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This thesis is the result of work done during the period of registration, and is my own original work. I give my consent to its being made available for consultation, photocopying and for use through other libraries.

Mervel Vlaeminke
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INTRODUCTION

THE TENSIONS IN ENGLISH PUBLIC EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION - THE TENSIONS IN ENGLISH PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Broad Debate

A recent diagnosis of Britain's condition opened with the assertion that "the leading problem of modern British history is the explanation of economic decline". In the rundown to virtual stagnation of an economy which once dominated the world, the British experience is unique. It is a spectacle which has offered a tantalising invitation to analysts from many different backgrounds, from various parts of the world and from almost the whole spectrum of academic disciplines. But while the quest for an adequate explanation has assumed great vitality at a time when Britain's critical economic condition can no longer be disguised either from its own people or from the rest of the world, the problems are not of recent vintage. A historical perspective is inevitably drawn into the discussion, and the identification of symptoms and causes takes one progressively further back in time.

Whichever period within the last century is under review, it seems that the origins of Britain's difficulties cannot be found exclusively, or even mainly, from within that period. Hence, an analysis of recent economic performance which begins with the suggestion that in 1945 the picture was quite optimistic, arrives at the conclusion that a "formidable historical burden" and the "dead weight of the past" have much to do with the "unbroken chain of abysmal failure". Then in a scrutiny of the war period itself, the "absurd coupling of complacency and incompetence" which afflicted industrial and future planning, are again attributed to the inheritance of the past - "in the midst of a twentieth century war the spirit of the early-nineteenth century romantic movement blazed up again in Britain". Moving back to the 1930s and the 1920s, Britain was then led by politicians who, in their resemblance to self-righteous Victorian headmasters, had been educated for "a moment in history that had already vanished". And before that, despite a "prolonged and dramatic exposure" to the reality of foreign competition, the British "preferred to comfort themselves with fables" and cling to old and inefficient ways. Only in wartime, it seems, have discernible energy and direction been put into the organisation of affairs, though in the First World War the impetus given to, for example, scientific research was somewhat marred by the ineptness of the military commanders, few of whom "possessed either the imagination or the

scientific background to understand new technological conditions." In any case, the very abnormality of the circumstances, together with the victorious outcome, militated against fresh approaches being maintained in peacetime. Nineteenth century attitudes seem to be so firmly entrenched that no twentieth century lesson impinges on them.

Why should this be? Why does it seem to be the case that each generation's attempts to solve its own problems are so encumbered with the legacy of the past that it seems unable to break the mould? Is there something inherent in the British situation which pre-determined irreversible economic decline? Or perhaps something immutable in the British character which disqualified it from adjusting to modern conditions? Is it inevitable that declines follow rises, or that pioneers are impossibly handicapped once competitors emerge? It cannot be satisfactory to answer 'yes' to any of these questions. Although Britain's early industrialisation did bequeath some problems which other countries did not have to face, it also brought great wealth and experience. And while national character may be in part shaped by 'fixed' influences like geographical or climatic conditions, it is not an ever-present, unchanging force; to assume otherwise is to deny the capacity to observe and learn and re-direct. In a broad sense our ancestors have always exercised choices about the way forward, and the paths they took were dictated not solely by circumstances beyond their control, whether inherited from the past or posed by other nations. At least as important, at any point in history, were their perceptions of those circumstances, the understandings they brought to them, and the values they judged to be important.

It is therefore appropriate to keep probing for clues. The area of perceptions and values is a more elusive one than the facts of economic performance, and it is not surprising that there is a large body of literature devoted to trying to understand what has been distinctive about the British experience. It is a remarkably diffuse debate, encompassing a wide range of interpretations. There is analysis of the nature of industrialisation, with all its implications for the evolution of modern capitalism, the class structure, and organised labour, as well as for demographic considerations and for changing attitudes to science and technology. There is the socio-political approach, relating the absence of catastrophic wars or revolution to the characteristics of British democracy and of the social structure, and with them, the apparently profound trust in stability and tradition, and the attendant socialising processes. A philosophical perspective is not lacking, tracing the history of ideas like 'idealism' or 'imperialism', nor is work on the changing fashions in psychology, such as phrenology, faculty psychology and eugenics. The contribution of literature and the arts has been examined, as has the role of religion, especially of the late-nineteenth century evangelical variety, and comparative studies have supplied contrasts between Britain's experience and that of other countries. It seems there are clues to be found everywhere, and the whole subject constantly threatens to become unmanageably vast.

The Role of Educational Research

Contributions to this debate of necessity deal primarily in generalisations and broad abstractions, and tend to neglect the actual mechanisms by which values are transmitted. The most important of those mechanisms must be education in its widest sense, and whilst accepting that there are no measurable indices tying education to economic performance, it seems inconceivable that the two are not mutually related; the suggestion that "the English sickness" or 'British disease' was educational in its roots" has not been disproved. The second half of the nineteenth century has commonly been identified as the period when, it is alleged, Britain should have been modernising its attitudes to cope with the new economic challenges and safeguard its pre-eminence. In a number of respects, education was indeed changing in response to new pressures, the most conspicuous trend being the move towards institutionalisation at all levels. There is thus no substitute for examining closely the late nineteenth century schools and colleges which transmitted the all-important values, since "no other set of institutions has been so centrally concerned ... with the transmission of the cultural heritage".

Some of them have received due attention. Oxford and Cambridge Universities figure prominently in discussions about philosophical, intellectual and religious change, and the leading English public schools offer unique sociological evidence about the nature of ruling elites and the perpetuation of class distinctions. These are the most obvious locations in which to seek illumination of the attitudes of Britain's leading citizens at that critical point in its history. But as institutions catering specifically for a small minority of the population, they can tell only part of the story. Despite their deliberate development as institutions neither geographically nor philosophically tied to a particular locality, they can scarcely be viewed as expressing a genuinely national statement about education. The attachment to 'laissez-faire' liberalism which had restrained state intervention in favour of the voluntary initiative, meant that an overall strategy for education had never been formulated. There was no general view of its purpose, no nationwide system relating to a demographic logic, and no proper articulation of its component parts. Some institutions resembled each other or, finding that they had interests in common, consciously grew more alike, but provided they could maintain financial independence of the state, they had a virtually free hand in defining their own objectives. Clearly they had to develop in a way that was roughly in accord with a consensus of opinion, but they were not merely reflective of that consensus; rather, then as now, "an institution like the public school does not simply transmit values; it selects them and reinforces them".

3 Wilkinson, op.cit.p x.
Understandably, for any institution interested in self-preservation, one of the chief values the Victorian public school chose to promote was its indispensability to its customers. So came into being a version of education which incorporated as one of its fundamental tenets the perpetuation of class differences, partly by means of specialising the content, but even more through adherence to a stylised process. Amongst other things, this meant that the educational institutions of the elite could afford to remain largely aloof from a whole range of pressing educational controversies. Indeed, an increasingly important part of their prestige lay in their assumed capacity to safeguard traditional values and to induce conformity to familiar patterns of behaviour. Furthermore, through their ready access to elite status, the public schools ensured that the education deemed appropriate for the majority of the population was shaped by people who adhered to quite different educational priorities for their own class. The peculiar British circumstance that state education provision has been largely determined by people who do not participate in it, is of crucial importance in any assessment of its development. Class interests cannot be divorced from what such people term the 'national interest', and the survival of certain institutions or styles of education at the expense of others may have little to do with their intrinsic worth for the educational advancement of the whole population.

This thesis is based on the assumption that institutions which have been less favoured by history can tell us at least as much about the values of Britain's rulers as the schools and universities in which they were themselves educated. It is an assumption supported by what seems to be a persistent inclination in the world of education to glorify antiquity and tradition. This in turn creates a tendency both to undervalue innovatory institutions, and to misrepresent moments in history when there was real potential for a change of direction - in other words, when alternative values and priorities were mounting an effective challenge. The end of the nineteenth century was one such moment, witnessing a critical test for the established elite and their familiar values. Other sections of the population were utilising a haphazard collection of educational resources at their disposal to construct a dynamic and self-contained 'system' of education, which disconcertingly had no apparent desire to emulate the priorities of the elite. By the end of the century, this new system was approaching completion, and it is possible to identify four distinct ways in which it seemed to be challenging the established order. In the areas of technical, secondary and elementary education and in educational administration, tensions were building to a climax and significant measures of reform seemed urgently needed. To understand each of them it is necessary to look at institutions other than those which have become regarded as the repositories of Britain's educational tradition.

As witnessed by the competition among institutions for proof of an early foundation date, the lengthy detailing of old covenants in publications like the Victoria County History, and the taste for old-looking buildings, founders' days, coats of arms, Latin mottoes, etc.
The Tensions in Technical Education

Probably the most important 'new' controversy which was thrusting into the world of education was the whole area of technical, scientific and vocational education. It had not been a pressing issue while industrialisation was in progress or during the subsequent half-century or so of world dominance. Britain's industrial revolution had succeeded in the absence of any formal encouragement or controls, and it had become a key part of the Victorian gospel not to intervene. Industrialists and entrepreneurs were largely placed outside the mainstream of political and cultural life, a process reinforced by the nonconformist backgrounds of many of them, while the intellectual elite had no need to assimilate industry or applied science to its own experience. In England, neither the universities nor the schools of the governing class had played any part in the industrial transformation, unlike its continental imitators who had to learn how to do it and programme their institutions accordingly. One of the unsurprising outcomes of this was that industrialists had come to expect little help from the nation's elite, and tended to accept that the point of education was to safeguard the cultural heritage and develop general qualities of leadership, not to increase technical competence and feed skilled personnel into industry. Relations settled into a barren pattern, in which industrialists failed to appreciate the value of scientific research or technical training, university-based scientists resented what they regarded as the taint of applied research, and most members of the elite had little respect for either group of experts.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century there were signs that attitudes were changing. A number of more perceptive Victorians, aware that Britain's economic supremacy was coming under challenge, made intelligent guesses at the reasons. Prominent amongst them was the inadequacy of educational provision to respond to the more technically-demanding "second" industrial revolution of the latter part of the nineteenth century. By the 1890s, they had succeeded in forcing the issues onto the political and cultural agenda. The first input of state money into the endowed schools was to encourage practical science and manual instruction, and in the publicly-provided sector those subjects were positively booming, from elementary schools up to new technical colleges and university courses. To the pro-science lobby, these developments did nothing more than accord science something

1 Whilst acknowledging that each of these three can mean different things, this thesis follows the advice offered by S.T. Cotgrove in Technical Education and Social Change (1958) p 36, that "for all practical purposes, technical education in the nineteenth century meant the teaching of science". Both were then forms of vocational education, which also came to include commercial education and domestic training.

2 As it was neatly put in one case, "Germany was a land of schools before it was a land of factories". E.H. Reisner, Nationalism and Education since 1789 (1939) p 181.
approaching its rightful place after years of neglect, and there was great enthusiasm for what was happening. From the Birmingham witness telling the Cross Commission that "the little blackguards in the poor districts ... have an extremely sharp intelligence, and they can be specially awakened by science"¹, to the rejoicing of Samuelson that "the impetus given to technical education [140 technical schools and colleges started between 1891 and 1893] was beyond the most sanguine expectations of its warmest advocates"², real change seemed to be in the air.

But the success of the movement was too dramatic for those who believed that education should be based on other priorities, and who themselves had little knowledge or experience of the alternatives. Convinced that "good" grammar schools were being ruined, and that the whole literary tradition of education was under threat, they managed to create a climate of opinion that saw technical and secondary education as two distinct things, the former being inimical to the latter. The Bryce Commission heard much of that kind of anxiety, and though it paid tribute to the equal claims of literary, scientific and technical elements in education, it nevertheless concluded that "there is little danger at the present day that we should fail to recognize the necessity of improving and extending science and technical instruction. It is less certain that we may not run some risk of a lop-sided development in education, in which the teaching of science, theoretical and applied, may so predominate as to entail comparative neglect of studies which are of less obvious and immediate utility, though not of less moment for the formation of mind and character"³. That comment rang the alarm bells for many of those involved in the higher levels of the educational world, and the considerable weight of opinion in favour of a literary-based education was mobilised. Despite the rapid progress in technical and scientific education, it had far fewer resources on which to draw, and when the tensions over curriculum came to be resolved, the two sides proved to be very unevenly matched.

The Tensions in Secondary Education

The institutions which felt most directly threatened by the technical education movement were the lesser endowed schools. By the close of the nineteenth century, the restructuring of England's ancient educational endowments was coming to a natural end, after seventy or so years of erratic progress. At first, a handful of schools which were highly favoured — either in terms of financial security or the fortuitous arrival of a dynamic headmaster — had reformed themselves in a

² Reported in The Record of Technical and Secondary Education Vol III, No 13 (Jan 1894).
³ (Bryce) Royal Commission on Secondary Education (1895) Vol 1 pp 48,284.
way that seemed to accord with the needs of a certain part of the population. Blessed by the Clarendon Commission, they were attracting considerable prestige, not least through their strengthening connections with the nation's intellectual, religious and political elite. This helped them to assume a role as models of educational excellence, which proved to be an irresistibly powerful influence on the Schools Inquiry Commissioners deciding the future of the rest of England's endowed schools. Showing scant regard for the needs of the industrial cities, they constructed their proposed new system around the pinnacle of the classical first grade school. Significantly, that model had been delineated before there was any concern about the nation's economic performance. Some schools profited handsomely from the reorganisation, and so another tier of schools joined the original nine. The attachment was formalised in the creation of the Headmasters' Conference, which came into being specifically to resist state interference and which played a key part in giving a common image to a widely differing collection of schools. The providers of state education were thus placed in the odd position of being vigorously opposed by the very schools they most respected - it was no wonder that they became prone to ambiguity and compromise.

But what of the rest of the endowed schools - the majority - which still could not manage to become viable, despite reformed schemes and reorganised endowments? Few of them were content with the essentially negative designation of second grade or third grade status, but there was no obvious way out of the financial, intellectual and social constraints within which they were accustomed to operating. The Bryce assistant commissioners reporting in 1894-5 found a lot of endowed schools were so impoverished, unpopular or badly run that they were virtually moribund, offering only elementary education or even in abeyance. By about 1900, then, the endowed schools were far from being a homogeneous group of institutions sharing a particular identity. Rather, the nineteenth century reorganisation of secondary education had resulted in a "polarisation of endowed grammar schools into two groups", with "the gap between successful and unsuccessful schools becoming wider".

At that point in their history, many endowed schools were in a perilous condition and could have been coaxed in a variety of directions. A growing number were developing links with the publicly-funded sector of education through scholarships and capitation grants, and despite some grumbling, were moving fairly smoothly towards closer co-operation with the local educational authorities. But others had seen a different way

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2 Though its more elaborate rituals were mostly added after the schools began taking larger numbers from the rising bourgeoisie.

out of their difficulties. The shared educational background (in the absence of any other) of the teachers in many endowed and most public schools encouraged the former to emphasise their identity of interest with the latter, even when their schools had almost nothing in common. They needed allies and quite consciously sought them among their more prestigious fellows in the educational world, and through that alliance were able to elicit sympathy from the central decision-makers. They thereby ensured that when the long-awaited reorganisation of secondary education arrived, all endowed schools were treated as part of the independent sector which, as has been suggested, was essentially class-based and poorly attuned to the needs of industrial communities.

The Tensions in Elementary Education

One of the firmest convictions of the struggling endowed schools was that their problems were not of their own making or soluble by their own efforts. They saw themselves as the victims of unfair competition from the publicly-provided sector of education, which by the 1890s had grown much grander than had originally been expected. State support for elementary schools had been conceived as a completely different activity from the sort of education outlined in the previous section. It seemed to be the best way to tackle the serious social problems associated with urban poverty, for a strong strand of Victorian opinion clung to the idea that the poor quality of life of the urban working classes was the fault of the people concerned, not the circumstances in which they lived. And yet there was always a reluctance to spend too much money on the correcting process, and improvements in elementary education were never free of stringent financial constraints.

