

# Education in England and Wales

Second edition

H. C. Dent

# Education in England and Wales

Second edition

H. C. Dent



HODDER AND STOUGHTON

LONDON SYDNEY AUCKLAND TORONTO

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Dent, H. C.

Education in England and Wales.—2nd ed.

1. Education—England

I. Title

370'.942

LA632

ISBN 0 340 26300 8

First published in 1961 as *The Educational System of England and Wales*  
Revised, reset and re-issued in 1977 as *Education in England and Wales*  
Second edition 1982

Copyright © 1982 H. C. Dent

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage and retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher.

Printed and bound in Great Britain for  
Hodder and Stoughton Educational,  
a division of Hodder and Stoughton Ltd,  
Mill Road, Dunton Green, Sevenoaks, Kent,  
by Richard Clay (The Chaucer Press) Ltd  
Bungay, Suffolk.

Typeset in Monophoto Bembo by  
Macmillan India Ltd., Bangalore



# Preface

What I attempt to do in this book is to give a concise yet comprehensive description of the organization, conduct, and ethos of education in England and Wales at the present time, together with, in Chapter One, a brief outline of its history, and in subsequent chapters notes about the origins and development of particular institutions and practices.

The book is intended primarily for students training to be teachers, and for students from overseas countries. I hope, however, that it may also interest some parents, teachers, and educational administrators.

This edition brings the story down to the end of 1980. But once again I must warn readers that, as changes in the structure and teaching methods are continuing to happen very rapidly, some statements in it will be out-of-date even by the time it is published. So I urge them to supplement its reading by study of the daily newspapers and the educational periodicals. This will be especially necessary in the 1980s, as the effects of the cuts in expenditure made by the Government – the most severe for half a century – and of the falling birthrate in the 1960s and the 1970s become evident.

I am, as always, indebted to many persons for help, and many sources for information. I would like particularly to thank my friend Ralph Brooke, lately headmaster of the Joseph Whitaker Comprehensive School at Rainforth in Nottinghamshire. I am grateful once more to Mr Stanley Foster, lately of Hodder & Stoughton, and to his colleagues, for their friendly and efficient services.

For the contents of the book I am, of course, solely responsible.

Whatlington, East Sussex, 1 January 1981

H. C. Dent

# Contents

Preface	iv
Chapter 1 Genealogical Tree	1
2 Bird's Eye View	29
3 Control and Direction	52
4 <u>Primary Education</u>	74
5 <u>Secondary Education</u>	85
6 Education of Handicapped Children	100
7 Welfare Services	111
8 Independent Schools	121
9 <u>Further Education</u>	131
10 University Education	149
11 Training of Teachers	167
12 A Unique Partnership	179
Index	183

## CHAPTER I

## Genealogical Tree

Education is as old as the human race. It began in Britain in pre-historic times, and was for many centuries a socializing activity, as always among primitive peoples: the initiation of the young, by their parents and the elders of the tribe, into the way of life of their society.

During the Roman occupation of England (AD 43–AD 410), the conquerors encouraged the wealthy and influential among the natives to give their sons an academic education after the Roman pattern. But all traces of this were obliterated by the hordes of Angles, Saxons, and Jutes who during the following centuries first ravaged and then occupied most of what is now England. Neither Roman nor Anglo-Saxon managed to penetrate permanently into the mountains of 'Wild Wales' or the Scottish Highlands.

Organized education was re-introduced into England in AD 597, when Augustine, a monk sent from Rome by Pope Gregory to bring Christianity to the island, landed in Kent with a band of forty missionaries. No documentary evidence exists to prove that Augustine brought education as well as religion, but there can be little doubt that, when shortly after his arrival he established at Canterbury a church – later to become a cathedral – he included among its functions the provision of two types of schooling: 'Grammar', or general academic education, which was available to any boy or man (girls were not supposed to need it), and 'Song', a vocational education intended to prepare choristers for singing in church choirs, and acolytes who would assist priests in the conduct of church services. Such was the invariable practice of the Christian missionaries of those days; to them religion and education were inseparable, and both indisputably the business of the Church. That tradition has persisted in English education to the present day.

