verdala. It can be said to have the same status in Malta's educational life as a Grammar School in England. Its studies are now, however, organized into two courses; the Classical and the Modern. It prepares its students for the Matriculation Examination of the University of Malta, for entry into the local Civil Service and for careers in Commerce, Electrical Engineering and Marine Engineering. At present, it suffers in that its courses stop short at the Matriculation standard and, as a result, there are no facilities, save those of the University, for students who wish to enjoy the advantages of post-matriculation education.

As in the case of the University, the Lyceum is not residential. In all, it caters for some six hundred boys and it is housed in two schools. The Senior Lyceum is in Valletta and the Junior Lyceum in the suburb of Hamrun. The Headmaster presides over the former school and the latter is under an Assistant Headmaster. The division appears to have been the outcome of the problem of accommodation - a new school building is badly needed - coupled with a desire to pay special attention to the needs of the children according to their ages. There is no real line of demarcation between the two departments and the object is to continue the work of the lower school smoothly into the upper school.

Entry into the Lyceum is by examination and the majority of the boys are fee-paying. Only some sixty scholarships are offered to Elementary School children by all the Secondary Schools combined. There is a scheme in operation, however, whereby free places are granted to the children of poorer parents. The basis of this scheme is exemption from fees when the family income is less than £100 plus £50 for each child in the family. As will be seen from later chapters, however, both Secondary and University education in Malta are much the prerogative of the children of the more wealthy members of the community in spite of the fact that the fees of the schools are so low as to be nominal. Secondary education, incidentally

costs the Government nearly £20,000 per year.

Theorectically, the Gozo Lyceum is intended to provide the sister Island with similar facilities to those of the Malta Lyceum. The conditions are, however, totally different in the two communities. Gozo is entirely concerned with agriculture and is removed from the commercial and industrial life of Malta. The pupils of the Gozo Lyceum are drawn from the homes of the farmers of small holdings. In the vast majority of cases, their financial standing precludes the possibility of subsequent University education and the bulk of them aim at minor Government posts such as those of policeman, postmen, telephone operator, messenger and meter reader. A few, as one report puts it, have the higher ambition of becoming Elementary School teachers. The School leads up to the Oxford School Certificate Examination but is not obsessed with Matriculation. The demand for black-coated workers in Gozo is very limited and ambitious Gozitans, who aim at entering the professions, usually cross over to Malta for their education.

The Gozo Lyceum has had a roll of approximately sixty in recent years and has thus been a somewhat expensive institution to maintain; the cost per student is more than twice that in the Malta Lyceum. It has been considered right, however, that facilities for secondary education should exist in Gozo. Moreover, in the last few years, it has been increasingly appreciated that a rigid academical course has been alien to the needs of the Island and the future is likely to see appropriate changes in the curriculum and a probable increase in the roll.

The Valletta High School was opened in 1936. In July of that year, there were more successful candidates in the Lyceum Admission Examination than could be accepted. Further, in October, sixty-four boys who attended the Umberto Primo School found themselves without a school when that institution was compelled to close on account of its propaganda activities. These pupils, with a number drawn from other sources, were housed in Valletta and became the High School. The teaching staff was made up of Lyceum masters, Central School teachers and some of the staff of the Umberto Primo School. The Lyceum syllabus has become the basis of instruction and the Lyceum regulations have been adopted. In the internal examina-

tions, the same papers are set in both schools.

The Secondary School for Girls, in Valletta, is the only one maintained by the Government. Its courses are arranged much on the lines of those of a girls' Secondary School in England but are considerably less exacting. Girls in Malta do not usually aim at employment in an already overcrowded labour market. For them, the centre of interest is the home and, subsequently, marriage. The degree of emancipation in Malta is less than in England. Thus, in the Secondary School, the bias is towards the domestic subjects. The highest examination for which the girls are entered is the Oxford Senior Local. There are no women students at the University and the teaching profession is the only one capable of absorbing an appreciable number of girls with academic training.

Connected with the Secondary Schools is a Preparatory School which was also opened in 1936. It is described as supplying a long-felt want inasmuch as it solves the problem of parents who are unwilling to send their children to the Elementary Schools and who wish to prepare their sons and daughters for secondary education. The school caters for children under eleven years of age and they are fee-paying. Varying methods of teaching have been tried in this school and it was here that the Montessori method was applied in Malta for the first time. It is intended to gain experience in this school which will lead, ultimately, to a better standard of teaching in the Elementary Schools.

In all, the Secondary Schools of Malta are attended by about one thousand boys and five hundred girls. This, in 1938, represented only 3.87% of the number of children in the appropriate age groups. The cost to the Government was, incidentally, in the region of £13 per head.

As these schools are not dealt with in detail in the following pages, it may be remarked here that they have been efficient and have had enviable examination records. Their main disadvantage appears to lie in the fact that they are turning out increasing numbers of students to compete for a very limited number of posts. Few black-coated workers are needed in Malta and the competition has lead to an examination fetish. Unfortunately parental pride - of misplaced nature - has subscribed to this state of affairs. It

is being increasingly recognised that a drastic revision of courses will be needed in the future if the mass producing of superfluous clerks is to be avoided.

Secondary education of a specialized nature is carried on in the three Central Schools and the Higher Central School and the Technical School. More will be said later of the Central schools which date from 1921. Their function is not that of similarly named institutions in England. In Malta they exist principally for the training of Elementary School Teachers. The Technical School caters for rather fewer than one hundred and fifty boys. The syllabus is very similar to that of an English technical school and leads up to City and Guilds of London Examinations and to the Teachers' Certificate in Handicraft.

The Elementary Schools are ninety three in number and are housed in a variety of school buildings in all the towns and villages of both Malta and Gozo. Seventy four of the schools are in Malta and the remaining nineteen in Gozo. In 1938, the attendance was 28,377 children, of whom 15,557 were boys and 12,820 girls. The enrolment was 29,173. These figures represented, on enrolment, 60.79% of the total school-age population of the Islands and, on attendance, 52.85%.

Of the ninety-three departments, forty-five are for boys and thirty-six are for girls. There are only twelve separate Infants' departments under their own Head Teachers but twenty further Infants' departments are attached to girls' schools. There is no Hadow scheme in operation in Malta. The organization of the classes provides for two infant stages and six subsequent standards. For reasons which will be given later, the average school life is seven years in the towns and six in the rural areas. The existing legislation enforces a limited degree of compulsion.

In addition to the day schools, there are Evening Schools which are classed as Elementary Schools. They are more usually referred to now as Special Classes and they are sixty-three in number. In a country which is burdened with illiteracy, their function is to give primary instruction to adults. Some three thousand men and women are enrolled in these schools and the average attendance is about two thousand, five hundred. The schools are

held in the day school buildings and are taught largely by the day-school teachers. They are, of course, free.

Associated with the Elementary Schools are a number of special schools. There are five Handwork Centres which are attended by about two thousand boys who visit them for a period of instruction each week. For girls, there is a Housecraft School, on the English model, which is attended by girls from schools in its vicinity. The facilities of these schools are, as yet, enjoyed by only a small percentage of the children.

As the Government Schools have never met the full demand for education, Malta has always had a large number of private schools. Many of these have been small "adventure" schools but some, and in particular those conducted by Religious Congregations, have played an important part in the cultural life of the Islands. The Jesuits, who were the founders of Malta's educational system, returned in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century and their St.Ignatius' College was the most advanced school in the country and attracted the children of many of Malta's leading families. It closed, however, in the early days of the present century. There still remains the large St.Aloysius' College which is conducted by the Augustinian Fathers and a number of other smaller schools under the Church. St.Edward's College is a school run on the lines of an English Public School and it was founded and endowed by Lady Strickland who shared Lord Strickland's anglophile sentiments. It has been particularly successful. Many private schools exist for primary education and where such schools have been of proved efficiency, they have been able to secure small grants from the Government to assist them to carry on. Recently, the Government has paid an average of £1,000 per year in these subsidies. It is estimated that, in all, some four thousand children are receiving their schooling in these institutions and, as a result, they play an appreciable part in the educational life of the Islands and have helped to ease the heavy demands made on the Government Schools.

It will have been noted, in the history of education in Malta, that the administration has varied from time to time. At the present moment, the University looks after its own affairs and the Elementary and Secondary Schools are under the control of a Director

of Education. It has been felt that the existing arrangement is unsatisfactory in that the University is insufficiently co-ordinated to the Elementary Schools and in that the work and responsibility of managing all the schools is too great for one man, and, moreover, does not give the schools the benefits of the cumulative experience of a Board of Education.

CHAPTER III

THE ECONOMIC BACKGROUND AND ITS PROBLEMS.

The social conditions of a country are inevitably a mirror of the economic conditions and the social services must always be considered against the economic background. Malta is no exception; rather the reverse. The present social conditions of the Island have been engendered to a very great extent by the peculiar economic circumstances and it is a prerequisite for future progress that these circumstances be considered and, where possible, ameliorated. From the educational point of view, it is imperative that the implications of the economic situation be fully appreciated in planning for the post-war years.

The root of Malta's economic troubles lies in overpopulation. The total area of Malta and Gozo is 121 square miles (77,980 acres), Malta extending to 95 square miles and Gozo 26 square miles. In In this very restricted space, there is a population of 270,160. This represents a density of population of 2,334 to the square mile. Nor is this high figure the full measure of the congestion. A large proportion of the Island is rocky waste and only 42,434 acres is cultivable land. In consequence, the density of population based on productive area becomes 4,075. Moreover, the figure is not static; it is increasing rapidly.

Even in the more distant history of the Island, this overcrowding has made itself evident and, in this connection, it is possibly worth while to trace the phenomenal growth of the population over the years.

In the 10th Century, the people of Malta and Gozo numbered 21,190. In 1514, an estimate of 22,000 was given and, on the arrival of the Knights in 1530, computations varied between 15,000 and 25,000. At this stage, the economic duress began to make itself felt and 10,000 quarters of wheat had to be imported annually from Sicily to prevent famine. In 1551, the Maltese had grown to a strength of 31,000. In 1582, when the figure was apparently static at this level, 20,000 quarters of wheat were being imported annually, again to prevent famine. A census of 1590 gave a population of

30,500 and, in that year alone, 3,000 people died of want. The 17th Century saw a sharp upward movement from 33,000 in 1601 to 41,184 in 1614 and thence to 50,113 in 1632 and 55,155 in 1667. In this last named year, the figure had reached 66,000 but 11,000 died of the plague. The end of the rule of the Knights found the population in the neighbourhood of 100,000. That was in 1798. In the next few years, the figure fell to about 80,000 as a result of the military activity in the Island, and particularly the blockading of the French in Valletta, sickness, famine and emigration caused by the economic conditions. With Malta under the British, and with more settled conditions obtaining, the upward trend again became evident. 1829 saw the population at 114,236; 1836 at 119,878. Cholera claimed 3,382 victims in 1837 and, in 1838, the Royal Commissioners found conditions of destitution which beggared description. But the congestion grew greater and the population rose to 145,605 in 1873 and to 184,742 at the turn of the century. It leapt to 219,311 in 1911 and again to 258,400 in the census of April, 1931. Since then, it has continued to rise and the successive years have shown increments of 2,437, 3,230, 2,842, 2,683, 4,258, 3,575, 3,305, 3,445 and 2,664, the population in 1940 being, therefore, 270,160.

If a footnote to the statistics quoted and their implications is needed, the words of the Royal Commissioner of 1838 will suffice. "The real grievance of the Maltese, I am sorry to say, lies beyond the reach of Governments and Commissioners viz; the excessive population of the Island." When he spoke, the population of Malta was less than 120,000.

The first and most obvious result of this congestion is that the Island is not self-supporting, and there is little prospect that it can become self-supporting in the future. Imports must, of necessity, exceed exports and there is, inevitably, an adverse trade balance. The effects of this are mitigated in several ways, the mitigating factors being a comprehensive system of Customs and Excise Duties on imports, a large expenditure by the Imperial Government on the Dockyard, aerodromes and military works, the influx of money due to the presence of officers and men of the Royal Navy, the tourist traffic, the harbour facilities and

preferential treatment for local industries. The economic balance, however, is precarious and the country can only be described as poor. Its greatest asset lies in its strategic position, rather than in its own resources, industries or products.

The main occupation of the Island is agriculture. As has already been stated, the land is even unsympathetic to this industry, only 42,434 acres out of 77,980 being suitable for cultivation. The remainder is either rocky waste, is built upon, or has been acquired by the Imperial Government for airfields and other military works. This process of acquisition is likely to continue with the growth of air power, Malta's position, and with the full appreciation of the effectiveness of Malta as an air base in the war.

Adapted to circumstances, the farming is intensive. Every square yard of suitable land is utilised and every precaution is taken against soil erosion. With infinite care and work the fields have been preserved and, with traditional skill, fertility has been maintained. The holdings are invariably small. Recent figures, which actually have not altered in a decade, show that there are 236 holdings of less than 10 acres in area, 10,864 holdings of between 10 and 50 acres and no holdings at all in excess of 50 acres.

The average areas cropped, taken over a number of years, are roughly as follows:- 20,000 acres under cereals, 13,000 acres under vegetables and tomatoes, 10,000 acres under forage crops, 3,000 acres under vines and fruit trees and 2,000 acres under cumin and cotton. The climate allows a second crop in some instances and usually some 6,000 acres are thus planted; potatoes, in particular, being grown in vast quantities. The livestock consists mainly of goats (31,000), sheep (16,000) and pigs (7,000). These are animals which are easily fed and require no appreciable areas of pasture land.

The annual value of the total agricultural produce of the Islands is in the neighbourhood of £1,200,000, the sum being divided almost equally between the crops and the livestock industry. About one sixth of the produce, calculated on value, is exported, potatoes forming the chief export and accounting for approximately

£100,000. The agriculture of the Islands is protected by the imposition of duties on imported products which can be grown locally in sufficient quantity to meet the demand and, at the same time, the export of produce is controlled by law to ensure that nothing is sold abroad that is needed at home. Imports of foodstuffs, as might be expected from the details of the population, are still very high in spite of agriculture being the principal industry. They value more than £1,500,000 annually; a figure in excess of that for the local produce.

As can be inferred from the number of holdings, all of them small, the farms are family affairs in the vast majority of cases and husband, wife and children work in the fields. Except during the sowing of the Spring potato crop, outside help is rarely employed. The number of people engaged in agriculture is given officially as 13,679. This figure, more probably than not, indicates only the total of farmers and farm labourers and does not show the members of families; the women and the children.

Whether or not agriculture can be developed in the future to better the general economic situation in Malta, is question of some importance. The prospect is by no means bright. All the available land is already intensively cultivated and it would seem that the employment afforded by the industry and the quantity of produce obtained cannot be appreciably increased. A Commissioner investigated the problem in 1934 and his conclusions and recommendations were more concerned with the efficient marketing of produce rather than with the holding out of hopes that the industry might be greatly expanded. Provided it could be effected economically, an increase in the area under irrigation would give a greater yield. The increased use of fertilizers and the conversion of waste into manure might have a small, but beneficial, effect. The development of a poultry-breeding industry, too, is not without potentialities. These, and similar restricted improvements, are put forward. In the main, however, it is through good marketing arrangements and the development of a scientific export trade that the greatest economic benefit to the Island can accrue. The produce involved consists of potatoes, tomatoes, green vegetables, onions, and cumin seed. Potential markets are the United Kingdom and Ceylon in

in particular. In this connection, too, there is room for the expansion of canning industries; three canneries already existing in the Island.

Economically, the farming communities are not too badly placed in comparison with the urban population. It is difficult to assess their actual profits as no returns of income are made in Malta. The primary poverty, which is often met with in the towns, is, however, not so prevalent in the villages. None the less, the social conditions leave much room for improvement. These conditions will be dealt with more fully in a later chapter. It is sufficient to say, here, that they are largely due to ignorance and insularity and there is no doubt that education will have to play a large part in improving the lot of rural population as well as in providing a schooling appropriate to their particular needs.

Some 31,000 people are engaged in manufactures and industries, other than agriculture, in Malta. The Imperial Government is the largest single employer of labour employing in 1937, 11,643 workpeople. The Island possesses one of the great Naval Dockyards and has been one of the major British Naval Bases. Facilities exist for the maintainance, refitting and repair of the largest warships afloat and the docks, factories and machine shops are large and well equipped. The installations have, of course, been extensively damaged in the war and the question of the future of Malta as a great Naval establishment has yet to be answered. In peace time and during the war, however, the Yard, with its opportunities for employment and its large expenditure in wages, has constituted an economic factor of the greatest importance.

The actual number of workmen employed has, of course, varied with armament or disarmament policies of successive Imperial Governments, but it has always been appreciable. In busy times it has risen to 10,000 and, even in the slackest periods, it has rarely fallen below 6,000. In 1937-8, it was 9,233. The labour employed is graded into four principal classes viz; Labourer, Skilled Labourer, Assistant Fitter and Fitter. In addition, there is the higher grade of Chargeman and there are also Boy Labourers and Apprentices, the latter training to become Fitters ultimately.

Promotion from one grade to another depends on ability shown and on the length and nature of service given.

The wages paid in the Dockyard are low but they are much better than those obtaining in the smaller, privately owned industrial enterprises in the Island. The Dockyard employees, too, have the advantage of working under good conditions. The hours are regulated, holidays are specified, provision is made, in measure, for sickness and rigid rules of safety, corresponding to those in the Factory Acts in England, are enforced. While his condition may still leave room for improvement, the Dockyard worker, while in employment, has probably a greater measure of security than any other worker in the Island. If, unfortunately, a Naval policy calls for an appreciable reduction in the number of workpeople employed, a great deal of hardship is felt throughout the entire country. Naturally, such a reduction affects the lowest paid, unskilled, casual labourers much more than the key men of ability.

It is not out of place to stress the educational implications of a great Dockyard at Malta. It is obvious that its existence calls for a system of education which offers adequate facilities for the appropriate technical instruction. Unfortunately, as yet, the demand for such facilities has largely to be met, though steps were being taken to meet it. In addition to the existing Technical School and the Evening Classes which catered for technical students, a new school was in course of construction. Work on this institution, which was designed specifically for its purpose, has been held up by the war.

The Dockyard itself provides certain educational facilities. There is a Dockyard School which trains the Apprentices in the Yard. This school is selective and admission is by examination, a high standard being required. The subsequent training is comprehensive and, throughout it, the theoretical instruction is implemented by practical work in the shops of the Yard. The Apprentices ultimately pass out as fitters and are, of course, likely candidates for higher appointments. The number of entrants accepted by the Dockyard School is, however, limited and they are the boys of more than average ability. The demand is still for technical schools which will cater for a wider range of students.

The value of Malta as an air base, both Civil and Military, is destined to play a part in the economic life of the Island in the future. It is difficult to see yet the extent to which Malta will gain in this direction but there are great potentialities. As an R.A.F. and Fleet Air Arm base, the Island has been invaluable during the present hostilities. Moreover, the aerodromes and associated establishments have been greatly extended in the course of the war. In all probability, the strategic position of Malta will ensure it an importance in the days of air power commensurate with its importance in the days of the absolute supremacy of sea power. It may be that the post war years will see a transformation, the Dockyard and Naval Base losing something of their former importance and the Air Bases being developed extensively for both Civil and Military aviation. Whichever way the balance swings, it is reasonable to assume that the country will not be appreciably poorer as a result.

In any case, the educational requirements will remain substantially the same. For both Dockyard work and aircraft maintainance, the need for a sound technical training is obvious and the provision of the necessary schools to impart this training demands a high degree of priority.

The industries and manufactures, excluding agriculture and the Imperial Government establishments, employ roughly 20,000 people. Malta possesses no mineral wealth or other natural resources. In consequence, there are no great industrial enterprises. The local manufactures are concerned almost entirely with meeting the home demand for everyday commodities. Thus, there are factories and establishments for the following; furniture and cabinet making, cigarette making, tailoring, baking, brewing, wine making, milling, and laundering. An appreciable number of people is also employed in shops, cafes, hairdressing establishments and garages.

Malta is still, to a large extent, the home of one-man or small businesses. The Island has not, as yet, been exploited by combines or mergers. Thus, for example, 238 separate tailoring establishments employ 440 people, 337 bakeries employ 448, 338 hairdressing establishments employ 240, 250 shoemakers employ 109

and 471 furniture making concerns employ 824. Among the larger concerns, 3 breweries employ 273 workpeople, 62 cigarette factories account for 1,031 and the Water and Electricity undertakings, which are Government concerns, have staffs totalling 673. A survey carried out by the Department of Labour in 1938-9 showed that there were 7,642 shops, workshops, factories and offices employing 23,264 people.

It has long been urged that local industries should be developed and, if possible, new industries introduced. It is true that more efficient business methods and a more co-operative system of production and marketing might assist local enterprises to be run more economically and, in measure, to expand. But it is equally true that a high percentage of industry is devoted purely to supplying a reasonably stable local market and is not well placed to enter into the competition of foreign markets. Insufficient co-operation among the small firms prevents suitable quantities of material being available for export at competitive prices and commodities produced in Malta and subsequently sold abroad would not only be deprived of the advantages of tariff protection but would also be subject to import duties in the countries to which they were despatched.

New industries for the Island are limited in range by the fact that the dearth of local resources implies the importation of the essential raw materials and the exportation of the finished products. This suggests light industries in which a high degree of craftsmanship would play a principal part. The prerequisite for success in such industries is the excellence of the finished product; as in the case of Swiss watches. This is usually the outcome of a high educational standard, of specialized training and of traditional skill. Malta would have to prove herself in such a field while labouring under the disadvantage of entering a highly competitive market late in the day. Actually, one small light industry has been established in recent years for the manufacture of pipes and smokers' requisites. It employs some 122 workpeople. None the less, such industries do not really strike at the heart of the Island's economic and labour problems. The scene is dominated by a mass of unskilled and often illiterate workpeople who could not hope to benefit in the immediate future.

Two industries carried on in the Island and not specifically mentioned as yet are the fishing industry and the quarrying and building industry; both of which give a good measure of employment. Some 3,500 people are engaged in fishing as either a whole or part time occupation. The annual haul is in the neighbourhood of 20,000 crans and its value is in excess of £100,000. The industry has developed in recent years, mainly due to the exploitation of the deep sea fishing grounds which has followed upon the introduction of motor driven craft. The application of more modern and efficient methods of fishing, with improved apparatus such as the "Lampara", has given a satisfactory increase in the supply of fish. On shore, steps have been taken to improve the wholesale and retail distribution of the catch; a new fish market being opened recently. It is probable that the industry could be developed further on the lines of the past few years. It contributes materially to the effort to produce as much food as possible locally. It is a moot point, however, whether any sort of export trade could be initiated or ancilliary canning and salting industries set up.

Quarrying in Malta is intimately linked with the building trade. In the absence of clay deposits, there is no brick making and the local stone is used exclusively for all buildings. Ten million cubic feet of globigerina limestone are quarried and dressed annually; the value of the stone being roughly £150,000. Some 3,500 people find employment in the quarries and in the building trade and in the associated industries such as lime making. Since 1920, there has been a building boom and between that year and 1937, 19,789 building works have been undertaken, representing an expenditure of £6,346,262.