The deep tensions implicit in deciding what elementary education was for, and how much of the nation's resources should be invested in it, were approaching a climax by the end of the nineteenth century. Just as with secondary education, there had never been a 'national' appraisal of the purpose of elementary education, but rather a series of responses to existing practice in the form of permissive, enabling directives from the centre. The creation of the 'elementary school system', including the 1870 Act, was based on assumptions about the age, social class and educational needs of the recipients which had never been made explicit, because they had been expected so to circumscribe the system that detailed definitions were superfluous. But fairly rapidly, all three of those anticipated self-regulatory factors had become disquietingly blurred and complicated. By the end of the century, the public elementary education system was attracting increasing numbers of older pupils as well as children from a widening range of social classes, and to cater for both, curricular constraints had been progressively loosened and standards allowed to rise. In the process the Science and Art Department, a body founded for quite different educational purposes, assumed an important presence in 'elementary' education though the relationship between the two was yet to be properly defined.
During that quarter-century, the central authority had bent with the winds of change as elementary education broke its boundaries in all directions, and even started to forge links with colleges of higher education. Depending on who was in office, the Education Department vacillated between feeling vaguely uneasy about what was happening but lacking a rationale to stop it, and positively welcoming the progress towards better opportunities for the mass of the population. Adherents to the latter view held sway in the first half of the 1890s, and helped to engender "an era of new educational hope .... the whole emphasis was indeed delightfully positive". Public elementary education was given such a boost that it was beginning to pose a serious challenge to both its two chief competitors, the voluntary elementary schools and the poorer endowed secondary schools. The accession to power of a strong Conservative government (after an election in which education played little part), was extremely fortuitous for both. Powerful lobbies from the Anglicans and the endowed school heads played upon the government's instinctive sympathies and greatly enhanced their chances of having the tensions within elementary education resolved in their favour.

The Tensions in Educational Administration

Underlying all three of the areas of tension described above was a conflict in outlook between the centre and the periphery which had major repercussions for the exercise of power at local level. Since education was uniquely important as a repository of values and of class interests, its administration was likely to be profoundly affected by people remote from the actual institutions. Continuing affection for the voluntary principle in education meant that the centre had refrained from laying down a universal model, whether of technical, secondary or elementary education. But that did not mean that it was uninterested in how things took shape and nor, as became clear towards the end of the 1890s, was it neutral. As institutions which it favoured - Church of England schools and endowed grammar schools - seemed to be threatened with extinction, it abandoned its permissive stance of twenty-five years and looked for ways of restoring the old balance, primarily by curbing the elementary education system. Local wishes became relatively unimportant and the industrial areas which had gained most from the expansion of public education - and which were often those worst served by voluntary effort - were brought into sharp conflict with the central authority.

By the end of the nineteenth century, those towns and cities were in a position to put up a more determined resistance than would have been the case a few years earlier. Urban government had become more sophisticated and more self-assured, accompanied by (cause and effect are difficult to disentangle) a growing involvement in the life of their towns.

E. J. R. Eaglesham, From School Board to Local Authority (1958) pp 59, 103.
among the prosperous business communities. Status could be acquired by serving one's local community, and so even though wealthy men moved their residences out to the suburbs, sent their sons to distant public schools, and invested their money far from their home town - or even their home land - they nevertheless retained an emotional commitment to their locality. In Birmingham, for example, it was said at the beginning of this century that prominent citizens "do not hold themselves aloof from local affairs," and a later writer has identified that city's early recognition of "a new vision of the function and nature of the corporation" as the main reason for its social and economic elite resisting the pull to the metropolis.

The metropolitan elite was far removed from this world of gas supplies, sanitation and poor relief funds. With its shared public school, Oxbridge background and its affinity with the aristocracy and the governing elite, it had never come to terms with industrial urbanisation. Its members were deeply uneasy about the industrial cities, which were seen to be remote from the capital, dirty and smoky, and full of sickly, drunken and immoral inhabitants. It seemed inconceivable that their needs were of a similar order to those of the aspiring middle class, and local leaders who thought otherwise clearly needed to be guided in the 'right' direction. Their liking for science and technical education, the upward surging of the elementary school system under their care, and the damage being done by both to many endowed grammar schools, were all evidence of the urgency of the task. That the provincial cities might have anything to teach the metropolitan elite was scarcely contemplated, for the education of the latter led them to believe, above all, that they had perfected a style of education that was crucial to the nation's wellbeing.

There was consequently a persistent tension underlying relations between the urban authorities, which became increasingly committed to the education systems under their care, and their central overlords. The Education Department, through its retention of recruitment by patronage, remained even more exclusively the preserve of the metropolitan elite than most government departments. Visiting inspectors had

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1. It has been suggested by D.A. Reeder in *The Reconstruction of Secondary Education 1869-1920* (typescript, 1985) p.8, that "it may have been easier for local elites to adopt expansionist and meritocratic policies with regard to local schooling" precisely because their own children were removed from the scene.


4. The radical educationist George Dixon was a good example; as explained by J.M. Jones, *George Dixon* (typescript, 1980), he gave up a promising parliamentary career to devote himself to hisailing wife and to Birmingham's affairs. The city was fortunate to have congenial Edgbaston just a mile from the city centre.

5. L. Davidoff, *The Best Circles* (1973) has described how the elite which comprised Society and followed The Season 'never visited industrial cities; their world was London, country houses, Oxbridge, Eton, Henley, Ascot.
little in common with local inspectors or with most of the nation's teachers, the urban school boards became the object of violent attacks, locally-based attempts to exert control over endowed schools were resisted, and the old universities were quite deliberately employed to "hold the pass against the onslaught of the surge of democracy in the towns" through supervision of the civic universities. Local administrators who in some circumstances imitated the metropolitan upper middle class, found their loyalties sorely tested, as their home cities seemed to be best served by the very things least favoured at Whitehall - the pursuit of scientific and vocational goals in education, and the continuing upward growth of the publicly-provided elementary school system.

The Higher Grade Schools - A Focus of Tensions

One group of institutions was intimately involved in all four of the tensions outlined above. The higher grade schools were the highest achievement of the school board elementary system, by virtue of which they were perceived as rivals to the older secondary schools, and they placed a much stronger emphasis on scientific, technical and vocational education. The first of the higher grade schools came into being in 1876 (in Bradford); twenty-five years later they were declared illegal, and within another five years they had ceased to exist. It is therefore possible to isolate them as a phenomenon, one which closely coincided in time with the major tensions which were gathering in the world of education. They are thus of unique significance in illuminating key aspects of the interplay and ultimate resolution of those tensions.

The following areas of enquiry are of special interest in assessing the importance of the higher grade school phenomenon. How far were the schools part of a conscious attempt by the school boards to construct an alternative system of education accessible to all children? If they were trying to do that, did they succeed? - did they in fact extend

1 The battle over King Edward School, Birmingham, in the 1860s and 1880s was an example of this kind of conflict, as described by R.C. Gilson, 'The Schools of King Edward VI' in Muirhead, op.cit. pp 523-60, & D. Smith, Conflict and Compromise (1982) pp 176-83.

2 Allsbrook, op.cit. p 662. P. Gordon & J. White in Philosophers as Educational Reformers (1979) pp 121-2 described how personal links between, for example, Jowett at Balliol and Percival of Clifton College and later the bishopric of Hereford, led to an open invitation to the Oxford colleges to get closely involved with provincial university colleges, "in order to avoid local influences, which would tend towards the practical wants of the neighbourhood but which would produce little or nothing in the way of liberal culture". Bristol University College, over which Balliol and New Colleges had considerable influence, was their greatest success.

3 The designation was probably first used by a school in Cambridge, but it was of a rather different type.
educational opportunities and offer a genuine service to their localities? Did the higher grade schools have any distinctive features, and if so, were the schools themselves conscious that they were engaged in something new? And where did they think it might lead? Was their emphasis on science a desired characteristic or merely one forced upon them by inadequate funding and semi-official status? Were the higher grade schools successful - in the kinds of children they attracted, the standards they achieved, and the role they had begun to play in the evolving hierarchy of educational institutions? Had the endowed schools just cause to be worried by them, or were they seeking scapegoats for their own shortcomings? If they were, how did they go about protecting themselves, and with what results? How did the central authorities respond to all these tensions, and in particular to the higher grade school innovation? Were local initiatives encouraged and absorbed into general practice, or did 'metropolitan' values find it difficult to assimilate the new discoveries? And finally, in broad terms what does all this tell us about alternative models of secondary schooling, and about the attitudes to knowledge and to social class that underlay the choices made at that crucial point in educational history?

Existing work on late nineteenth and early twentieth century education gives little help in finding answers to these questions; the higher grade schools seem to be much mentioned, little described and readily written off. Some writers express a warm admiration for them and draw wide-ranging conclusions about their potential role in English education and society. Rather more follow the general line advanced by contemporary opponents of the higher grade schools, that they were an ill-regulated assortment whose assimilation into the education system was desirable and inevitable. Colloquially stated, the commonly accepted interpretation says:

- higher grade schools were a good effort, by unsuitable ruling bodies operating in adverse circumstances
- they had lots of faults
- they were bound to be dealt with sooner or later
- nobody missed them much when they'd gone, because they were replaced with something better.

It is the purpose of this thesis to re-examine these verdicts in the light of a full factual picture of higher grade education, and to offer an assessment of the contribution which that information makes to the broad debate about the uniqueness of Britain's experience.

The Documentary Evidence

Having identified the higher grade school movement as an under-researched subject in which the four key tensions of late nineteenth century education were at work, the availability of information was obviously crucial. It was particularly important to be able to penetrate the unfavourable 'official view', to try to catch the spirit of the schools and understand how they were perceived by their pupils, teachers, parents and other local people.
feel that the schools were merely a stop-gap waiting to be replaced, or did they have a recognisable identity which was known and approved? If Robert Morant was correct when he said that the term 'higher grade' is used by an infinity of Schools up and down the country and has no definite connotation whatever, it would be impossible to study the 'higher grade school' as a distinctive type of educational institution. There are indeed a number of practical constraints.

Since the higher grade schools were not the product of any central planning and had uncertain legal status, there was no centralised recording of their activities. Nobody in the central administration was responsible for them and they straddled all three of the statutory controlling bodies - the Education Department, the Science and Art Department and, to a lesser extent, the Charity Commissioners - at a time when those three were so autonomous that they scarcely spoke to each other. The Science and Art Department had the most to do with them, but as for most of its existence it was nothing more than a grant-awarding, examining body, that is precisely the extent of the information it recorded. The point at which the Science and Art Department realised that its work in schools had begun to assume a rather special nature and started to administer accordingly, came late in its life, and so records are interesting but limited.

In fact the dubious legal status of the higher grade schools directly militated against informative record-keeping at all levels. While the archives of national and local education administration are well preserved as a rule, some local authorities were cautious about their use of the term 'higher grade' in official circles, although it was freely used in committee meetings, election propaganda and the local press. Under pressure, they were inclined to stress those features which made higher grade schools merely good quality elementary schools and therefore an indisputable part of their responsibilities. Nor was that a serious misrepresentation of the situation, for higher grade schooling was the best version of elementary education available; it grew out of the public elementary system, never voluntarily discarding its roots, and often shared its premises, school names and teaching staffs. Furthermore, by the middle of the 1890s, the obvious success and popularity of higher grade education was encouraging other elementary schools to look in that direction. Increasing numbers of them were retaining their ex-Standard children and providing more advanced courses, even though they had not as yet changed their names. 'Higher grade' information is consequently often as jumbled up with elementary school archives as it is with the Science and Art Department's records.

1 In the proposed Minute establishing Higher Elementary Schools, 6 Apr 1900, quoted in Eaglesham, op.cit. p 192.
2 It is extremely difficult to disentangle the information relating to higher grade schools from the listings for the hundreds of assorted institutes, schools, colleges and classes which utilised the Science and Art Department's examinations. An attempt to do so appears in Appendix 1.
To difficulties of that nature is added the natural wastage which afflicts all archive material, particularly when it is not centralised. Items relating to individual schools like log books and admission registers have generally been retained on the premises, and over the years, changes of status and moves to better locations have taken a heavier toll of higher grade schools than of more settled institutions. When schools are found which do have their records, they are not always as informative as might be hoped. Although the school boards nurtured their higher grade schools rather carefully, they were interested primarily in the mundane business of daily administration. Attendance, equipment and examination entries figure largely in the log books, and higher grade school heads did not always have the time or energy to add much more. Conscious of the need to justify both to their employers and their pupils their respective investments in extended schooling, they often carried a heavy personal teaching load, as well as a strong commitment to staff development. They seem also to have been deeply committed to working towards a recognisable school ethos, and to developing an ambassadorial role for the new style of education - involvement with local community affairs was important, as was contact with parents, and there were frequent visitors from other parts of the country. There is no doubt that the heads worked very hard and, in the absence of clerical assistance, their log books sometimes became rather fuller of lamentations about their state of nervous exhaustion than a wealth of factual detail, personal comment and philosophical interpretation.

If the school boards and the headteachers failed to keep copious records, perhaps the people who owed most to the higher grade schools did it for them. Unfortunately, even the more academically inclined former pupils were too busy earning their living, as teachers or clerks or engineers, to produce the 'Alma Mater' type of histories which proliferate in the annals of public and endowed schools. There are occasional first-hand accounts of higher grade education in old school magazines and newspapers but conversations with early-century pupils revealed their surprise that their memories of school should be a subject of academic interest. Such glimpses generally convey the remarkable pride and loyalty felt for particular higher grade schools, though, it should be said, those who maintained contact with their former schools were not necessarily typical of the whole school population. But it is interesting that F.H. Spencer, who had a wider experience of education than most, observed that the High Pavement Higher Grade School in Nottingham, where he started his teaching career, was "famous, at least in the local sense some 'Board Schools' were. Grown men to-day will talk of Ithaca Road, or Stenhouse Street School with an insolent pride". Tributes of this kind invite exploration, and stimulate the search for knowledge and understanding in this relatively neglected area of educational history, despite the reticence of its participants.

1 F.H. Spencer, An Inspector's Testament (1938) p 157. Similarly, Mark Grossek in First Movement (1937) p 39, noted how London's board schools "just like the more genteel centres of learning, possessed their own individual specialities and traditions".
It was decided to concentrate on certain cities in order to
gauge the total effect of the higher grade school phenomenon
on an area, rather than selecting individual schools
disjointed from each other and from their environments.
Bristol is the main focus of this research, a city which was
unusually well endowed with secondary schools and yet found
that higher grade schools uniquely filled a major gap in its
educational provision. It was not one of the pioneers, but
within a very few years in the 1890s became heavily committed
to higher grade school development, finding that its cautious
entry into the field aroused an enthusiastic response among
its citizens. Birmingham and Nottingham are also investigated
in some detail, both of them areas in which higher grade
schools had made an early appearance. The former is of
particular interest as a city which was noted in the second
half of the nineteenth century for its radical and positive
approach to popular education, and the latter as one of the
few cities which tried the unhappy experiment of converting to
higher elementary schools.

In those chosen locations, it proved possible to examine
detailed records relating to seven previously unresearched
higher grade schools, together with less detailed information
about half a dozen others. For purposes of comparison, some
source material relating to other educational institutions in
the chosen areas was studied. Existing work in the shape of
books, theses and unpublished histories contributed
information about a further thirty higher grade schools all
over the country. The main focus of this thesis is the twenty
year period of which the 1902 Act is the midpoint. The first
half of that period was what might be termed the maturity of
the higher grade school movement, when early problems had been
largely solved, and when a spell of sympathetic handling from
the central controlling bodies gave the movement considerable
impetus. After 1902, when technically the schools ceased to
exist, it is significant to see what happened to them; they
did not change overnight and retained their distinctive
identity until at least 1907 when the moulding process to
which they were subjected began to have a decisive effect.

This, then, forms the location - in place and in time - for
the reassessment of the higher grade schools which comprises
this thesis. They are seen as a vital constituent of a range
of educational institutions which included organised schools
of science, pupil teacher centres, technical colleges, evening
classes and university colleges, which were all blossoming at
the close of the nineteenth century in response to an upsurge
of educational demand1. In the course of the chapters which
follow, the prevailing interpretation of the higher grade
school phenomenon summarised earlier will be considered, and
the following propositions advanced in response:

1 Only the university colleges continued their development
in the twentieth century; no doubt their susceptibility
to 'metropolitan' influence (see p 11) helped to protect
them.
that the higher grade schools were not merely a good effort, but a successful and extremely promising one—such faults as they had were not of their own making and were not as great as often suggested—\ldots that they were readily susceptible to reform; there were several more constructive ways in which the higher grade schools could have been dealt with; and the chosen way was a conscious (and not very educational) decision rather than an inevitable development—\ldots that the schools, and the principles by which they functioned, were making a unique contribution to English education, the loss of which may have been seriously underestimated.