As Christianity spread across England similar 'schools' were set up in other cathedrals, in collegiate churches, and in monasteries. In the earliest days these schools had neither buildings nor staff of their own; they were merely assemblies of pupils – of all ages – taught by the bishop himself or one of his priestly colleagues, in some convenient part of the church. But gradually the distinction between 'grammar' and 'song' led to separate schools, with their own staffs and, ultimately, their own buildings.

'Grammar', which then meant the Latin language and literature, was the first of the Seven Liberal Arts<sup>1</sup> of medieval Christian scholarship; and not



merely the first, but "the foundation, gate and source of all the other liberal arts, without which such arts cannot be known, nor can anyone arrive at practising them".<sup>2</sup> Latin was the universal language of religion, law and government throughout Christendom, and therefore essential not only to scholars but also to all aiming at a career in the service of Church or State. It is not surprising that from the start the Grammar school enjoyed a higher status, and was staffed by better paid teachers, than the Song school.

As time went on it became not infrequent for the English Grammar school to demand that its pupils should on entry be literate in their native language. To meet this demand there developed the Reading and Writing school, sometimes as a preparatory department to a Grammar or Song school, sometimes as a separate establishment.

During the later Middle Ages the Song school tended to fade out of existence altogether or to merge with the Reading and Writing school in what was called the 'Pettie' (i.e. *petite*, for little children) school, the medieval equivalent of the modern Elementary, or Primary, school. The Grammar school has had a continuous history right down to the present day. Several existing schools, such as, for example, the King's School, Canterbury, St Peter's, York, Beverley Grammar School, St Albans, Sherborne, and Warwick, can claim, if not an uninterrupted life, at least direct descent from schools founded long before the Norman Conquest.

Before the rise of the universities the English Grammar school often undertook the teaching of rhetoric, and sometimes dialectic, as well as grammar, and in exceptional cases — as under Alcuin at York in the eighth century — grew to be university and theological college as well as school, with a curriculum covering almost the entire range of medieval learning. With the emergence of Oxford during the second half of the twelfth century and of Cambridge in the early years of the thirteenth its scope was increasingly confined to the teaching of grammar, and one of its most important functions became that of preparing able pupils for entry into the university. This function the Grammar school has ever since retained.

From the fourteenth century onwards many Grammar schools were founded with this purpose expressly in mind, being either attached to, or linked by scholarships with, Colleges at Oxford or Cambridge. An example of great historical importance was 'Seint Marie College at Wynchester', founded by William of Wykeham, Bishop of Winchester, in 1382. This foundation made a crucial departure from previous practice. Up till then all schools — or so it is claimed — had been ancillary to other establishments: they had been parts of cathedrals, collegiate churches, monasteries, chantries, hospitals, or university colleges. But Winchester College, though a twin foundation with Wykeham's 'Seint Marie College of Wynchester in Oxenford' (New College, Oxford), and designed to supply this with scholars, was nevertheless created for the sole purpose of providing a school. "Thus for the first time," wrote Arthur F. Leach, "a school was established as a sovereign and independent corporation, existing by and for itself, self-centred and self-

governed.”<sup>3</sup> Other benefactors followed Wykeham’s example; notable among them was Henry VI, who when he founded Eton College in 1440 modelled its statutes closely upon those of Winchester.

Some historians have seen in the terms of the foundation deed of Winchester College the origins of the English ‘Public’ school. Not so much, perhaps, because of the independence accorded to the College, important though this was, as because of three other conditions. Pupils were to be accepted from anywhere in England (though certain counties had priority), the College was to be largely a boarding-school, and it was to include among its boarders, in addition to seventy ‘poor and indigent’ scholars (*pauperes et indigentes*)<sup>4</sup>, for whom free places were provided, up to ten ‘sons of noble and influential persons’, who would pay fees for their tuition and their board and lodging.