The commercial life of the Island results in the employment of 20,000 people. These include the merchants, dealers, agents, and their staffs; warehousemen, stevedores and those engaged in work in the harbour; and also those engaged in all the transport services. Valletta is, of course, one of the principal ports of the Mediterranean. While it has no vast hinterland to serve, it handles all the import and export trade of the Island and there is an additional amount of entreport trade. This latter is mainly

accounted for by bunkering and ships' stores. There is no doubt but that the harbour facilities contribute appreciably to off-setting the adverse trade balance and constitute an "invisible export" of some importance.

The administrative and professional life of Malta finds occupation for a further 10,000 people. This figure includes the Local Government officials, who number 1,500, the Army and Navy permanent staffs of 2,000, the Roman Catholic secular clergy, Monastic Orders and Nuns and Sisters totalling 2,000, and the doctors, lawyers and representatives of the other professions.

Certain factors not directly allied to the industries and products of Malta play a large part in determining the economic situation and in redressing the adverse trade balance. In the past, the presence of the Mediterranean Fleet at the Naval Base had a considerable influence upon the fortunes of the Island. The thousands of Officers and men brought an increased volume of trade and few sections of the community did not benefit either directly or indirectly. The personnel of the ships bought the local produce and were, in addition, the mainstay of the clothing, catering and furnishing trades. Many brought their wives and families to live in the Island for the duration of their commissions and rented house and flat property. They gave a considerable amount of direct employment; particularly to domestic servants. In a lesser degree, the units of the Army and the Royal Air Force, stationed in Malta, played a similar part to that of the Navy. In 1936, some 6,000 people, of whom 5,000 were women, were listed as being in domestic service.

The climate and natural beauty of Malta, its wealth of subjects of archaeological and historical significance and its amenities have inevitably made it a popular resort for tourists. Moreover, its position has made it a port of call for a great body of travellers using the Mediterranean sea routes. This traffic has been of great benefit to the Island. It is difficult to assess the actual value of the tourist and the traveller but, in 1936, 116,925 passengers called at Valletta and it was estimated that they contributed some £150,000 towards meeting the adverse trade balance. There can be little doubt that Malta will enjoy a greatly

enhanced popularity in the future and the flow of visitors will be considerably augmented. The vogue of cruising was bringing an increasing benefit in the days before the war and, when these sea trips are resumed, it is obvious that Malta will be featured on many more itineraries.

In general, it is possible to make a rough classification of the occupations of the Maltese. Roughly one quarter of the people can be said to be engaged in the principal industry of agriculture, another quarter is dependent upon the Dockyard and the other establishments of the Imperial Government, and the remaining half is engaged in other occupations, none of which, taken individually, represents a major contribution to the economic life of the Island. The great problem which emerges from a survey of the labour conditions obtaining lies in finding employment for all in a heavily overpopulated country which is devoid of natural resources. The core of the problem is the great mass of unskilled and often illiterate workpeople whose lot in good times is poor enough and who suffer severely in times of depression. One of the obvious solutions to the problem lies in reducing the extent of the overpopulation of the Island by a scheme of organized and controlled emigration.

The history of Malta records many instances of emigration on a large scale. These have taken place at times when destitution has been widespread and famine a reality or near-reality. The Royal Commissioners of 1838, to quote but a single case, found mass emigration taking place, the country at that time being in an appalling state of poverty and want. Farmers, fishermen and others, despairing of making a living in the Island, were leaving it for Egypt, Sicily, North Africa and the Levant.

An attempt at organized emigration was made about this time. The Governor, the Marquess of Hastings, thought that the Ionian Islands, which had been newly acquired, would be a suitable place in which to settle some of the Maltese. As a result, in a short time, 278 people, with a Chaplain and a doctor, left for Cephalonia.

In 1878, the Crown Advocate of Malta, Sir Adrian Dingli, was chosen as legal adviser to Sir Gamet Wolseley, the High Commissioner in Cyprus. The Malta Government asked him to investigate the possibilities of state-aided emigration to that Island. He submitted a scheme, in 1878, which involved the purchase, by the Malta Government, of land on which to settle the Maltese farmers. Two land surveyors were sent to Cyprus to study the proposals in detail but financial difficulties, the dread of malaria and technical troubles caused the project to be abandoned.

Some three years later, in 1882, following official correspondence, a Mr. De Cesare proceeded to Australia with a number of Maltese emigrants who proposed to settle there. The Queensland Government showed itself willing to co-operate but distance mitigated against success and no great progress was made.

In 1902, there was a substantial reduction in the naval and military forces at Malta and this, combined with the completion of several large undertakings in 1906, precipitated an unemployment crisis. The situation deteriorated to such an extent that a Royal Commission was appointed in 1911 to inquire into the finances, economic conditions and judicial procedure in Malta. This Commission dealt with the question of emigration. It found that the Mediterranean littoral could not take a sufficient number of Maltese to offset the rapid increase in population of the Islands. Outside the Mediterranean, ignorance of English impeded emigration, on a large scale, to the British Dominions and, without compulsory education, it would continue to do so. Australia was considered to offer some prospects for successful settlement. The most significant sentence of the Report read, "The Government of Malta should consider systematic emigration, on a large scale, as the most important of the objects which it must set itself to attain; as no alternative in the system of taxation or any other measure could act as more than a temporary palliative." Outside the Empire, migration to Southern California was recommended with grants of up to £20 to assist and it was also suggested that the prospects of emigrants to Sao Paulo should be investigated as Brazil had offered free passages and certain facilities. Imigration,

in appreciable numbers, to South America was late attempted but was not successful.

The war of 1914-18 intervened with a temporary relaxation of the unemployment situation, it being estimated that 30,000 people found work during these years With the cessation of hostilities, nearly 15,000 people were thrown out of work. The consequent poverty of a large section of the community and the inability to provide alternative employment again focussed attention on the problem of settling bodies of the people elsewhere. An Emigration Department was set up by the Government. As a result of its work, 51,975 people left Malta between November, 1918 and March, 1937. Roughly 40% proceeded to the North African littoral; either Lybia, Tunisia, or Algeria, 25% to the United Kingdom, 15% to the United States and 6% to each of Australia, Egypt and Metropolitan France.

Emigration cannot, however, be said to have been an unqualified success for, in the same period 33,608 Maltese returned to the Islands. In other words 66% returned and only 18,367 left the Island on net balance. This represented an average of 1,000 a year. That this figure did not get down to root of the problem of overpopulation is obvious insofar as it did not even absorb the annual increment in population which was roughly 3,000. Naturally, money was spent in assisting emigration but it was particularly unfortunate that considerable sums were also spent in repatriating Maltese. £4,060 was spent in 1932-3 and £5,635, £9,087, £19,562 and £11,115 in succeeding years. Detailed statistics show that, out of 28,000 emigrants classed as skilled, 20,000 returned and out of 12,000 unskilled emigrants, 9,000 returned; the percentages being, therefore, 71 and 75 respectively.

As emigration must, of necessity, play a great part in solving Malta's economic and labour troubles and, as it therefore makes definite demands on educational policy, it is essential to trace the causes of these high percentages of repatriations. It would appear that three factors are responsible. In the first place, the unskilled emigrants, in many cases semi-illiterate, were unable to compete with better educated settlers and indigenous people and, particularly in the years of world economic depression,

were the first to be rendered unemployed and, subsequently, destitute. It is probable too, that some of those who were classed locally as skilled suffered the same fate. Secondly, the Maltese upbringing, with its great emphasis on family ties and its extremely parochial outlook, has mitigated against happy settlement abroad. The desire to return has ultimately prevailed, even over a measure of success and independence in the adopted land. The third reason for the movement back to Malta is divorced from the other two. Political changes have, on occasion, made the position of the emigrant untenable and he has had perforce to return. This happened in the case of Turkey in 1935 when foreigners were forbidden to own businesses. In that year, the bulk of the £19,562 spent in repatriating Maltese was devoted to those affected by the Turkish decree. Intense nationalism in other countries has had similar repercussions.

Coupled with the factors leading to so many Maltese returning home, the factors which have precluded an expansion in emigration must be considered. The United States does not allow the almost unlimited immigration of the immediate post 1918 period and other countries, either for political reasons, or being faced with economic and labour troubles of their own, have closed their doors. Further, there is a tendency on the part of the majority of countries towards a greater discrimination in the matter of permitting entry and particularly towards more exacting demands in the education and in the financial independence of their immigrants. Finally, the extreme insularity of the Maltese, coupled with an imperfect appreciation of the opportunities awaiting them outside their own small country, have been a sufficient deterrent to many promising potential emigrants. The return of so many of their fellow countrymen has served to confirm them in their decision to remain at home.

In spite of the unpromising results obtained up to now, emigration must remain the logical solution to Malta's most pressing problem. From a wider point of view, the heavy overpopulation of the Island and the high birth rate are potentially of great value. Within the bounds of the Empire alone, and particularly in Australia,

there are tracts of land that need the influx of a people of good character, good physique, industry and latent skill. It will not be denied, after the war, that the Maltese have shown characteristics that should make them not only acceptable but welcome as settlers in any country.

Turning to the demands which economic and labour conditions make on education in Malta, several clear cut issues emerge. There can be no doubt that the greatest need is full compulsory primary education. The illiteracy which has led to the major problem of the unskilled workman is still being perpetuated and it is probable that upwards of 13,500 children of school age are at present in receipt of no education. They are destined to labour under great handicaps and to be a burden on the all too slender resources of the Island. So long as the unskilled exist as the numerically largest class of the community, modern developments in the industrial life of the Island are virtually impossible and the chances of economic prosperity are slight. Moreover, their prospects as emigrants are unpromising and they represent a serious obstacle to a beneficial depopulation of the country. The future for many of them presents an unfortunate picture of casual labour at low wages within the confines of the Island and, in times of depression, conditions of poverty and even destitution.

Dealing with specific industries, agriculture, as the principal occupation, commands consideration. The rural communities stand to gain as much as any section of the people from the introduction of compulsory education. Indeed, in the past, the facilities available in the villages have never been so good as those in the towns. The country schools have often stopped short at Standard IV and the actual school buildings have not usually been comparable with the more spacious and modern institutions in the urban areas. The percentage of children attending school has generally been lower, too, in the farming districts where there has naturally been a plethora of tasks for the children to perform. With a legacy of illiteracy, it is understandable that the benefits of education have not been fully appreciated and that there has not been any great incentive, on the part of parents, to send their children to school under the terms of the present legislation governing

attendance.

It may be that, in the past, the nature of the instruction given in the rural schools has not been such as to commend itself. The tendency has been to have a more or less uniform course in all of the schools in the Island and to judge the efficacy of individual schools on standard examination results. It is obvious that some revision is needed. The needs of the farming community are well expressed in the survey of agriculture in Malta carried out in 1934. "Vocational education and training for farmers and their families is an essential to progress and success. Long courses are not practicable in regard to the working of farms. Farmers are very poorly educated. In fact, the majority of them are illiterate and could not profit from theoretical instruction. Special short courses of a practical character in livestock management, crop husbandry and the grading and packing of produce are required..... Such courses should be purged of all theory and designed to assist the farmer in his everyday requirements. In arranging these courses, due regard should be given to the illiteracy of the farmers and the poor educational standards of the children. In arranging these courses also, due attention should be given to what the farmer and his family need and some provision should be made for the teaching to the younger generation of reading, writing and simple accountancy. Farmers courses should be for a few days or a week's duration and for their sons two or three months might be found to be practicable at periods when they can best be spared from work on their parents' farms. The sons of farmers should be expected to work on the Experimental Farm and be credited with the value of their labour so rendered. Provision for suitable hostel accommodation should be made."

This report envisages both adult and child education and cites both as being necessary to the well-being of the principal industry of the Island. So far as the children are concerned, the requirements are compulsory primary education with a definite vocational bias; a training that will appeal as having a practical value and that will ensure that the coming generation of farmers will be able to make the most of their land, imbibe progressive and

scientific methods of farming and market their produce in a more effective and remunerative manner.

The existence of the Dockyard focusses attention upon technical education. Unfortunately, the position of technical education was until recently in need of clarification. While certain facilities existed for suitable training and such training appeared to be correct and logical, difficulty was actually experienced in placing the pupils at the completion of their course. This was, in the main, due to conditions of employment obtaining in the Dockyard. The Dockyard, as has been stated, has its own school for the training of its apprentices and a number of students, comensurate with anticipated requirements, is admitted. The alternative method of entry into the Yard was as a boy labourer. This implied work in an unskilled capacity and did not suggest advancement as a result of study; the boy labourer becoming a labourer at the age of twenty and subsequently working his way through the subsequent grades of skilled labourer, assistant fitter and fitter. Moreover, the Yard did not accept entrants between the ages sixteen and twenty. In this way, it placed a bar on entry of a student who may have attended a technical course. Further, it accepted only its own standards of competence and did not allow of accelerated promotion as a normal course. Other establishments in the Island, connedted with the Imperial Government, were more or less in line. The openings remaining for the student of the technical school, were limited. The position was, then, that while a great deal of work of a technical nature was carried on in Malta, it was imperfectly co-ordinated to the appropriate training facilities. Fortunately, in recent years some measure of agreement has been reached and there is now employment assured for an appreciable and increasing annual class of technical students. At one time Malta was too much regarded as the cource of workpeople and too little as a potential source of technicians.

The professions and the black-coated workers of the commercial, industrial, and administrative life of the Island are, of course, a small minority and do not require a great deal of comment. They are drawn from the more well-to-do classes and have received an adequate education; in many cases at the Lyceum and the

University. It must, however, be pointed out that the posts available are very limited in number, that competition is keen and that there has been a resulting tendency to develop a fetish for examinations at the expense of a more liberal education. Unhappily, too, there is a class of people, who, on the score of very modest academical attainments, regard any manual work as being vastly beneath them. They cannot be absorbed by the limited number of minor posts available in Malta and, from every point of view, they are unsuitable candidates for emigration. It may be that, in the re-ordering of life in Malta in the post war years, openings and opportunities will present themselves and that both industry and commerce will be able to employ an appreciable number of really qualified people each year. The professions and the administration, of course, cannot be expected to expand to any great extent though, as will be seen later, education itself will need a number of additional teachers if and when compulsory primary education is introduced and secondary education is developed in proper proportion.

For that large body of people who are engaged in the general work of the Island and in its many small industries and establishments the need is a sound primary education which will permit them to achieve, subsequently, a measure of skill in whatever work they choose. The present low standard of education of many of them condemns them to dead end jobs and to casual labour. It is the members of this class of the community who should have a training to fit them for emigration should they be unable to make a living and to improve their position at home.

Emigration from Malta makes very definite demands on the reforms which are necessary in education. As has been mentioned already, much of failure of emigration in the past has been the result of the poor standard of education of the emigrants. Moreover, the flow of emigrants has been kept small by the inability of many to meet the minimum educational requirements and by the ignorance and insularity of the people most likely to benefit by leaving the Island.

Here again, as in all matters concerning the economic and labour conditions, the need for adequate primary education is paramount; not only to give the necessary academic qualifications but

to sweep away old established prejudices and to arouse ambition. Specific training for emigration is, of course, much to be desired and facilities should be extended for giving this training. The instruction should be designed to give the necessary standard of attainment to meet the literacy tests, to give appropriate practical training on lines most likely to be useful in the country to which the emigrant will proceed and to give the emigrant a clear idea of the geography, history, customs and usage of his future home. Much of the work of such a course would automatically be covered by a normal elementary school education, particularly if it was planned with imagination and with the express purpose of fostering emigration.

Before 1938, the only educational facilities available to the emigrants were those of the Night Schools. The instruction given was designed to enable the pupil to pass the literacy tests and provided 20 vocational or practical training. In October 1938, however, an Emigrants' School was actually opened at the Government Experimental Farm at Chammieri. It was initiated by the Director of Education in co-operation with the Superintendent of Emigration and the Director of Agriculture. The pupils are taught English, Farm-work and carpentry and are paid 10/- a week during their attendance. In the first five months of its existence, 48 of its students left for Australia. Unfortunately, the war has put a stop to emigration but a promising start has been made to meet the needs of the emigrant and the post war years should see a continuation and considerable extension of this work forming part of a fully co-ordinated scheme of emigration. Appropriately and significantly, this work is being financed by the Colonial Development Fund.

CHAPTER IV.

THE SOCIAL BACKGROUND.

The problems confronting the reform of education in Malta, and particularly the introduction of compulsion, are not merely those concerned with the provision of adequate buildings and trained and efficient staff; or the passing of legislation ensuring compulsory attendance. To initiate and develop an expensive system of education, without, at the same time, making equal strides in the other social services, would be an unsatisfactory and unfruitful proceeding. In planning education for the Island, the social needs must be taken into account. These are, naturally, very closely related to the economic conditions but, for the sake of clarity, it is advisable to consider them separately. The particular problems of child welfare, though by no means dissociated from the general economic and social conditions, need special comment.

The Maltese community is unfortunate in that it falls into two sharply divided classes. There is a small minority, made up of the wealthy and the very wealthy people, and a large majority, the working class, which exists uncomfortably close to mere subsistence level. There is no vast body of what is termed the middle class; people whose incomes are sufficient to provide a measure of independence. It is, to a large extent, this educated and articulate middle class that, in other countries, has crystallised public opinion and taken the initiative in matters of social reform. Without this class, and burdened with illiteracy, the Maltese are largely incoherent. While they appreciate that reform is needed, they do not appear to be organised to press their claims. Much more will be done to remedy social disadvantages when the Maltese achieve a greater unity of action and combine to put their house in order.

In considering elementary education, the children of the working class are principally involved and it is their social background which must be considered. The salient features of it are low wages, lack of social security, bad housing and living conditions, a low standard of education, large families and a poor health record.

The low wages are, of course, explained by the economic situation. A large proportion of the population is kept in the

lowest wage group by its lack of skill and education and by the depression of wages which inevitably occurs when the labour supply exceeds the demand. Even among the more skilled, rates are low and labour conditions unsatisfactory. One of the reasons for this is that, with the exception of the Dockyard, the majority of the industrial enterprises are small businesses with comparatively few employees. This has had the effect of delaying the introduction of trades unions and similar organisations which would have had the power to demand improved working conditions as well as higher remuneration.

The actual level of wages in Malta, among the working class, was investigated in detail by the Department of Labour in 1936-7. A brief summary of this investigation and its results will give an idea of the situation.

One hundred workmen were accepted for the purpose. They were selected as representing the most accurate cross section of the Maltese working class. Their employment was as follows:-

H.M. Dockyard.	18	Government Printing Office	4
Public Works Department	16	Messrs. Simmonds Parsons Ltd.	9
Water and Electricity Dept.	8	Malta Export Brewery	10
Dept. of Agriculture	14	Others	18

Thirty two towns and villages were represented and, in effect, the enquiry covered the whole of Malta. Variations in rent and transport costs and the small local differences in the prices of commodities were therefore neutralized. The age limit was fixed as from 30 years upward but, in a few cases, the family budgets of workmen under 30, who were supporting a family of three or more, were also accepted.

The wages were as follows:-

18	workmen	earned	from	21/-	to	25/-	a	week.
32	"	"	"	26/-	"	30/-	"	"
20	"	"	"	31/-	"	35/-	"	"
30	"	"	"	36/-	"	42/-	"	"
or								
50	"	"	"	21/-	"	30/-	"	"
50	"	"	"	31/-	"	42/-	"	"

The average wage was £1.11.9¼.

A careful analysis was made of the exact weekly expenditure of the households of the workmen, with the following results:-

	Food.	Housing.	Fuel and Light.	Clothing.	Miscellaneous.	Total.
Amount.	18.0¾	3.8¼	1.0½	3.1½	5.10¼	£1.11.9¼.
%	56.8	11.6	3.3	9.8	18.5	100

A further analysis, in this case of the miscellaneous weekly expenditure, gave the following:-

	Medical Attention.	School Attendance and books.	Meals and Drinks outside home.	Amusements Water, Insurance.	Soap.	Tobacco	Transport.	Total.
Amount.	0.6½	0.3d.	1.1d.	1.3d.	0.10¼	1.1d.	0.9¾	5.10¼
%	8.9	4.3	18.5	21.3	14.6	18.5	13.9	100

As can be seen, the low wages are offset to a small degree, in normal times, by the fact that the cost of living, reflected in the figures, is appreciably lower in Malta than in England. None the less, the English workman is immeasurably better off than his Maltese counterpart.

Low wages are bound to imply a certain lack of social security but this is often mitigated by extensive state aid. In England, National Health Insurance, Unemployment Benefit, Public Assistance, Widows' and Orphans' Pensions and Workmen's Compensation are all part of a comprehensive plan put into operation to ensure that, under no circumstances, shall primary poverty and destitution exist. To an Englishman, therefore, the lack of social security in Malta is distressing. Of all the measures mentioned, only Workmen's Compensation and Widows' and Orphans' Pensions are represented. There is no National Health Insurance, no Unemployment Benefit, no Public Assistance on an appreciable scale and no Old Age Pensions scheme. Workmen's Compensation was introduced in 1929 in Act No.VI of that year. Ordinance No. XXVIII of 1934 replaced the Act and had the effect of making insurance compulsory on all workers, save non-manual workers whose remuneration exceeds £180 per year. The benefits obtainable under the scheme are not high. Pensions of 10s.0d. a week are paid to dependents in case of death, pensions of 12s.0d. in case of total disability, while other cases are treated on their merits; the compensation not exceeding 18s.0d. per week in any case. Pensions are governed by the Pensions Act of 1926 and the Widows' and Orphans' Pension Act of 1927 and their subsequent amendments. These Acts are not of universal application and are concerned, in the main, with the provision of pensions for employees of the Government and their dependents. Thus, in effect, the average Maltese workman must look after himself, his wife and

his children and make his own provision, out of his low wage, for sickness, death and old age. The representative family budget already quoted shows the great difficulty of this end being achieved.

The situation is complicated and aggravated by the size of the families. Families of four and five children are the general rule and much larger families of ten or twelve are by no means uncommon. The Department of Labour investigation incidentally gave the average family as 5.5. Attention has already been drawn to the rapidly increasing population. The birth rate is very high and has averaged over 30 per 1,000 in recent years; the figure for the death rate being approximately 23 per 1,000. Though the high birth rate and the heavy population may represent a potential asset to the Empire, they constitute a problem in Malta. This problem, to the working man, resolves itself into an intensified struggle to feed, clothe, house and educate his children and to achieve, unaided, a margin of security. It is an unfair and unequal struggle and the inevitable outcome is a depressed standard of living with unsatisfactory housing conditions, a poor health record and with the sacrifice of leisure, education, cultural activities and recreation.