The first chapter surveys in some depth the common interpretations—\ldots about the higher grade schools to be found in existing work on educational history. These are grouped around the important themes which recur and to which further reference will be made later. In Chapter 2, evidence is drawn from all the sources indicated above to create a thorough descriptive analysis of the higher grade schools. The characteristics of a 'typical' school are discussed, with particular reference to distinctive aspects of internal organisation, curriculum, staffing and pupil intake. Two chapters are devoted to a detailed case study of Bristol. The city's decade of optimistic higher grade school development forms the subject of Chapter 3; Chapter 4 reviews their subsequent battle for survival and eventual transformation into secondary schools of a very different nature. The main task of Chapter 5 is to investigate whether Bristol's experiences after the 1902 Act were duplicated in other parts of the country. It follows the pattern of Chapter 2, illustrating how each of the distinctive higher grade characteristics fared in England's new education system.

A number of unexpected findings are encountered during the detailed examination of the rise and fall of the higher grade schools. Among them, the issue of opportunities for girls stands out as a subject which not only figures little in previous work about higher grade schools and pupil teacher centres, but has also failed to make any impression on the growing body of research into the history of women. That work has polarised into two class-based models relating to education. One concentrates on the gradual enhancement of opportunities for middle class girls and women through the adoption of various strategies to penetrate the male-dominated educational world. However, this success has been characterised as a Pyrrhic victory in view of what happened to working class girls, who were subjected to a rigorous domestic ideology which underpinned the steady suppression of opportunities. In contrast to both these delineations, the education which girls received—\ldots female teachers gave—in higher grade schools and pupil teacher centres was in many ways closer to present ideals of equality. The importance of this discovery justifies a thorough examination of the subject, which is undertaken in Chapter 6.

\footnote{By S. Delamont, 'The Domestic Ideology and Women's Education' in Delamont & L. Duffin, The Nineteenth-Century Woman (1978) p 166.}
What emerges from this first comprehensive study of the higher grade schools is that they were significant and distinctive institutions whose demise raises many questions. If, as is suggested in this thesis, they were making a unique contribution to English education, why and how they were removed from the scene? Chapter 7 examines the educational background to the transformation that was accomplished by the Board of Education in the first decade of this century, concentrating in particular on the manner in which it resolved the various tensions in public education outlined in this Introduction. In the Conclusion, the perspective broadens to encompass the social, economic and cultural context in which the twentieth century system of secondary education was shaped in England, and to recollect the general issues outlined at the beginning of this Introduction. Such a review is rendered all the more worthwhile by the persistent search for a style of post-primary schooling appropriate for the majority of children and for a proper place for vocational, technical and manual subjects in the secondary school curriculum. While it is obviously unrealistic to advocate the reconstitution of the nineteenth century higher grade schools or their inventors, the school boards, it is valid to assess the continuing relevance of their best attributes. Eighty years on, the scale and significance of this lost opportunity have perhaps yet to be appreciated.
CHAPTER 1

THE HIGHER GRADE SCHOOLS - THE VERDICT SO FAR

"Pseudo-Secondary Schools"
"Lop-Sided Curriculum"
"Dubious Legality"
"Administrative Muddle"
"Supreme Achievement"
"Social Quarantining"
"Repositories of Ineptitude"
"Heroic Innovators"
"Unique Partnership"
"Bursting with Brains"
"That Strange Administrative Giant"
Chapter 1

THE HIGHER GRADE SCHOOLS - THE VERDICT SO FAR

Few histories of English education omit reference to the higher grade schools. Assessments vary from the dismissive to the enthusiastic, but two recurring features are striking, one for its absence and the other for the regularity with which it appears. The first is the shortage of actual detail about such mundane but crucial aspects of higher grade school life as what was taught, by whom, to whom, for what purpose and with what results. The second is that this shortage has been little remedied over the years, so that instead of there being a steady growth of knowledge about the schools, it is possible to find statements both of fact and opinion expressed in the 1970s and 1980s which are very similar to those of the 1950s or the 1920s or even the 1890s. This inevitably produces a heavy reliance on those sources which make authoritative noises about the higher grade schools, resulting in regular repetition of those authors' information and judgments. Since the chronology of the writing seems to be relatively insignificant, it is more profitable to examine certain key themes which are frequently reiterated.

A preliminary point needs to be made. It is impossible to extract cleanly opinions on the higher grade schools from a range of related issues, notably the role of the school boards and the significance of the 1902 Act. Attitudes are likely to be coloured by their spokesmen's varying perceptions of the English educational system as a whole, especially as thorough factual information is hard to come by. When opening a book whose author has been moved to write because he was "increasingly alarmed" and "really touched on the raw" by repeated allegations of the serious deterioration in the English educational system, one is not surprised to find a defence - or even a celebration - of most of the decisions that have been made in the past. Admirers of the delicate administrative balance between local and central powers tend to see the school boards as messy and outmoded, and enthusiasts for the twentieth century grammar schools are likely to approve the changes which made them possible and not be over-solicitous about what was discarded in the process.

In general, there seems to be a desire to seek out recognisable patterns from the past, as if to prove that innovations or sudden changes of direction were in fact stages along a carefully-managed evolutionary path. Institutions and trends which fell by the wayside tend to be the chief victims of such an approach. This chapter will cite typical examples from what has been said to date about the higher grade schools, and in indicating some of the less satisfactory aspects of those verdicts, suggest the themes which this thesis intends to illuminate.

'Pseudo-Secondary Schools'

There is little dispute within the historical literature that what are generally known as the higher grade schools were those founded by the school boards as a means of providing a higher level of education for some of their pupils. As such they were innovatory, adding a new component to the nation’s educational provision, "the first enterprising ... attempt to provide education for all". Writers are divided about where to place them in their overall descriptions of the educational framework, puzzling whether to include them with the public elementary school system or with the endowed secondary schools. Higher grade board schools grew out of the former, yet had almost nothing to do with the latter, and so phrases like 'secondary-type schooling', 'secondary education in effect', 'secondary in all but name' and 'pseudo-secondary features' are commonly used.

The use of the term 'grade' was in keeping with the educational jargon of the time, reinforced by the Schools' Inquiry Commission's plan to match secondary schooling with social class, as determined by school leaving age. By the 1870s higher grade schools were being seen as equivalent to 'third-grade' schools, though at least one headmaster resisted this categorisation, proclaiming that "his own school is of no grade, but will be developed according to the requirements of the district". Most writers do not include those voluntary schools which used the name 'higher grade' to indicate social selectness, in order, it was said, to "influence ignorant parents in their neighbourhood". In explaining how the higher grade board schools achieved their higher level of education, there is commonly reference to their links with the Science and Art Department, less frequent mention of higher elementary or organised science schools, and occasional attempts to define two types of higher grade school.

Sometimes these are described respectively as 'all-through' schools, in which a higher grade department was built onto an elementary school, and 'central' schools, in which ex-Standard children from many elementary schools were gathered together. Marsden attempted to refine the distinction by suggesting that schools of the first type were deliberately located in socially respectable areas and made selective by means of fees (as in Bradford), while the second variety catered for deserving and clever children from a whole city and offered nothing below the seventh Standard (as in Sheffield and Birmingham). In the case of Birmingham, this repeats the error made by some previous writers to the effect that the

2 Leeds' Dr Forsyth quoted in The Schoolmaster 7 Dec 1895.
3 The words of Morant, quoted in E.J.R. Eaglesham, From School Board to Local Authority (1958) p 187.
4 W.E. Marsden, 'Schools for the Urban Lower Middle Class: Third Grade or Higher Grade' in F. Searby, ed., Educating the Victorian Middle Class (1982) p 51.
Bridge Street Seventh Standard School offered solely science and practical subjects. As the school’s early log book shows, the ‘three Rs’ were taught each morning and were examined by Education Department inspectors, grammar was chosen as one of the optional ‘class subjects’, and general subjects always remained an important part of at least the first year course. In fact, no higher grade school has been found with an exclusively scientific curriculum or wholly ex-Standard pupils; even those that called themselves ‘central’ schools and examined their entrants, took children part-way through the Standards and carried on their normal education, while gradually increasing their scientific, practical or commercial studies. In addition, few writers mention that two very important cities, London and Liverpool, organised their higher grade education differently from both the variants outlined above, favouring departments in many elementary schools.

The mention of some of the ‘famous’ higher grade cities in the preceding paragraph contributes to an assumption that the schools were primarily associated with the industrial cities of the North and Midlands\(^1\). While this was not untrue, little is said of higher grade schools in such places as Bristol, Plymouth, Brighton and Oxford, which provide interesting evidence of how the movement was developing beyond its original locations and functions. Most writers give a date for the first higher grade school and a total of how many such schools there eventually were, but there is variety on both counts. Sheffield (in 1876, 1879 or 1880) is the most popular choice for the earliest school, though Birmingham is also credited with being the pioneer, and it is known that Bradford opened a higher grade school in 1876. The Bryce Commission’s figure of 65 by 1875 is favoured as a total, though Dent wrote of ‘over a hundred’ by 1900\(^2\) and Midwinter misleadingly referred to nearly two hundred schools of science in his section on school board involvement in secondary education\(^3\).

There are also differing interpretations of the motives of the school boards in founding higher grade schools. Among the approving were Selby-Bigge — "distinguished by their active and progressive spirit, they contributed greatly to the advance of education"\(^4\) — and Lowndes — "so cruelly cut back — one of the ‘might have been’ of English educational history"\(^5\). More cynical were those who implied that school boards were being deliberately provocative in assuming powers to which they were not entitled, or that they were motivated by self-interest, whether financial or in terms of enhancing their reputation. For example, Hallevy said that they "were usually prepared to exceed their legal powers, and whenever the opportunity arose, permit secondary education to be given in their schools"\(^6\), and Adamson wondered if the higher Science

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1. Higher grade schools are specially identified by different writers with — Lancashire and Yorkshire, Lancashire and Durham, London and the larger cities, or ‘the manufacturing North’.
and Art Department grant was the main incentive to higher
grade school development1. A more complex issue is raised by
the suggestion that higher grade schools were never intended
to serve the poorer sections of the population who normally
attended board schools, but were an attempt to gain kudos by
invading the middle class fee-paying world of secondary
education. Morris, for example, saw Manchester's higher grade
schools as a disappointing example of the "continuity of the
practice ... of diverting to middle-class purposes funds which
were provided for the labouring poor"2; and Musgrove, in
attempting to refute the charge that grammar schools were
middle-class institutions, said that higher grade schools
"offered precisely the applied and vocationally oriented
education that the middle classes wanted and understood" and
that "even very prosperous professional families" preferred it3.
During the course of this study, further light will be shed
on the motivations of some of those most intimately
concerned with running higher grade schools, so that their
true place in educational history can be more accurately
assessed.

'One-Sided Curriculum'

Much of the contemporary criticism of the higher grade schools
cited the unsatisfactory nature of their curriculum - that it
was too scientific, specialised and examination-oriented. The
Bryce Commission, while acknowledging the importance of
scientific and technical studies, nevertheless fuelled
anxieties about the 'one-sided' nature of the curriculum by
suggesting that literary subjects might be pushed into an
irreversible decline. Arriving at a 'balanced' curriculum was
indeed one of the chief areas of concern for the higher grade
headmasters, though, not surprisingly, their priorities were
rather different both from Bryce's and from many subsequent
commentators. Nearly all of the latter place themselves in
one of two opposing camps, saying either that the higher grade
curriculum was too narrowly scientific and needed to be
changed, or that it had a lot to commend it and could have
been developed as a much-needed counterweight to archaically
classical notions of curriculum.

The first and more populous follows the assumption dominant in
the nineteenth century, that true secondary education
consisted of literary or humanitarian subjects. Science would
occupy at best, a subordinate role - to prevent total
ignorance rather than produce excellence - and technological
or vocational training lay firmly outside or beyond the
secondary school. Hence, Archer felt that such public money
as went to secondary schools before 1902 amounted to the
virtual subsidising of scientific secondary education, which

2 N. Morris, 'The contributions of local investigations to
historical knowledge' in T.G. Cook, ed., Local Studies
3 F. Musgrove, School and the Social Order (1979) pp 104-5.
was "unfair discrimination against the more literary type of education". Adamson repeated the charges that the higher grade curriculum was "wanting in breadth" and "unduly biased if not warped", and Barnard noted that the severe competition offered by the higher grade schools "helped to depress the grammar-school type of education to the advantage of schools which tended to emphasise - or even over-emphasise - instruction of a non-literary type". More recently, Dent observed that higher grade education was "in many cases of a restricted character"; and Cruickshank criticised "the imbalance of the curriculum, the neglect of the humanities and particularly of the English language" of these "hybrid institutions".

The second camp follows the line taken by two of the more important twentieth century reports. Hadow noted that the organised science schools functioning within higher grade schools were popular with parents and represented "a natural development" of the science teaching long associated with the best elementary schools. And Young's much-quoted introduction to the Spens Report included these sentences: "The most salient defect in the new Regulations for Secondary Schools issued in 1904 is that they failed to take note of the comparatively rich experience of secondary curricula of a practical and quasi-vocational nature which had been evolved in the Higher Grade Schools, the Organised Science Schools and the Technical Day Schools. The new Regulations were based wholly on the tradition of the Grammar Schools and Public Schools". There is, incidentally, no more reason to accuse the Spens Committee of bias to suit their own case than the earlier advocates of the literary curriculum.

Members of this second camp include Selby-Bigge, who (before Spens) presented inside information that the anxiety of the Board to establish a distinctive style of secondary school "led it to look askance on competing types of full-time day schools", and Graves, who believed that the organised science school met a real need "for some quasi-vocational alternative to the traditional grammar school curriculum", and that "the rich secondary curriculum of the higher grade, science and

1 R.L. Archer, Secondary Education in the Nineteenth Century (1921) p 308.
2 Adamson, op.cit., pp 371, 455.
4 Dent, op.cit. p 23.
8 R. Lowe in Robert Morant and the Secondary School Regulations of 1904' in JEAH Vol 16 No 1 (Jan 1984) p 1, suggests that the introduction was "clearly intended to vindicate the Board's current policy" and "to discredit" the Board's earlier anti-vocationalism.
9 Selby-Bigge, op.cit. p 55. He was Permanent Secretary to the Board of Education 1911-25.
technical schools" was ignored by the 1902 settlement. He went on to argue that this "delayed reorganization on Hadow lines by at least fifteen years, and was largely responsible for the neglect of technical education which persists to this day" (1943). Eaglesham echoed this point of view when he suggested that Gorst and Morant had little idea of the "possibilities for a less exclusive secondary school population of ... technical and commercial education" and that in their ignorance, they "did much to destroy the old conceptions of technical and vocational education". Lowe has recently added strength to this argument with evidence that the 1904 Regulations "did effectively standardize secondary schooling, after a few years of vigorous experiment", because the Board of Education was under pressure from the Treasury to minimise costs "by establishing a 'model' of secondary education to which only a minority of schools could conform".

Somewhere between the two camps lie Banks and Kazamias, who take the view that the higher grade schools were overly scientific, but that their specialist achievements were not wasted. Instead, they argue, the new secondary school curriculum represented a successful blending of the literary and the scientific traditions in secondary education. Banks, having discussed the issue at some length, concluded that there was "no attempt to re-impose the traditional classical curriculum" on the new schools, and Kazamias judged that the new version was a compromise between two curricula, not the abandonment of one. Both sought to minimise Morant's directive role in the matter, instead elaborating on the widespread 'fears' and 'growing alarm' that science was growing too strong and the consequent unanimity in favour of a decisive shift towards a 'general' or 'liberal' secondary curriculum.

This viewpoint invites three comments, which will be explored further in this study. Firstly, as Cane has shown in his detailed work on examination entries in the sciences, they were nowhere near rivalling the more traditional secondary school subjects; he concluded that the 'public opinion' described by Banks "was misled concerning the extent of scientific and technical instruction in secondary schools". Secondly, the suggestion that local education authorities, teachers and parents all welcomed the new-style curriculum underestimates the range of pressures to which they were subjected and the different ways in which opposition was
expressed. And thirdly, the argument that a liberal curriculum was more appropriate for the majority of secondary school leavers who would become clerks and pupil-teachers, shows an ignorance of contemporary employment patterns and falls into the trap of assuming that a more scientific education can prepare children only for 'scientific' jobs. In fact, as far as clerks were concerned, there are examples to show that the 'commercial' training offered in a number of higher grade schools was commended by HMIs and welcomed by employers. And regarding pupil teachers, nobody seems to have given much thought to where the science teachers of the future were to come from - at least until the Thompson Committee (1918) drew attention to the "dearth" of science teachers, especially women, as just one facet of "the nation's weakness in science". The findings of that Committee have been cited by Lawson and Silver as one expression of the fact that the "social status of science remained low in the community at large, its position in the secondary-school was frequently one of tolerance".