How ‘noble and influential’ Wykeham hoped the parents of his fee-paying boarders would be one cannot say; but he does not appear to have been successful in attracting those of highest rank. This was simply because it was not the habit of the English aristocracy in the Middle Ages – or for long afterwards – to send their sons to a school. They provided for them, in their own homes and those of their peers, an exclusive, and totally different, form of education, aimed at the attainment of skill in the arts of war and the etiquette of chivalry.

The Grammar school was in medieval England (there were few schools in Wales) the avenue of opportunity for the able sons of parents of relatively modest means – the lesser gentry, yeoman farmers, merchants and craftsmen, and, occasionally, villeins or serfs. It led to careers in Church and State and in the learned and clerical professions. Neither poverty nor lowly status in society was an absolute bar to entry; almost all Grammar schools had, like Winchester and Eton, free places for ‘poor and indigent’ pupils, and any boy whose ability excited the interest of the parish priest or the lord of the manor could be awarded one of these; and, later, make his way to the university, by winning one of the scholarships which many schools had to offer, or having his expenses paid by his patron.

Not all such parents sent their sons to Grammar school and university. For those who thought more in terms of worldly wealth there was, from the twelfth century onwards, the highly organized system of apprenticeship run by the powerful craft and merchant guilds, whereby a boy was bound by indentures to a master-craftsman or merchant, who took him into his home for an agreed number of years and taught him his trade, thus enabling him to become a qualified journeyman, and, perhaps, in time, a master-craftsman or merchant. Many of the smaller gentry chose this medieval equivalent of technical education for their younger sons, to whom – the right of succession belonging strictly to the eldest – they would have no goods to leave.

Modern research has shown that elementary education<sup>5</sup> was far more widely prevalent in medieval England than was formerly believed. Much of it was given by parish priests, who from an early date were constantly being



reminded by their bishops that it was their duty to undertake it. Much was given in the numerous chantries founded during the later Middle Ages. The first duty of a chantry priest was to say Masses for the souls of the founder and such other persons as were specified in the foundation deed. But as this was rarely a full-time occupation, the priest was frequently instructed also to 'kepe a grammar skole', or to teach the children of the district 'to rede and sing'. By the time of the English Reformation (mid-sixteenth century) there were over 2,000 chantries in England. How many undertook teaching is unknown; perhaps in most cases only those where the priest was sufficiently interested to take the initiative. According to the Chantry Certificates of Edward VI the majority of the fully organized chantry schools were Grammar schools, but there was also an appreciable number of 'pettie' schools. In the 'pettie' school girls as well as boys were often found. But girls were rarely, if ever, admitted into the Grammar school, nor was any comparable type of school provided for them, though a few received some sort of secondary education in nunneries. Girls' education, beyond the rudiments, was normally undertaken in the home, and consisted of training in domestic duties.

For close on a thousand years, from the coming of St Augustine to the Reformation, the Church controlled absolutely, and was almost exclusively the provider of, all organized education, except that of apprentices and aristocrats; from the group of village children taught by the parish or chantry priest to the societies of scholars in the Colleges of Oxford and Cambridge. Every teacher had to be licensed by the bishop, who also — in the early days personally, and later through his deputies the chancellor and the precentor — appointed all Grammar and Song school headmasters. With but rare exceptions all teachers were clerks in the orders of the Church. The Church claimed a monopoly in education, and though this was from the twelfth century onwards occasionally disputed, in practice it was most effectively maintained.

The contribution made by the laity became substantial as a result of the English Reformation. It used to be believed that the dissolution of the monasteries and the expropriation of the chantries by Henry VIII and Edward VI had a disastrous effect upon English education. Research<sup>6</sup> has shown this opinion to be incorrect. The chantries and monasteries were at the time of their closure doing far less educational work than was previously thought. The Commissioners who investigated the affairs of the chantries "took the most elaborate pains to protect existing schools".<sup>7</sup> And — infinitely more important in the long run — the closures moved a host of benefactors, chiefly rich merchants (especially London merchants) and landed gentry, but including also royalty, nobility, clergy, municipalities, and guilds, to re-establish and re-endow grammar schools that would otherwise have ceased to exist, and to found many new schools as well. At these schools they often endowed scholarships to the universities, or alternatively established at the colleges which were growing up at Oxford and Cambridge 'closed' scholarships, available only to boys (girls were still not considered to need academic learning) attending a specified school or resident in a particular locality.