Under such conditions, the children are bound to suffer. It has become an unfortunate necessity for a large proportion of the children to be put to work at the earliest possible opportunity. In the past this meant that a child was compelled to forego schooling or to have a short career at school terminating when a chance of employment came along. Under the present legislation, which is dealt with in detail later, the alternatives are either no education at all or a full elementary school course. In many cases, the education has to be sacrificed for the few shillings with which the child can augment the slender family income or for the assistance the child can give at home, on the family farm or in the family business.

In consequence of this state of affairs, the past saw three classes of children growing up; the uneducated and illiterate, the imperfectly educated, and those who had had a full primary course. The first class was in the majority and the last class were a small minority. The present system is designed to eliminate the middle

class, increase the third class and pave the way for the ultimate compulsory education of all classes. To advance along that way necessitates the removal of the obstacles presented by the conditions referred to. It must ultimately be made possible for children to attend school without their attendance resulting in aggravated financial difficulties in the home.

It has been urged that the most effective way of solving the problem of Malta's large families and low standard of living is by the introduction of family allowances in addition to the basic wage; allowances graduated, of course, to the number of dependent children. Such allowances have already been adopted by several countries; Australia, New Zealand, France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Italy and Spain. The methods of paying the allowances vary. In New South Wales and New Zealand, the payment is by the State; in France, by means of pools and equilisation funds which share the burden fairly among the employers; in Italy and Spain, by a contributory scheme supported by workers, employers and the State, on the lines familiar in England for Unemployment and Health Insurance. In England itself, what are tantamount to family allowances are paid in indirect ways, while the principal, in full, is admitted in the payment of such allowances to the Services and to the Police. Immediately prior to the war, the Chancellor of the Exchequer was engaged on an inquiry into the possibility of adopting a scheme of family allowances for all in England. The pressing needs of the extraordinary large families in Malta, under their present conditions, warrant an investigation into the possibility of establishing a suitable scheme for the Island. It is probable that no other measure could effect equal, widespread relief or contribute so materially to the cause of child welfare in general and education in particular. It is unlikely that Malta's economic situation will improve to such an extent as to produce a state of prosperity in which all can share. Financial assistance will be necessary from the Imperial Government after the war and this might advantageously be utilised, in part, to initiate and maintain a scheme of family allowances.

As has been stated, the Maltese do not enjoy the benefits of such measures as National Health Insurance and Unemployment

Insurance. Even if it is not found practicable to introduce family allowances, something must be done to make this indirect aid available during the working life of the Maltese labourer. In employment and in health, his lot is poor enough; in times of industrial depression and sickness it is hard in the extreme. The question of Old Age Pensions must also be faced. The difficulties of making provision for unemployment, sickness and old age out of an inadequate wage depress an already low standard of living and lead to a frugality which affects both body and mind.

Assured of a genuine family wage and a measure of protection against all contingencies, the burden of worry and want would be removed. The workman would be able to stand on his own feet and to cope with his present and future needs. He would be able to save and to acquire modest property; he would have a measure of dignity and independence and, for the first time, he would have access for his children to a complete primary education, without hardship to himself or to them.

The principal factors of low wages, large families and lack of security are at the root of almost all of the social ills. The present housing situation is a case in point. The inability of the workman to pay anything but a low rent has forced him to endure overcrowding and inconvenience. Some idea of the overcrowding can be gathered from statistics for the urban districts, based on the Census of 1931, viz:-

District.		Population per square mile.
Valletta.		80,021
Floriana,	- a suburb of Valletta.	19,411
Hamrun,	- ditto.	13,877
Sliema,	- ditto.	23,545
Cospicua.		51,401
Senglea.	The Three Cities.	102,053
Vittoriosa.		37,016

If the region round Valletta and the Harbours is considered as a whole, it is found that 108,936 people, representing 44% of the entire population, are living in an area of 6,279 square miles; i.e. 5% of the total area.

In the country districts, the density of population is considerably less, although it still averages 1,000 to the square mile. Here, unfortunately, the advantages of more room are neutralised by the poor state of sanitation, the lack of amenities and the ignorance of hygiene. The balance between urban and rural districts can be appreciated from the fact that the death rate in the country villages is even higher than in the congested towns.

The task of education against such home backgrounds is made doubly difficult. In the towns, there is a lack of privacy, quiet and space. In the country, there is legacy of ignorance and a lack of comfort and convenience. In neither case is there that atmosphere which can be said to assist the schools.

The need is for houses which are capable of accommodating the large families in decency and reasonable comfort; houses that are equipped, too, with adequate water supply, efficient sanitation and either gas or electric light. The need is equally great in the heavily populated urban areas and the more spacious but more backward villages. A considerable amount of building has been done in recent years but it has not improved the general position to an appreciable extent. With the exception of a very small Government scheme for the erection of workers dwellings this building has been the work of private speculative builders. It purely confirms the need for a comprehensive Government sponsored, or Government supervised, planning scheme in which the interests of the people and the preservation of the amenities of the Island will be fully considered. Particularly from the children's point of view, a primary concern of such a scheme should be the provision of many more open spaces and playing fields. A great difficulty does exist, of course, in Malta which does not exist in England; the restricted size of the Island and the need for conserving the arable land do not make for the spacious planning of housing estates. Moreover, the cost of land is naturally high. None the less, land which is not useful for farming may be quite suitable for building purposes and, in any case, in the final assessment of values, land built upon in the right way may be of greater value to the community than land under crops.

Public health depends largely upon the factors of feeding and housing and education. It follows, inevitably, that Malta's

health record is capable of improvement. So far as feeding is concerned, the comparative poverty of the working classes does not allow a sufficiently varied and balanced diet. It is often said that the Maltese live on bread and oil. This is something of an exaggeration but these commodities do, in fact, constitute the basis of a diet that is characterised by cheapness rather than by food value. The reports of the Medical Officer draw attention to widespread malnutrition; the general diet is lacking in the requisite and balanced proportions of protiens, fats, mineral salts and vitamins. As might be expected, malnutrition is particularly evident in the crowded districts of Valletta, Floriana and the Three Cities. Here, too, the diseases associated with cramped conditions and lack of fresh air are met with. Follicular conjunctivitis, which is prevalent among children, is a case in point. The country people are naturally better fed and have a finer physique.

At one time, Malta suffered from recurrent plagues and epidemics. Many of these are recorded as major catastrophies in the history of the Island. It says much for the progress that has already been made that these have virtually been stamped out. The last of the great scourges, undulant fever, has practically disappeared with the introduction of pasteurised milk, the immunisation of goats and the practice of boiling raw milk. The incidence of typhoid fever and of diptheria have also been materially reduced. Much remains to be done however. In addition to achieving a general all-round improvement in health, measures must be taken to deal with unsatisfactory particular aspects of the health record. One special figure in the statistics draws attention to itself. The infant mortality rate in Malta averages over 275 of the children born out of every thousand. The corresponding figure for England is less than 60.

The removal of the primary causes of the less satisfactory features of Malta's health record; poverty, bad housing and lack of playing and recreational space, would work wonders. But it must be appreciated that the conquest of ignorance is as important. There should, naturally, be proper medical attention for all and within reach of all; a scheme of National Health Insurance is vital. To make services of the doctors most effective, however, the legacy

of ignorance, which is so potent a factor in the country districts, must be overcome. It can best be overcome by extending education to all children and stressing the teaching of hygiene in the schools. If such education could be co-ordinated to a progressive rise in the standard and conditions of living, the existing state of affairs would soon be remedied and, in any case, would not be perpetuated into another generation.

The hospital facilities in Malta are good and there is no shortage of well trained staffs. The standard of the medical courses in the University of Malta is high, comparing favourably with that of other schools abroad. A fine new hospital is being built at a cost of £270,000 and the work is well advanced. In the existing hospitals, an average of about 12,000 patients have received treatment annually. The largest general hospital is the Central Hospital which deals with some 9,000 cases each year. There are, of course, hospitals for contagious diseases, emergency fever wards, convalescent wards and hospitals for tubercular cases.

That the hospitals are efficient and adequate has been amply demonstrated in the war years when the normal cases and a great number of air-raid casualties have been dealt with under conditions of great difficulty, but with marked success. It is in the gap between health and the hospital that development is needed most. This can only come as a result of some nation-wide scheme which will lighten the burden of doctors' bills for the poorer classes and prevent medical assistance being secured as a last resort, as it so often is at present. There is a need, too, for an extensive development of the District Nurse scheme. Such nurses would do much, by their influence, to sweep away the ignorance and neglect which contribute in such large measure to a poor health record.

The expenditure on the Medical and Health Department is the largest single item in Malta's budget. In addition to the hospitals, the Department controls orphanages, asylums, homes for the aged and incurable, and reformatory establishments. Some of the institutions support themselves or are kept up by voluntary subscriptions, but the majority are maintained wholly or in part by the Government. The facilities afforded by them do much to allieviate acute distress but they cannot be said to render Health and Unemploy-

ment schemes superfluous. In fact, the high expenditure on these institutions merely serves to show what is really required.

No review of social conditions in Malta would be complete without the consideration of a number of extraneous factors. In the Island, the most important of these factors is religion. The Maltese are a most devout Roman Catholic community and that religion plays a very great part in their lives. This has been of inestimable good. In conditions which might have engendered the debasing of ideals and led to immorality and crime, it has been stabilising influence. Through their religion, the Maltese have maintained a dignity and firmness of character that has lifted them above their environment. Morality is of a high standard and statistics show that serious crimes are few and far between and lesser crimes are not numerous. The general situation is, indeed, a matter for congratulation. Moreover, the devotion of the people to the principles of their Faith has lead to what might well be described as a spontaneous "Christian Socialism" which has done much to alieviate the effects of economic duress.

The family life is another powerful instrument for good. In spite of large families, or, more likely, because of them, the home influence is great and beneficial. The most is made of the slender financial resources and the general standard of living, though low, is much higher than would obtain were the housewives less thrifty, industrious and proud. Parents are invariably devoted to their children and are prepared to make sacrifices for them. At the same time, parental control is strict, as it must needs be, unsupported, as it so often is, by the advantages of school discipline.

The firmness of the family ties and inherent love of home life have produced only one disadvantage. Allusion has already been made to it. It has mitigated against the spirit of independence which is essential for emigration. Families in Malta are closely interwoven and the ties closely knit. The limited number of surnames gives an indication of the process which has produced this result. To leave Malta usually means the severance of the many ties and the sacrifice of a familiar and well loved community life.

Paradoxically, a characteristic of the Maltese is individualism. This applies particularly in matters of work and

business. It has probably been induced by the competitive nature of life in the Island and the stern necessity of providing a living for one's self. It is a serious disadvantage and a bar to that co-operation in all spheres of economic and social life which is necessary for progress. The Maltese would do a great deal for themselves were they to show more unity. The Maltese working man has still to learn to help himself. Trades Unions are vital to-day if the workers are to assert their rights and if Trades Unions in Malta are undeveloped and weak in bargaining power, the workers have only themselves to blame. Really strong Unions, employers' associations and associations of professional men are all required. Through them, and through them alone, can any future prosperity be equitably shared by all sections of the community. Amongst all classes, there is a need for a stronger social education, a willingness to sink selfishness and individualism and a willingness to show real citizenship. The very poor classes, who are so inarticulate at present, require good leaders to secure social justice for them until such time as their educational standard allows them to find spokesmen in their midst. The wealthy people, business and professional men and the small middle class need to show a greater appreciation of their social obligations; their duty to pay fair wages if they are employers, to shoulder their fair share of taxation and to justify their higher social status by providing leadership of the right kind. Finally, the few really wealthy need to use their excess wealth for the common good, putting it, so far as is possible, into local industry and enterprise, and so giving useful employment and contributing to the welfare of their fellow-countrymen.

In dealing with the social conditions, some mention should be made of the conditions under which the Maltese work. The Dockyard workmen are, of course safeguarded by advanced rules and regulations governing safety and also governing holidays and sickness. The same applies to other employees of the Imperial Government and to employees of the Government of Malta. In the private enterprises of the Island, conditions are not so advanced. The Factory Regulation Act, Act No.XII of 1926, regulates the employment of women and children and the condition of workmen in factories. It lays down rules which are applicable in the case of industries involving heavy

manual labour and work injurious to health. The Hours of Employment and Shops Ordinance was originally promulgated in 1936 as Ordinance No.XVII. It was re-enacted in 1938 with amendments. It enables the Government to regulate, by Orders, the hours at which persons may be kept at work in any employment and to make provision for certain matters incidental thereto, including the fixing of minimum wages in any employment affected by the Orders. Six such Orders were issued in 1937, 1938 and 1939. Five of them had the effect of regulating conditions and wages in shops, hotels, clubs, places of entertainment and in the transport industry. The sixth gave power to the Inspectors of the Department of Labour to enter, inspect and examine all establishments in respect of which an order is issued. As a result, 1,636 inspections were carried out in the first year, 1,500 shops, 42 places of entertainment and 94 clubs being involved. 66 charges were brought, fines up to £3 levied and, in instances of underpayment by employees, salaries were made up retrospectively.

These measures represent a bid advance and a welcome one. As has been stressed before, much of the industry in Malta is in small businesses and this, coupled with a superabundant supply of labour, tends to force wages down to a very low level. Moreover, before the issue of the Orders, the employee was largely defenceless and lacked the power to arbitrate that a union could have given. The number of industries and occupations affected as yet is small but there will, no doubt, be many further Orders issued in the future.

Recent reports on the factories and workshops in Malta have brought the following general points to light.

1. There are, locally, no definite regulations with regard to safety devices and protective measures for workmen and machinery is often installed without such devices to effect a saving in cost.

2. While new suitably designed factory buildings are being erected, particularly in the county districts, the majority of factories in the towns were established in converted private houses. In most cases the dark, damp, and poorly ventilated ground floors, cellars and yards were used and the machinery has become dangerously cramped.

3. Insufficient instruction is given in the operation of machines.

4. In the two years 1935-37, 104 accidents were reported by workmen operating machinery which was not properly fenced.

5. Cleanliness leaves much to be desired in the workshops themselves while washing facilities and sanitary accommodation for employees are practically non-existent.

6. The importance of First Aid on the spot and desirability of having First Aid boxes available in the workshops has not yet been appreciated.

7. Persons working on their own account are not compelled to register with the authorities.

These reports show that a great deal still remains to be done before the Maltese workman is assured of employment in safe and healthy surroundings. The Department of Labour is hoping, as a result of its inspections, to be in a position to make definite recommendation with regard to the requisite legislation to improve working conditions.

Considering the social conditions of Malta in general, it is clear that they are much as might be expected from the peculiar economic situation. Some additional influences tend to create a more pleasant picture. Among such influences, the character of the Maltese, their religion and their home life must be included. Other factors impede social reform. Much legislation and no little amount of assistance is required to make the lot of the Maltese working man and his family comparable with that of their English counterparts. But the people of the Island must be in a position to assist in their own progress. The greatest obstacle undoubtedly lies in the low average standard of education. It keeps the community insular, produces competition instead of co-operation, leaves a large section of the population unable to express their grievances and have them redressed and makes the work of introducing nation-wide social schemes more difficult. There are many precedents in history to show that social reform and education go hand in hand. The elaborate schemes which protect the English working man in sickness and health, in employment and unemployed, and in old age; and the measure of protection given to his dependents in the case of his death have

only been applicable and successful in their working by reason of the high standard of general education throughout the country. In the same way, the elimination of a poor health record, brought about largely by bad sanitation, ignorance of elementary hygiene and lack of appreciation of the value of physical recreation depends upon a new generation leaving the schools to sweep away an unfortunate legacy from the days of indifference and apathy.

At the present time, much is said of education for leisure. It may be argued that, in the past, the Maltese have had no leisure save the enforced and unfortunate idleness of unemployment. None the less, the future holds out hopes of a steady improvement in economic and social conditions and the need exists and will become more pressing for cultural and recreational facilities. The need for compulsory primary education is paramount but much can also be done, particularly for the adolescents and the adults, by both vocational and non-vocational classes and by community schools and social halls. This aspect of the situation is, fortunately, not being neglected and it offers an opportunity to do much for the welfare of the people. Education, in the widest sense, has lagged behind the need and the demand for it and any supplement to the primary and secondary schools will be invaluable.

CHAPTER V.

PROBLEMS OF CHILD WELFARE.

The questions of child welfare and the questions of education are indissolubly linked. No system of education can hope to bestow its full benefits unless it is supported in its work by the environment and the activities of the child out of school and by the prospect of launching its pupils into a sympathetic post-school world.

In England, there is efficient compulsory education for all children which in itself is the greatest factor in the well-being of the child. Moreover, there is a high degree of social security and a correspondingly high standard of living, an advanced and advancing legislation governing child welfare and a wealth of desirable movements, clubs and activities of all kinds. Malta is not so fortunate and a great deal of improvement in the whole sphere of child welfare is still necessary.

The lack of universal education is, of course, the great drawback at present and, irrespective of what happens out of school, only about three quarters of the children in Malta are receiving the advantages of the discipline and character building influences, as well as the interest in their progress and general welfare, that the school alone can provide. The remaining half are without any organized supervision and the only bar to their developing on unpleasing lines or to their being exploited is in the home influence and in the influence of the Church. The unsatisfactory state of the existing system of education does not allow of the best results being obtained with those who actually do attend school. It is virtually impossible to split the children of a country up into two distinct classes; those who attend school and those who do not. In play, and subsequently at work, there must be intermingling and an ultimate average level of behaviour, outlook and character that is below the best. Only when all the children are brought into the schools can real progress be made, the principal factors working against child welfare be overcome, and a more homogeneous child population be created and its interests in recreation, no less than in matters of employment, be catered for.

The economic and social conditions of the Island are, of course, the root of much of the difficulty which faces any attempts at a reform. These conditions have already been dealt with. It is necessary only to reiterate their effect on the children in particular. The large families, low wages and lack of security have, inevitably, led to child labour. This labour takes two forms. Children may be employed and receive remuneration for their work or they may be assisting in the family work. This latter type of labour is naturally common in a country of large families, large numbers of small farms and a preponderance of small private businesses. Both forms of child labour are objectionable. The employment of children for wages can, of course be obercome by the introduction of appropriate legislation. The home employment question is, however, more difficult of solution. It is only through the parents themselves that the desired change can take place. A greater appreciation by them of the needs of the children, physical, mental and moral, and a less short sighted view of education are called for. In this connection, it would be a great pity if the introduction of full compulsory education in the future was merely to lead to a graver imposition on the children and if the work, at present done by them, continued to be done out of school hours.

The present legislation governing the employment of juveniles is inadequate. The Compulsory Attendance Act, which is dealt with at length in this study, stipulates that a child attending school is not to be employed during school hours and provides for the punishment of anyone so employing such a child. The Factory Regulation Act, Act No.XII of 1926, prohibits the employment of children under fourteen on certain work, the employment of children under sixteen on other work - in this case of an unhealthy or dangerous nature - and limits the hours of employment to eight per day. In these Acts, the measure of control of child labour is very small. The schedule of prohibited occupations in the Factory Regulation Act includes only the most onerous, unhealthy and dangerous work. For the vast majority of processes, it is still possible to employ a child at any age or to employ a schoolboy or schoolgirl out of school hours.

Reform is obviously necessary in the legislation. Pointers

might conceivably be drawn from the English Education Act of 1936. This Act was, of course, concerned in the main with the raising of the school leaving age to fifteen and this respect is inapplicable to Malta. It did, however, raise the whole question of child labour and introduce the important term, "beneficial employment". An appreciation of the significance of that term is imperative in Malta. It will be remembered that an attempt at close definition was made by a number of Local Education Authorities. They decided that, while it was difficult to compose the necessarily elaborate list of occupations which could be deemed beneficial, there were a number of forms of employment which could only be considered as definitely harmful. These included (a) employment in, or in connection with, the sale of intoxicating liquors, (b) employment in barbers' or hairdressers' shops, (c) employment in the actual collection or sorting of rags and refuse, (d) employment in billiard halls, and (e) employment in establishments used for dancing, public amusement by machines, or games of chance or skill. The authorities reached agreement also on the matter of "dead end" jobs. No child was to be exempted from attendance at school, before the age of fifteen, to take employment in any of these categories of occupations.

In Malta, children are, unfortunately, in almost all of these undesirable situations; not only children of fourteen, who have finished their schooling, but also children of ten and eleven who are, in some cases, still at school and who, in other cases, have never been to school at all. They are found in the public bars as waiters; they are found in the dance halls; they are found in the common lodging houses. Many of these places, in certain areas, have definitely unsavoury aspects which are at least superficially absent in their counterparts in England. No child should be allowed to work in such establishments.

The undesirable conditions of child labour are not limited wholly to the instances of employment in harmful moral surroundings. In many cases, the nature of a child's work, while not necessarily detrimental to moral welfare, imposes too great a physical strain. Some of the work is of a manual order in excess of the child's physique and stamina and some involves hours which are too long,

though legally permitted. Children are employed as conductors on the buses, in heavy work on the farms and in haulage and carting. There are very few industries in the Island where they are not employed. Exceptions are, of course, the Departments of both the local and Imperial Governments and their establishments. In 1936, 40% of the total number of accidents in the workshops and factories of Malta were sustained by boys and girls from 14 to 18 years of age.

A particularly unfortunate result of this widespread employment of children in Malta is that they do not enjoy the full recreational life to which their contemporaries in England are accustomed; recreational life, not only in the physical sense, but also in the cultural sense. The working child is precluded from enjoying the leisure in which to play and the nature of his work often makes him too tired to participate in games or prevents any enthusiasm for them. In many cases, the unfortunate necessity of earning a living has had the effect of depriving Maltese children of the enthusiasms and pastimes usually associated with childhood.

In England, much of the happy state of recreation is due to the keenness inculcated by the well organised school games and the out of school activities sponsored by the school. It is easy to appreciate that the situation in Malta is not comparable. Half the children do not come under the school influence at all, and, further, the recreational side of school life needs a great deal of developing. The lack of good open playing spaces and playing fields is a serious drawback and one which will be difficult to redress. Land being at a premium in Malta, the cost of providing a number of good recreation grounds would be by no means inconsiderable. Moreover, a tradition in sport has yet to be established in the Island. Of the major team games, only association football has aroused anything approaching a popular interest. Cricket is played but more by English residents than by the local people. Tennis still retains a measure of exclusiveness, though it is an ideal game in the climate. Sports meetings, with the usual field and track events, have not, as yet, succeeded in creating enthusiasm.

Naturally, a lot depends on the schools whether or not a tradition will ultimately be established and it is to the young teachers that the work of fostering enthusiasm for sport must fall.

The older teachers, not having been interested in it in the main, cannot be expected to become eager and active sponsors now. Sport apart, the young reachers have an opportunity to do much in the schools themselves in teaching Physical Training. This subject is just now emerging from the redundant "military drill" stage and being remodelled on the lines of the 1933 syllabus familiar in England. The introduction of this more interesting training with minor as well as major team games on a competitive basis, with School and Class leagues, will do much to make physical recreation more popular. The facilities in the schools are admittedly not all that might be desired but, if ingenuity is shown, this need not be too serious a drawback initially and the existence of a widespread interest in physical fitness would ultimately draw attention to its needs.