In weighing up the validity of these varying interpretations of the curricular issue, it is pertinent to ask why there is such a divergence of views. Is it that their authors draw upon different factual information (or maybe none at all), or is it that their preconceptions about what constitutes 'general education', a 'balanced curriculum' or 'excessive specialisation' colour their interpretation of the facts. Without even taking the obvious step of examining the timetables of higher grade schools, which will be done in Chapter 2, certain important considerations seem to be notable by their absence from much of the curricular discussion.

One - while the Bryce Report's anxiety about the dangers of a 'lopsided' curriculum has been regularly quoted, what of its argument that the literary, the scientific and the technical all had "a claim to be considered in the course of studies of every secondary school"? Or its commendation both of the Science and Art Department's recent moves to liberalise its requirements, and of the very favourable impression made on regional assistant commissioners by nearly all the higher grade schools they visited? Two - is it safe to assume that the new grant-aided secondary schools did in fact follow the Board's 1904 Regulations, the curricular details of which have often been cited with approval? And how can their apparent 'balance' be reconciled with other, overtly anti-scientific actions by the Board, such as its abandonment of the popular 'Division A' (more scientific) category of secondary schools, the early reduction of its own prescribed hours for science, and its insistence on holding down standards and status in institutions like higher elementary schools where science was said to be important? Three - how much importance should be attached to the Board's concurrent disdain for vocational

1 (Thompson) Committee to enquire into the Position of Natural Science in the Educational System of Great Britain (1918) pp 51,36.
3 (Bryce) Royal Commission on Secondary Education (1895) Vol I p 284.
education - its professed dislike of commercial training, and its reversal of the remarkable progress made before 1900 in developing evening classes and technical colleges? Four - should not the failure of the legislators and administrators to follow Bryce’s advice that the great public schools should be included in any organisation of secondary education, arouse suspicion about what ‘balance’ and ‘lopsidedness’ meant to such people? Is it not possible that they were so conditioned by the great prestige and resources vested in the literary tradition in English education (as well as their own personal experience of it) that they were unable to make objective judgments? A closer knowledge of the content of the higher grade school curriculum is vital to a proper understanding of these contentious issues. Furthermore, it may be that in their flexibility and variety, the higher grade schools were closer to finding a solution to the problem of how satisfactorily to educate all children after the elementary stage than the English education system has yet managed to achieve.

'Dubious Legality'

The question of whether the higher grade board schools should have been engaged in finding a solution to that problem brings in wider issues. Since the overt challenge to the existence of the higher grade schools came about by legal process, rather than political or administrative decision, an unusual amount of attention has been focussed on their precise status in law. Most commentators have shrunk from the unequivocal verdicts of, for example, Halevy - the higher grade schools were “illegally maintained” - and Graves - they “rested on no legal basis whatever” - and have favoured terms like ‘doubtful legality’, ‘equivocal position’, ‘irregular position’ or ‘haphazard growth’. It has been pointed out that the actual words of the Education Act of 1870 - what Hyndman termed the “semantic ambiguities” - did not seem to impose such a restriction, provided “elementary education is the principal part of the education given”. Perhaps more important, though rarely stated, is the fact that the school boards had taken on many responsibilities which existing laws and rules did not explicitly permit them to do, but from which subsequent legislation clearly took its lead. In the education of pupil-teachers, infants and handicapped children,

1. E.J.R. Eaglesham, The Foundations of Twentieth-Century Education in England (1967) p 63-4. He notes that Morant loathed commercial education, the growing popularity of which he regarded as “one of our greatest educational misfortunes”.

2. Bryce’s sample timetables (Vol IX, pp 404-423) show that the endowed schools (including Rugby School) offered a narrower range of subjects than any higher grade school.


and the organisation of school meals, medicals and physical exercise, the school boards had perceived a need and responded positively, thereby contributing much towards defining the wider role of the nation's education service. For this and other reasons the 'dubious legality' question does not seem to be a particularly fruitful matter for discussion. Whether or not the school boards were technically entitled to be doing what they were, their actions were hardly a secret, either from their electorates or from the Education Department, and the development of higher grade schools clearly took place with the acquiescence of both those parties. What is more important than the questions of whether the Cockerton judges were right or wrong, or of how and why the case came to be brought, is that the effects of the verdict could easily have been reversed or modified by the nation's policy-makers had they been so inclined. The notion that Morant suddenly made the "startling discovery" that the higher grade schools ought not to exist, or that he "discovered what nobody else knew"\(^2\), and that his "position must have been very difficult ... What was Morant to do?"\(^3\) seems always to have been more than a little naive. It has now been proved to have been more than a little naive. It has now been proved to be so, but it is still possible to find a recent writer suggesting that Morant "was astonished to discover" that the higher grade schools "rested upon no legal basis whatever, that they had in fact been established and carried on in open defiance of the law of the land"\(^4\).

Much more convincing than comments of that nature is the well-substantiated allegation\(^5\) that Sir John Gorst inside the Education Department and an influential committee headed by the Cecil family outside it, were already committed to attacking the school boards. Eaglesham has suggested that Morant was totally in sympathy with them and hardly trying to hide his views, and that Gorst deliberately - and dishonourably - "sat back and watched the Local Government Board deal with the unpleasant infant he had so industriously fostered on it"\(^6\). His conclusion was that the Cockerton Case provided a mere smokescreen for a major change of direction which the government had every intention of making by whatever means should prove necessary. Certainly, by effecting that change through the courts, the Board of Education was saved from having to explain why it wanted to halt the progress of the higher grade school movement, and from dealing with the opposition which such a policy would have engendered. Instead, it could be seen as trying to rectify an unfortunate situation created by a decision over which it had no control. It is therefore more important to examine the real reasons - and prejudices - behind the case than to worry about whether it was an exemplary piece of English legal history.

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"Administrative Muddle"

Discussion of the 'dubious legality' of the higher grade schools is often placed in the wider context of observations about the generally poor state of educational administration at the end of the nineteenth century. It is cited as one of many examples of inadequate legislation, poor planning and coordination, muddled ideology and a lackadaisical inclination to improvise. Adamson, for example, devoted a whole chapter to the 'administrative muddle', though his comments were often expressed in language which is not amenable to analysis or quantification - the "chaos", the "national disinclination to think things out", "the overlapping and waste". But later writers seem to have been influenced by this interpretation, following both the general line of argument and the tendency to couch their criticism in forthright and wide-ranging terms.

Mann found the educational scene of the 1890s to be "almost indescribable", Leese saw it as "utter confusion", and Curtis talked of "the chaos and overlapping which was the result of the piecemeal development of English education". Ten members of the Cabinet were held to have some say in educational institutions, and it was said to be "scandalous" that no single body controlled education. Of the three main administrative bodies, it has been suggested that the Charity Commission was being allowed to wither away, the atmosphere at the Education Department was "troubled and potentially inflammable", and the Science and Art Department's "multifarious activities were now causing great confusion in the organization of education". That "overgrown Moby Dick", the school board system, is a favoured target, especially as in the 1890s it seemed to be creating problems for voluntary and endowed schools and technical instruction committees. And high on everybody's list of criticisms is the "jungle" of secondary education, which was characterised by "complete lack of system" and "chaotic muddle".

One wonders if the people actually working in education at the end of the nineteenth century felt that they were in quite such a disorderly and derelict condition. Or if they would have concurred with Halevy's depiction of the "native chaos which prevailed throughout every branch of the educational services", or his castigation of the school boards' "superfluous multiplication of elections calculated to discredit democracy by disgusting the electors"?

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1 Adamson, op.cit. pp 451,467.
2 Mann, op.cit. p 18; Leese, op.cit. p 226; S.J. Curtis, Education in Britain since 1900 (1952) p 9. Curtis is not alone in echoing Bryce on this, though late 19th century 'overlapping' may be the same as 20th century extension of opportunities.
3 Lowndes, op.cit. p 61; Halevy, op.cit. p 148.
4 Bishop, op.cit. pp 129,192,255.
5 Midwinter, op.cit. p 75.
7 Halevy, op.cit. pp 161,163.
attached most responsibility for the muddle to the school boards, but gave no evidence as to how they "intensified the confusion", nor in what ways they "bemused public opinion which in turn reacted upon the work of the schools". The notion that parents felt only "puzzlement" and "bemused ... curiosity" about the schooling their children were receiving, seems to be somewhat patronisingly overstated when local studies have shown that parents had a clear and fairly sophisticated understanding of what the public elementary system could offer them. Overall there is a tendency to underestimate the benefits which resulted from the so-called "administrative muddle", and to neglect the significant reforms which were already being effected in, for instance, the inspectorate of the Education Department, the curricular requirements of the Science and Art Department, the training of teachers or the 'new' institutions of post-elementary education.

'Supreme Achievement'

The general tone of this kind of criticism is matched by the widely expressed approval of what replaced the nineteenth century 'muddle'. It is often enthusiastic and sometimes lyrical - a "major advance", a "landmark", a "transformation", a "supreme achievement", "nothing short of revolution", "a social revolution of the first magnitude", and "incomparably more cohesive and effective". It seems likely that the long wait for Government intervention in the secondary education system (as opposed to individual schools) not only built up almost a frenzy of anticipation at the time, but in retrospect throws the changes into unusually high relief. And it has been wisely suggested that the sheer durability of the changes - "the indisputable consecration of stability" - has served to enhance their reputation - however justifiably or otherwise. For it is possible that the persistence of the administrative balance, the ineffectiveness of the 1918 Act and the absence of radical change in the 1944 Act, were due to other causes than the excellence of the original shaping of secondary education.

1 Adamson, op.cit. p 451.
3 In Bootle, "there is no doubt that parents with aspirations for their children were rating schools according to rough academic and social criteria", and the London poor became "reconciled to their children's elementary education", attracted by the chance of socio-economic mobility. W.E. Marsden, 'Social environment, school attendance and educational achievement in a Merseyside town 1870-1900', and D. Rubinstein, 'Socialization and the London School Board 1870-1904', both in P. McCann, Popular education and socialization in the nineteenth century (1977) pp 207,258.

4 Halevy, op.cit. p 204.
If the hyperbole used by some writers arouses suspicion, others provide some pointers to where to seek flaws in the educational settlement shaped at the turn of the century. Tributes like "at last ... England possessed a State system of education", or "a co-ordinated national system of education was at last introduced", have been questioned on the grounds that the settlement was neither national nor a system. Lowell suggested that the many agencies at work in the field of secondary education were "as yet ... not welded into a complete system", and Archer observed that the 1902 Act had not dared to legislate for existing secondary schools, many of which remained aloof and distrustful. He questioned whether a state system of education can "be regarded as satisfactory as long as schools which can afford to do so insist on boycotting it". Lowndes, who was in general much impressed by the progress in secondary education after 1902, nevertheless felt that its growth was hardly sensational. He said, "we have not absorbed our efficient public and proprietary schools at the same pace as the United States", a reminder that Bryce had suggested that such a development would be desirable.

The enormous significance of the Board's approach, which did not merely fail to draw the majority of secondary schools into the "system", but actually enhanced their separate and privileged status, has not been properly evaluated in the general enthusiasm which surrounds the birth of the "system". Rather sentimental talk of it being "our English way to adopt lines which appear well, regardless of logic" or of the English not liking "to espouse a new cause too wholeheartedly before they are quite sure that they are not abandoning some old good" fail to convince. So do more analytical attempts to show that the Board of Education's conception of secondary education accorded with "public opinion", when the Board had been carefully staffed to safeguard a particular set of attitudes held by a small, if influential, section of the population.

Part of the enthusiasm for the new "system" has been ascribed to the fact that for the first time elementary and secondary education were treated as part of a single whole. The suggestion that "the two forms of education starting at the two ends had at length met in the middle", implies that they were mutually dependent and shared a common aim. In fact, one of the most firmly held of Morant's convictions was that elementary and secondary education should be entirely distinct, and under his guidance the Board of Education was

1 Adamson, op.cit. p 471; Barnard, op.cit. p 211.
2 C. Birchenough, History of Elementary Education in England and Wales (1938) p 179, noted the comment of the President of the Board of Education in 1913 that "the existing system suffered from the double defect of being neither national nor a system".
4 Archer, op.cit. p 315.
5 Lowndes, op.cit. p 99.
6 Archer, op.cit. p 319; Lowndes, op.cit. p 98.
7 Notably by Banks and Kazamias.
8 Archer, op.cit. p 318.
extraordinarily fussy in its insistence on the segregation of pupils, teachers, curriculum and buildings. Eaglesham accused Morant of having a "deep-seated 'elementary' complex", which caused him to attack the elementary system with "headlong vigour" and to be "continually on the look-out for signs of overlapping' with secondary education"\(^1\).

A more accurate assessment was that the 1902 Act "did not, alas, create a completely articulated system of public education ... the 1902 structure was made up of two imperfectly co-ordinated parts, elementary education and 'education other than elementary'"\(^2\). And this was not just a view derived from the benefit of hindsight, for Sir George Kekewich explained in 1903 that "co-ordination had been talked of as if it meant simply that higher and lower education were under the same school authority. That was not co-ordination, because co-ordination meant that the curriculum should be so arranged as to be properly stepped from one school to another"\(^3\). Simon felt that the subsequent conduct of the Board of Education through its Regulations was proof of its determination to destroy 'end-on education'\(^4\). Examples will be cited later to show that individual schools and local authorities were prevented by the Board from developing the close liaison between elementary and secondary schools which they desired, though no such objections were raised to preparatory schools attached to grammar or public schools.

'Social Quarantining'

A number of writers hesitate to salute the good co-ordination of the new structure but nevertheless assume that the new secondary schools made a significant contribution to improving educational opportunity for all children of ability. Thus, Adamson believed that the 1902 Act "placed advanced instruction within the reach of the major part of the people", and Lowndes argued that "the national system of secondary education has been built principally upon the aspirations of the wage-earning classes, and the determination of those in receipt of small salaries themselves to equip their children to earn larger ones"\(^5\). At greater length, Halevy explained that "throughout the whole of the nineteenth century the sole means by which members of the lower middle class ... could rise in the social scale was by becoming wealthy ... In future there was no county or town in which the lower middle class was unprovided with secondary schools where for a low fee, or even without payment, their children could receive an education as good as that given to the children of the gentry or the upper middle class"\(^6\).

\(^3\) Reported in The School Government Chronicle, 9 May 1903.
\(^4\) Simon, op.cit. p 241.
\(^5\) Adamson, op.cit. p 471; Lowndes, op.cit. p 125.
\(^6\) Halevy, op.cit. p 205.
Such statements not only underestimate the work of the higher grade schools but also make the assumption that the new secondary schools suited everyone’s taste and pocket. Surprisingly little has been made of the insistence, often against local wishes, on a minimum school fee, which disqualified from secondary education far more children than scholarships or free places could support. Nor do many writers dwell on the remarkable fact that large numbers of children declined to compete for secondary school places, even when maintenance support was available. Perhaps the distinctive identity given to the grammar school became so familiar during the course of the twentieth century that it is forgotten how strange — and unwelcoming — it was to many children facing it for the first time. As Leese has pointed out, the Board of Education was “over-anxious lest the elementary children should fail to be assimilated to the atmosphere which was desired in the secondary schools”. Graves ascribed this segregational outlook to Morant’s perception of education looking from the top down rather than from the children’s needs up, and felt that “practically speaking, no alternative now existed for the ambitious poor boy of 12”. Archer had earlier said that “the mass of pupils whose capacities were well above the average, but not actually outstanding, had few opportunities”, and according to his biographer, Michael Sadler’s reports to various LEAs particularly drew attention to the problem area of children aged 12 to 15 for whom “remarkably little had been done”. Although Sadler’s comments on the higher grade schools were “to say the least of them, chilly”, yet he “never contemplated their abolition without their being replaced by something better”, and firmly believed in “retaining every instrument of tested value”.