This great movement, which resulted in the foundation, or re-foundation, of hundreds of Grammar schools, almost all with free places for necessitous pupils, began to gather momentum during the earlier decades of the sixteenth century, expanded suddenly after the Reformation, and reached a high peak between 1611 and 1630. Professor W. K. Jordan has estimated that by 1660 there was a grammar school for each 4,400 of the population<sup>8</sup> – a proportion not to be reached again before the twentieth century.

During the few years of the Commonwealth established by Oliver Cromwell (1649–60) it looked for a moment as though a State system was on the way. Educational reform was in the air, and proposals were advanced for creating a national system of elementary education. These, alas, came to nothing, except in Wales, where, under an Act for the Better Propagation of the Gospel, passed in 1650, nearly sixty free schools were provided and maintained out of public funds. But they lasted only until the restoration of the monarchy in 1660; and more than two centuries were to elapse before they had any successors.

During the eighteenth century Grammar school and University education fell to a very low ebb. Schools and Colleges alike resisted all attempts to induce them to move with the times, and clung persistently to outdated curricula and methods. Consequently, they became less and less capable of performing useful service to society, which naturally turned elsewhere for aid in meeting its educational needs. By the middle of the century many Grammar schools had been closed and many more had but a handful of pupils; and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge had largely become exclusive clubs for slothful dons who did not teach and wealthy young aristocrats who did not even pretend to study.

This unhappy situation was part cause and part effect of the fact that during this century both class and denominational distinctions hardened. England became riven into Disraeli's 'Two Nations', with on the one side of the great divide the tiny *élite* of the rich and privileged, and on the other the vast mass of the 'lower orders', the 'labouring poor', to which was added towards the end of the century the rising class of manufacturers and merchants that was being born out of the fast-developing Industrial Revolution. The line of denominational cleavage, while not identical, was not greatly different; the *élite*, almost to a man, adhered to the Established Church, while the strength of Nonconformity – immensely reinforced by John Wesley's half-century of fervent evangelism – lay with the lower orders and, most importantly, the new 'middle class' that industry was throwing up.

The members of this class rejected with contempt the arid and unrealistic curricula of the Grammar schools and Universities. From the latter many of them were in any case excluded because they were not members of the Church of England. They began to patronize private schools offering more modern – and more efficient – education for their children, and 'Dissenting Academies', which provided courses of study of university calibre, and were not reserved, as were Oxford and Cambridge, for members of the Established

Church. At much the same time the *élite* began to send its sons to a small group of expensive boarding-schools — Eton, Harrow and Winchester were among them — which were coming to be known as the ‘great’, or ‘public’, schools. For the children of the lower orders no education beyond the merest rudiments of literacy was considered either necessary or desirable. Much public opinion, indeed, among both the *élite* and the industrialists, would have denied them even this meagre modicum of instruction, believing that any education at all would render them dissatisfied with their lowly lot, and thus cause them to become a menace to the stability of society.

Yet it was during this period of rigid social stratification and denominational discrimination that the foundations were laid for today’s statutory system of public education. One good which resulted from the existence of an immensely wealthy *élite* alongside a poverty-stricken proletariat was the realization by the former (thanks largely to the teaching of their Church) that their possession of great riches imposed upon them a moral obligation to contribute in charity to the well-being of the latter; and not only to their material but also, and even more importantly, to their spiritual well-being. The first step towards the latter was to enable the poor to understand ‘the principles of the Christian religion’; and that involved teaching the poor to read.