Mention must be made of activities in Malta, other than those concerned with sport, that are likely to affect children. There are many clubs and organisations in the Island but not on the scale and sometimes not of the nature required. The Scout and Guide Movements stand out as having been particularly beneficial and popular and they have done a great deal of most useful work. Older boys, withna Scout training, have made a material contribution to the war effort by their service in many directions. Both among boys and girls, the two allied organisations have supplied a long felt want. In a different class, but eminently desirable, are the many institutions run under the auspices of the Church. These cover a wide range of activities but are flexible enough to cater for the young children as well as the adolescents. Their background is, naturally, of a spiritual and cultural nature.

The majority of other organisations and clubs appear to be intended for older boys and for men. Amateur and professional football clubs and band clubs, which sometimes have a political bias, are numbered among them. As not a few of these institutions house a bar and supplement their activity in the worlds of sport and music with tombolas and card games, it cannot be said that they really meet the needs of the youth of Malta.

Malta is singularly fortunate that, in spite of deficiencies in education and inadequate facilities for child welfare, the moral

and spiritual well-being of the children is a matter for congratulation. This is largely due to two powerful influences; the Church and the Home. As the people are all Roman Catholics, there are no dissentions and sectarian quarrels to offer an impediment to full religious education. More than forty Priests are associated with the Government Schools and there are special Directors of Religious Education. The Archbisop Bishop of Malta and the Bishop of Gozo take the keenest interest in the spiritual welfare of the children and the closest liaison exists between the Ecclesiastical Authorities and the Education Department. Naturally, religious teaching takes a place of the greatest importance in the curriculum and, in addition, many festivals and celebrations are held by the schools as a body. The children who do not attend school also come under the influence of the Church. Religious observance is universal and the interest of the Parish Priest embraces the entire population in his charge.

The home life of the average Maltese family reflects the greatest of credit on the people. The parents are invariably inordinately fond of their children and, in spite of the economic duress under which they live, are prepared to make any sacrifice for them. The parental pride is always evident in the general neatness and cleanliness of the children. The work of the home goes deeper than this, however. A high standard of behaviour and obedience is demanded and there is a scrupulous sense of morality. There can be no doubt but that the home influence is one of the greatest factors for good in the social life of the Island.

Before leaving the subject of child welfare, mention should be made of the standard of health and physique of the Maltese children. In general, the standard is below that obtaining in England and, in some cases, very much inferior. Actual under-nourishment and mal-nutrition account in part for this, as do the general living conditions. The unsuitable physical nature of a good deal of child labour cannot but be another contributory factor. A full survey of the health of the children is virtually impossible under present conditions. A great step forward will have been made when all the children are brought into the schools and under the observation of the School Medical Service.

The importance of this Service is being increasingly appreciated. Until April, 1937, the doctors engaged in its work were part time only but, at that time, one full time doctor was appointed. This is not sufficient, of course, but it is a step in the right direction. If and when compulsory education is introduced, a staff will be required to carry out the periodic examination and treatment of some 40,000 children. The present arrangements provide for a yearly inspection of some 25,000 children. The future, too, should see the establishment of a School Dental Service. No such service exists at present but the need for it has been stressed and it is reasonable to hope that it will be instituted in the near future.

The Schools and their associated Medical Service have done a great deal for the physical welfare of the children in their charge. Under-nourishment and malnutrition are being combatted by the issue of free milk and tonic food to 5,000 of the children from the poorer classes. There is every reason to hope that this service, which costs roughly £1,000 a year will be extended as on the lines in England. There is need for this extension. Investigations have shown that the outstanding deficiency in the diet of Maltese children is milk. Where 8 ozs. a day is a minimum requirement, 20% get 4 ozs. or more, 64% get less than 4 ozs. and 16% get none at all.

The schools have yet much to do to break down ignorance and unthinking neglect. This particularly applies in the case of the treatment of eye defects and trouble with teeth. Too often, the parents will not carry out the prescribed treatment. This state of affairs is not peculiar to Malta but it is very marked in the Island. Faddish treatments and ignorance of the most elementary rules of health and hygiene did much to spread disease in the past. The work of the schools in recent years has done much to improve matters but the need for intensive propaganda and for extended hygiene teaching still remains.

The survey of the social conditions and the problems of child welfare shows that it is imperative that all the children should be brought into the schools in order to enjoy the benefits, including those other than the purely academical, which school life,

with its supervision, interest and care, can give. There is little doubt but that the introduction of compulsory education would produce both happier and healthier children. The matter should not, however, end there. Much needs to be done to provide the child, on leaving school, with suitable employment in suitable surroundings. There is a need for a great deal of tightening up of the regulations controlling the employment of children and for new standards to be laid down in order that the factories and workshops shall become healthy and safe. The Department of Labour might well co-operate with the Education authorities to place the school leavers in the most satisfactory and beneficial employment. There is, as yet, no liaison between the industry and the schools and the co-operation of employers is needed to ensure that the children shall pass from the class rooms into suitable and congenial employment rather than be exploited in dead end jobs.

CHAPTER VI.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION.

The review of the economic and social conditions in Malta confirms the fact that compulsory primary education is essential and should be instituted as soon as practicable. Illiteracy constitutes a social evil of the first magnitude and the existence of an indigestible core of unskilled labour is of serious detriment to the economic life of the Island. Already the country is burdened with an adult population half of which is uneducated and this unfortunate state of affairs is being perpetuated by the lack of the facilities necessary to provide education for all. Almost fifty percent of the children between the ages of five and fifteen are receiving no instruction.

To a very large extent the purpose of this study is to deal with the difficulties which lie in the path of any attempts to bring full compulsory education into operation. It is desirable, therefore, to review the legislation which governs attendance at the present time and the circumstances under which that legislation was brought into force.

Elementary education in Malta developed in such a way as ultimately to offer children schooling from the age of five to the age of fourteen. Until 1924, however, there was no measure of compulsion at all. Children were free to enrol at a school and subsequently free to withdraw at any time at the inclination or whim of their parents. The system had everything to condemn it. It was wasteful both in effort and financially; it created difficulties in maintaining a reasonable percentage of attendance; it was opposed to the enforcement of a good discipline and placed the school staff at a serious disadvantage in dealing with parents. There is little doubt that, under it, many children received little or no benefit from their schooling and that many teachers found their work onerous and unfruitful and their fine efforts frustrated.

Another serious fault revealed itself. The school accommodation in Malta has never been adequate even in the days of voluntary attendance. There has always been an appreciable waiting list of children seeking to enter the schools. The

wastage caused by haphazard attendance and by short, inconsequential school careers had thus an added significance. The more conscientious parents, who would have ensured the regular attendance of their children for a protracted period, were often unable to secure admission for them, places being occupied by much less deserving cases.

The effects of the voluntary system of attendance made themselves evident at the lower and upper ends of the school, conditions being reasonably stable in the middle school. At the lower end of the school, the trouble was caused by the enrolment of children whose parents subsequently lost interest in their education and, not being prepared to put themselves to any inconvenience, withdrew them. In the higher classes, the trouble was caused in another way. As the survey of the economic conditions has shown, it has often been necessary for parents to withdraw their children at the age of ten or eleven to seek employment or to assist at home. This factor underlay the progressive denudation of the top three classes in the school. In the average large school, then, the ultimate result of the voluntary system was seen in the provision of possibly four parallel classes at the extreme lower end of the course, three and, subsequently, two parallel classes in the middle school and, finally, a single class in the upper school. The following figures, showing the attendances in the various classes on July 31st 1923, illustrate the general trend.

Infants (2 yrs.)	St.I	St.II	St.III	St.IV	St.V	St.VI.	Total.
7,631	3,730	2,445	2,219	1,583	1,030	860	19,498

As is only to be expected, lack of compulsion in any shape or form did not make for a high level of attendance. In 1923, the average attendance was 85% of the average enrolment. The total wastage was, therefore, considerable.

The "Compulsory Attendance Act", Act No.XXII of the 6th of December, 1924, was designed to remedy the faults inherent in the voluntary system. As this Act is of obvious importance, the text will be given in full. The Act reads as follows:-

ACT NO. XXII OF 6TH DECEMBER, 1924.

An Act to make attendance compulsory for children of the Elementary Schools.

Preamble:- Whereas it is expedient that children, once admitted into a public Elementary School, should not leave before the completion of the entire Elementary School course.

Be it enacted by the King's Most Excellent Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and the Legislative Assembly, as follows:-

Art.I. This Act may be cited as the Compulsory Attendance Act, 1924.

Art.II. Every child whose name will appear in the school registers of a public Elementary school, on and after the 31st of December, 1924, as a pupil in any of its standards or stages, shall continue to attend such school regularly until it shall have obtained from the Head of the school it attends a certificate of having passed the highest examination of the highest standard in the school,

Provided that, in any case, no child so attending a public Elementary School shall be allowed to leave it before the age of 12 years,

Provided also that, dull and backward children may, on the authority of the Minister for Public Instruction, be allowed to leave school at the age of 12 even in default of the certificate mentioned in this Article.

In any case, for the purpose of this Act, the 12th year of age shall not be considered as completed before the end of the scholastic year during which that age shall have been actually reached.

Art.III. Attendance shall not be deemed to be regular where the number of attendances during each month does not reach 75% of the total number of morning and afternoon lessons.

Art.IV. (i) The parent of a child shall be responsible for its regular attendance in accordance with the provisions of this Act; and the Head of the school shall inform the parent of any absence of the child from school.

(ii) If, within fifteen days, from the receipt of such notice, the parent fails to comply with the law, he shall

be liable to the punishments laid down for contraventions of it; and the Court shall apply to him the provisions of the first paragraph of Art.321 of the Police Laws.

Art.V. (i) It shall, however, be lawful for the parent, after having obtained the admittance of the child into a public Elementary School, to withdraw the same at any time and to provide for its education in any public or private school; but, in every such case, the parent shall, from the time of admission of the child and in the month of July of each year, and until the child has reached the age of 12 years, reckoned as in Art.II of this Act, furnish the Director of Elementary Schools with a certificate from the Head of the school to which the child has been transferred to the effect that the child is attending it in accordance with Art.III of this Act.

(ii) If the parent fails to produce such a certificate, or does not show a just cause which prevents him from producing it, he will be liable to the punishment mentioned in Article III of this Act.

Art.VI. In cases where a child misbehaves in a public Elementary School to such an extent as to prevent the smooth running of the school, or render itself guilty of such offences as would justify its expulsion from the school, the Minister for Public Instruction may order that the child be punished or expelled from the school as the Minister may think fit; provided that the punishment be not corporal; provided also that the Ministerial order for expulsion will, ipso facto, deprive the culprit of his right to any certificate from the Education Department.

If, however, it appears that the child has so misbehaved at the instigation of its parent or of a third party, The Minister may refer the matter to the Executive Police and the parent or third party so charged shall be liable to the provisions referred to in Art.IV of this Act.

Art.VII. The Director of Elementary Schools, or a person deputed by him, shall have gratuitous access to the Civil Status Registers when ascertaining the ages of children or other particulars deemed necessary for the purposes of this Act.

Art.VIII. (i) No person shall employ, during school

hours, any child whom he knows to fall under the provisions of this Act.

(ii) Any person who contravenes this provision shall be liable to a fine not inferior to 10/- and the Court shall apply to such a person the provisions of the first paragraph of Art.321 of the Police Laws.

Art.XI. The Minister shall have the power to grant exemptions from any of the provisions of this Act provided he has a report by the Director of Elementary Schools that such an exemption is warranted by a special and reasonable excuse.

Art.X (i) For the purpose of this Act, the term "child" means a male or female child.

(ii) The expression "parent" means any person who, either legally or actually, has charge of a child.

(iii) The"Director of Elementary Schools" means the person for the time being at the head of the Government Elementary School Department, or any other person who, at any time, is appointed to act in his stead.

(iv) The expression "corporal punishment" means any punishment inflicted in the form of beating, whether by hand or by instrument or in any such way as may cause bodily injury to the child.

(v) The "Public Elementary Schools" comprise the two Infant stages, the six Elementary standards and the three classes of the Central Schools for the training of aspirants to the posts on the teaching staffs of the aforesaid Infant and Elementary Schools.

As can be seen from the text, the Act was a thorough attempt to place Elementary education on a more satisfactory footing. It is, of course, a compromise. Compulsory education has at all times, since 1838 been the aim of those responsible for the schools but to establish such education at the time was out of the question. The Act was designed to ensure that, if it was impossible to educate all the children, those who could be educated with the facilities available would be educated as thoroughly as possible.

Though short, the Act covers a lot of ground. The introduction of compulsory attendance itself is dealt with and every attempt is made to legislate for the problems associated with it. Article II lays down the law of compulsion and specifies the date at which it is to commence, the parent having the opportunity to agree to abide by its terms or to withdraw children at school. The same Article gives the limit of the new, enforced attendance; the child is free to leave school on passing the final examination of the highest class but must, in any case, have reached the age of twelve. This latter clause had to be inserted for a particular reason. Some of the schools, and especially those in country districts, have no classes above Standard III or IV. A child might quite easily be free to leave school at the age of ten, in consequence, having passed the final examination of the highest class. This would be defeating the object of the Act and the inclusion of the age condition overcomes it; one of the subsequent aims of the authorities being to introduce the higher classes and offer, in time, the full school course to all the children on the roll.

One thing that the Act appears to do, is to shelve the great responsibility of the dull and backward child. Such a child is not likely to reach the required standard of attainment and so is permitted to leave at the earliest possible time. It can be appreciated that this loophole is convenient in cases where the work of a class or school is upset by the presence of mentally deficient children but it draws attention to the need for special classes for such children and special teachers for those classes. As the Act stands, the term "dull and backward" is not defined and, as a result, a good deal of latitude and discrimination appears possible.

The standard of attendance, 75%, which is considered as regular is low but the figure has, in all probability taken local conditions into account. In the first place, too great a demand might conceivably have jeopardised the success of the new measure by keeping a large number of children out of the schools in the first instance. The terms had not to be made too onerous.

It had to be possible for parents to comply with them. Secondly, the demands made on children for their assistance at home and in unpaid labour in family businesses and farms are greater than those made in England and a certain measure of latitude had, therefore, to be granted. The figure quoted does, however, offer the opportunity for a tightening up of the situation, if and when conditions permit.

The legal obligations of the parents are defined. Not only do they have to ensure the attendance of their children under the threat of punishment for any consistent negligence; they, and any third parties who may be implicated, are, in effect, not to seek to upset the work of the schools by inciting children to bad behaviour. This latter provision was, in all probability, necessary in the Act. Compulsion removed a safety valve. In the days prior to its introduction, the parent who had a grievance, real or imaginary, against a school or a teacher could withdraw a child from the school and bring the trouble to a close. The Act, wisely, was seeking to effect an all round improvement in discipline and order and to give the necessary protection to the teachers in their work to achieve it.

The actual misbehaviour of the children themselves is dealt with. Two courses were left open by the Act. Punishment of a non-corporal nature could be inflicted in the case of a minor offender and expulsion, with the deprivation of any certificates, could be resorted to in the case of the persistent or major offender. Here again, as in the case of the dull and backward child, the case of the recalcitrant is largely shelved. In many cases, expulsion loses its terrors as it is the one thing the offender wishes to achieve. The absence of corporal punishment while in the school and the prospect of being relieved, by expulsion, of the necessity of attending school at all do not make the way of the transgressor sufficiently hard. The obvious lack of the restraining influence of corporal punishment on the one hand or of some form of special school, which would defeat any advantage the badly behaved child might secure by expulsion, on the other, leaves the question of a really sound form of discipline open. Reformatory Schools do, of course, exist but they

cater only for those whose tendencies actually exhibit themselves in the perpetration of some crime and do not cater for those whose behaviour, though bad, does not bring them into the Police Court.

The remaining provisions of the Act do not call for a great deal of comment. Naturally, a clause had to be inserted giving the parent the right to remove a child from one school to another, the continuity of the child's education being insisted upon in accordance with Article II. The employment of children who come under the provisions of the Act is also prohibited during the school hours. That this prohibition could not have been made to cover the whole period of the childrens' school lives is unfortunate. Here again however, the introduction of this first measure of compulsion had not to impose too stringent regulations which, under local circumstances, might have defeated the object of the authorities and kept the children out of the schools.

It was anticipated that, when the Act became law, there would be a considerable falling off in the roll of scholars and that anything up to twenty per cent of the children then attending school would be withdrawn. It was also anticipated that the number of requests from parents for the admission of their children would be greatly reduced. These fears were, however, belied by results inasmuch as the percentage of children withdrawn was so low as to be negligible and the demand for admission was fully maintained and continued to exceed the accommodation available. The average number of children on the registers of the schools continued its steady increase, the figures being:-

1920-1	1921-2	1922-3	1923-4	1924-5	1926-7
19,595	19,619	21,010	21,181	21,992	23,607

Moreover, regular attendance having been stipulated, there was a marked improvement in this direction and the attendance figures rose from the level of 85% to the much more satisfactory figure of 90% immediately after the Act came into force. In subsequent years, this figure has fallen off from time to time but the average has been maintained at about 88%. It has been felt by the Director that the Act, in allowing 25% of absences, has been too slack. The situation has been aggravated, apparently, by the ease with which medical certificates have been granted to cover long

periods of absence. A large gap certainly does exist between the figures for the average enrolment and the average attendance. To instance but one year, these figures for 1937-8 show 29,641 for enrolment and 25,768 for attendance.

None the less, the statistics do not do full justice to the results achieved by the Act. It has to be remembered that the schools are now dealing with children who are committed to a full course and the wastage indicated is the total wastage. Previously, figures alone could not adequately express the waste of time, accommodation and money involved in the short and irregular careers of so many children. When conditions allow, the terms of the Act will undoubtedly be made more rigorous and any existing loopholes for evasion closed.

Before the enforcement of the Act, the tendency was for the effects of a voluntary system to make themselves felt in the lower and the higher classes of the schools. The elimination of a good deal of this trouble resulted from the new measure. The figures for attendance in classes, on July 31st of three different years, are shown below.

	Infants (2 yrs.)	St.I	St.II	St.III	St.IV.	St.V.	St.VI.
1923	7,631	3,730	2,445	2,219	1,583	1,030	860
1925	8,620	4,264	2,838	2,298	1,629	1,008	714
1938	11,456	5,555	4,284	3,204	2,415	1,110	352

It will be seen that the state of affairs in the lower classes has improved with the introduction of compulsion and that the case of the upper classes shows an appreciable change. Actually, the figures quoted are probably not fair to the case of the upper school inasmuch as they are based on a day right at the end of the scholastic year when the cumulative leavings of the whole year are reflected in the attendance. A factor which does contribute to the poor level of attendance in St.V and St.VI is the failure as yet to provide the necessary classes and teachers to enable children to have the venefits of the full school course. A lot has been done but, particularly in country districts, a large number of schools cater for the Infant Stages and the first four Standards only. As accommodation and teachers become avail-

able there will, in all probability, be an improvement and all schools will be able to offer the full course. An attempt has been made to combine the schools of adjacent villages to achieve the same end but the country people who are affected are parochial minded to a degree which prevents their willing acceptance of the arrangement; an unfortunate prejudice which, it is hoped, will be overcome.

Article IX of the Act gave the Minister for Public Instruction power to grant exemptions from the provisions of the Act if these were warranted. When the Act had been in force for some little time, it was found expedient to give rulings covering exceptional cases which cropped up. The following classes of children were permitted to leave school as a result: those who had reached the age of sixteen; those of fifteen years of age who had employment in prospect; orphans or children of fourteen years of age who had been abandoned by their fathers or whose fathers were out of work and had been out of work for some time. These rulings were a necessary supplement to the original provisions based on passing the final examination and having reached the minimum age of twelve. It was natural that many children, while not excusable on the score of being dull and backward, were incapable of meeting the examination clause. These new exemptions covered their case and recognised the unfortunate necessity of permitting those in more straitened circumstances to leave earlier than really desirable in order to find work.

In summing up the general effects of the Act, it can be said that it represented a great and welcome advance in education in Malta. It is probable that, in the years in which it has been in force, more progress has been made in bringing Malta's educational system to a higher degree of efficiency than has been achieved before. The old, chaotic system has disappeared and the schools have been given a definite aim. The Act naturally demanded many things; more and better school accommodation, larger and more thoroughly trained staffs. Much has been done to meet these demands. New schools have been built and the training of teachers and, consequently, their standing have changed radically for the

better. Education has been made to mean something more than a haphazard attendance at school and parents have been given a new responsibility.

The Act does, of co urse, show certain very necessary reforms to be needed. The cases of the dull and backward children and the persistently badly behaved children call for special schools and special methods and teachers to replace mere exemption from attendance in the one case and expulsion in the other. Further, the situation in regard to the top classes, particularly in the country districts, has shown itself to require more attention. The enforcement of a higher standard of attendance and discipline, too, are still matters for consideration.

These points are, however, essentially details. The greatest proof of the value of the Act lies in the fact that, after nineteen years in operation, it had so improved conditions in the schools that it was possible to place compulsory education on the tapis and to formulate definite proposals for its introduction.

Immediately prior to the war, these proposals, which have not yet been made public, were submitted by Sir Charles Bonham-Carter, the then Governor, to the Secretary of State for the Colonies. They envisaged a process which would introduce compulsion by districts and which would be completed in four years. Education was to be declared compulsory in the townships of Birkirkara and Floriana in the first years, in Valletta and the Three Cities in the second and then successively in two divisions making up the remainder of the Island in the subsequent years. In this way, it was felt that the problems of staffs, accommodation and finance could be dealt with without serious difficulty arising.

Very unfortunately, the incidence of war postponed consideration of the scheme. That it has merely been postponed has been made quite clear. The Governor, Sir William Dobbie, speaking to the Council of Government on the subject in November, 1941 said, "I have no doubt that the Secretary of State would have considered the scheme most sympathetically, but Italy's entry into the war made it necessary that it should be postponed. I can

assure you of my anxiety that compulsory education should be established in these Islands as soon as circumstances permit and I shall not fail to take the first opportunity to revive my predecessor's plans."

Education in Malta for the present, then, continues to be governed by the Act of 1924, but it is encouraging to note that the work of this Act is likely to be consummated by more far-reaching and desirable legislation in the immediate post war years.

CHAPTER VII.

SCHOOL STAFFING AND ITS PROBLEMS.

In the past, the Government practiced a condemnable economy in education and so laid the foundations of the present unsatisfactory staffing position. There was a time when the teacher in Malta was paid at the rate of from threehalfpence to fourpence a day. Some young boys and girls, while still at school, were misled into accepting this miserable pittance. Without any education save their indifferent elementary schooling, without any examination of value and without any organized practical training, these deluded youngsters were drafted into the school staffs. The material prospects offered to them were slight and the chances of improving their own education, acquiring qualifications and attaining something equivalent to a professional status were negligible. The majority were allowed to remain where they were; to fossilize in the village schools.