If it should prove to be the case that the new system of secondary education badly failed large numbers of children who wished to continue their schooling and had previously been able to do so, then its merits would have to be seriously questioned. Few writers have explored this fundamental issue. Marsden suggested that in attaching high status to the “social quarantining” of the grammar schools, to the detriment of the “educational sophistication” of the higher grade schools, the Board of Education faced opponents with an impossible dilemma, which served to muzzle their protests. The NUT and the Labour Party could only press for more grammar schools and scholarships because technical and higher grade schools would be seen as “poor substitutes for grammar schools”; in the words of the NUT’s own historians, the teachers were presented with a choice between “half a loaf or no bread”. To Simon,

1 Leese, op. cit. p 278.
2 Graves, op. cit. pp 63, 80
3 Archer, op. cit. p 316.
4 L. Grier, Achievement in Education: The Work of Michael Ernest Sadler (1952) p 139.
5 Marsden, ‘Schools for the Urban Lower Middle Class’ p 54.
the "extremely retrograde measure" that comprised the 1902 changes imposed "a hierarchical and divided structure on the system of public education, thus vitiating any concept of an all-round education".

Simon is one of the few historians to have catalogued in any detail the range of opposition to the new secondary school system. His analysis of teachers' organisations and journals, TUC resolutions and public protests makes much more convincing reading than the assertion of Kazamias that the class base of English secondary schools was taken for granted by all classes and organisations, including the Labour Party and the TUC. The latter implies that far from seeing the essentially middle class secondary school as an "elite institution to be done away with", working class parents warmly welcomed it, in preference to the low-status higher elementary school. Only a handful of writers have hinted that the new arrangements might have represented a diminution rather than an enhancement of opportunities.

And if the changed nature of the education on offer deserves further attention, so too does the scale on which it was available. The belief that after 1902 secondary schooling expanded dramatically, with its implicit assumption that more and different children were being educated in new schools, is almost unanimously expressed. The important qualification that in the absence of full statistics, nobody knew how many secondary school pupils there were, is only occasionally made. Even rarer is any consideration of the possibility that the main achievement of the new system was to rescue hundreds of ailing endowed schools, which essentially carried on educating the same children in much the same way as before. Overall, it seems that the impact at consumer level has yet to be properly examined.

'Repositories of Ineptitude'

A major reason for the muted response to the government's early-century educational changes lay in the fact that the bodies which had most to lose from them were superseded in the process. More than any other set of institutions, the higher grade schools lost their stoutest defenders by the abolition of the school boards. Banks' attempt to show that the former could exist without the latter - that the schools were "destroyed by neither the Cockerton Judgment nor the Education Act" - is unconvincing. The schools' own headmasters were in no doubt that the two belonged together, arguing that to replace the boards with council committees would be

2 In Simon, Education and the Labour Movement.
3 Kazamias, op.cit. p 144. Only parents in a couple of dozen places can have had any idea what a higher elementary school was.
4 Banks, Parity and Prestige p 28.
"Disastrous to the expansion of our educational system", since school board management was the only way of "retaining the present close connection - I contend the only possible close connection between Elementary and Secondary Education"\(^1\).

But the abolition of the school boards has rather encouraged the search to prove that they were administrative anachronisms with an inevitably limited life expectancy. Curtis believed that "few mourned the decease of the School Boards save the School Boards themselves", and writing from experience, Sneyd-Kinnersley said, "I rocked the cradle of many Boards in 1871, and mine were two of the dry eyes that noted the interment ... sometimes it was a farce, sometimes a tragedy"\(^2\). It has been pointed out several times that only 1,189 of the 2,568 school boards came into being by popular demand, that they were unpopular with ratepayers and parents, and that the quality of candidates declined after a good start. Elections were "often sectarian battles", the turn-out "far from impressive", and the boards "had become the object of bitter political and religious conflict ... no longer calculated to serve the best interests of education"\(^3\). To such criticisms, three comments are worth making briefly. Firstly, in the context of the times, 1,189 voluntarily adopted school boards seems a lot, and elsewhere opposition often had little to do with genuine public opinion but was mounted by a handful of influential individuals, notably Anglican churchmen. Secondly, there is good evidence that resistance to the rate increases which accompanied school board activity was much reduced by the 1890s, and that religious issues had never been very important to ordinary people. And thirdly, at around 40-50%, election turn-outs do not compare badly with local elections today.

It also seems reasonable to question the motivation of contemporary opponents of the school boards, who enjoyed portraying school boards either as "positively evil" because of their dangerously pagan and radical outlook, or as "repositories of bucolic prejudice and ineptitude"\(^4\). For example, Sneyd-Kinnersley's first-hand assessment of the Anglesey board could scarcely have been more damming: "five men whose opinion on a pig might be accepted ... but on school matters the pig's opinion would be equally valuable". Such tales, it has been suggested, doubtless went down well in the gentlemen's clubs frequented by the likes of Morant\(^5\).

\(^1\) Quoted in The Schoolmaster 7 Dec 1895 & 26 Apr 1896, from conference speeches of the Association of Headmasters of Higher Grade and Organised Schools of Science.


\(^3\) Cruickshank, op.cit. p 57; Lowndes, op.cit. p 57; Lawson & Silver, op.cit. p 319; K. Evans, The Development and Structure of the English Educational System (1975) p 61.

\(^4\) A. Rogers, 'Churches and Children - A Study in the Controversy over the 1902 Education Act' in BJES Vol VIII No 1 (Nov 1959) p 33; Hyndman, op.cit. p 209. Rogers cites the use of some very emotive language, such as 'anti-Christ' and 'day of judgment', by the Anglican anti-school board lobby.

\(^5\) Sneyd-Kinnersley, op.cit. p 8; Lowndes, op.cit. p 69.
The corollary of the anti-school board argument is approval for the county council structure as the new basis of local educational administration. To Halevy, "it was plainly out of the question to unify the local administration of the Education Acts on the basis of the school boards ... it was inevitable that the County Councils should be preferred". Archer argued that "the county councils had been successful in their management of technical education", and Adamson asserted, without explanation, that the county council system was the "obvious choice". More recently, Cruickshank has said that the LEAs were a logical development from the county councils, which already had "substantial expertise" through the technical instruction committees.

There is some difficulty in finding evidence for this point of view. Some of the technical instruction committees had done a good job, but they were barely ten years old, and even the best of them had no experience of dealing with the educational needs of all children or the education service as a whole. Their most noted achievement was the creation of technical colleges, and a significant proportion of their energy and money was devoted to sponsoring scattered evening classes in bee-keeping or wood-carving. But the involvement they had had with secondary education, though limited, was no doubt favourably regarded by those looking for an alternative to the school boards. For the technical instruction legislation had played a "crucial part" in restoring the fortunes of the struggling endowed schools and, it has been suggested, "this mutual support between the county authorities and the grammar schools helps to explain the direction of policy for secondary education after 1902". Their experience in setting up selective scholarship schemes and their refusal to assist higher grade schools, on the grounds that "it will be difficult to treat them as institutions giving secondary instruction until further steps have been taken to differentiate them from primary schools", were no doubt additional testimonials.

1 Halevy, op.cit. pp 196, 206; Archer, op.cit. p 319; Adamson, op.cit. p 451; Cruickshank, op.cit. p 5.
2 Not helped by the limited amount of work done on the technical instruction committees. Apart from London's Technical Education Board, which receives attention because of the chairmanship of Sidney Webb, the only thorough study has been P.H.J.H. Gosden & P.R. Sharp, The Development of an Education Service: The West Riding 1889-1974 (1978).
3 The manner in which some of them initially familiarised themselves with their task - appealing for information in the local press, or in one case, consulting the sanitation sub-committee - was indicative of what an alien introduction they were to the education scene.
4 Bourne & MacArthur, op.cit. p 46.
5 Editorial in The Record of Technical and Secondary Education Vol II (Jul 1893). And as will be seen in Chapter 6, the technical instruction committees tended to hold much more typically middle class attitudes to girls' education than did the school boards, thinking of 'technical' education in narrow, domestically-orientated terms - cookery, hygiene, first aid, dairywork, etc.
"Heroic Innovators"

However, as some writers have been at pains to point out, the idea that the school boards "had long outlived their period of usefulness" was an assumption that was far from unanimously held. Many of the larger and medium-sized boards have earned unqualified praise from subsequent commentators - "men of vision and vigour and courage" in both Barnsley and Sheffield, "magnificent service" in Birmingham, or "self-taught, versatile, industrious, devoted to public service, free-thinking, independent" in Bradford. Sidney Webb paid a handsome tribute to the "transformation" effected by the London School Board, and in Nottingham there were "no complaints in the press" and "little local criticism", despite the growing cost of public education which was "cheerfully borne". Overall, Armytage thought the school boards "engaged some of the liveliest minds of the times. Each school board produced its great men", while to Sutherland such people were "the likeliest candidates for the role of heroic innovators" in the world of education.

So what is to be made of this marked divergence of opinion about the school boards, "the idol of one party and the bugbear of another"? There is no doubt that some contemporaries - of whom the Cecil family was an outstanding example - loathed the school boards with a passion; what is perhaps surprising is that their interpretation has continued to be given such wide currency. It is questionable how relevant is the citation of some of the worst school boards that existed, for the areas with tiny apathetic boards, or even no boards at all, were not the ones which really worried the Government. The real target was the strong, successful urban boards, the ones of whom Kekewich confessed himself "not quite able to understand why... having done their work admirably, they were not to be rewarded and honoured, but led out to execution". It was they who represented a serious challenge to central power and to 'traditional' values, and the strong Liberal, nonconformist presence on many of them was not, of course, likely to be sympathetic to what the Government saw as the most pressing problems in education - the rescue of the denominational and endowed schools.

1 Attributed to Morant by Curtis, op.cit. p 32.
4 Sneyd-Kinnersley, op.cit. p 170.
5 For the Cecil 'conspiracy', see Taylor, op.cit.. There cannot be many crusades originating from such aristocratic, High Church sources which have been so widely applauded in later years.
At the heart of the school boards’ success lay their importance as organs of local democracy, described angrily in 1903 as “that gem, the principle of popular control, [which] had been burglariously stolen from them and replaced by mere paste”. The school boards have since been described as “the most democratically constituted of all elected bodies of local government”, and as “unique experiments in local democracy. They allowed education the position in the forefront of local services”. Their abolition became a matter of urgency, it has been suggested, when the acceleration in the growth of higher grade schools gave them a new strength and confidence which demanded that they be “chopped down quickly”. And there has been speculation on the possibility that the twentieth century would almost certainly have seen greater Labour and Trade Union representation on the school boards, which “must have been at least one reason why the Church Party was anxious to replace a system of voting for school boards with one of appointing education committees”. That the Church Party played an active political role at that time is indisputable. Morant’s remark about ‘getting up steam’ against the school boards by appealing to the voluntary school lobby is well known, and it has since been judged that a very well organised and vociferous section of the Church of England played a key role in promoting “bitter and unreasonable hostility to the School Board system”. It will be considered later how well in tune with public opinion were the Government’s attitudes to democracy and to established religion, and what bearing both had on priorities in educational policy-making.

It is interesting that at various intervals through this century, educationists have toyed with the idea of returning to a different form of local educational administration. In 1913, half the country’s directors of education, and no less than 72% of those in boroughs and urban districts, indicated that they preferred the ‘ad hoc’ system, because they were anxious about the “decay in local interest” in education – and also, no doubt, because they wanted a freer hand than central administration had so far allowed them. Eaglesham in the 1950s overcame his initial prejudice against the school boards to end up convinced “that the systematic and extensive

1. Ibid 16 May 1903 – the words of Rev McCarthy, the radical Anglican headmaster of one of Birmingham’s King Edward grammar schools. A long-serving member of the city’s school board, and passionately devoted to the cause of public education, he refused to serve on the education committee as a matter of principle.


3. Lowndes, op.cit. p 76.

4. C. Briggs, op.cit. p 163. It may well also have been one reason why the Liberal Government of 1906 had little desire to revert to the former system of direct election.

5. Rogers, op.cit. p 35.

6. Lawson & Silver, op.cit. p 379. They also point out that the ad hoc, directly elected principle survived in Scotland until the 1930s, moves to copy the 1902 English model being defeated.
development of the ad hoc principle might in the long run have provided a sounder system of local educational administration than that established by the 1902 Act". More recently, Mann argued strongly for the "creation of small single-purpose education authorities" to facilitate North American style participation and control, and Midwinter came to the conclusion that the nineteenth century English school boards, with their single rate levy, were particularly well-suited to local educational needs. It is salutary to consider that had the school boards confined themselves to a narrower definition of their duties, and in particular not developed higher grade schools, their other sins might have been forgiven them long enough for them to have been modernised by the 1906 Liberal Government - assuming that the House of Lords had allowed it.

'Unique Partnership'

The idea that there were some sharp conflicts of interest surrounding the organisation of secondary education after 1902 would seem to be at variance with the generally favourable consideration given to the new administrative arrangements. Much has been made of the importance of the relationship between central and local authorities, which has been somewhat effusively characterised as a "unique partnership ... it is this all-pervading partnership which makes the system work ... in all parts it is sustained by this spirit of partnership". Its creation is always attributed to the 1902 Act, which inaugurated "a coherent system of administration", and meant that "the community nationally and locally assumed responsibility for all forms in a sense never before realized". Banks thought that the Board of Education was restrained in its handling of local education authorities, leaving them to determine local needs; to her, the fact that a number of them implemented central policy and abandoned their higher grade schools was indicative of a broad consensus of middle class opinion. Leese depicted the central authority as placing its "accumulated experience and knowledge" at the disposal of the "comparatively inexperienced" local authorities, with Morant going "to the utmost pains to work out a clear definition of policy for their guidance"; he thought "England owes much to the men who, like Robert Morant, believed in strong local authorities". In Dent's view, many of the new education committees "had strong (and often strange) ideas about the kinds of secondary schools they wanted", and since they were all preoccupied with keeping down the rates, there is all the more reason to be thankful for Morant's "clear vision and dynamic energy" goading "progressive and laggard local education authorities alike into incessant action".

1 Eaglesham, From School Board to Local Authority p vii; Mann, op.cit. p 20; Midwinter, op.cit. p 94.
2 Dent, Education in England and Wales p 179.
3 Cruickshank, op.cit. p 5; Adamson, op.cit. p 469.
4 Banks, Parity and Prestige pp 28,42-3; Leese, op.cit. pp 225,231; Dent, Century of Growth pp 60-1.
Whether their ideas were strange or sensible, the local education authorities were certainly not always happy about the 'guidance' they were given from Whitehall, even though they had been expressly constituted for their likely empathy with central policy. In addition, they had considerably less power than the 1902 Act seemed to imply or than some subsequent writers have attributed to them. Graves noted that in putting all responsibility for 'education other than elementary' on the new education committees, the Government appeared to be "taking a big risk", but that in fact the local authorities were obliged by the Board's regulations to follow central policy assiduously. Hyndman confirmed that the 1904 Regulations were a "classic illustration of how central authority could exert pressure upon one particular sector of education when it really desired to". Eaglesham reckoned that for the Board to say that the local education authority would "be absolute master of secular education was nonsense. But the statement was repeated time and again; and somehow the bluff worked". He outlined how Morant battled against some of the less compliant local authorities and "fumed against these petty bureaucrats ... who would technicalize every school in the place". In the most thorough study yet of relations between the two administrative 'partners', Greenhalgh described how Morant was determined to have as "little contact" as possible because of his "low opinion ... of the abilities of education officers in general".

In general, it is hard to see any automatic way in which the quality of educational administration was improved by the new system. A number of built-in anomalies, such as the Part II/Part III authorities and the continued existence of voluntary school managers, detract a little from the ostensibly systemisation, and to Clarke writing in 1940, the English education system was still "extraordinarily complex ... as illogical as it is ill-defined". At the turn of the century, urban democracy was too fragile an innovation for there not to be a deep distrust of co-optative practices, particularly in areas where there had been battles over the control of endowed schools. In moving the administration of education a decisive step away from its popular roots, the 1902 Act made it more susceptible to centralised control and, quite simply, less democratic. Midwinter has suggested that in the change to the county council system, education became just one of numerous services in the queue for the attention of an "obscure and distant" local authority, bogged down in a

1 Graves, op.cit. p 52; Hyndman, op.cit. p 215.
4 F. Clarke, Education and Social Change (1940) p 34.
Various writers have noted the complications associated with the smaller Part III authorities; e.g. Curtis, op.cit. p 43, said they were "restricted and handicapped" and "the source of much contention" over the years.
5 A significant loss was for the rights of women, who could (and did) stand for election to the school boards on equal terms, but now figured as a small required element in the co-optative membership of education committees.
"bewildering series of committees" and regarded with "suspicion and envy" because of its costliness. To Simon, the breaking of the direct relationship between the people and the local school system was one of the key factors which made the 1902 Education Act "a disastrous package".