Towards the close of the seventeenth century many societies sprang up to further this end. In 1698 a decision that was to prove of very great historical importance was taken when a newly-formed Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge (SPCK) resolved, at its first meeting, ‘to further and promote that good design of erecting Catechetical schools in each parish in and about London.’ The design prospered; the Society, which worked by prompting parishes to provide their own schools, was able very shortly to extend the range of its activities beyond London, and within a quarter of a century had established schools in many parts of Britain. A remarkable offshoot of its enterprise was the creation in Wales by one of its local correspondents, the Reverend Griffith Jones, of a vast system of ‘Circulating’ schools, manned by peripatetic teachers, in which between about 1730 and 1780 many thousands of children and adults learned to read.

During the second half of the eighteenth century the founding of weekday schools languished. The Industrial Revolution was sweeping children as well as adults by scores of thousands into mine, factory and workshop, there to toil for unbelievably long hours. Weekday schools kept children out of employment, and were therefore bitterly opposed by industrialists. The attention of the charitable was diverted to the provision of Sunday schools, which did not interfere with employment. These sprang up like wildfire all over the country from about 1780, thanks largely to the organizing ability of Robert Raikes, a Gloucestershire pioneer of the movement who, being a newspaper proprietor, was able to give it widespread publicity.

But one-day-a-week schools, however numerous and efficient (and most were not), were quite inadequate to meet the needs of a country that was fast becoming a great industrial power. This became widely recognized round the

turn of the century. In 1802 Sir Robert Peel, a cotton manufacturer (father of the Prime Minister of the same name), attempted, without much success, to secure for child apprentices in factories shorter working hours and a daily period of schooling by means of his Health and Morals of Apprentices Act. In 1807 Mr Samuel Whitbread, son of a brewer, introduced into Parliament a Bill proposing a national system of Elementary schools supported from public funds. This actually got through the Commons, but was rejected by the Lords, largely because of the unyielding opposition of representatives of the Established Church. Yet at the same time both the Church of England and organized Nonconformity were on the point of becoming committed to support of voluntary societies which aimed to provide the nation with a universal system of elementary education.

Two hitherto insuperable obstacles to the provision by private charity of such a system were the formidable recurrent cost involved and the perennial scarcity of competent teachers. In the closing years of the eighteenth century two men, Dr Andrew Bell, an Anglican priest, and Joseph Lancaster, a Quaker, almost simultaneously demonstrated that both obstacles could be overcome, that elementary education could be provided at an extremely cheap rate, and involve the employment of very few adult teachers, if the simple expedient were adopted of using selected pupils to teach the others. This 'monitorial' system made an immediate appeal to the ruling classes. Money poured in, and two voluntary societies (both still in existence) were founded to stimulate the establishment of schools conducted on the lines laid down respectively by Bell and Lancaster: the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England and Wales,<sup>9</sup> and the British and Foreign School Society, the latter a body sponsoring schools on a non-denominational basis. Within twenty years members of these societies had provided, entirely out of voluntary contributions, numerous schools throughout the country. It was a remarkable achievement; nevertheless, even within this period of exceptional activity it became obvious to a few discerning people that, despite the readiness with which the rich were subscribing to this charity — as they were also to others — and despite the devotion with which innumerable persons, both priests and laymen, were giving themselves to the work of establishing and maintaining schools, voluntary effort could never by itself cope with the gigantic task of schooling all the nation's children. And so the demand was pressed again and again for aid to be provided from public funds.

Finally, with success. In 1833 the House of Commons was induced to grant the sum of £20,000 to assist the National and British Societies to build schools. The grant was repeated the following year, and in 1839 was increased to £30,000. In that year the Government created an Education Committee of the Privy Council to supervise the distribution and use of what had become an annual grant, and the newly-formed Committee at once claimed the right to inspect all grant-aided schools. Such were the modest beginnings in England of State intervention in public education.