Under these deplorable conditions, it is only natural that the more able men teachers left the classrooms for more remunerative employment at the earliest possible opportunity. It was only the unfit, who could not secure alternative work, who remained. They became a legacy of ignorance and incompetence and a burden for the future. The situation was somewhat different in the case of women teachers. In a country where the emancipation of women has been markedly slow, attractive employment outside the schools rarely presented itself. As a result, the majority of women teachers, good, bad and indifferent, remained at their posts.

The actual level of these low salaries of the first half of the nineteenth century can be gauged from one or two instances. A teacher of twenty-one years experience in Floriana received ninepence a day. Another teacher, aged thirty-six, was receiving sixpence a day. A very much more fortunate teacher of thirty-six, in Rabat, Gozo, drew thirty shillings a month. The younger teachers were getting the few coppers a day to which allusion has already been made.

Canon Pullicino, who, it will be remembered, was put in

charge of the Elementary Schools by Governor O'Ferral in 1850, was the first to make a serious attempt to place salaries on a definite footing. In the year of his appointment, he instituted an elaborate scale. There were three classes of teachers formulated for the purpose, the first class being the highest paid. Each class was sub-divided into three further classes, making nine grades in all. The effect of Pullicino's arrangement was to give schoolmasters salaries varying between £18 and £45 a year and schoolmistresses salaries between £11 and £38. Though the figures were low, they represented a great advance on what had obtained previously.

The basis of the grading was a combination of the qualifications of the teacher and the rank of the school in which the teacher served. The scheme had much to recommend it but there was a hitch somewhere. In 1855, the Auditor General fixed salaries on the basis of the population of the district in which the school was situated. Thus, for example, a teacher in Cospicua, which had a population of 10,705 at the time, drew £40 a year while a teacher at Musta, where the population was only 3,524, drew £30. The more highly trained teachers accordingly gravitated to the town schools and, in consequence, the standard of the village schools deteriorated.

The Commissioner on Education in 1878 found three grades of salaries in operation. The third grade was now the highest. The rates paid and the number of teachers in each grade was as follows:-

	Men.		Women.	
Grade.	No.	Salary.	No.	Salary.
3	6	£65.(1 at £45)	6	£31,35,45,48, 48,60.
2	11	£45. to £55.	12	£28. to £48.
1	20	£38. to £45.	19	£21. to £28.

The"average schoolmaster" was thirty-nine years old, had served sixteen years and had a salary of £47. The "average schoolmistress" was forty-three years old, had served twenty-three years and had a salary of £31. The total annual expenditure on salaries was £3,957. and the staffs totalled 255. Canon Pullicino, himself, had a salary of £200.

Unfortunately, the situation was worse than the salary scales seemed to suggest. The scales were only applied to what

might be termed the established teachers. There was a vast body of teachers who received very much lower remuneration. These teachers were the "Temporary Assistants" and they consisted of the pupil teachers who, on the completion of their course, had not been permanently placed on the school staffs. They numbered no fewer than 155; almost twice the number of the established teachers. One hundred and nine of them had less than sixpence a day and the remainder all had less than ninepence. Seventy-seven of these unfortunates were over twenty-one years of age and fifty-nine of them had given more than five years service. Dr. Pullicino's Pupil Teacher system had simply degenerated into a method of providing cheap labour for the schools. The ninety established teachers drew £3,271 annually and the one hundred and fifty-five "Temporary Assistants", only £686.

The Commissioner's recommendations on the salary question were interesting. For the established teachers he suggested three classes. The corresponding salaries were to be £50, £40 and £30 for men and £40, 30 and £20 for women. These salaries were to be basic salaries. Over and above them, there was to be payment by results which would enable teachers to raise them to the levels of £75, £60, £45 and £60, £45, £30 respectively. School fees were to be levied and utilized to provide part, at least, of the money required. Turning to the "Temporary Assistants", Keenan recommended that they should be absorbed into the lowest class of established staffs or discharged; a reasonable time being granted to allow them to pass any suitable test. In the future, there were only to be sufficient pupil teachers in training to meet the legitimate staffing demands and they were to be paid £5 a year. Fifty-five was suggested as the maximum number and they were to be classed as Monitors and Monitresses.

The following years saw some improvement in the salaries but not to the extent that the Commissioner anticipated. Nor was his suggested reduction in the number of Monitors evident in the staffing figures in the nineties. These showed a total of 411, divided into classes as follows:-

Masters	38	Mistresses	44
Assistant Masters	19	Asst.Mistresses	122
Monitors	51	Monitresses	91

Masters received salaries ranging from £50 - £90; Mistresses £40 - £80. The Assistant Masters were divided into three classes and paid as shown below, Assistant Mistresses being paid on a slightly lower scale.

Assistants	Class 1	£22 - £30
	Class 2	£15 - £21
	Class 3	£10 - £14

These salaries were basic. Payment by results was in operation but the limit was £6 per year for men and £5 for women. Education had, incidentally, remained free and no fees were levied to augment the salaries.

In 1900, the position was bettered somewhat by the introduction of new set scales. These were applied as shown, three classes being created in each grade.

		No.	Salary.	Increment.
Masters (40)	Class 1	9	£90 - £110	£5 every three years.
	Class 2	14	£70 - £85	" " " "
	Class 3	17	£50 - £65	" " " "
Mistresses (46)	Class 1	11	£80 - £95	" " " "
	Class 2	16	£60 - £75	" " " "
	Class 3	19	£40 - £55	" " " "
Asst.Masters (150)	Class 1	25	£36 - £45	£1.10.0. annually.
	Class 2	50	£24 - £33	" "
	Class 3	75	£18 - £21	£1. 0.0. "
Asst.Mistresses (195)	Class 1	25	£30 - £36	" "
	Class 2	70	£21 - £27	" "
	Class 3	100	£15 - £18	" "
Monitors	-	27	£9 - £15	" "
Monitresses	-	55	£8 - £12	" "

No payment by results was made over and above these salaries and the Assistants of Class 2 and Class 3 were considered as being Temporary Assistants.

These scales remained in force until 1920, the only modification being that the triennial increment in the case of Masters and Mistresses was made biennial. The need for reform was imperative, however, in view of the changed conditions brought about by the war. New scales were brought into being and these scales were, with only minor alterations the scales which are used to-day. The present salary position (1939) is then as follows:-

	No.	Grade.	Salary.
Male Head Teachers	36	-	£140 by £10 to £250.
Female Head Teachers	40	-	£110 by £6 to £200.
Male Teachers	105	Grade I	£120 by £5 to £160.
	109	Grade II	£ 75 by £5 to £120.
	77	Grade III	£ 62 by £5 to £72.
Female Teachers	112	Grade I	£ 80 by £5 to £105
	152	Grade II	£ 56 by £5 to £80
	85	Grade III	£ 40 by £5 to £55.
Male Pupil Teachers	41	-	£58
Female Pupil Teachers	85	-	£40.

The teachers in the Central Schools and the Higher Central School receive salaries which are slightly higher. School Inspectors receive £250 - £350 and Inspectresses £190 - £250. The Director of Education receives £600.

It will be seen from this table of salaries that the prospects offered in the teaching profession are not great. A Pupil Teacher, after his four year course, commences at a salary of slightly over £1 per week. After four or so years, promotion to Grade III brings a salary of less than £1.5.0. a week. After several years further service, Grade II offers £1.10.0. rising slowly to £2.6.0. The maximum salary obtainable as a Grade I Assistant is just over £3. 0. 0. a week. Not all teachers qualify for Grade I and, in any case, the maximum is not reached before a very long period of service has been given.

The full significance of the rates of pay for teachers can probably be better appreciated from the table set out below. In it, the salaries paid in other Government Departments for a variety of posts are stated and the rank in the teaching profession which has comparable remuneration is set down alongside.

Post.	Salary.	Equivalent (Male Teachers)
First Class Clerk.	£320 by £5 to £360	No equivalent salary.
Second Class Clerk.	£180 by £15 to £290.	" " "
Third Class Clerk.	£100 by £10 to £170	Head and First Grade Teachers.
Draughtsman (1st Cl.)	£190 by £10 to £260	Head Teachers slightly less.
Draughtsman (2nd Cl.)	£120 by £10 to £190	Head Teacher and First Grade Teachers.
Storekeeper	£120 by £10 to £190	Head and First Grade Teachers.
Postal Clerk	£160 by £10 to £220	Head Teacher.
Post Office Sorter	£100 to £140	First Grade Teacher.
Foreman (1st Cl.)	£120 to £150	First Grade Teacher.
Foreman (2nd Cl.)	£ 90 to £120	Second Grade Teacher.

Post.	Salary.	Equivalent. (Male Teachers).
Postman	£80 to £120.	Second Grade Teacher.
Messenger.	£90 to £100.	Second Grade Teacher.

It is not surprising that the teaching profession in Malta is not held to be an attractive form of employment when the above figures are studied and when conditions are such that a First Grade Teacher enjoyed an appreciable rise in salary on being appointed storekeeper at the Education offices. The Director of Education has often lamented the fact that his Department is the nursery for the other Government Departments. Many students of promise, whose natural vocation was teaching, have been compelled by personal pride and ambition, no less than by economic circumstances, to seek higher remuneration in other spheres of activity. It is ridiculous to hope that, if the present salaries are maintained, the required number of teachers for future, necessary developments in education in Malta will be forthcoming or that the qualifications of such candidates as do present themselves will be of a sufficiently high order.

To a large extent, salaries determine the status of the teachers as well as their quality. It is not, therefore, surprising to find that the social standard of the schoolmaster in Malta is not comparable with his standing in England though it has risen appreciably in the last twenty years. The success of any future educational reforms will, in the final analysis, depend upon the teacher and the degree of his authority. As so much work is to be done in Malta to influence the adult as well as the child population, there is a particular need for the teaching profession to be recognised as a profession and for its members to be accorded a dignity commensurate with their social importance.

Before any possible solutions to the problem of wages can be put forward, it is essential that the academical and professional qualifications of the teachers and the nature of their training should be reviewed. These factors must be considered, too, as part of the second problem connected with staffing; that of providing the trained teachers, in sufficient numbers, to allow for the introduction of compulsory education.

In the early days, of course, no special training was given. Pullicino was the first to introduce some method into the

selection and training of prospective teachers. In 1850, he established the Pupil Teacher system and in 1855 set up a Model School. The basic preparation for appointment as teacher thus became the elementary education of the candidate and some slight training in School Method. Eventually, after 1865, it became necessary for the candidate to pass a simple examination. This was of a low standard but it did at least have the effect of weeding out a number of undesirables who would otherwise have been a burden on education in the Island. Further, a suggestion of a more rigorous practical training came into the scheme of things.

From 1900 onwards, the process of selecting and training teachers was as follows. Monitors and Monitresses were chosen from the best boys and girls of the higher classes of the Elementary Schools. Three times a week, they received lessons of an hour's duration from the Head Teachers of their schools. On Saturday mornings, they attended at a centre in Valletta - a primary school - where they received, collectively, instruction in English, History, Italian, Arithmetic, Geography and the Principles of School Management from a staff of thirteen special teachers. An annual examination determined their promotion to the post of Assistant Teacher. The degree of attainment was still low and the examination standard was inferior to that of the higher classes in a present day elementary school.

The need for improvement was obvious and, in 1920, the time at which self-Government was granted to Malta and reform was in the air, a gradual process was begun, aimed at raising the standard of the qualifications necessary to become a Pupil Teacher. The process had, of necessity, to be slow. At first, the Oxford Preliminary Examination and the College of Preceptors Preliminary Examination were the chosen standard. It was a low standard of attainment to secure admission into what is regarded as a profession of importance in other countries but it represented a great advance on what had sufficed before. The next step was to replace the two examinations mentioned by the Oxford Junior Local Examination and the College of Preceptors Junior Examination. This presented difficulties. The gap between the level of instruction in the highest classes in the elementary schools - from which the pros-

pective teachers were drawn - and the standard of attainment required to pass these examinations was great and unbridged. No organized supplementary classes were in existence to bridge it and, even when the would-be teachers were piloted to success, cramming was necessary.

It was felt that real progress would be made if classes were arranged to prepare students for the selected examinations and if, at the same time, the classes could give some practical training in teaching. An experiment on these lines, conducted in 1921, was held to have justified itself and, in 1923, this system of training was adopted and the Central Schools started.

The term "Central School" in Malta has none of the significance of the same term in England. Probably the only point of similarity between the institutions lies in the fact that they both select the more promising pupils of the elementary schools. In Malta, however, the Central Schools exist solely for the training of teachers. There are four of these schools in the Island and they provide a four year course for prospective Pupil Teachers drawn from the Sixth Standard of the elementary schools. The teachers at the Central Schools are specially selected for their work, both academical and professional. At the conclusion of the course, their pupils are expected to have a sound knowledge of English, Maltese, Religion, English and Maltese History, Geography, Mathematics. The course, as has been stated, ends in an examination. The standard of the examination, in the earlier days, was slightly higher than that of the Oxford Junior Local but it has been raised gradually to the level of the Oxford School Certificate.

The four years completed, the student, having passed his or her examination, is admitted to the staff of a school and commences to draw the full Pupil Teacher salary. Association with the Central School is not necessarily finished, however. In 1929 the Higher Central School, or Training School as it is called now, was founded. Its object, in the days when teachers' examinations were of a lower standard, was to provide a centre at which pupils could be coached for the Oxford School Certificate after having passed their teachers' examination. Subsequently, with the raising of the normal Central School examination to this new level, the Training School became a

post-certificate centre. It has as its present object the more thorough practical training of teachers and it also provides facilities for teachers to acquire extra knowledge and qualifications and to fit themselves to specialist posts. With the gradual widening of the scope of the syllabus in the elementary schools, the centre performs a vital function in supplying adequate numbers of teachers in subjects such as domestic science, handwork and music.

It will be seen then, that the present system of training teachers brings them academically to the level of the Oxford School Certificate. Their practical training is acquired by actual experience in the schools and by the attendance at the courses of the Central Schools. Some have had the advantage of additional instruction at the Higher Central School. A limited number of teachers have proceeded beyond the present accepted academic level and taken more advanced examinations. Now that the Higher Central School has become a centre for post-certificate work, there is no reason why this number should not be enlarged considerably. It might ultimately be possible for the higher examinations of the College of Preceptors, the A.C.P. and the L.C.P. to be attempted.

The training which we associate with English elementary school teaching and which leads to the Board of Education Certificate usually becomes possible for the Maltese teacher only on promotion to the position of Head Teacher of one of the larger schools in the Island. It has been the practice, since 1881, to send such teachers to England for the accepted two year course. Up to 1905, eighteen teachers had been so trained. In more recent years, the number training has increased. In 1936, the British Council granted seven bursaries which enabled a corresponding number of teachers to proceed to Exeter, Nottingham and Southampton University Colleges for short courses. Seven further teachers were granted bursaries for a scholastic year. At the same time, four teachers were at training colleges in England. In 1937, seven additional teachers were awarded British Council bursaries and, in all, seventeen were under training in England in that year. The Maltese students who take the two year training course usually proceed to one or the other of St.Mary's College, Strawberry Hill, Endsleigh College, Hull, St.Charles' College, London. It is significant that the Maltese students invariably do

extremely well in competition with other students who have undoubtedly had superior facilities and opportunities for preliminary training.

Reviewing the whole of the measures which govern the training of teachers and their development, the salient feature is the great progress which has been made in recent years. The standard of attainment which is accepted in Malta at the present day may seem low when it is considered that a large number of elementary schools in England have graduates on their staffs but the standard is indeed rising and the situation has altered out of all recognition in the last twenty years. This has been largely due to the initiative of the present Director.

Many problems still remain to be solved. In the first place, the present achievements have not removed the burden created by the short sighted economy of the past. Rather, the burden has become more evident. Roughly fifty per cent of the serving teachers entered the profession in the bad old days. Through no fault of their own, they are ill-equipped according to present day standards and will be unable to sustain their part in the progressive reforms which are essential to the future of education in the Island. It is virtually impossible for these older teachers to resume their studies, pass examinations and, at the same time, comprehend and put into practice modern methods of teaching. The Director of Education has stated more than once that, while the young teachers are promising, the older members of the staffs are a source of many difficulties. He adds that, if substitutes could be found for them, their services would be dispensed with. But substitutes cannot be found and that is the crux of a second problem.

To maintain the present limited primary education facilities is a sufficiently onerous task from the staffing point of view. Indeed, many of the country schools have had to dispense with the upper classes because of the lack of suitable teachers. Further, an analysis of the figures dealing with teachers shows that the staffs of the schools are made up of 18% Pupil Teachers, 21% Third Grade Teachers, 34% Second Grade Teachers and 27% First Grade Teachers. Moreover, though the child population consists of almost equal numbers of boys and girls, 60% of the teachers are women and 40% are

men. These figures indicate that many more better trained teachers are stil. required and that there is a definite need for men teachers.

The total number of teachers is about 900 at present. Should compulsory education be the goal, the call is for at least 200 additional teachers. Even though the introduction of compulsion might be a gradual process, spread over several years, it does not diminish the acute difficulty of providing the staffs. One great barrier will most certainly have to be removed; the low wage standard which prevents so many promising students from becoming teachers and which causes the schools to lose so many men teachers. The number of positions as black coat workers in Malta is strictly limited and, if the salaries paid to teachers were made reasonably attractive, the profession would become a desirable source of employment to many of the students of the higher educational institutions who now gravitate to other posts. So long as the salaries remain as they are teachers will only be forthcoming from a limited statum of society and they will not, be adequate.

The payment of remuneration on an enhanced scale would give the Education Department the right to impose more rigorous training and to continue to improve the standard of the qualifications necessary for entry into the teaching profession. It would be a negation of the work of the last twenty years if the introduction of compulsory education was to result in a wholesale dilution of the staffs.

The means must obviously be found, in the near future, for the training of a large number of teachers. The Central Schools are probably capable of considerable expansion but other additional sources of suitable candidates are the Lyceum and the Secondary Schools and the University. Students of the secondary schools who had matriculated would, according to present requirements, have adequate academic training and would require only the practical training before becoming teachers. Such students represent, potentially, a partial solution of the staffing problem.

Up to the present, the University of Malta can be said to have made no contribution to the training of teachers for the elementary schools or to have offered them any facilities. It has remained, until very recently, under its own management, largely

uncoordinated to the other educational institutions in the Island. Actually, in the University, there is a three year course, the Literary Course as it is called, which seeks to bridge the gap between the Secondary Schools and the University proper. This course, of "Letters, Sciences and Philosophy", is taken at the University but does not belong to any Faculty. It is peculiar to Malta and covers the period in the students' life that, in England, would be occupied in study for Higher School Certificate, University scholarships or the Intermediate B.A. or B.Sc. of London. Its principal drawback is its lack of elasticity. It is a fixed course for all students, irrespective of the Faculty they propose to enter and unrelated to their needs if they are merely continuing their education beyond the secondary school limit. This course has particular possibilities for the training of teachers. It could probably be adapted to give them the necessary academical standard to become specialists in certain subjects and it would, in any case, serve the dual purpose of augmenting the facilities for training and promoting a higher standard in the profession. The University might do even more than this. It might permit the students who have taken this course to pass on to a B.A. and it might also allow acting teachers to graduate without the necessity of attending the full University terms. Nothing could do more to raise the status of the teacher in the Island than to have his profession recognised as important by the University and for the University to provide facilities for him.

The Central Schools, Training School and University apart, there remains the possibility of training an increased number of teachers abroad. Admittedly, the number of students studying in England has increased in recent years and will probably continue to increase in future. It is extremely doubtful, however, whether the principle could be extended sufficiently to meet the great demand for teachers. In a way, it is not altogether desirable that a large body of teachers be trained abroad. Malta has its own traditions and its own culture and these are more likely to be appreciated if the training is carried out efficiently in the Island. It is certainly very desirable that a number of teachers should have the advantage of the superior training facilities available in England and one very great need of the moment is for training in special subjects.

Physical Training, Hygiene, Music, Domestic Science and Handwork are subjects which have been introduced increasingly into the schools and specialists, trained abroad in these subjects, are invaluable in progressing the work and giving others the benefit of their knowledge.

The staffing problems in Malta, then, resolve themselves into two major issues; salaries and the supply of an adequate number of trained teachers for present and future demands. They are, of course, closely related. The satisfactory solution of the question of teachers' pay will probably result in an increasing number of desirable candidates coming forward and a continuation of the steady improvement in quality of the teachers. The recent revival of interest in education has been nowhere more evident than among the students themselves and it is not unlikely that their interest will be translated into a practical effort to assist in educational reforms which are essential in the post-war period.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PROBLEM OF SCHOOL BUILDINGS AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE.

The difficulties of providing sufficient suitable school accommodation in Malta have always constituted a serious problem. At every stage in the history of the Elementary Schools, it is recorded. In the first schools to be established in the Island, those in Valletta and the Three Cities and Gozo, the age of admission of children was nominally six but had to be raised to eight at the dictation of cramped conditions. In 1838, the Royal Commissioners, finding the facilities for popular education still limited to the three original foundations, proposed ten schools in all. The seven new institutions were set up and, as separate departments for boys and girls were housed in each building, there were, in effect, twenty schools in the Islands. It was thought that the accommodation so provided would be adequate. How poor an estimate this proved to be is shown by the conditions in 1850, the year in which Canon Pullicino became Director of Primary Schools. There were, at this juncture, twenty four Government Primary Schools in existence in Malta, four in Gozo, a night school at Zabbar and an Industrial School at Floriana. It was estimated that only one sixtieth of the population was being instructed in them although they totalled ten more than Messrs. Austin and Lewis had contemplated. Nor did these schools present anything but a gloomy picture. Not one of them had been built for its specific purpose and all were poorly equipped.

Dr.Pullicino, during his term of office of thirty years, fought to improve conditions. In four of his eight General Reports, he drew attention to the need for new schools. He supplemented these Reports with letters to the Chief Secretary to the Government, in one of which, dated 19th of March, 1868, he said, "I need hardly state that, in all cases, it is preferable to build premises for schools than to convert common houses for such a special purpose. I have repeatedly recommended this course to be adopted by the Government.....I have also forwarded plans of such schools; but have since desisted from preparing other plans under the impression that the Government was not inclined to incur expenditure on a large scale to carry out my recommendations."

Dr. Pullicino's efforts were not without a measure of success, however. With Sir Patrick Grant as Governor from 1867 to 1872, provision was made for fifteen additional schools. In 1878, the year of the Royal Commission, eighty-one separate schools or departments were in being, housed in forty-three buildings and accommodating 7,746 children. Two of the buildings, at Rabat (Gozo) and Floriana, were erected specially as schools at the suggestions of the Director. His plans were not, apparently, well or fully carried out but the schools proved to be suited to their purpose and much superior to ordinary houses. The remaining thirty-four buildings, which accommodated sixty-one departments, were rented at an annual cost of £451. Some of them were not too inconvenient or unsuitable but, in the main, conditions were bad and there was considerable overcrowding. In many cases, the sanitary arrangements left much to be desired and, in all save one or two rare instances, playgrounds were unknown.