A leading higher grade school headmaster predicted in 1895 that "an indirectly elected and nominated body cannot possibly be so well in touch with the ratepayers as one elected by them. Its action will tend to be weak, its policy vacillating. Where it should be strong it will hesitate, where it should be yielding it will be obstinate ...". It had taken an amendment from Yoxall, the NUT General Secretary, to ensure that at least a majority of each education committee should comprise elected councillors; there was, of course, no way of guaranteeing that they had any special knowledge of the subject, and they never had to place before the electorate their specific educational policies or qualification for the job. Most writers refrain from passing close judgment on the competence of individuals, some of whom are deservedly revered in their respective localities. F.H. Spencer was less restrained when he observed that the smaller authorities he had known were often characterised by a "sprinkling of intelligent and enlightened men and women, diluted ... by a mass of mediocrity, and not without elements of stupid self-importance, bumptiousness, or even dishonest self-interest".

It seems that like all forms of local administration, education has had mixed fortunes in the servants it has attracted. Perhaps it is the case that statutory changes to the structure are relatively less significant than the way in which power is used by the central overlord, and that caution should therefore be exercised in condemning or applauding any particular system.

'Bursting with Brains'

The central authority, the other half of the 'unique administrative partnership' created at the turn of the century, has received rather curious treatment from the writers of educational history. For the most part it has been characterised by two salient facts. At the structural level, often little more is said than that there was 'significant' or 'a considerable measure of' reform in the general direction of greater co-ordination and efficiency. In terms of personalities, Robert Morant completely dominates all of his political, administrative and educational contemporaries. Indeed, the two aspects are frequently presented almost as one, the implication being that without Morant no reform would have occurred at the centre. Morant's first job after his

1 Midwinter, op.cit. p 95.
3 John Bidgood of Gateshead, quoted in The Schoolmaster Dec 1895.
remarkable promotion in 1899 was "to help Gorst to the utmost of his power in bringing into effect the unification of the Central Authority for Education"!, and his success in "creating the department of his dreams" has been judged to be his second most important achievement, bettered only by the planning and implementation of the 1902 Act.

Various writers have drawn attention to points of interest in the central administration of education, and it is necessary in this survey to note only those which had a bearing on the higher grade schools. One of the most striking is the dismal picture presented of the political leadership of education at that highly significant point in its history. Lord Salisbury, it has been said, was essentially an anachronism, whose "antiquated notions of what an educational system should be became increasingly irrelevant and increasingly embarrassing". All the Cecils, their family biographer concluded, shared their father's affection for creeds which were "already unfashionable, and sometimes obsolete". And a recent investigation has shown that they were actively promoting those beliefs in a clandestine but highly effective manner. Several Cecils were involved in the events which led up to the Cockerton judgment, for them the successful outcome of their "campaign of guerrilla warfare" against the London School Board, during which they "nobbled" Sir John Gorst and identified Morant as an ideal spy for Balfour. It has thus been proved that 'Hotel Cecil' was more than just a catchy nickname for an unusual family presence in high political circles, and that opponents were right to suspect "private intrigue" by a "self-constituted committee of meddlers", and to think that Gorst was "not master in his own house" but had "fallen into the hands of evil advisers".

Balfour, the Cecil cousin who assumed the parliamentary leadership of education as well as the premiership, has generally been commended for his intelligence and philosophical detachment, as well as his fine manners and shrewdness. But he was hardly the man to create an education system designed to serve the whole population. It has been written of him that "he was willing to engage in battle only when the traditional institutions he cherished or his own privileged status or life style seemed threatened", and like his uncle, his interest in the 1902 legislation derived from a determination to rescue the voluntary schools, for "whether the nation’s children went to school or not was a matter of deep indifference to a man noted for his intellectual elitism and his lack of concern for 'democratic' issues".

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1 B.M. Allen, Sir Robert Morant (1934) pp 135, 140.
5 Taylor, 'The Cecils and the Cockerton Case' pp 36-42. He says, "Was there a Tory plot? The answer has to be, yes there was, and quite a well-advanced one at that".
6 The comments came from the NUT (Circular 370, Apr 1900); M.P. Dr Macnamara (Commons debate reported in The Schoolmaster 9 Mar 1901); and M.P. Gray (Higher Grade School Headmasters' Annual Meeting, ibid 23 Nov 1901).
hostility to social reform has been identified as characteristic of "the smug passivity or fatalism about social problems characteristic of many wealthy, privileged Britons during the mid-Victorian age". Balfour's shameless clinging to office until the end of 1905 and his well-known pledge to thwart the new government through the House of Lords - in which task he received the active assistance of three Cecil brothers - are proof of how out of touch he was with modern democratic conditions.

Supporting the two prime ministers before and after 1902 were Cabinets which were "impatient and tired with the whole question of education", and became so chaotic that Morant found it impossible to discover what had actually been decided at meetings. Many Members of Parliament "seem to have been genuinely confused" by the debates on the Bill, which prompted one writer to suggest that "intelligent direction from the legislature" would have ensured much better use of Morant's administrative talents. As for the education department itself, it had in 1902 a largely undistinguished political past, the typical President often knowing "more about cattle plague than he did about the education code", while the typical Vice President "came in like a lion ... and went out like a lamb".

The new Board of Education may have become a more efficient unit, but in political terms it continued to lack status. "No man of really first-rate ability has ever been President of the Board of Education" said Spencer in 1938, and it had a particularly rapid turnover of incumbents (19 in the first 44 years), very few of whom left any mark. Morant revealed to Beatrice Webb his contempt for most of the politicians he worked with, and more detached commentators than he have not done much to prove that he was guilty of gross overstatement. The Duke of Devonshire failed "through inertia and stupidity to grasp any complicated detail half an hour after he had

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1 S.H. Zebel, *Balfour* (1973) pp 15, 89, 293; and T. Taylor, "An Early Arrival of the Fascist Mentality: Robert Morant's Rise to Power" in *JEAH* Vol XVIII No 2 (Jul 1985) p 50. The latter cites Balfour's sister's comment that he had no decided views on education, which he regarded as "a tricky political topic, fraught with pitfalls and full of intricate discussions of detail. Not only that but it was boring".

2 According to Rose, *op.cit.* pp 78-9, 249-50, James, the new Lord Salisbury, tried petulance, threats and approaches to the King and the Archbishop of Canterbury, while the venomous Hugh adopted "reckless" and "irresponsible" tactics in the Commons, including shabby tricks to obstruct debates and a screaming attack on the 'traitor' Asquith.


6 Spencer, *op.cit.* p 312; Evans, *op.cit.* p 144.
listened to the clearest exposition of it", and Gorst was "cynical and careless, having given up even the semblance of any interest in the office". Their replacements in 1902 were the Marquis of Londonderry, who was simply "a bull in a china shop", and Anson, who was "too academically clever to be a comfortable fifth wheel in the coach ... he knew so little ... that it was barely worth talking to him". A more recent writer has pointed out that of these "uninspiring and ... anodyne replacements", the former was the sixth choice for the job, the other five being "similarly bloodless aristocrats", and the latter an "experienced nonentity".

Ranking just below the President of the Board of Education created in 1899 should have been the Board itself. But, as Bishop explained, all that the Act did was to "surround the minister with the redundant paraphernalia of a non-existent Board", and provide him with a set of "imaginary colleagues". Graves has shown how the proposed Educational Council of advisory experts never existed, how Morant arranged for the Office of Special Enquiries and Reports to lose all its originality (as well as its most talented researcher), and how the Consultative Committee never gained sufficient independence to become genuinely innovative. Eaglesham commented that Morant "thought little of the competence" of this Committee, "confessed to having difficulty in finding subjects which could safely be referred to them", and sometimes forgot what he had told them to investigate.

This failure to utilise any of the advisory mechanisms provided for the Board contributed to the insulation of its officials from a wide spectrum of educational opinion. Furthermore, Gorst had closed off the possibility of any elementary teacher becoming an HMI, and the Board of Education uniquely among government departments retained recruitment by patronage — it was "almost the last surviving self-perpetuating oligarchy in the British Isles". The 1912 Civil Service Commission was far from impressed by the Board of Education's recruitment methods, pointing to cases of favouritism and showing that its appointees were no better qualified than those who entered other government departments after examination. The Board, it thought, furnished "a striking condemnation of the system of political nomination. It became notorious that its senior officials were prone to allow personal views to influence their official actions". Spencer depicted the Board's permanent officials as "entirely without first-hand acquaintance with the 'proletarian' class of education they control ... They lack imagination and they lack positive enthusiasm, though many of them burst with brains". In similar vein, Bishop believed that Morant

1 Mackenzies, op.cit. pp 257,265.
succeeded in surrounding himself with people "whose ignorance of, indeed contempt for, elementary education was matched only by their lack of interest in it".

Much the same could be said of their dismissive attitude towards their 'colleagues' from the Science and Art Department. The physical and ideological isolation of that department, and the ensuing competition for supremacy between the secondary and technical branches of the office, were to be particularly damaging for scientific education and the higher grade schools. Sneyd-Kinnersley characterised the antagonism between the two thus: "the Montague and Capulet retainers never met; only they bit their thumbs when the other house was mentioned". Opinions about the Science and Art Department are extremely divided. Some historians follow Acland's condemnation of its examinations-based 'payment by results' mode of operation - "the very worst way in which a secondary school can receive public aid" - without always noting that he was writing before the Department modernised its requirements in the mid-1890s. The normally judicious Eaglesham saw it as "an illustration of English makeshift methods at their worst"; he disliked its "privateering spirit" and alleged that it became more liberal only to further its own ends - "its working principles were not educational".

But others, both then and since, have acknowledged the contribution of the Science and Art Department to making the education of thousands of children (and adults) more interesting and fruitful. It "had done a vast amount of good, and had more than justified its existence" thought the higher grade school heads, and Selby-Bigge believed that "at small cost" it did "valuable pioneering work" in promoting a sound educational blend of general and specialist instruction. Heward and Butterworth explained that the Department's insistence on meticulous rules and marking under the supervision of highly-qualified examiners blended remarkably well with "the vagaries of local initiative". It was "a unique organisational form in our educational history", which successfully lent itself to a "bewildering variety of educational purposes". But although the liaison had achieved a great deal, the adoption of Science and Art Department work in schools had been an expedient and brought into the school system a body founded for quite different purposes. Its

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1. Spencer, op.cit. p 313; Bishop, op.cit. p 272.
2. Sneyd-Kinnersley, op.cit. p 143.
5. James Scotson of Manchester, reported in The Schoolmaster 14 Jan. 1893 (before the Department's most significant reforms); Selby-Bigge, op.cit. pp 13,142. Grants from the Department totalled just £314,000 in 1901-2.
relationship with the normal education system had never been defined, and with the convenient retirement of its determined head just one month before the passing of the Board of Education Act, the Department fell prey to all the personal and political wranglings within the new organisation.

The uncertainty after 1899 about how everyone would fit into the restructured Board of Education, and the lobbying from outside pressure groups, disrupted the normally settled routines of central administration. Bishop was critical of the "exceptionally permissive character" of the 1899 legislation, which left seven Cabinet Ministers still holding some responsibility for education, and failed to clarify relations between the Board of Education, the Charity Commission and the Science and Art Department. All these weaknesses lay in areas which were perceived at the time to be in particular need of reform, though politicians were perhaps naive about how crucial administrative organisation could be in the shaping of policy, over which they believed they had control. Overall, Bishop was led to the conclusion that the rise of the central authority for education, far from being inevitable or deserving of praise, was mostly due to bad luck and poor judgment — "a slow, tortuous, makeshift, muddled, unplanned, disjointed and ignoble process".

This, then, was the administrative system in which resided the future of the higher grade schools and the style of education which they embodied. It was created by politicians whose low standard of competence was repeatedly lamented by Beatrice Webb, and whose confusion about education in general and the schooling of the ordinary people in particular was striking. Even the individuals who created the new system were surprised at the ways it worked out in practice; Balfour's plaintive "I did not realise that the Act would mean more expense and more bureaucracy" is well-known in this context. They might well have been even more astonished to discover how permanent much of their work became, both at the organisational level and in terms of the educational principles which were built into the new system. It is because of the durability of the 1902 arrangements that, as was suggested earlier, it is unusually difficult to disengage verdicts about changes long since made from perceptions of England's educational development as a whole. A wide range of considerations — some philosophical and objective, others purely personal — determine whether one regards it as education's good or bad fortune to have come to the top of the political agenda at such a time.

1 Major-General Sir John Donnelly mounted a "last-ditch defence of his cherished system" before he went, as described by H. Butterworth, 'The Department of Science and Art (1853-1900)' in HESB No 6 (Autumn 1970) p 40; and he died in 1902 just before "the machinery he had so patiently constructed [was] systematically dismantled by Robert Morant". Bishop, op.cit. p 197.

2 Ibid p 276.

3 Though her criticisms were not always fair (one of her greater 'blunders' was to dismiss Campbell-Bannerman as "a quite stupid person", Mackenzies, op.cit. p 189), the turn of the century does seem to have been a rather lean time for politicians of stature.
Strange Administrative Giant'

It is for the same reason - the durability of the early Board of Education's work - that Robert Morant has received so much attention from educational historians, and that some of them have become unusually extravagant in their judgments. For there is more at stake than the normal historical interest in evaluating people and performances from the past; anyone with an awareness of the imperfections of our present educational system and a curiosity about how they got there, finds him/herself drawn back to Morant. It is not, of course, hard to show that there were lots of influential people who agreed with Morant, for however persuasive and efficient he was, he would scarcely have been able to generate a policy which nobody supported. But that does not require us to suspend judgment of him or the policy he espoused, especially when the legacy of his work is still very much with us.

For the many reasons outlined so far, education in England at the turn of the century was beset by uncertainties and tensions, and consequently offered enormous scope for an exceptional administrator. Words like 'unique', 'remarkable', 'extraordinary' and 'genius' abound in discussions about Robert Morant. To Beatrice Webb he was a "a man of genius ... who has done more to improve English administration than any other man", while three-quarters of a century later, Dent believed that it was "fortunate for English education" that for eight years it as "directed by a man of clear vision and dynamic energy". Mackenzie saw him as a "remarkably able and single-minded educational administrator", and Martin observed that "his political masters became shadows beside this unique reformer". Eaglesham judged him to be the greatest Permanent Secretary ever to serve the Board of Education, and characterised him as a "strange administrative giant", an "educational buccaneer", and "the oddest, if also one of the greatest, of all civil servants".

But if the tributes to what Morant achieved proliferate, there are always deep reservations about the manner in which he did so. It seems to be almost impossible to review his personality in a favourable light. Described variously as "a strange mortal, not quite sane", "brilliant but erratic and indiscreet", "this extraordinarily talented and yet flawed man", and "the 'eminence grise' of the Board of Education", he had "great failings as a human being", and was "as autocratic, ruthless and ambitious as any self-made industrial magnate".

3 Eaglesham, From School Board to Local Authority p 2; 'The Centenary of Sir Robert Morant' p 18; and The Foundations of Twentieth-Century Education p 39.
4 Judges, op.cit. p 44; Dent, Century of Growth p 57; Taylor, 'An Early Arrival of the Fascist Mentality' p 49; Hughes, op.cit. p 125; Tropp, op.cit. p 184; W.O. Lester Smith, Education in Great Britain (1958) p 117.
His most commonly agreed personal qualities were his industriousness - "a man of diabolical energy, with a consuming passion for work" - and his intolerance towards opposition of any kind. Nearly all writers note that his handling of opponents was ruthless and unscrupulous, combining elements of flattery, bluff, deceit, and, if needs, a violent temper. Eaglesham detailed some of Morant's dealings with colleagues who had fallen out of favour, and Grier presented convincing evidence that he "wronged and humiliated others" as his "power and influence ... grew by leaps and bounds". Two men who knew Morant at work, whilst acknowledging some of his better qualities, were struck by his single-minded ambition and his enjoyment of intrigue. One said of him that he was "occasionally hysterical in mood and manner .... and by nature and by habit a maker of intrigue, advancing on his goal by several devious personal channels"; and the other that he had "a profound conviction that all opposition derived from the devil. 'Beasts', as he called them, beset his every step. That he was over-weeningly ambitious, tortuous and indifferent to common standards of honour, is not in doubt.