The Committee of the Privy Council on Education was singularly fortunate in its first secretary, Dr James Phillips Kay – better known as Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth.<sup>10</sup> Though he held office for only ten years he laid the foundations of a system of elementary education which lasted for a hundred. He encouraged the schools to take up other subjects besides the '3Rs'. He killed the monitorial system by launching in 1846 a nation-wide scheme of grant-aided 'pupil-teachers', who after completing a five-year apprenticeship in school could go to training college on 'Queen's Scholarships'. He secured grants for training colleges, and with a partner, Mr E. Carleton Tufnell, himself established, and ran for four years, one at Battersea from which he hoped that others might learn. Not least among his contributions to public education was his establishment of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools, and his insistence that HMI must be advisers, not dictators.

During his period of office Kay-Shuttleworth was continuously harassed by sectarian problems, by the deep-rooted antagonism of a large body of opinion (both within the Church of England and among the Nonconformists) which fiercely resented any form of State intervention in education, by the hostility of many industrialists to any extension of elementary education (which diminished their supply of cheap labour), and by the apathy of innumerable parents.

A confused struggle between sectarian and other bodies of opinion persisted for many years, seriously retarding and stunting the growth and development of elementary education. Industry, aided and abetted by parents, snatched children of tender age from the schools – or from the streets, for many never entered school; governmental economy scored a dreadful triumph (one only of many) when by the Revised Code of 1862 it so restricted grants as to cut the curriculum of the Elementary schools virtually to the '3Rs'; denominational pride and prejudices frustrated any hope of a united voluntary effort; and all these forces hindering progress towards the national system of education which the country desperately needed were powerfully supported by the prevalent political and economic doctrine of *laissez-faire*, which in more brutal terms meant every man for himself, with the minimum of government, and the devil take the hindmost. The story of elementary education in England and Wales between 1833 and 1870 is not one to be proud of; its most pleasing features are the enlightened work of the early HMIs, and the undoubted heroism of many teachers, who, with the most meagre resources and almost complete lack of public support, tamed and taught great hordes of children who otherwise would have grown up half-savage and illiterate.

The first decisive advance towards a statutory system of public education was delayed until 1870; and even then the Elementary Education Act passed in that year was a typical English compromise. This Act, piloted through Parliament by the Liberal statesman William Edward Forster, a Bradford woollen manufacturer, in face of fierce and sustained opposition, maintained



the voluntary system; but at least it empowered the Government to 'fill the gaps'. In districts where no voluntary schools existed, or where the provision of elementary education was judged inadequate, local School Boards were to be elected, with power to provide and maintain Elementary schools out of public funds. Sectarian rivalries, which had killed many previous Education Bills, and threatened death to this one, were at the last moment appeased by a formula which provided that in the 'Board' schools "no religious catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination"<sup>11</sup> was to be taught. One crucially important consequence of this compromise was that it established in England and Wales a system of 'Dual Control' of elementary education, with statutory and voluntary bodies sharing the responsibility for the provision and maintenance of schools. This system has persisted, though with many modifications, down to the present day.

The 1870 Act did not make attendance at school compulsory, though it is often incorrectly stated to have done so. It empowered School Boards to make attendance compulsory within their areas, and many did. But to enforce compulsory attendance everywhere in 1870 would have been impossible, because in many districts the number of children of school age was far greater than the number of school places. A remarkable spurt of building, by both the voluntary societies and the School Boards, enabled the Government to introduce in 1876 a partial measure of compulsion, and to make attendance at school compulsory everywhere in 1880. (But it took many years, and thousands of 'school attendance officers', to get this universally observed.) In 1891 tuition fees in Public Elementary schools were largely done away with by the Government's offer to pay compensatory grants to schools which gave up charging them. Total abolition of fees in Elementary schools was not, however, effected until 1918.

While the sectarians were wrangling over the control of elementary education, reform was gradually getting under way in secondary and higher education. In part this was brought about by the efforts of individual reformers, amongst whom Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby School from 1828 to 1842, and George Birkbeck, promoter of Mechanics' Institutes, rank high; in part it was the result of increasing pressure from public opinion, especially from the now powerful and wealthy middle classes.