Although Dr.Pullicino had virtually trebled the accommodation available in the schools, the situation was a very long way from being satisfactory. During all this time, only £1,750 had been spent in erecting schools. Mr.Keenan, the Commissioner, commented, somewhat drily, that this was not much for a Colony that had not grudged £48,000 for an Opera House. He recommended that a few new schools should be built annually to supercede the old ones and that they should be built upon plans possessing all the aids and accessories to education that the school architecture of the time provided. He considered that £2,000 set aside annually for this purpose would have the effect, in the course of ten or twelve years, of providing the Country with an adequate number of suitable schools and he considered that the money would be well spent.

Between 1880 and the end of the century, many of the recommendations of the Commissioner were put into effect and, particularly under Dr.Tagliaferro as Director of Public Instruction and Prof.Magro as Director of Elementary Schools, some new schools were built. Notable among these were a school for eight hundred pupils at Mosta and another large school at Kospicua. During this period, the difficulty of securing the necessary capital for the

work was partially overcome by having the schools built with the money of private investors and the paying of interest at the rate of four per cent. Some £6,000 appears to have been involved in this way.

In spite of these efforts, the general situation was not being eased appreciably. The Census of 1891 had shown that there were 37,000 children between the ages of three and fifteen. Only 11,000 of these could be accommodated in the Government schools and 2,400 in the private schools in the Island. This restricted education to 35% of the children and there were waiting lists for admission. The total of those voluntarily seeking entry rose to 7,021 in 1898 and was 6,591 in 1899. Dr.Tagliaferro was forced to admit that, although several commodious schools had been built and others were in contemplation, it would not be possible for some time to come to provide sufficient accommodation to meet the growing demands. In a report published in 1901, he stressed the urgency of the situation: "The question of the supply of school accommodation is a matter of great importance and calls for all the more attention of those concerned because it is only on a prompt and satisfactory solution thereof that the Government can adequately meet the ever increasing demand for admission to the elementary schools." At this state, 13,028 children were enrolled in the existing day schools and 2,082 in the night schools. £912 a year was being paid in rent for school premises.

In 1901 and 1902, some progress was made. The number of Infants' departments was increased from fourteen to twenty-five and new schools were opened at Dingli and Imkabba. In 1902, it was possible to admit nearly 6,000 children and the waiting list dropped to 4,462. This reduction was, however, partly explained by the fact that many parents considered it futile to register their children; so remote was the chance of securing admission for them. In Hamrun, Senglea, Vittoriosa, Sliema and Zabbar, 650, 450, 333, 296 and 285 respectively, were on the waiting lists.

In 1902, a peculiar and unfortunate reason for slow progress in the provision of schools made its influence felt. The report of the Director for 1902-3 contained the following significant paragraph: "It is to be regretted that the action of the Government to

provide adequate school accommodation at Naxaro, Zeitun, Gudia and Chircop has not met with the support of the Elected Members on account of their misguided opposition to anything connected with the schools and raised by them on account of the language question." In this way, the political issues of the times worked to the detriment of education. In addition to the schools mentioned in the report, buildings urgently required, at Hamrun and Sliema were also affected.

In 1905, the number of schools or departments was 167 and 15,698 were enrolled. The waiting list stood at 3,614, and the inhabitants of Kercem and Calcara had petitioned for adequate schools to be provided. The schools at Senglea, Luqa, Naxaro, Krendi, Asciak, Gudia and Xeuchia were inconvenient and unsuitable and, in some cases, had unsatisfactory sanitary arrangements. New premises had been opened in Valletta and Zebbug and slow progress was being made with a number of other schools. At the same time, many projected schools were held up for lack of funds. The rent of schools was £1,252, the interest charges on schools erected for the Government by private persons being £274.

The following five years saw two new schoos, accommodating 500 additional children, opened and extensions made to existing buildings in an effort to cope, economically, with the waiting lists. In 1910 itself, the new Sliema schools were opened after having been building for some ten years. They were able to admit 852 children; 600 more than could previously be dealt with. In spite of this, 3,379 children were vainly seeking entry to the schools on March 31st, 1911. The plight of the children in Hamrun, a populous and growing suburb of Valletta, was shown by the fact that, of 750 seeking admission in that area, 135 had been registered for more than three years, 281 for between two and three years, and 280 for between one and two years. Of all the schools in the Islands, only fourteen had been built for their specific function. Five of the seven schools considered unsuitable in 1905 were still in use. Rent and interest on buildings not owned by the Government amounted to £1,250 a year.

The decade which followed saw the same limited progress being made in the provision of accommodation. The day school enrolment of 17,940 in 1910 rose to 18,482 in 1912 and 22,052 in 1916. It fell off slightly in 1917 to 20,503. In that year, a new

departure was made in the effort to absorb the waiting list. As a result of the insufficiency of the accommodation available for girls in Valletta and Sliema and the fact that there had been no admissions of children since September, 1914, arrangements were made for 357 elementary scholars to attend school in the mornings only and 197 to attend in the afternoons only. In this way, it was possible to accommodate all the children seeking admission in these two areas. In Hamrun, the same expedient was not able to achieve the same, desired end. The adoption of the practice still left a waiting list of 150. This part time education has, unhappily, remained a necessary part of the scheme to bring schooling to as many children as possible in the Islands.

The war years of 1914-18 were naturally a period of retrenchment so far as expenditure was concerned and no great strides could be made with building programmes. Two new schools were, however, opened and they provided accommodation for 400 pupils. In addition, six of the older buildings were extended and the total extra number of children who could be accepted was brought up to 2,500. The interest of Lord Methuen, the Governor, in the schools and the general desire for improvement in the post war years had the effect of keeping attention focussed upon the problems of education and it was hoped, after the Armistice, that progress would be made.

The grant of Self-government in 1920 gave further impetus to these aspirations. In that year, some 20,000 were enrolled in the schools and there was the inevitable waiting list. Forty-four buildings were in use and, of these, some sixteen had been built as schools. In the short, non-statistical report of the Hon.W.N.Bruce in 1921, the need for new buildings was mentioned but it was pointed out that their provision would depend largely upon the state of the Country's finances under its new Government and the amounts which could be allocated for the purpose.

It was at this period that Dr.Laferla became Director and among the many contributions which he has made to the improvement of education in the Island, his efforts to secure adequate and suitable accommodation with the limited funds available must rank high. In the earlier years of his administration, the Compulsory

Attendance Act made obvious demands and, in large measure, these were met. The Aragon School and Migiarro School were opened in 1923 and the Marsa School was opened though not fully completed in 1924. A school at Gzira and another at Asciak were opened in the same year. Three populous districts were in particular need of really good accommodation at this time; Birkirkara, Curmi and Senglea. It was decided to open specially designed new schools in these areas. In 1925, the Marsa School was completed and immediately became overcrowded with 619 children. At Mellieha, additional accommodation had to be found, the existing buildings being insufficient for the 428 school children of the area. At Curmi, no less than 378 children were awaiting admission and at Birkirkara, the accommodation was described as disgraceful. In his report for the year in question, the Director stated that the measures taken in the past had merely touched the fringe of the subject. Many thousands of pounds would have to be spent before the accommodation would hold the children who were clamouring for admission. There was no hope of preventing the waiting lists in the near future. It is a somewhat melancholy commentary on the progress of a quarter of a century that Dr. Tagliaferro had used almost identical words in 1900.

To quote the details of accommodation for each successive year is largely a repetition of what has already been indicated; a limited number of new schools being built and opened and old schools being extended and an ever increasing number of children seeking admission. It is possibly more useful to analyse the causes of the unsatisfactory state of affairs which has so long been detrimental to education in Malta and which continues to be a stumbling block on the road to the essential and desired compulsory education.

The basic cause of trouble has been the short-sighted economy which has characterised education in Malta in so many ways. The effects of this economy have been cumulative. The first half century of primary education under the Government saw less than two thousand pounds spent on new school buildings. The second half century was thus commenced with a legacy of unsuitable and overcrowded accommodation. While expenditure has increased very substantially, it has never been adequate and is not adequate now. Moreover, the limited sum of money which have been available have had to be spent

more on compromise accommodation in adapted private houses than on the much more expensive but eminently desirable new schools. This expedient has enabled a large number of children to be admitted into the schools and, while it has never succeeded in eliminating the waiting list, it has prevented a serious worsening of the situation. It has, however, merely postponed the inevitable capital expenditure which a large programme of school building involves.

A second cause of trouble has naturally lain in the increasing population. Each succeeding year has materially increased the number of children lying in the age groups of the schools. In consequence, while vigorous efforts not necessarily successful - have been made from time to time to cope with immediate demands for schools, the passing of five or ten years has rendered them totally inadequate for the new child population. Thus, in 1877, 5,044 out of an estimated 14,654 in the appropriate age groups were on the rolls of the primary schools. This figure represented 40% of the children as attending school. In 1891, twice the number of children on the rolls of the schools gave no increase in the percentage. In 1901, 13,500 enrolments gave no increase nor did 18,000 in 1910. Turning to more recent days, the same trend is evident. A roll of nearly 30,000 children in 1938 represents 60% of the child population. In sixty years, the accommodation has had to be increased by 500% to deal with only an additional 20% of the children of school age. Unfortunately, this phenomenal growth of population did not, apparently enter into the calculations of the Commissioners of 1838, who felt that ten schools would provide for the Country, or of the Commissioner of 1878, who thought that the Islands would be well-equipped with modern school buildings if £2,000 were spent annually for ten or twelve years.

Other factors have, of course, complicated the situation. The standard of education has been raised progressively, the length of the school course increased and legislation governing attendance introduced. Where the length of a school course in 1880 was, perhaps, three years, it became four or five years in 1910 and is now six or seven years. Moreover, whereas in pre-1924 days an amount of accommodation was made available by children leaving school before the completion of their full courses, the Compulsory

Attendance Act made a definite demand for accommodation for all the enrolled children for a specific period.

Finally, the last twenty years have seen a radical change in the attitude of many people towards education. The war of 1914-18 did much to effect it in the first instance. The grant of Self-government produced a national spirit which accelerated the process. The more recent years have naturally continued it. Schooling may have been regarded, in the past, as superfluous and, in the economic conditions obtaining, a luxury. It is now being regarded by an increasing number of parents as a necessity; not only for the well-being of the individual in his own country or abroad, but also for the well-being and pride of the Maltese as a nation. If the demand for educational facilities in the past has been great and insistent, the demand in the future is likely to be universal and even more intense.

The actual building of new schools and the extension or modification of existing buildings is carried out by the Public Works Department. The work comes under the heading of "Works Extraordinary" and is financed from the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Island. When the magnitude of the task of providing accommodation is considered - at present it amounts to housing at least 13,000 additional children and improving the accommodation of the 30,000 already at school - the following figures, showing the money spent on school building and the total money spent on Works Extraordinary, indicate the inadequacy of the present scale of financial provision.

	Total Works Extraordinary including Special Works.	Expenditure on Schools.
1937-8	£125,029	£4,327
1936-7	£123,159	£4,558
1935-6	£108,470	£6,198
1934-5	£ 85,335	£6,596
1933-4	£ 92,717	£7,261

1920, an exceptional year, saw an expenditure on schools of £26,675 and 1930 saw an appropriation of £14,631. On average, however, roughly £5,000 a year has been devoted to school buildings. This is about 5% of the total sum for Public Works Extraordinary. What is possibly a more illuminating fact is that this pressing national problem, which has been so repeatedly and vehemently stressed, should only have succeeded in having one half of one per cent of the Island's

expenditure devoted to its amelioration.

These figures give some indication of the difficulties facing the Director of Education. It says much for the careful expenditure of small sums available that the last twenty years has seen many fine schools built in Malta and Gozo; notably those at Birkirkara, Curmi, Ghargur, Nadur, Senglea, Luqa and Hamrun. Progress is now being made with other schools, particularly a large, new school at Tarxien and - to supply a long felt want - a large Technical School at Ghain Dwieli.

One unfortunate result of the small sum of money made available for building work is that it is often many years before a large, modern and necessarily costly school can be completed. The urgency of the problem of providing accommodation absorbs much of the money in alterations and additions to existing premises and rented property. The balance only is available for the new school. Thus, the school at Birkirkara, which cost some £20,000 was commenced in 1924 but could not be completed until 1935. The case of the school at Curmi was practically identical. The Ghargur school, costing £6,427, was started in 1927 and not finished until 1934. The £5,370 school at Nadur was under construction for five years, being finally completed in 1934. The Tarxien school, estimated to cost £18,000 has been building since 1930 and is not complete yet. The Director computed the time needed to complete the much needed Technical School at ten years from its commencement.

The lengthy period taken in the erection of a school has obvious, serious drawbacks. In the first place, school architecture is not static and a school designed to meet conditions in 1930 is not necessarily a convenient school for 1940 after ten years of educational development have possibly altered appreciably the purpose and, with it, the plan of the ideal school. In this connection, it is worthy of note that not one elementary school in Malta has a gymnasium and only one has a garden as an integral part of the design. In the second place, the child population of an area may alter very appreciably in a decade. In Malta this has definitely proved to have been the case in more than one locality. As a result of the upward trend of population, the schools at the Marsa, at Sliema and at Hamrun were overcrowded immediately upon their completion and opening. It is now thought that the school at Tarxien

will suffer the same fate.

One salient conclusion emerges from the study of the problem of school accommodation. It has been created by economy and compromise, and has become one of the several unfortunate legacies from the past. The need, after the war, is for the rebuilding and renovating of such modern Government-owned schools as survive and the building of new and adequate premises to replace all the unsuitable adapted buildings and rented buildings. That a large capital expenditure will be involved is unquestioned but the rebuilding of Malta is not likely to devolve in anything like its entirety upon the slender resources of the Island. The proposals for modern school premises, capable of meeting all the present and future demands for accommodation and anticipating full compulsory education, should form part of any scheme of reconstruction which is undertaken with the financial assistance of the Imperial Government.

CHAPTER IX.

THE FINANCIAL PROBLEM OF ANNUAL EXPENDITURE.

It has been stated, particularly in the chapters which deals with the salaries of teachers that economy has been the guiding principle in the financing of education in Malta. This economy has often been carried to a stage at which it has seriously and adversely affected the efficient operation of the existing system of education and it has always proved an insurmountable barrier between the hope and the realisation much needed reforms. That such economy has been against the wishes of those responsible for the direction of education in Malta is without doubt. They have never failed to condemn it.

The annually recurrent cost of Malta's schools is borne by the Consolidated Revenue Fund of the Islands. Since the beginning of the present century, the revenue has steadily risen from some £350,000 to £1,500,000 in the years immediately preceding the war. This revenue is drawn from three main sources; Customs Duties, the Water and Electricity undertakings - which are Government concerned - and Licenses, Stamp and other Duties. The Customs Duties bring in approximately 50% of the total income, the Water and Electricity undertakings 12%, and the Licences, Stamp and other Duties 8%. These figures, incidentally, have remained reasonably stable over the last forty years. Income from landed property, interest on investments, the Post Office, the Telephone Service, the Government Lotto, Fees of Office and Reimbursements also make appreciable contributions.

The Consolidated Revenue Fund represents, to all intents and purposes, the total income. There is no direct taxation, such as Income Tax, and, as there are no municipalities, there are none of the rates on property which are levied for the purpose of Local Government in England. In general, the sources of revenue and the total sums, which are thereby made available for the expenditure of the Islands, reflect the economic conditions. All the normal departments identified with the civil life of the community have to be catered for out of this revenue though Military expenditure is, naturally, dealt with by the Imperial

Government. In recent years, the principal heads of expenditure, in the order of the sums allocated to them, have been; Medical and Health Services, Education, Water and Electricity Services, Public Works (Extraordinary), Public Works (Annually recurrent), Pensions and Police. Malta, fortunately, has no National Debt save a sum of £79,000, known as the "Massa Frumentaria", which dates back to the time of the French occupation of the Islands.

The Table A indicates the provision which has been made for education in the past in relation to the total Government expenditure and also shows the manner in which the money available has been apportioned to University, Secondary and Primary institutions. It will be seen that, fifty years ago, rather less than one twelfth of the Islands' income was allocated to education and that this proportion has risen to one eigth in recent years. The actual sum involved has been increased approximately nine times in the same period. The general conclusion which can be reached concerning the education vote is that it has become the maximum permissible fraction of the Islands' expenditure. To increase it further would involve the withdrawal of money from other departments which are essential to the life of the community and which are very similarly placed financially.

As will have been seen from the preceding chapters, the sums made available for education have allowed only limited progress to be made towards the goal of the compulsory education of the Maltese children by adequately paid, well trained staffs in suitably equipped and maintained schools. Schemes for the introduction of special schools have been held up or abandoned. It has been impossible to extend the facilities for technical education or for physical training and Malta is still without schools for the deaf, dumb, blind or mentally deficient. It follows that outside assistance will be essential in the future. If Malta is ultimately to have a sound system of education, with facilities comparable with those abroad, not only will aid in the form of capital to provide buildings and initial equipment be necessary; an appreciable annual grant will be needed.

In his proposals for the introduction of compulsory education, Sir Charles Bonham-Carter hoped that the money required to supplement annually recurrent expenditure from the Consolidated Revenue Fund would also be forthcoming from the Colonial Development Fund. Whether

or not the Fund will be in a position to make specific yearly allocations, as opposed to capital grants, is a matter of some moment for Malta.

Referring again to the figures for past expenditure, it will be seen that, at one time, a very large proportion of the money made available for the purpose of education was spent on the University and on the Secondary Schools. The Elementary Schools received only slightly more than half the sum. The opinion has been expressed, on more than one occasion, that the few have been educated at the expense of the many. There seems to be some justification for this view. In 1887, the cost of Primary Education was £5,768 and 7,746 children were enrolled in the schools. Secondary and University Education, while catering for only 819 of the children of more well-to-do parents, was costing the Government £54,676. In 1904, the average cost to the Government of a student at the University was £26.10.0, of a student at the Lyceum £8.15.4. and of a child at an Elementary School £1.13.8. At this time, 3,152 boys and girls were registered as seeking admission to the Elementary Schools. Matters cannot be said to have improved a great deal. As recently as 1935, the University student and the Lyceum student were costing the Government £62.15.8. and £9.2.4. respectively, the figure for the Elementary School child being £4.19.11. Meanwhile, there is still a waiting list for the Primary Schools. All that can be said is that the proportion of the money devoted to Primary Education has risen to three-quarters of the Education vote while the University's share has been cut by half and the Secondary Schools' reduced by about one third.

None the less, it should be borne in mind that the child of Maltese working class parents is not nearly so well placed as his English counterpart to avail himself of Secondary or University Education. Under present economic and social conditions, the family finances are too often insufficient to maintain him at school or at the University - even if actual fees can be covered by scholarships. Post-primary education still remains, therefore, the perogative of the children whose financial standing is above the average. Scholarships, in themselves, are inadequate; grants are required which will permit the more promising children from working class homes to continue their education without undue hardship to the parents. It is possibly

not out of place to mention here that, Government help apart, there exists, in connection with the advanced education of poorer students, a commendable opportunity for the wealthy members of the community to exercise their generosity.

Another aspect of the financial situation is worthy of consideration. Two instances of the cost of primary education for each child enrolled have been mentioned. From the beginning of the century until 1920, this remained fairly constant at about £1.10.0. As a result, the slowly increasing annual votes for the Elementary Schools enabled a modest yearly increase in the number of children for whom provision could be made. Around 1920, the revolution in educational practice, coupled with increased salaries for teachers and higher costs in general, demanded a greater sum of money for the education of the same number of children. Thus the cost per head rose rapidly from £1.10.0. to £2.10.0. and then to £3.0.0. as the money available for the Elementary Schools was doubled. Since then, it has risen steadily to £4.0.0. The increasing allocation has been absorbed in two ways; in providing a greater expenditure per capita and increasing, as far as possible, the number of places available in the schools. The present Director has been faced with the choice of sacrificing the quality of education, denying admission to the many waiting to enter the schools, or effecting the fairest compromise between the two extremes. This latter policy has been followed as the statistics in the Table B testify.

The financial problem of the immediate future, in so far as recurrent expenditure is concerned, is considerable. Provision needs to be made for at least 13,500 children. At the present rate this, in itself, involves £54,000 annually. To this must be added the cost of such desirable reforms as the increase in the salaries of the teachers and the cost of maintaining and supplying a greatly increased number of schools. The use of expedients may reduce this estimate appreciably but the history of education in Malta is largely a condemnation of false economy and expediency. It is probably not an exaggeration to say that the annual cost of full compulsory education with adequate, trained staffs and adequate material will be at least £200,000 yearly. It is quite clear that such a sum cannot

be provided from the revenue of the Islands as drawn from the existing sources.

TABLE A.

The total yearly expenditure of Malta, the amount spent on Education and the allocations to Elementary, Secondary and University Education.

Year.	Total.	Educ.	%	Elem.	%	Sec.	%	Univ.	%
1889	230,090	19,221	8	10,182	52	2,988	16	3,296	17
1895	280,367	20,667	7	11,316	55	3,330	16	3,589	18
1900	326,562	22,720	7	14,641	64	4,278	19	3,782	17
1905	460,545	37,204	8	25,128	68	4,804	13	5,155	14
1910	475,737	39,881	9	27,140	68	4,673	12	5,758	14
1918	484,726	38,877	8	28,187	70	4,541	11	6,149	15
1922	710,464	74,825	11	56,405	75	7,385	10	9,415	13
1930	930,113	134,640	14	89,438	67	9,974	11	9,764	10
1932	942,650	138,528	15	102,632	74	11,461	11	10,080	10
1935	1,065,670	145,956	14	115,616	79	18,096	12	11,985	8
1937	1,211,360	155,805	13	118,628	76	19,085	12	12,630	8
1939	1,436,625	165,625	12	121,589	73	21,215	13	13,264	8
1940	1,516,999	174,517	11	126,857	72	19,931	11	14,413	8

TABLE B.

Year.	Cost of Elem.Ed.	No.of scholars.	Cost per scholar.
1899	£ 14,636	13,028	£1. 1. 7.
1905	£25, 128	17,100	£1. 9. 8.
1910	£ 27,140	17,940	£1. 8. 5.
1915	£ 28,352	22,052	£1.13. 8.
1920	£ 55,961	19,595	£2.12.11.
1925	£ 78,771	23,607	£2.19. 6.
1930	£ 89,438	25,981	£3. 4. 8.
1935	£115,616	30,414	£3.19. 4.
1939	£121,589	32,735	£4. 0.10.

CHAPTER X.

THE LANGUAGE QUESTION.

The question, which is at once the most interesting and important in the problem of the curriculum - if not of education - in Malta, is the question of the language of the schools. It is so involved and there are so many aspects of it - religious, educational, historical, political, social and commercial - that only a very brief outline can be given of its history, its salient features and of the efforts which have been made to solve it.