Taylor portrayed Morant's spectacular rise in the central educational administration as a quite consciously engineered exercise, during which he repeatedly sought out powerful allies, switched allegiances, and then villified any possible rivals, including former friends. Arriving in the Department in 1875, with experience of virtually ruling Siam rather than the usual tedious civil service apprenticeship, he must immediately have seen the opportunities for a conscientious and well-informed leader to cut through the confusion, especially as there was a consensus in favour of change. It has to be said that in taking full advantage of those possibilities, Morant's preparation was impeccable. By 1902, when he became Permanent Secretary, he was moving in higher social and political circles than most senior civil servants managed in their entire careers, he had the rare distinction of having changed Chamberlain's mind on a major issue of principle, and he was a close and trusted ally of the Prime Minister - politicians certainly held no fears for him. Among his senior colleagues, he easily outmanoeuvred Kekewich, forcing into him early and undignified retirement, and in

2 Eaglesham in 'The Centenary of Sir Robert Morant' pp 8-12, in which words like 'unreasonable', 'violent', 'vehement', 'sledgehammer', 'blistering', 'devastating', 'storm', 'fume' and 'explosive' are used to describe Morant's rows with individuals and other government departments.
3 Grier, op.cit. pp 78-9. Although an admiring biographer of Michael Sadler, Grier's interpretation of Morant's dishonourable behaviour towards him is substantiated by the uproar which greeted Sadler's resignation and the fact that a Blue Book had to be published - to "explain away these changes of personnel", as Sir John Craig put it in A History of Red Tape (1955) p 155.
4 Sir Arthur Salter quoted in Grier, op.cit. p 81; Craig, op.cit. p 155.
5 Taylor in 'An Early Arrival of the Fascist Mentality'.
driving out Michael Sadler rid the Board of the one man of comparable ability to himself. Sadler himself later wrote of a "restlessly ambitious side" to Morant's nature, and suggested that "at heart he was authoritarian. At critical moments in his career ... he was not scrupulous [but] impatient, masterful, prejudiced and a little reckless. I think he would have seen his way, if he had been a young German in 1933, to serve Hitler strenuously". Without passing judgment on this particular suggestion, it is hard to dispute that purely as an exercise in establishing an autocracy, Morant's seizure of control at the Board of Education cannot be faulted.

And so, instead of moving into a place within a well-established hierarchy of officials, Morant occupied a vacuum at the Board of Education, quickly emerging unmistakably as the experienced expert - the ideal man to be in command of both practical details and visionary plans. This made it possible for him to clear the ground of any remaining vested interests which might have given him problems, notably the school boards and their higher grade schools, abolishing both before their successors were announced so that opposition was minimised and the eventual solutions more readily welcomed. And he then cultivated aloofness from all the spokesmen and experts who might have disagreed with him, notably the new local authorities and the main part of the teaching profession. One of his successors as Permanent Secretary believed Morant to be "incapable of thinking in terms of partnership"2, and later writers have drawn attention to his basically anti-democratic urge to "submit the impulses of the many ignorant to the guidance and control of the few wise ... special expert governors or guides or leaders". He was, it has been suggested, "quite competent to give the public what he thought was good for them", and to that end kept control of the Board's relations with the public "strictly in his own hands"3. The ubiquity of his handwriting on documents within the Board of Education, and the care with which he briefed colleagues in what to say, confirm this interpretation rather than the one which says that Morant's influence has been exaggerated and that he was simply part of an administrative machine or a widely-held consensus of opinion4.

1 Quoted in Grier, op.cit. p 80. Taylor has explored this analogy in "An Early Arrival of the Fascist Mentality", concluding that Morant possessed a number of typically fascist qualities - he was authoritarian, totally unscrupulous, and paranoid, a man of action but "less good at reflection and implementation" (p 60).
2 Sir Maurice Holmes, quoted in Curtis, op.cit. p 46.
3 Armytage, op.cit. p 183; Hughes, op.cit. p 125; Graves, op.cit. p 89.
4 E.g. Adamson, op.cit. p 463, said Morant "was but giving effect to his Department's policy"; Banks, Parity and Prestige p 11, thought the "influence of Robert Morant ... has often been not only exaggerated but misunderstood"; Tropp, op.cit. p 184, sought to minimise the importance of his individual beliefs; and Dent, Century of Change p 66, was critical of the approach which found it "so easy (and emotionally satisfying) to portray Morant as the machiavellian aristocrat".

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One body which would not have concurred with the latter view was the National Union of Teachers, with whom there was an "extraordinary breakdown of confidence" while Morant was at the Board. The Union's historians concluded that relations between the two were never so bitter as when Morant was in charge, and Graves suggested that Morant felt "scarcely concealed contempt" for the leaders of the NUT, whose influence was "set resolutely on one side" during his tenure of office. Only intense and long-felt dislike can explain the determination with which the major teachers' organisation and its allies pursued Morant out of the Board of Education in 1911. The thrust of the onslaught was highly personal, directing itself against a "bureaucratic despotism" and an "autocratic and reactionary officer", and The Schoolmaster presented a precise list of objections in demanding that civil servants be "more open minded, less haughtily prejudiced, more patient, more accessible to argument, less class conscious, and less cocksure than some of them have been".

Significantly, the pretext for the attack was rooted in differing perceptions of the role of the inspectorate, for this was the mechanism by which Morant achieved many of his changes. HM Inspectorate - the "eyes and ears of the Department" - was just moving into its most important period to date, and Morant was fully aware of its potential power. Furthermore, the Board of Education's retention of patronage as the means of recruitment gave its head almost total control of the personnel selected. It is impossible to conceive that in choosing men like Headlam and Mackail, both distinguished classical scholars, Morant did not know what he was doing, nor that he could not have predicted the sort of comments and conclusions they would relay to him about the existing state of education. Corelli Barnett has recently said of this triumvirate that "it is hard to imagine that the shaping of British state education at a crucial point in its development could have fallen into the hands of men more sublimely oblivious, or dismissive, of Britain's urgent educational needs as an industrial society already outmatched by its rivals". To him, Morant set out "not to provide England with education for capability (either general or technical) that could match that of her rivals, but to demolish what little had been gradually built up by this time".

Barnett's comments bring this survey to the heart of the controversy over Morant. If it is generally accepted that he habitually operated in a dictatorial and unethical fashion, the key issue becomes a consideration of whether, despite his methods, he served English education well. It seems that most commentators believe that he did, as they describe the chaos before he arrived and the structure and order which he gave to the educational system, with the clear inference that without Morant no reform would have been effected. As earlier sections of this chapter have already suggested, the chaos has been as overstated as have been the benefits of the new structure. If much that was good was discarded in the process

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of systemisation, and the nation's overall educational potential stunted in order to safeguard part of it, then Morant's ideals and achievements are as open to criticism as his manner and methods. It is one of the aims of this thesis to demonstrate that in the higher grade school movement English education had a source of great strength, and that the rejection of both its educational ideology and its organisational principles was a wasteful, ill-informed and retrogressive step.
CHAPTER 2

THE HIGHER GRADE SCHOOL PHENOMENON - AN ANALYSIS

A Distinct Identity
Curriculum
Staffing and Organisation
Premises
Fees and Class of Pupil
Length and Nature of School Career
The Organic Connection with Elementary Education
The Final Word —
   The Views of the Higher Grade School Heads
The purpose of this chapter is to remedy the gaps in our detailed knowledge of what the higher grade schools were like, by means of a descriptive analysis based on the records of about a dozen schools. In the process, their distinctive characteristics will be evaluated, with particular attention to those which seem to have been neglected or misunderstood in the writing of educational history. While obviously those features were all inter-related, they are categorised here under seven headings: A Distinct Identity; Curriculum; Staffing and Organisation; Premises; Fees and Class of Pupil; Length and Nature of School Career; The Organic Connection with Elementary Education. From all these sections a perhaps unexpected continuity emerges. Higher grade schools were not just a brave attempt to conjure up some form of higher elementary schooling out of a set of basically unfavourable circumstances, and even less were they an imitation of 'traditional' secondary schooling. Rather, they saw themselves as embodying a particular approach to education, not, of course, free from practical constraints, but wholly positive and constructive nonetheless. Their style of schooling was clearly of special importance to certain classes of society, but was not exclusive of others; it had a validity in its own right, with enormous potential for the future.

A Distinct Identity

The strong feelings of loyalty and pride in their higher grade schools expressed by former pupils, to which reference was made in the Introduction, was just one facet of the understanding which contemporaries had of the higher grade schools. It may have suited Morant and the Board of Education to represent them as an undefinable hotch-potch of institutions - Morant's remark about them having "no definite connotation whatsoever" may be recalled. But there is no doubt that by the 1890s a lot of people knew what the higher grade schools were - what they did and why they were different from other public elementary schools. In other words, they had an identity. School boards discussed motions about higher grade schools without labouring over definitions, and local press coverage did not feel the need to include explanatory notes, even when the idea was being discussed for the first time in an area. Contact between school boards and higher grade schools in different parts of the country became regular and cordial through correspondence, visits and meetings, especially of the headmasters' own association. There was every sign that the higher grade school movement was becoming increasingly coherent and assured on a national scale.
Within a particular community the formal opening of a new higher grade school was usually a notable public event, graced by local and sometimes national dignitaries and eloquent speeches, and drawing crowds of people and detailed newspaper reports. Open days, concerts and prize-givings were always well attended - St George School's 1896 concert at the Albert Hall in Bristol was "cramped to a lie, hundreds had to be turned away" - and the schools usually turned out in force at activities like the opening of a tramway or the neighbourhood procession on Coronation Day in 1902. Most heads allocated weekly times - one or two afternoons every week - when parents could visit, and one in a solidly working class area was delighted to receive over a hundred responses to the reports sent to the parents of his organised science school pupils. He inferred from this that a "vast amount of interest and anxiety for the welfare of the children exists, often where not expected", and that parents were "fully alive to the great privileges and benefits which our Schools offer". This firmly contradicts the idea that parents did not understand their children's school reports, were baffled by anything beyond the 'three Rs' and rarely visited the schools. The impact which the higher grade schools had can be gauged by the fact that the label persisted long after the official designation ceased to exist, and it is possible even today to hear elderly people refer to a particular school, much changed over the years, as 'the Higher Grade'. In the St George area of Bristol, which had - and still has - a somewhat distinctive identity, the higher grade school has been held to have had a significant effect on the cultural cohesion of the district, and on the marriage patterns of its inhabitants.

The fact that at the close of the nineteenth century higher grade schools had a definite identity is not to say that they were all the same. A major advantage of the absence of central direction was that it permitted a greater flexibility to higher grade/organised science schools than was available to public elementary schools or, after 1904, to state secondary schools. And despite Morant's "infinity" of higher grade schools, there were relatively few of them, though they were growing fast by the 1890s. The Bryce Commission spoke of 85 such schools, the National Union of Teachers of 80 just three or four years later, and it is known that several school boards had plans for others at various stages of progress. The majority were very new and still evolving, or as one headmaster put it in 1895, "all of us are young, some of us are mere infants in arms ..., we are a new species".

In addition, one of the most valuable characteristics of the higher grade schools was that they were genuinely local in conception. Some school boards may, as critics alleged, have been attracted by the prestige of having such a school, but

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2. Ibid 25 Jan & 3 Feb 1897.
4. By former St George School pupils George and Mary Creech.
none was sufficiently free of financial constraints to undertake lightly the necessary high expenditure, especially when the approval of the ratepayers had to be sought every three years. In all known cases, supply followed demand; children were actually there in the elementary schools wanting more education and not wanting, or not being old enough, to leave. In Bristol, for example, one headmaster notified the school board in 1896 that he would soon have a number of children who had passed Standard VII for whom something would have to be provided¹, while in Bradford most of the six higher grade schools came about as the result of pressure from local residents². The Barnsley School Board was told by one of its members that "a Higher Grade School is sorely needed as, after Standard IV, the children make little progress. My own child passed this Standard before she was 10 years old", and by another that "my child will pass Standard V in October. I do not know what I am going to do with her afterwards. I shall not send her to a private school because I am not satisfied with their class of education, and to send her to Sheffield High School will cost about £80 a year. Most middle-class men are in this position. We ought to keep pace with the times"³. In these circumstances, uniformity was neither possible nor desirable, a view which was emphasised by a leading higher grade school head in 1895: "Higher grade schools are of different types in different parts of the country, and to contend that they should be established upon one universal system would be to make a great mistake"⁴.

Both the Barnsley speakers obviously had an awareness of a recognisable trend around the country, and it remains true that the common characteristics of the higher grade schools are more striking than their differences. They were unlike any other institutions in England, and arguably had a stronger identity than the endowed schools, which at that time were extraordinarily varied in almost every respect. Before embarking on the analysis of the higher grade schools' distinctive characteristics which comprises this chapter, a couple of negative points can be made.

Firstly, 'higher grade' was not synonymous with 'school of science' as defined by the Science and Art Department. Many higher grade schools incorporated schools of science for their more advanced pupils, but no higher grade school was solely a school of science, nor were schools of science automatically higher grade schools - they could be part of technical colleges, or endowed or voluntary schools. And secondly, most higher grade schools were not endowed or voluntary-aided. Some endowed schools, like Bablake in Coventry or the Perse School in Cambridge, had turned themselves into schools of science, usually for a mixture of financial and ideological reasons, but in other respects - notably the cheap and automatic access to elementary school children - they did not fulfil the same role as the higher grade schools run by the

¹ Bristol School Board - School Management Committee, Minutes 17 Sept 1896.
⁴ John Thornton of Bolton in The Schoolmaster 9 Dec 1895.
school boards. Some of them, such as Alderman Newton's and Wyggeston Boys in Leicester or Bablake in Coventry, had arrived at a good working relationship with the local school board, which provided scholarships for those elementary school children performing best in the schools' entrance examination, and which had thereby avoided the most pressing demands for a higher grade board school. Occasional references will be made to such schools, which sometimes bore the name 'higher grade school', and to the handful of small denominational 'higher grade schools' which existed, mainly run by the Wesleyans. But the main focus of this study is the publically-provided higher grade school movement which was devised and developed by the school boards, and which, significantly, did not long survive them.

Curriculum

The basis of all higher grade schools, from which every other feature stemmed, is a simple one - they offered a higher standard of education than ordinary public elementary schools. Even Morant acknowledged that education "at a higher level" was their main function, and local administrators, teachers, parents, pupils and some employers knew that. In their more systematic approach they were different from - though sometimes a development of - the 'higher tops' or ex-Standard classes within elementary schools, which were essentially catering for the same need but on a more tentative scale. They were also an acknowledgement that the Education Department's attempts to provide for older elementary pupils by creating 'class' and 'specific' subjects and a Standard VII, were inadequate. The higher standard of education was therefore offered by means of a different curriculum, and it is not an over-statement to say that without the Science and Art Department, the higher grade schools could not have existed.

All the schools required their entrants to have reached a designated Standard in the Education Department Code, though which one varied with the nature of the school. Those like Birmingham and Sheffield, which functioned as central schools drawing pupils from all elementary schools, expected a higher Standard to have been achieved - VI or VII. The majority, as in Bristol and Nottingham, which were 'all-through' schools with an additional intake from other elementary schools at the higher level, were happier to admit to the higher grade department from Standard IV or V. Both types usually favoured a sort of introductory first year of exclusively Education Code work at Standard VI or VII, before embarking on the Science and Art Department's prescribed school of science course. That could be spread over four years, two fairly general years followed by up to two more specialist years. Each year of the syllabus also geared itself to other examinations, such as the school boards' tests of pupil teachers, the College of Preceptors' examinations, Oxford and Cambridge Junior and Senior Locals, music examinations, Civil Service Examinations and London University Matriculation.
Of the schools closely analysed in this study, not one was exclusively scientific and technical, and all showed a careful regard for constructing as wide an education as teaching resources and examination requirements permitted. Indeed the most striking feature of most schools' prospectuses was the extremely long list of subjects they hoped to fit onto the timetable. To take examples from just one city, Nottingham, all the senior classes at High Pavement Higher Grade School studied Shakespeare and other literature, history, writing, arithmetic, recitation, geography, several sciences, French, music, domestic economy, needlework and shorthand, and the local newspaper paid tribute to the "ample evidence of the comprehensive curriculum adopted". At Mundella Higher Grade School the head worried that in trying to achieve a balance between the numerous worthwhile subjects, nothing was being done sufficiently thoroughly, but the Science and Art Inspector's Report for 1900 was happy that "a balance has been carefully maintained between the literary and scientific work". And the Report on the People's College remarked that "commendable care is exercised in not drafting immature boys into the School of Science from the Standards".