Revolt against the Anglican exclusiveness of Oxford and Cambridge brought into being between 1828 and 1836 a University of London – of which more later. In the 1850s Royal Commissions were forced upon the ancient Universities, and consequent Acts of Parliament made radical changes in their centuries-old constitutions. In the 1860s, other Royal Commissions investigated, first, the constitutions and curricula of the nine old and famous schools which ranked as 'public' schools,<sup>12</sup> and secondly all the other endowed schools, nearly 3,000 in number. These investigations also were followed by Acts of Parliament, which remodelled the constitutions of the public schools and redistributed the endowments of many of the others, in part to make provision for the secondary education of girls, which on a

substantial scale dates only from the 1870s. Education for women at a higher level had begun in London in the 1840s with the founding of the Queen's and Bedford Colleges; twenty years more were to elapse before Girton College gave it a slender footing at Cambridge, and thirty before Somerville College and Lady Margaret Hall were opened at Oxford.

From the 1850s onward mounting anxiety about the increasingly successful industrial competition Great Britain was having to face from European countries, and the well-founded belief that these countries were enabled to compete so successfully because they had built up efficient systems of vocational education, resulted in a spate of commissions of inquiry, official and private. These provoked both governmental and voluntary action. In the 1850s the Government established a Department of Science and Art; in the 1870s the Corporation of the City of London with some of the City Livery Companies (the descendants of the medieval craft and merchant guilds) drew up plans for a national system of technical education, and founded the City and Guilds of London Institute (CGLI); in the 1880s the Government appointed a Royal Commission on Technical Instruction, and followed this up by passing in 1889 a Technical Instruction Act. This Act, the first of its kind, empowered the County and County Borough Councils, created in 1888, (and the urban sanitary authorities), to levy a rate of one penny (less than  $\frac{1}{2}$ p) for the purpose of providing and grant-aiding vocational education. Thanks to the Act, but much more to the diversion to educational purposes of large sums from Customs and Excise, and from London charities which had outlived their original purposes, the 1890s saw a considerable growth of technical colleges and evening schools providing a wide variety of vocational courses.

Liberal adult education was still left to voluntary enterprise, which was not lacking. The 1840s had seen the foundation, in Sheffield, of the first 'People's College', to be followed in 1854 by the famous Working Men's College (still flourishing) in north London; and in 1867 a young Cambridge don, James Stuart, started one of the country's greatest adult movements when he delivered, at the request of the newly-formed North of England Council for Promoting the Higher Education of Women, a series of public lectures in Leeds, Liverpool, Manchester, Sheffield, Rochdale and Crewe. These gave birth to 'University Extension', the organized provision by universities of lectures and courses for persons not members of a university.

But the keystone of the educational arch was still missing. Practically every inquiry, public or private, into the state of education from the 1860s onward had emphasized the urgent need to create a national system of secondary education. At long last, in 1894 a Royal Commission (the 'Bryce' Commission) was instructed to recommend how this could best be done. Its labours resulted, first, in an Act of Parliament, passed in 1899, which created a national Board of Education to supervise elementary, secondary, and vocational education, and secondly in the epoch-making Education Act of 1902. This Act, passed by a Conservative government in face of denomi-

national controversy as bitter as that of 1870, made three fundamental changes in the law relating to public education. It made available to voluntary schools money from local rates as well as national taxes (that was what caused most controversy); it abolished the *ad hoc* School Boards and made the general purpose County and County Borough Councils the local authorities for education; and it empowered these councils to provide, and grant-aid the provision of, 'education other than elementary', thus making possible in England the long-desired statutory system of secondary education. (Wales had secured one a dozen years earlier, as a result of the passing of the Welsh Intermediate Education Act 1889.)