In the Ninth Century, after two Saracenic invasions and terrible massacres, an Arab Emir assumed the sovereignty of Malta. Possibly it was then that the foundations were laid of the language to which the Maltese have pertinaciously clung, though many authorities contend that its origin is to be found in much more remote history. For some two hundred years, the Arabs remained masters of the Islands and their influence was dominating in the extreme. When Count Roger of Normandy became the conqueror in 1090, little trace of the speech of the Phoenician or the Byzantine, the precursors of the Arabs, was evident. The Maltese had, in effect, become Arab in language. In marked contrast, they had not become alienated from the Christianity which St.Paul had preached during his three months sojourn in their midst. Perhaps the same tenacity which caused the religion of the Maltese to survive so many assaults has been again manifest in the survival of the Maltese language to the present day.

It is true that, in the days of successive German, French and Spanish rulers who, from 1194 to 1530, followed the Normans, and in the days of the Knights, who held sway until 1798, little was done to draw the people away from their Arab dialect. In all cases, the rulers held aloof from the Islanders and no system of popular education was ever established to make an impression upon them as a whole. It is possible, however, that the introduction of Italian took place in the days of the Knights and was largely due to them. The codes of Laws of the Grand Masters Vilhena (1722-1736) and de Rohan (1775-1797) were published in Italian. Moreover, in the Jesuits' College which was founded with the sanction of Grand

Master Verdala (1581-1595), in the University which replaced it in the reign of Grand Master Pinto (1741-1773) and in the Bishop's Ecclesiastical Seminary, the literature and the teaching were in Italian and Latin.

Although the French set to work with energy and decreed many educational reforms, including the establishment of elementary schools in which French was to be taught and the education of the sons of the upper classes in France itself, their rule was of too short a duration to permit them to put the measures into actual operation. As a result, when Malta became aBritish Colony - practically in 1800 and actually in 1814 - the Maltese dialect was the language of the vast majority of the people and Italian was a language which had some hold upon the more educated section of the community. Maltese had suffered, so far as education was concerned, from its being a dialect rather than a written language. It was, however, rapidly emerging from that state. There were several writers, grammarians and lexicographers of Maltese; Agius, Canolo, Naudi, Vella and Vassalli. The latter eminent scholar was ultimately to become the Professor of Maltese in the University in the time of the Marquess of Hastings (1824-1826) as Governor. He published, among other works, a Dictionary, a Grammar, a Collection of Maltese Proverbs and a translation of the History of Cyprus. The principal feature of the work of rendering Maltese a written language was the use of Roman characters instead of the Arabic notation and the elimination of the many corruptions which had been introduced into the language with the passage of time. This did not, unfortunately, lead to a uniformity in the ortography adopted by individual Maltese scholars.

With Malta a British Colony, it was natural that the English language should make itself heard. The first Governor, Sir Thomas Maitland, had implicit instructions from Lord Bathurst, the Secretary of State, on the point. "I recommend to your constant attention the diffusion of the English Language among the inhabitants; and the promotion of every method by which the English may be brought to supersede to Italian Tongue. The circumstances appear to favour this endeavour. The people at large use a corrupt dialect of the Arabic, while the upper classes speak Italian." Maitland, following

these instructions, decreed that no one could be an Advocate, Notary or Law Procurator unless able to read, write and speak English. Further, all petitions to the Government were to be in English and knowledge of the language was a recommendation for Government appointments. When it was but little known, however, it suffered a reverse. In 1825, a Commission of five, selected to investigate and reform the Laws of Malta, decided, by a majority of one, that the language of the new Laws should be Italian. The dissentients were the Chief Justice of Malta, Sir John Stoddart, and the Attorney General who were in favour of English. The battle of the languages was fought with much bitterness and resulted in an antipathy, lasting for many years on the part of some Maltese, to the cultivation or even the toleration of English. In 1835, a Criminal Code and Laws of Procedure were published in Italian and, since then and until quite recent years, Italian has been firmly entrenched as the language of the Courts, the Judges and the Advocates.

Perhaps not unnaturally, the Royal Commissioners on Education of 1838, when dealing with the language of the schools, came to the conclusion that the Italian language was far more useful to the Maltese than any other language excepting their native tongue. In consequence, they recommended that, as soon as a child should have learned to read Maltese, he should learn to read and write Italian through the medium of the former language. English was only to be introduced after Italian had been learned and if the time allotted to the child's schooling permitted. At the same time, the Commissioners were in favour of Arabic being taught in the schools; not because of its relation to the Maltese tongue but in view of its value to the many who were, at the time, emigrating to Arabic speaking countries.

Between 1840 and 1850, there were major political troubles in Italy and the Italian Risorgimento had the effect of bringing a large number of the intellectuals of the country to Malta as refugees. There was a good deal of sympathy for them and many of their writing reached a large public and had the effect of diffusing the Italian language further in the Islands.

In 1850, the Elementary Schools came under Dr.Pullicino. In addition to the official authority for the teaching of Italian, it was his own personal desire that that language should predominate.

He saw to it that the teachers were also imbued with the same idea. His circulars to them, his instructions, the arrangements for their training and his time tables were all issued in Italian. He appears to have felt a strong repugnance for Maltese and, though he wrote a number of primers to assist in the lessons in that language, his object in doing so was mainly to aid the culture of the Italian. While he had sympathy with the English language, he made it markedly subordinate to that of Italy. In 1865, the Commission on Public Instruction appointed by the Governor, Storks, recommended Italian as the written language and the basis of instruction. This was probably the one feature of an extremely adverse report which appealed to the Director. There were, however, still champions of English. In 1866, a Dr. Sciortino proposed that the schools should teach reading and writing in Maltese first and that English and Italian should be introduced later on terms of equality. A Dr. Zammit followed the lead of Dr. Sciortino in 1870 but the proposals made no headway.

Sir Patrick Keenan, the Commissioner of 1878 went into the language question very fully. He found that Maltese was the language spoken by all and sundry and he made the recommendation that the education of the children in the primary schools should be based on the principle of teaching them to read their native language as correctly as English children were taught to read English in English schools. In the matter of the second language to be taught, the Commissioner recommended that English - and English only - taught through the medium of the Maltese should be the future language of the schools. This decision was based on a wide review of the advantages which would accrue and on statistics which showed that, although a greater number of people spoke Italian than spoke English, the latter language was making rapid progress towards equality and subsequent predominance.

The Commissioner's recommendation was supplemented by the recommendation of Sir Penrose Julyan who was investigating the Civil Establishments of the Island at the same time. He proposed direct action to introduce English as the official language and was in favour of its substitution for Italian in the Law Courts as a result of a gradual change over a period of twelve to fifteen years. Keenan, moreover, enlisted powerful support for his proposals.

The Archbishop, in a letter to him expressed his resolve to co-operate with the Government in the extension and improvement of education and described the proposal to give English a prominent place as laudable. Sir Adrian Dingli, the Crown Advocate, however, expressed the opinion that it would be unwise to compel the use of English and that it would be preferable to allow the use of English to develop spontaneously.

The recommendations of the Commissioner found a ready champion in Mr. Sigismondo Savona who became Director of Education in 1880 and, in consequence, an official member of the Executive Council which was set up by the Constitution granted in 1881. Savona made the study of English obligatory from the 2nd Class of the Primary Schools but retained Italian in the 3rd and 4th Classes. The opposition to these moves was led by Dr. Fortunato Mizzi, the Elected Member for Gozo. He was the champion of the Italian language and formed the Anti-Reform Party to oppose Savona's innovations. Education was drawn into the orbit of party politics.

The first move of two of the Elected Members was to resign and to have elected in their places an imbecile and an almost illiterate organ grinder. This use of ridicule as a weapon in the fight had, as its consequence, the dissolution of the Council in December, 1882. New regulations were framed to prevent a recurrence of these happenings and the Executive Council was reconstituted. As a result Mizzi and his Party returned to the Council. In September 1883, he stated his attitude to the language question. He did not object to the diffusion of English but would oppose its substitution by compulsion to Italian. Mizzi further held that the election of his Party had been in the nature of a plebiscite and had shown that the Maltese were Italian and that their language was Italian. The teaching of Maltese was consequently opposed and the threat was made to reject the Education votes unless Italian was restored to the position it had occupied in the pre-Savona days.

Elections were again held in June 1884 and the Anti-Reform Party was again successful. In the following two years, however, there was something in the nature of a reaction, particularly to the assertion that the Maltese were an Italian people. This carried the affair outside the bounds of the Island. The leaders

of the reaction gave offence to Italy, largely because the cry of irredentistism had been raised against Mizzi and his followers. Diplomatic protests followed from Italy and the Foreign Secretary, Mancini, denied that there was any Italian authority favouring an irredentist policy in Malta. Assurances were given by both the Italian and the Maltese Governments that they were not interfering with each other in any way.

In 1886, Mizzi resigned from the Government, having disagreed with the Elected Members as well as with the Official Members. At this stage, the young Count Gerald Strickland appeared on the scene and he and Mizzi joined forces. Political agitation was now largely directed towards securing a new Constitution. Several schemes were put forward and turned down by the Secretary of State. Mizzi and Strickland went to London with a scheme and, subsequently, in December 1887, a Constitution was granted based largely on their proposals. This gave a Council of Government with six Official Members and fourteen Elected Members and an Executive Council of ten, of whom three were chosen from the Elected Members.

Savona resigned from the post of Director of Education earlier in the year as a result of the setting up of a Committee to inquire into questions concerning the University by Sir Victor Hely-Hutchinson, the Lt.-Governor. This Committee recommended that the Statute of the University be altered and, in consequence, the University became governed by a Senate of fourteen of whom the Director was an ex-officio member. One of the first subjects referred to the Senate, which was slightly modified on the recommendation of the Secretary of State, was that of the language of the schools. As a result, Maltese continued to be taught in the Primary Schools but in the Italo-Maltese alphabet as used before the Savona reforms. Italian and English were placed on an equal footing.

Mizzi had triumphed at the first elections under the new Constitution but later withdrew from politics on the score of poor health. In the elections of 1891, Savona was successful at the polls, twelve out of the fourteen Elected Members belong to his Party. The political issues were now more those of Ecclesiastical matters which had been raised as a result of a mission to the Vatican, undertaken by Sir Lintorn Simmons, the Governor of Malta from 1890 to 1893, in 1894. A relentless political duel continued to be fought

between Savona and Strickland. The former abruptly abandoned politics in 1895, however, and the Elected Members were left leaderless. His erstwhile enemy, Mizzi, was prevaled upon to return and the language question again came to the foreground. One of Mizzi's first acts was to introduce a draft ordinance recognizing Italian as the medium of instruction and the language of communication. Conditions had, however, altered appreciably in the preceding year or two. English had made great strides and the school of the English Jesuits, St. Ignatius' College, was regarded as one of Malta's finest educational institutions. Moreover, Strickland, with whom Mizzi had collaborated on the Constitutional question, was pro-English in the language controversy. After the Select Committee of 1897 had carried on its work, the language situation was that Maltese was taught in the first two years of the Primary School course, the choice of one or other of Italian or English in the third and fourth years and both Italian and English in the ultimate two years. Mizzi strenuously opposed this arrangement.

In 1899, at the direction of Mr.Chamberlain and during the term of office of Sir Francis Grenfell as Governor, an Order in Council was promulgated decreeing the substitution of English for Italian as the language of the Courts. The change was to be made in a period of fifteen years. The Elected Members protested to Grenfell and, in Council, made the voting of any supply dependent upon the acdeptance of Mizzi's proposal to make Italian the medium of instruction in the schools. Constitutional issues were also involved and Mizzi and a member of his party left for England to see Chamberlain. They found him adamant on the question of the language in the courts, particularly in so far as it affected Englishmen, and disinclined to extend the 1887 Constitution in view of the way in which it had been used.

Chamberlain visited Malta and Italy in 1901. His visit did not pacify the Elected Members. They rejected the votes for the schools with the result that they were closed by Grenfell and not opened until, in consequence of some reaction, the votes were passed. Meanwhile, Italy took offence at Chamberlain's proposals. This led first to a proclamation which modified the time limit for the introduction of English into the Courts to twenty years and,

finally, to a withdrawal of the proposals in their entirety.

By 1902, the language position in the schools was governed by the choice between Italian and English and Maltese had disappeared from the curriculum. In 1899, on April 8th, a "System of Instruction in the Government Elementary Schools" was devised by Sir Gerald Strickland and approved by the Government. In consequence, parents or guardians had to make the choice either English or Italian as the secondary language of instruction for their children on their promotion or admission to the third year of the school course. On April 7th, 1902, a Manifesto - Government Notice No.84 - gave the parents the choice of one of the two languages as the language of colloquial instruction for the children in the Infants' classes and the classes below Standard III. Above Standard IV, another choice had to be made of the language of the examinations. English or Italian or English and Italian together could be chosen.

In the years in which these measures were introduced and in the following years, the majority of parents chose English. Over a five years period from 1902, an average of 89.8% chose English as the language of colloquial instruction; 92.15% chose English as the secondary language of instruction over the nine years from 1899 to 1908; 98.8% chose either English or English and Italian together over the five years from 1902 to 1907.

In spite of this verdict of the parents, there was still considerable trouble. The Elected Members were opposed to the free choice and now favoured both English and Italian being made obligatory. In 1903, they rejected the Education votes. As a result, on June 22nd, of that year, the Constitution was withdrawn and Malta returned virtually to the government she had had under the 1849 Constitution, and in which the Official Members had a majority. Mizzi's party was returned and, though Mizzi himself died in 1905, it resorted to abstentionism until 1907.

Conditions were a shade more settled by 1909 and a speech made by Mr. Winston Churchill on a visit to the Island had a good effect. Letters Patent in December again allowed Elected Members on the Executive Council, two being appointed. Agitation for a new Constitution continued, however, and the policy of abstention was again resorted to.

Though the war of 1914-18 drew a good deal of attention away from local politics and the Maltese made invaluable contributions to the Allied cause, the issues of the language and of the Constitution remained outstanding. In 1915, Dr.Enrico Mizzi, son of Dr.Fortunato Mizzi was elected. His sympathies were most strongly pro-Italian. In March, 1917, he earned a reprimand when, in a printed speech on the language question in the schools, he condemned the British government in terms which were considered to have verged on sedition. In August of the same year, he was sentenced to a year's imprisonment but the sentence was reduced to a severe reprimand. He had, perforce, to retire from the Council until after the Armistice.

When hostilities ceased, the politicians renewed their agitation for autonomy. On the 25th of February, 1919, Dr.(later Sir) Philippo Sceberras held a National Assembly at the Circolo "La Giovine Malta" and a resolution was unanimously passed asking the British Government to grant a Constitution with "Full political and administrative authority". Matters moved rapidly to a head. On June 6th, the University students created disorders and greatly damaged their Schools. In the meantime, dissatisfaction had grown among the poorer classes of the people due to the high cost of food and the unemployment which was widespread in the depression which followed the boom years of the war. Unfortunately, on June 7th, all the discontented parties met en masse in Valletta and serious rioting took place. The troops were called out and opened fire, killing four people. Order was only restored when the Bishop appeared and assured the people that their grievances would be considered.

Malta had played a notable part in the war and the Imperial Government was far from unsympathetic to the aspirations of the people. Accordingly, Lord Plumer came to Malta as Governor with express orders to study the possibility of Constitutional concessions and Mr.Amery, Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, visited the Island. Two years of negotiation followed but the Constitution was ultimately granted and the Legislature was opened by the Prince of Wales on the 1st November, 1921.

The Constitution Letters Patent of 1921 dealt with the

question of language in education by two sections. Section 57(2) ran as follows: "The English and Italian languages shall be recognized as equal languages of culture in Malta at the University, in Secondary Schools and in the higher classes of the Elementary Schools as subjects of study. Where both languages cannot be taken simultaneously, regard shall be had in settling the order or priority in which the languages shall be taught to the wishes of the parents in the case of Schools.....

The foregoing provisions shall not extend to prohibit the Maltese language from being used in the lower classes of the Elementary Schools in so far as it may be necessary as a medium of instruction." Section 40 made it clear that the language question was a reserved subject and stated:- "We do hereby reserve to Ourselves.....full power and authority.....to revoke, alter or amend.....section 57.....as, to Us, shall seem meet."

The Constitution of 1921 was based on the dyarchical principle and consisted of a Senate of seventeen members and a House of Assembly of thirty-two members. Seven of the members of the Senate were elected by proportional representation as being interested in property and two representatives were elected, under their own rules by each of the nobility, the Trades Union Council, the Graduates and the Chamber of Commerce. The Archbishop nominated the remaining two. All the members of the House of Assembly were elected by proportional representation.

The five political parties in Malta soon merged into two and their views on the language question were diametrically opposite. The Nationalist Party, which had Dr.Mizzi as one of its members, was strongly pro-Italian while the Constitutional Party, led by Lord Gerald Strickland, was pronouncedly pro-English. As a result of this, and as a result of Section 57 of the Letters Patent, the middle course had to be steered and the language question in the Schools was answered by an Ordinance - No.9 of 1923 - which laid down the simultaneous teaching of English and Italian. Both languages were therefore taught from the 3rd Standard upwards while English was learnt in the Infant stages and the lower Elementary classes.

The language of the country - Maltese - was not taught at all - though, legally, it could have been included in the lower

school curriculum. There was, at the time, no unanimity on the desirability or otherwise of teaching it. A referendum among the Head teachers showed that there was no agreement as to how it should be taught if it was introduced. Moreover, it was recognized that the burden of three languages was too great for a normal Elementary School scholar.

Under Self-Government, then, Malta returned to the "parri passu" instruction in English and Italian. The privilege of choice which had existed for twenty-one years and under which the vast majority of parents had selected English as the language they wished their children to learn went by the board. This appeared contrary to another ruling on the question which was included in the Section 57 and which read:- "Nothing shall be done by way either of legislation or of administration which shall.....tend to restrict the use of the English language in education." The Ordinance of 1923 had been brought into being by the Nationalist, pro-Italian Party which was in power at the time and its right to introduce the measure was very much open to debate.

In spite of considerable political tension between the Parties, the Constitution worked well for several years and much very good work was done. Seriously handicapped as it was by the language question, education itself made great strides in other diredtions, in this period. In 1930, however, serious difficulties in the working of the dyarchical system and delicate and complicated matters in which the Ecclesiastical authorities were involved caused Lord Strickland, whose Party was now in power, to suspend the Constitution on the eve of elections. In 1931, a Royal Commission was accordingly sent to Malta to investigate matters. The language question was one of the many controversial subjects raised, both sides expressing their views at length. In its final report, issued in January, 1932, the Commission recommended that Italian be excluded from the Elementary Schools but be retained in the Secondary Schools and the University. When an amended Constitution was granted, in May, 1932, the Letters Patent included a ruling to this effect.

In the elections which followed, the Nationalists won and it was soon evident that the political duel was going to continue much on the lines of 1930. Friction developed was increased when the

pro-Italian Party sought to evade the new Letters Patent in their ruling on the language issue. In November, 1933, the new Governor, Sir David Campbell had to suspend the Constitution again and, finally, it was revoked completely by Letters Patent of 12th August, 1936. On 2nd September of that year, Malta became, once again a Crown Colony.

With this return to Crown Colony Government, the language question was removed from the control of the political parties and the policy was determined by the Imperial Government. As a result, Italian disappeared from the Elementary Schools and Maltese and English became the only languages taught. Maltese has continued to be taught as the language of the Infants' Schools and of the lower classes in the Elementary Schools proper. In the Secondary Schools, Italian has now the status of any other foreign language and it is not a compulsory subject in any examination. In the University, the lectures have gradually been changed over to English. In the administration, the Official language is English and all Government Notices are given in both English and Maltese. In so far as the schools are concerned, therefore, the recommendations of Sir Patrick Keenan have now, after a lapse of nearly fifty years, been put into effect.

One particular point should be mentioned before leaving the question of language. In spite of the fact that there has been a strong party in favour of the Italian language and that a long and bitter feud has been fought between the protagonists of the two rival tongues, there has never, at any time, been any lack of loyalty on the part of the Maltese to the British Crown. Even when the pro-Italian Nationalist Party has won an election, the rejoicing of the supporters of the Party has taken the form of a demonstration in which the National Anthem has been played and cheers called for the Governor. Perhaps Sir Adrian Dingli, in a letter to Sir Patrick Keenan, laid his finger upon that combination of independance and loyalty so peculiar to the Maltese.

"The Maltese are no more Italians in feeling than the Ionians...and, differently from other small communities, they connect themselves, by race or aspirations, with no foreign Nation. They were successively connected with different Nations and they almaga-

mated or identified themselves with none of them; no Maltese, questioned about their Nationality, reply that they are anything but Maltese. They would not become English, or be looked upon by their fellow English subjects as part of the English people, though they spoke English as fluently and correctly as any English persons of the corresponding classes. Yet their loyalty to the British Crown is second, in strength, to that of none of the English speaking colonial communities."

CHAPTER XI.

PROBLEMS OF THE CURRICULUM.

The curriculum of the Elementary Schools in Malta has always been dominated by the demands forced upon it by the language question. Both teachers and children have been burdened with two, and sometimes three, languages and it is not surprising that the time tables of the schools have been filled with reading and writing lessons to the exclusion of almost all subjects save the essential arithmetic. To indicate the difficulties under which the schools have worked, it is not necessary to go back further than to 1923 when the "pari-passu" system was in operation.

Under this system, the child, in the early stages of his school career, was instructed in English and, when he had reached the Third Standard, Italian was added and he continued to learn both languages simultaneously. He was not taught his own tongue, the language that he spoke at home, at play and, subsequently, at work. His case could be likened to that of an English child who was taught French and then French and German - but never English.

The situation was rendered more difficult by other factors. It was not every teacher who was so thoroughly conversant with two foreign languages that he could teach them both and give instruction in both. The salaries did not attract such qualifications. Moreover, the teachers felt as much repugnance for the conditions which had been thrust upon them as did the children. A good deal of their time was being absorbed in complying with regulations laid down by the politicians instead of in giving the children a more liberal education.

Until 1924, there was no compulsion in attendance and, before that date, the results of the "pari-passu" system were particularly deplorable. The school life of most children being of very short duration, they left school with an entirely useless smattering of English and Italian and no thorough grounding in any one single language. The Act of 1924 ensured that the children did attend school for a full course but, even so, the task of assimilating the language teaching was beyond the capabilities

of many of them. It is only since 1933 that the burden has been removed and that the schools have been able to develop the curriculum on broader lines after devoting a sufficient part of the school time to Maltese and English.