The 1902 Act was followed very soon by two other Acts of Parliament which were over the years to prove of inestimable benefit to generations of English and Welsh school children: the Education (Provision of Meals) Act 1906, which authorized LEAs to spend public money on meals for under-nourished Elementary school children, and the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act 1907, which made it the duty of the LEAs to provide for the medical inspection of children in Elementary schools, and gave them the power to make arrangements (with the sanction of the Board of Education) for giving medical attention to their health and physical condition.

The 1902 Act paved the way for great advances, but it did not, alas, create a completely articulated system of public education. That was not to come until 1944. The 1902 structure was made up of two imperfectly co-ordinated parts, elementary education and 'education other than elementary', that is, all other forms of education, including secondary education, that was provided or grant-aided out of public funds, except university education. The local education authorities (LEAs) were given fundamentally different responsibilities in respect of these two parts. They were placed under a statutory *duty* to secure the provision of adequate facilities for elementary education, but were bound by no such duty in respect of 'education other than elementary'; they were merely given *powers*, to be exercised at their own discretion, to provide and grant-aid the provision of this. As a result, some authorities made generous provision while others did as little as possible.

This dichotomy in the educational system was emphasized by two other factors. Pressure from vested interests had compelled the inclusion in the 1902 Act, alongside the County and County Borough Councils, of a second group of LEAs: the Councils of all non-county (municipal) boroughs having populations exceeding 10,000 at the 1901 Census and of all urban districts (i.e. town districts organized for local government but not possessing the status of borough) with populations exceeding 20,000. These minor authorities<sup>13</sup> were given responsibility for elementary education only; consequently, in their areas two local authorities for education might be operating, one for elementary and the other for higher education: a situation fraught with possibilities for friction, especially if one authority was progressive and the other laggard.

The other factor was that the two parts of the system were not made end-on to each other. Elementary education was compulsory up to the age of fourteen – nominally, that is, but as the law allowed children to be ‘exempted’ from attendance after attaining a specified level of academic education (not everywhere the same) many left at thirteen – and it was restricted to children under sixteen. But secondary education began ordinarily at ten or eleven, and could be started earlier. The two parts thus ran parallel for several years. This could have provided a valuable opportunity for developing various but closely co-ordinated forms of post-primary education. Unfortunately, the times were not ripe for this; the social gulf which yawned between the Public Elementary school on the one hand and the endowed and proprietary Secondary schools on the other was still too wide. What was done was to expand greatly, and systematize, the provision of scholarships enabling clever children to transfer from elementary to secondary education at about the age of eleven. In 1907 Regulations made under the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act passed that year required all Secondary schools maintained or aided by LEAs to reserve a given percentage (usually one-quarter) of their entry for pupils from Elementary schools awarded ‘free places’ by the LEA, which would pay their tuition fees.

In the early days many of the old-established Grammar schools resented the presence of ‘free-placers’ in their midst, but the passage of time and the ability of these pupils from Elementary schools gradually wore away the prejudice against them. A more persistent, and most unhappy, consequence of the free-place scheme was that, as the number of places available was usually much smaller than the number of candidates, many Elementary schools began systematically to coach and cram their abler pupils for what quickly became in many places a highly competitive examination.

The new system of secondary education was developed vigorously during the years preceding the First World War. Many endowed Grammar schools were accepted into it, as were some ‘Higher Grade’ and other senior Elementary schools which had been doing advanced work; and the LEAs built numerous new schools. Two criticisms are made of the policy pursued by the Board of Education during these years: that the curriculum of the Secondary school was assimilated too closely to the academic and literary pattern of that followed in the public and endowed Grammar schools; and that to meet the mounting demand for secondary education other parts of the educational system – notably vocational education – were starved. The criticisms are, on the whole, justified. Nevertheless, during these years there emerged two vocationally-biased types of post-Primary school which were later to become important elements in the structure of secondary education: the Junior Technical school, offering to pupils – mainly from Elementary schools – between the ages of twelve or thirteen and sixteen quasi-vocational courses, and the Central school – first pioneered by London and Manchester in 1911 and 1912 – a type of senior Elementary school which also offered vocationally-biased courses, but not so strongly vocational as those of the Junior