The teaching of only Maltese and English, however, has not been an easy task. It has been attended by a difficulty which has also cropped up in the case of other subjects; the difficulty of providing suitable text books. Malta is in rather an unfortunate position in this respect. It is natural that, to get the best results, books with a definite local significance and appeal are essential. As can be imagined, such books do not come to hand ready printed from the presses in England to meet the Islands' needs in English books. Moreover, writing in Maltese, suitable for children, has not been great in quantity in the past, the language having come into its own in the curriculum only recently. The Director of Education has, however, tackled the problem with commendable enterprise. Arrangements were made with the Oxford University Press with the result that "The Melita English Course", a series of five books based on the "Oxford English Course", were prepared. In the same way, a "Melita Grammar" was published. A complete set of readers in Maltese was printed too; the Catholic Catechism, "Taghlim Nisrani", in three parts, a set of Geography Books, "Gmiel tad-Dinja" and "Tahlim fuq id-Dinja" ("Wonders of the World" and "Stories from the World"), a grammar, "Taghlim fuq il-Kitba Maltija" ("Text Book of Maltese Composition") and two History Books, "Grajjet Malta", ("The History of Malta"). Further, in 1937, a Novel competition was held and the winning book was found eminently suitable for school use and was added to the growing list. In a very short time, a great deal of progress has been made, in this manner, towards supplying the schools with adequate, modern and interesting primers. The difficulty of securing arithmetic books has not, of course, been so great. A well known English series is in use.

Until 1920, the three R's formed the bulk of the instruction and the other subjects were very incidental. A little geography and history were taught and some physical training in the form of "drill". The improvement in the teaching of these subjects

and the addition of further subjects have been features of the last twenty years. It has not been easy to carry out these developments. It must be remembered that the difficulty has lain largely in the problem of training the teachers to deal with a wider syllabus. This has been surmounted by utilising the talent of the teachers who have had the advantage of training in England. They, on their return to Malta, have instructed the class teachers in their schools and so gradually effected the introduction of new subjects. At the same time, the teachers in the Central Schools have been trained to specialize in certain subjects and the Higher Central School has become something of a post-certificate training school in which this process can be carried a stage further. As a result the teaching of geography, history, music, drawing, and physical training have all made, and will continue to make, headway.

Some subjects are particularly handicapped in Malta. Probably the most seriously affected is Physical Training. None of the schools have gymnasia, very few have school yards and the number of teachers who are able to teach the subject on the more modern lines of the English 1933 syllabus is very limited. As has already been mentioned, progress is further impeded by the fact that there is no well established tradition of physical culture or of sport. Steps are being taken to put matters to right and a number of the younger teachers are taking an interest. School sports and matches are being ar anged and there are signs that enthusiasm will ultimately be created. The facilities that can be made available will, however, determine the rate of progress.

Music is another subject which has been handicapped. Here the difficulty has again been largely a matter of finding the teachers with the ability to introduce it into the schools. Classes for teachers are being held, however, and it is likely that the subject will make headway. Financial considerations will not permit of the provision of pianos or musical instruments at present but it is hoped that the schools will gradually be equipped in the future. Music should be popular with the Maltese children. They are naturally fond of the subject and the large number of band clubs in the Islands shows that it plays a great part in the

recreational life of the people.

Since the grant of Self-government in 1921, the national spirit has played a considerable part in the framing of the school courses. A much greater interest is taken in the geography, the history and the language of the Country. It is right that it should be so. Few places have such a romantic story and such pronounced and peculiar characteristics. Malta has its own ancient culture on which to draw and, now that the Maltese language occupies its rightful place, the legends and songs of the Islands should find their way into the schools.

In spite of the progress that has been made, particularly in the last twenty years, there is a great deal of debate as to whether or not the schools are catering for the needs of the people. Many contend that they are not and argue that a system of education is being created which would be appropriate in England but which is totally unsuitable for Malta. The question is worth examining.

Malta's needs are clear from a survey of the economic conditions and the social conditions. The first demand is for compulsory education. It is plain that no country can afford to be burdened with illiteracy. The child who goes to school leaves it able to read, write and to deal with the normal arithmetical calculations and, in this particular, the schools will be adequate when all the children are brought into them. Further, the Evening Schools in Malta are designed solely with a view to eradicating illiteracy among the adults who did not have the benefit of education in childhood.

The second demand is for practical, vocational or technical education specially adapted to local conditions. It is here that the system in Malta is inadequate. Three factors dominate the economic life of the community; agriculture, the Dockyard and other Military establishments of the Imperial Government, and emigration. All imply a sound academical primary course followed by an appropriate practical course. To meet this demand, Malta, at present, has one Technical School which is a post-primary school with a roll of less than 150, four Handwork Centres, which can only be attended by a limited number of boys from the Elementary Schools and a Handwork School and Housecraft School for Girls. It is not sur-

prising that, in a submission to the Royal Commission of 1931, Mr. H. Casolani, who was in charge of emigration, wrote:- "The free Elementary Schools and the practically free Secondary Schools and the Private Schools of Malta, and the University, are annually unloading legions of youths on the streets of the town, waiting for something to turn up, which, under present conditions, never will. The literary instruction that is being piled upon them is not good enough for commercial or any middle-class pursuit abroad, or even in Malta. It is not suited to skilled labour. It is too cumbersome for the unskilled.

Whether our people are to earn their livelihood in a foreign land, in competition with foreign labourers, or work in Malta and supply some of its essential requirements, in both cases they must be taught by first-class masters to handle modern machinery and be made familiar with up-to-date methods of work."

The need for technical training has invariably been raised by those who have reported on education in Malta. Sir Patrick Keenan laid very great stress on it as did the Hon. W.N.Bruce. Nor has the Director of Education failed to point it out. As far back as 1924, he stated:- "It is regrettable that our system does not lead up to technical education and is divorced from it. I strongly hold that the child should be made to use his fingers along with his brain and his eyes from his earliest years. Any successful system abroad does so from his Infant stages." In almost every Annual Report, the Director has again alluded to the matter.

It is probable that the introduction of technical education has been delayed by four factors; the need for stamping out illiteracy by pushing on to the goal of compulsory education, the wasted time involved in trilingual instruction, the lack of suitable staffs, and the shortage of money. Three of these factors are still present and will have to be overcome before major developments are possible. Moreover, the attitude of those parents, who regard any other work than "black coated" as beneath the dignity of their children, will have to alter radically.

Some improvements appear possible at the present stage, however, and they might do something towards preparing the way. Ever since the days of Dr. Pullicino, the "simultaneous" system

of teaching has been in practice and a fixed syllabus has been used in both town and village schools. Promotion from class to class by examination and the examination requirement of the Compulsory Attendance Act of 1924 have tended to preserve the system. To make the instruction more appropriate to the local ity and to the probable future needs of the children would be a big advance and would justify the abolition of the examinations. It would do more. It would give an added stimulus to the parents' interest in education. As far back as 1880, the proposal was put forward that local committees should be formed to foster that interest and, by advising on the syllabus, wean the parents away from the view that they held - not without justification - that schooling was useless book learning. Such committees are needed to-day, for the problem of technical instruction is the major problem of the curriculum. Moreover, it must be remembered that it touches adults as well as children. If, as is likely, there is a resumption of emigration - and organized emigration on an ever extending scale is virtually essential - wide facilities will have to be made for adult education. In this connection, the Emigrants' School at the Government Experimental Farm has pointed the way and an expansion of this school and the institution of similar centres of instruction in different trades will be needed.

Before leaving the questions of the curriculum, mention should be made of one subject which does not constitute a problem but which is worthy of note. The Religious Teaching in the schools of Malta is highly and finely developed. While other countries deplore that education has become too definitely secular and without any guiding moral association, Malta's education is based frankly on religion. There is, of course, the advantage of unanimity; the children are brought up as Roman Catholics by parents whose devotion to the Church of Rome is deep and traditional - dating back, as it does, to the shipwreck, on the Island, of St.Paul.

In the schools, the religious teaching is carried on by the teachers themselves and by more than thirty Spiritual Directors of School Congregations; Priests who, for a nominal remuneration which covers expenses, conduct school services and attend to the spiritual needs of both scholars and teachers. The Spiritual

Directors are usually the Parish Priests of the districts in which the schools are situated and they visit the schools regularly throughout the year. It is the custom to start the school terms with a Mass and with the blessing of the schools. To supervise the actual religious instruction, there is an Inspector of Religious Instruction attached to the Elementary Schools in a full-time capacity. As in other spheres of social welfare, the religion of the Maltese people is present in the schools as striking feature which does much to ameliorate conditions which would otherwise be less pleasing.

CHAPTER XIII.

CONCLUSION.

For rather more than one hundred years, there has been a system of Government Elementary Education in Malta. It can be said to have been initiated by the ten schools which were set up by the Commissioners of 1838. Since then, it has grown until, now, it gives free education to the majority of the children of the Islands. No one - least of all those responsible for its management - would suggest that there is not great room for improvement but, throughout its existence, the system has been seriously and often peculiarly handicapped.

Perhaps the most serious difficulty has been presented by the phenomenally rapid growth of the population. Education seems to have lagged behind; there has been a hysteresis which has never been overcome. All the plans which have been made have proved to be inadequate within the space of a few years and the efforts to deal with ever increasing demands of numbers have impeded developments in other directions.

Greater progress would undoubtedly have been made had adequate financial assistance been forthcoming. Unfortunately, Malta, unaided, has never been able to allocate sufficient funds to education to carry out the reforms and effect the improvements which have been so obviously needed. The Imperial Government, for its part, has shown no great interest in improving the standard of education although a comparatively small sum would have done a great deal for a community as small as Malta. It is only in recent years that the Colonial Welfare Fund has been established with the express purpose of helping the Colonies in their efforts to better their social and economic conditions. Malta's receipts, as yet, from this source have done little to assist education.

The social and economic backgrounds have been unhelpful. The problems with which Maltese working class families have had to contend have been hard and have had the unfortunate result of denying to the children of the Islands those benefits of education and recreation which are regarded as their prerogative in England.

Unhappily this state of affairs has existed so long as to have become traditional and progress has been made more slow by an inherent conservative attitude on the part of many of the people.

It was to be regretted that, with so many adverse factors, education should, for fifty years, have been drawn into the sphere of politics to become the bone of contention between uncompromising opponents. Apart from keeping the schools in an unsettled condition, the politicians, by their legislation, placed burdens upon both teachers and pupils and hampered the development of a more liberal and practical education.

It was not until 1920 that appreciable progress was made in overcoming the obstacles which had, for so long, worked against the schools. At that time, the people themselves became aware that a sound system of education was a national asset and, on the grant of self-government, the money was made available to provide better staffs and better schools. Even so, it was not until 1933 that the shackles of the language question were loosened and there was hope that education would develop freely and rapidly towards the goal of liberal compulsory schooling for all. Since that year, considerable leeway has, in fact, been made up.

It says much for those who have been in charge of the schools in Malta that the Islands are as well equipped with facilities as they are to-day. A community of about a quarter of a million people has a system of education which embraces a University, Secondary Schools, Elementary Schools, Training Schools for Teachers, a Technical School, Handwork Schools, a Housecraft School, an Emigrants' Training School and Evening Schools. These cater for well in excess of thirty thousand students. The fault of education in Malta lies not so much in what has been done as in what it has been impossible to do. Principally, it has been impossible to provide compulsory education, to provide vocational and technical training appropriate to the need of the Islands' industry and of emigration and to provide that poverty shall be no impediment to the children from working class homes.

One thing is certain; the task, in the schools themselves, which faces education in the post-war years is not one which will have to be undertaken from the beginning. The spade work has

already been done and, if assistance is forthcoming, Malta should, in the space of a very few years, offer to the children an education comparable to that which they would receive in England or in any of the Colonies or Dominions. There is reason to hope, too, that the all important background to education - the social and economic conditions - will be such as to help rather than hinder the work of the schools. Under the duress of war, Malta has experienced assistance in the economic sphere and has enjoyed, for the first time, a comprehensive social insurance. If these benefits are maintained, the rebuilding of Malta will, by the unanimous wish of the people, see new schools and a sound system of education established throughout the Islands.

CHAPTER XII.

THE WAR AND EDUCATION ON MALTA.

Whatever the shortcomings of Malta's education system, they have often been appreciated and there have been several revivals of interest in education. The present war years have seen such a revival. In all countries, it is understood that a reform of educational institutions and systems is a major task of post-war reconstruction. This is nowhere more true than in Malta where the popular demand for more and better facilities has grown steadily. This is somewhat remarkable when it is realised that the incidence of war on the Island has had serious and disturbing effects. Malta has had to endure a greater intensity of aerial bombing and more prolonged and sustained attacks than any other place of similar size and population in the world. These attacks have imposed abnormal living conditions upon the people and have brought in their wake a multitude of problems which might reasonably have precluded planning for the future and concentrated the thoughts and energies of the Islanders upon the insistent problems of the present.

It cannot be said that public attention to education in Malta in war-time was directed, as it was in England, by the spectacular process of evacuation. The small size of the country, coupled with the high density of population, forbade any large, organised scheme for removing the children to safe areas. Experience was to show that immunity from attack in the compass of the one hundred and twenty square miles of the Colony was virtually impossible. In the final analysis, it is probable that three principal reasons will be found to have fostered the new interest in education; two connected with the war and one dissociated, in measure from it.

In the first place, Malta was a base of great strategic importance and the war years saw its garrison considerably augmented. Some tens of thousands of soldiers and Royal Air Force personnel were drafted to the Island and their presence had far reaching effects. Malta, with its Dockyard, has long been one of the major bases of the Royal Navy but the Navy's influence has not extended beyond Valletta, Sliema and the suburbs adjoining the Harbours. The Army and the R.A.F., on the other hand, took up widely scattered

positions and were billeted in even the remotest of the towns and villages. The Maltese were not slow to appreciate that these men, their contemporaries of Britain, were immeasurably better equipped educationally than they were. There was no evidence of the illiteracy which is so great a burden to so many Maltese and there was every sign of a mental alertness and discipline which could be associated with one thing only; an efficient system of universal education in Britain. The development of education in Malta has so lagged behind the need and the demand for it that, illiteracy apart, the standard of attainment is low and the gap between the Maltese and the British standards wide. The introduction of conscription, itself an earnest of whole-hearted co-operation in the war effort, served merely to emphasise the great disadvantages under which the local people laboured. Comparisons were inevitable and distasteful.

It must be clearly understood in this connection that the Maltese lack neither native wit nor inherent ability. In all spheres of activity, given the opportunity, they have used their talents to great advantage. The academic standard of their University is high while Maltese who have studied in other countries, including England, have been well able to compete with their contemporaries. In the industrial life of the Island, and particularly in the Dockyard, a degree of skill and craftsmanship is achieved which compares favourably with that obtaining elsewhere. In commerce and in the professions, evidence again is not lacking of considerable ability. The war, with its attendant conscription, proved the existence of a high general standard of intelligence and it was significant that the Maltese showed a particular aptitude for the highly technical work of anti-aircraft artillery. The lack of the benefits of a sound primary education for all was the one factor which placed them in an invidious position. One of the repercussions of the war has been the appreciation of this fact by the majority of the people and it has led to popular insistence that the reconstruction and extension of the education system will have priority in the post-war era.

In the second place, the actual part played by Malta and the Maltese in the war has had a profound influence on public opinion and has had the effect of focussing that opinion upon the

reforms vital to the community in the years to come. The war brought to an end the turbulent period in the political history of the Island; the period characterised by bitter clashes between Anglo-Maltese and Italo-Maltese factions and during which Self-Government was granted and subsequently withdrawn; the period which saw many of the pressing needs of the Island and, incidentally, many of the finer characteristics of the Islanders obscured. On the outbreak of war, Party considerations went by the board and alien sympathies evaporated. A more truly national spirit grew and a unity, which had long been rendered impossible by minor dissension, was achieved. In that spirit and unity, the war was faced. Individually and collectively, the Maltese were called upon to play a vitally important role in the great struggle. They faced prolonged suffering and heavy loss and through the long, hard months of trial, danger and discomfort they proved themselves to be a courageous nation with every reason for self-respect and for the respect of others. The award of the George Cross to the Island in April, 1942 was an expression of the King's and the Empire's appreciation of the fine qualities of the Maltese which were evident in their unwavering resistance to the enemy. It is natural that a national pride was engendered which maintains the demand that Malta shall stand as high in the post-war world as she stood in the world at war; that her people shall not labour under the burden of great social and economic disadvantages but shall have the means and the opportunity to make full use of their natural talents and to take their place in the British Commonwealth of Nations on terms of equality.

A third factor, in this case removed from the war, has had a marked effect in directing attention to social conditions in Malta. As has been stressed, the Maltese are exclusively and devoutly Roman Catholic and the teaching of the Church permeates their lives, activities and aspirations to a remarkable degree. The year 1941 was the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of one of the greatest of Papal Encyclicals dealing with secular affairs; the "Rerum Novarum" of Pope Leo XIII. For half a century, this Pontifical document has exercised a tremendous influence on social affairs and its value and significance have increased rather than diminished with the years. It covers the entire field of social conditions and lays

strongthoned. It seems highly probable, also, that there will be no room for an Italo-Maltese Party in the politics of the country in the future and that, in consequence, one of the principal subjects of controversy will have been eliminated.

Turning to the matters which affected the schools directly, the immediate and unfortunate result of the entry of Italy into the war in June, 1940, was the postponement of the consideration of the scheme for the introduction of compulsory education which Sir Charles Bonham-Carter had submitted to the Secretary of State. It is probable that, had not hostilities broken out, Malta would have made progress with this four year undertaking. In places other than Malta, it might have been possible to persevere with the scheme, even at a slower rate than was originally envisaged. In an isolated and vulnerable fortress, however, primary consideration had to be given to the task of rendering the Islands inviolable and neither labour nor materials could be spared for education.

Thus, Malta entered the war with the facilities and system which have been described in these pages. As has already been stated, no scheme of evacuation was considered feasible and, with the exception of those immediately adjacent to the Dockyard, the schools continued their normal routine. The ensuing months brought added difficulties. Conscription was introduced in November, 1940 and the teachers were not exempt. No actual schedule of "reserved occupations" was drawn up; cases were considered on individual merit. As a result, 121 teachers were withdrawn from the schools. Of these, 87 served with the Forces and 34 were drafted for especially important work in emergency departments. As can readily be understood, the number of well-qualified people, on whom the Government could draw, was much more limited, proportionately, than would have been the case in England. The services of teachers were, therefore, requisitioned. The schools suffered particularly in that they lost a considerable percentage of their male staffs and a large number of boys' classes had to be managed by women substitutes.

From the very first day of Italy's entry into the war, Malta was subjected to air raids; first by the Regia Aeronautica and, subsequently, by the Luftwaffe. Some idea of the difficulties which these attacks imposed on the work of education can be gauged from

one or two facts concerning them. Up to the end of November, 1942, Malta had had in excess of 3,000 raids. Further, between December, 1941 and May, 1942, to quote one particular period, there were only two nights on which the Islands were not raided. The restricted size of the Colony offered immunity to no single district with the result that all schools were subject to repeated interruptions by day while the children were sleeping as best they could in shelters by night.

The heavy bombing inevitably produced complications in other ways. In his address, at the opening of the Third Session of the Council of Government, on November 25th, 1941, the Governor, Sir William Dobbie, gave some account of the working of the Education Department and quoted some facts. Up to that time, 10 schools had been lost by enemy action and 33 had had to be taken over for war purposes. This loss of accommodation was to become much more serious as a consequence of the particularly heavy attacks in the Spring of 1942. Ultimately, every school in the capital city of Valletta was to be unusable while the effects in other parts of the Islands were such as to reduce the original accommodation by 75%.

The Governor paid a warm tribute to the work of the Director of Education and his staff for the manner in which they had kept the schools open. In the year, 1940-1 the same number of children were actually attending school as in the year 1939-40. The staffing difficulty having been overcome by the employment of substitutes, accommodation was found either by requisitioning premises or by the timely assistance of the Ecclesiastical Authorities. In cases where the room available proved inadequate, the classes were duplicated in morning and afternoon sessions. This naturally placed a great strain on the teachers but they succeeded in maintaining the education of the children and, in doing so, won the admiration and respect of their fellow countrymen.

The great difficulties, which had to be overcome in order to keep the schools open, had the effect, early in the war, of focussing attention upon the heavy burden that was being borne by the Director of Education. It had been felt, even in peace time, that the entire responsibility of all the Primary and Secondary Schools was too much for one person. When the question of planning

for post-war developments was raised there was a feeling that the whole of education needed co-ordinating and that a Board of Education was essential for this purpose and for the future management of the institutions. There was a good deal of debate in the press and elsewhere on this point and the issue, in November, 1941, by the Constitutional Party, of a Manifesto, calling for the introduction of compulsory education and the setting up of a Board, did much to crystalize public opinion. The Governor promised that such a Board would be set up.

There followed a considerable amount of discussion on the probable composition, power and function of the new committee and the general concensus of opinion was that it should control the schools and tackle the important problems of maintaining them in war time and of planning the future of education in Malta. There was no unanimity on its composition. Early in 1942, the Governor published particulars of the Board and outlined its function. It was made up of nineteen members under the Chairmanship of the Lieutenant-Governor and they included the Attorney General, representatives of the Church, the Medical Officer of Health, the Director of Education, the Rector of the University, the Director of the British Institute, the Headmaster of the Lyceum, a number of Professors of the University and representatives of educational institutions other than the Government Schools. This Board was appointed by His Excellency "to advise him on matters of general policy affecting education."

There was disappointment at this sequel to the agitation for a Board. It was considered that, as its function was to advise, it did not meet the needs of the situation. A body which would have full authority had been looked for and it had been hoped that a smaller number of specialists would have been appointed. Judgement was, however, reserved until time should have proved the efficacy or otherwise of the Board.

Its subsequent history has been somewhat obscure. It may have deliberated but no notice has appeared of the results of such deliberations and no decisions in its name have been made public. After the lapse of some six months, comment appeared in the Press drawing attention to the fact that outstanding problems

still remained to be solved and that there was no sign that the Board was attempting solutions.

In October, 1942, a Mr. C.Ellis came to Malta, at the invitation of the Governor, to advise on matters of education. Mr. Ellis had had particular experience in the organization of schools under war-time conditions and the primary object of his visit to the Islands was to give the local authorities the benefit of his advice on this subject. The early months of 1942, had seen exceptionally heavy and sustained attacks on Malta and the task of keeping the schools open had been rendered difficult in the extreme.

The report which Mr.Ellis submitted at the conclusion of his investigations was not made public. He did, however, make an address to the people. In it, he drew attention to the magnificent work which had been done in Malta under the most abnormal conditions and expressed the hope that the schools would continue to function successfully during the emergency. He reiterated Malta's educational problems and stressed the need for compulsory education. He also laid particular emphasis on the desirability of vocational training and maintained that Malta's future well-being was largely dependent upon ample facilities for technical education.

It is too early yet for there to have been any action taken upon Mr. Ellis' report. At this juncture, then, the situation is that the schools are being maintained, that both Government and people are keenly interested in the whole question of education and that steps are being taken to plan for the future. It is probably not incorrect to say that the present conflict will have the effect of solving many of the outstanding social problems - including that of education. The searching tests to which Malta's institutions have been put have clearly revealed their weaknesses and shortcomings. Moreover, the war has enlisted, for a very gallant people, the sympathy, understanding and financial help - some of which, it is hoped, will build the future schools - which will go far towards creating a better Malta in the future.