These examples can be echoed by many others. Even the third and fourth year courses at the High Pavement and St George schools of science, which certainly did concentrate on science and technical subjects, also included Latin, French and English with some history and geography. The timetables reproduced in the Bryce Report show that at the Leeds Central School, all boys and girls studied English, history, geography, Latin, French, mathematics, at least two sciences, drawing, manual instruction and physical education, with religious instruction, German, shorthand, bookkeeping, geometry and dressmaking also included at various points during the four-year course. Sciences claimed the largest share of the time - between 11.5 and 14.5 hours (according to age) of a 27-hour week - but clearly other subjects were not ignored, and this was before the Science and Art Department's biggest step towards liberalising its curriculum. By 1899, one of that department's senior inspectors was delighted with the great variety of curricula that had developed as a result, which could only happen when "outside control is reduced to a minimum, and examinations in only a few subjects have to be faced". With the reservations that French needed more time in a lot of schools, and that some endowed schools of science were "hopelessly inefficient", he concluded that "in only a minority of schools can the amount of Science instruction be described as excessive. This is a matter of commendation".

And yet schools like these came in for relentless criticism from influential people whose own education would seem to have been conspicuously narrow in terms of curriculum. It is likely that many of them did not know the full range of what was taught in higher grade schools, and inferred from the

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2. (Bryce) Royal Commission on Secondary Education (1895) Vol IX pp 414-5,422-3. The timetable of Sheffield Central School was similar.
3. Department of Science and Art, 46th Report (1899) p 11.
'school of science' label and the importance of science examinations that no other subjects were taught. But there were more fundamental objections too. Most of the leading educationists of the 1890s attended English public schools and Oxbridge in the 1850s and 1860s when no science was taught. They knew little about it and believed that it was an inferior intellectual discipline, of utility to the lower classes pursuing industrial occupations, but lacking the humanising qualities which were the true hallmark of education as they understood it. Even a 'reformer' like T.H. Green could say that although he felt "the diffidence proper to one who has no thorough acquaintance" with the physical sciences, he was nevertheless confident that they were an "inferior educational organ ... doubtless more acceptable to the majority of boys than Latin or Greek, but for the simple reason that they are easier".  

Underlying such comments was the assumption that to be well-educated one could concentrate on only one area of expertise, which the theory of faculty psychology helped to legitimate. The interpretation of terms like 'general', 'over-specialised' and 'liberal' as used by educationists around the turn of the century must therefore be treated with caution. The idea that education should and could comprise a wide range of subjects, which is now taken for granted, is very much a rediscovery of the higher grade school tradition, in association with the provincial universities. The Rev McCarthy, looking back in 1900 over thirty years' work on the Birmingham School Board, was convinced of the unique benefits of an all-round education. He believed that new developments in scientific and manual instruction had done nothing but good in raising the general standards - and enjoyment - of education in elementary and higher grade schools, including literary subjects. Citing the fact that board school children were then winning over 80% of scholarships in the exclusively 'literary' entrance examination to King Edward VI Grammar School, compared with 60% a few years earlier, he said: "No evidence can be more striking and conclusive in favour of the continued excellence and even the improved excellence of the teaching of the elementary literary subjects".  

By the 1890s much of the anxiety about the way the secondary school curriculum was developing, was focussed on the Science and Art Department. Enjoying virtual autonomy from the Education Department and never much liked by it, the Science and Art Department was becoming threateningly powerful. To traditionalists, its way of operating was just about acceptable for part-time adults, particularly of the lower-

1 Taunton Schools Inquiry Commission (1868) Vol VIII p 150.
2 S. Rothblatt in Tradition and Change in English Liberal Education (1976) pp 150-1, suggests that when the classics were challenged by late 19th century concepts of 'new knowledge' and the 'research ideal', faculty discipline was seen as a step on the way to the ultimate philosophical goal of universal morality.
classes, but was considered totally inappropriate for the schooling of children. There was heavy criticism of its emphasis on the examinations and specialisation associated with 'payment by results', and after the nominal amalgamation of the two departments in 1899, Whitehall showed scant respect for the work of South Kensington. Organised schools of science were particularly unpopular, and behind the scenes steps were being taken to downgrade science teaching throughout the elementary and secondary education systems. This became easier after somebody (probably Morant) had the bright idea of insisting that the new higher elementary schools announced in 1900 should specialise in science, a requirement which was added to the original Minute after it had been debated and approved in Parliament. It was as if science could thenceforth be neatly shut up in a handful of low-status schools, which were denied access to any form of higher education by firmly fixing the leaving age at 15.

The higher grade schools had a more positive view of the Science and Art Department. With certain modifications, which the Department seemed to be willing to implement, it efficiently met the curricular requirements of the higher grade school pupils and parents. James Scotson's faith in the Department has already been mentioned, and his colleague in Gateshead, John Bidgood, was convinced that its courses were a response to an expressed need rather than an arbitrary imposition from above, for "the Organised Science School scheme was never elaborated until schools nearly corresponding to them were already in existence". The higher grade school movement increasingly saw itself as pioneering a new style of curriculum, which was useful but not utilitarian, combining practical, intellectual, cultural and physical pursuits. Its headteachers believed that this conception of education "so distinctly fills a void" that the Bryce Commission's suggestion that promising pupils should be transferred to grammar schools was much resented — "Does the Commission think that the parents of our children do not know what they want?"

Of course, not all parents did want precisely the same thing, and one of the higher grade schools' most notable characteristics was the diversity of needs they managed to accommodate. Bradford, which had six higher grade schools and therefore probably the most complete system of higher grade education of all cities, was leading the way in this respect by varying the curriculum to produce certain specialities within the system. All pupils did English, French, history, geography, art, chemistry, mathematics and physics, and all girls did domestic economy and all boys manual instruction, but then different schools offered algebra, book-keeping,

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1 There was outrage both in and outside Parliament at what was seen as the duplicitous manner in which Gorst and Professor Jebb had introduced the Higher Elementary School Minute. NUT Secretary Yoxall spoke of an "administrative fraud" and "eloquent platitudes", and A.D. Mundella called it "merely a Parliamentary manoeuvre" and a "piece of plausibility" hiding the real policy. *The Schoolmaster* 5 May 1900, 9 & 16 Mar 1901.

2 Quoted in *The Schoolmaster* 7 Dec 1895.

3 Ibid.
Euclid, shorthand, German, animal physiology or hygiene. Two schools, one boys' and one girls', were designated as centres for art and commercial subjects, to prepare for business life, while the others concentrated on science. Most higher grade schools, being large and well equipped, were able to offer choices between subjects or even between courses, especially as their funding arrangements improved. Perhaps most significantly, they did so without glorifying certain areas of study and demeaning others, and by rejecting the notion that children (of both sexes) destined for a particular occupation must be trained in a certain way. In achieving this formidable goal, it is hard to deny that the typical higher grade school curriculum looks commendably balanced and 'modern'.

Staffing and Organisation

A related characteristic of higher grade schools was their higher level of staffing in terms of academic qualifications and professional competence. It was a major problem in most newly established schools, as it is for any innovative organisation, but the latter part of the nineteenth century saw great progress in the status and aspirations of the elementary teaching profession. By the turn of the century one third of all elementary teachers were trained and certificated, and access to degree courses was much improved by the development of university colleges. Elementary teachers were in a state of transition, ready to embrace further advances in their academic and social opportunities, and with their leading union in an "extremely strong position". The higher grade movement played an important role in bringing them to this position, but in so doing, attracted growing animosity from the untrained graduate teachers of endowed secondary schools. The resulting confrontation and its unsatisfactory resolution emphasised divisions within the profession which have still not been fully eradicated.

In the early higher grade school days, a heavy burden devolved upon the headteachers, who were chosen with care and generally given a lot of responsibility for developing the new style of education. They sometimes seem to have been running their schools virtually single-handed. During St George School's first year, Mr Pickles noted whole days sitting in with a weak teacher's class, or teaching 130 girls in the central hall because of staff absence. And at Queen's Walk School in Nottingham, the head complained in March 1897 that he was "still waiting for help. Since Christmas, the Head Teacher has had to take one, two or sometimes three Classes at a time". Some of them seem to have been veritable polymaths.

1 Bradford Corporation, op.cit. pp 21,160.
3 St George School, Bristol, Log Book 15 Mar, 19 Sep 1895, 14 Feb, 11 Mar 1896; Queen's Walk School, Nottingham, Log Book 22 Mar 1897.
David Forsyth of Leeds Central School held a D.Sc. in geology, mainly taught Latin, wrote textbooks on chemistry, perspective, Shakespeare and copper-plate penmanship, and was also described as a mathematician. He was said to be a great believer in the "lack of finality in education"! And the head of the Bridge Street School in Birmingham concluded the autumn term of 1894 with a daunting review of his forthcoming duties. He was expecting two extra classes in Standard VII, both of them very weak, was one teacher short and had a new one starting who was "raw to 'Higher' Standard work" and would need help. Except for the new one, all his teachers in charge of Standard classes were appointed for their science qualifications, so he would have to do all their Education Code work, and two of the teachers doing solid geometry were not qualified for it. He was already personally responsible for all the honours practical chemistry, with nine boys doing six hours a week and a voluntary evening class he held, and the Science and Art Department was insisting that he do eight hours a week of steam and applied mechanics, and also improve the French lessons, with more pronunciation and idioms².

Within a relatively short time, recruitment problems eased as a new breed of teacher developed. Increasingly, the typical higher grade school teacher had been educated in a higher grade school, pupil teacher centre and training or university college, in all of which significant advances were being made. Indeed, the higher grade schools have been seen as "equally important for the prestige of the profession" as the pupil teacher centres themselves³. The school boards worked hard to staff their higher grade schools as well as possible, by organising recruiting visits to training colleges, arranging transfers between schools, and by offering higher salaries, rewards for newly-acquired qualifications and favourable promotion prospects. Not surprisingly, higher grade school teachers rapidly became something of an elite within the elementary teaching profession and working in those institutions was recognised as a specialism - "the thought and diligence required of a teacher in an Institution of this kind" or "their salaries are not adequate to the work required in a school of this character". Teachers commonly moved between higher grade schools, schools of science, pupil teacher centres, technical colleges and sometimes teacher training departments; there was very little interchange of staff with the endowed school sector⁴.

Higher grade school teachers generally continued their education on the job. They were likely to be encouraged to pursue further studies and enhance their qualifications,

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2. Bridge Street School, Birmingham, Log Book 21 Dec 1894. This confirms that the school was not solely scientific.
4. A typical (successful) career progression was that of Frederick Pickles. Having been educated at Bradford Technical College and Edinburgh University, he taught at Belle Vue Higher Grade School, Bradford, the Pupil Teacher Centre in Bradford and the Pupil Teacher Centre in Birmingham before moving to Bristol in 1875. For other examples, see Appendix 4.
either by attending holiday courses in individual subjects or through enrolling for external degrees; the aim, in the words of Mr Pickles of St George, was "to broaden their fields of vision and so improve themselves and their charges". Leave of absence was freely given and successes noted with pleasure, and a number of teachers obviously maintained some form of part-time study for the greater part of their working lives. F.H. Spencer vividly described the protracted and solitary labours associated with gaining an external London degree, particularly when there was no centre near enough to attend, scholars and tutors were far away and correspondence courses too costly.

It was no wonder that such teachers resented the Board of Education's determination to banish them from the secondary school system after 1902.

In addition, they were expected to continue their professional development. Headteachers accustomed to the training role associated with the school-based pupil teacher system paid considerable attention to passing on their own expertise and getting the best out of their assistants. Points which Mr Pickles thought worthy of note were: "enthusiasm", "displaying much kindness and sympathy to their charges", "influence of the best kind", "a cultured gentleman and a splendid worker and disciplinarian", and "excellent assiduity and skill in teaching". Heads were highly critical of poor teachers, but equally generous in their praise when those same staff managed to raise their standards, or when they had thoroughly good teachers working in their schools. Mr Pickles always paid the warmest tributes to staff who were doing well or making a particular effort, and over a period of eight years his predecessor's comment that "the weakness of staff is reacting on the whole work of the Higher Grade School .... We seem to be very unfortunate in regard to the staffing of the School", was transformed to "I have here to recognise the splendid zeal and enthusiasm displayed by members of the staff individually and collectively. The great secret of the success of this school year after year in the face of many discouraging conditions and hindrances to work of a higher kind - lies in the fact that nothing can daunt the 'esprit de corps' of the teachers. No trouble, no extra work, no sacrifice of time is counted an obstacle in carrying out their school duties. It is with real pleasure that I put this testimony to the loyalty and zeal of the present staff of the school on record".

One of the heads' foremost concerns was to establish good relationships between staff and pupils, and their attitude to discipline and punishments seems to have been thoroughly

1 St George School, Log Book 26 Oct 1896.
2 F.H. Spencer, An Inspector's Testament (1938) pp 171-2. The extended pursuit of qualifications emerges clearly from the information contained in Appendix 4. Teachers quite often gained their first degree in their mid-20s or 30s (by which time they had been teaching for several years), possibly with a Masters degree some years later.
3 And after the move to pupil teacher centres, higher grade schools were favoured for observation visits and teaching practice, and their teachers were often involved in part-time lecturing.
4 St George School, Log Book 17 Apr 1896, 17 Dec 1904.
enlightened. The use of the cane was an early issue at the Bridge Street School in Birmingham, when the head was accused by a junior colleague of "resorting too much to the milder method of personal persuasion", and he explained that "in gross cases I have found it more beneficial to make a lad apologize to this teacher, instead of resorting to corporal punishment". Soon after St George School’s opening, Mr Pickles had reason to speak to certain of the staff who were "in the habit of resorting to corporal punishment on unnecessary occasions", and he had repeated problems with Mr Watson in the workshop, who "makes no discrimination between the strong sturdy boys and the physically weak", and whose physical methods were in "serious breach of the School Board’s Regulations". Mr Hugh at the High Pavement School in Nottingham found that "in all the upper standards the assistants say they get, through using the 'mark card', such an amount of co-operation from parents, as reduces to a minimum the need of punishment of any kind whatever". Wherever A.P. Laurie, the Bryce Assistant Commissioner, went in the West Riding, he found that "the most perfect discipline reigns throughout" in the higher grade schools, and it is possible to read many, many HMI Reports before finding an adverse comment on the general atmosphere and conduct in the higher grade schools nationwide.

The concern of all higher grade school heads for the 'moral tone' of their schools and the personal development of their pupils is a persistent and striking feature of the records. In at least two instances, the organisation of extra-curricular activities - the 'School Journey' at Barnsley Central School, and the daily class cricket matches in the park adjoining St George School, Bristol - were held to have contributed significantly to good relationships within school. The latter were said to have been "most helpful in encouraging the growth of that 'esprit de corps' which is so necessary to a school of this character", and two unpopular teachers who were helping to supervise "have strengthened their position in the regard of the boys". The head of Bridge Street School, Birmingham, even introduced a short Moral Lesson for all classes on Friday afternoons, and was so pleased with the results that it was soon extended to two thirty-minute lessons a week. Two Bristolians, recalling their former headmasters from higher grade school days, evidently still felt great warmth and respect towards them. Freddy Pickles of St George School was described by one of them as "a Victorian gentleman", a man of the "highest moral calibre", to whom the

1 Bridge Street School, Log Book 14 Oct 1885; St George School, Log Book 6 Dec 1895, 14 Sep 1897, 29 Jan, 18 Dec 1900; High Pavement School, Log Book 25 Sep 1893.
3 Davies, op.cit. pp 176-9. He describes how, despite the Education Department’s opposition - "If it [the Barnsley School Board] does not show more common-sense in future ... it ought to go to the wall and let something else take its place" - the first School Journey was organised, and approvingly written up by Michael Sadler in one of his Special Reports.
4 St George School, Log Book 14 & 19 May 1897.
5 Bridge Street School, Log Book 15 Mar 1892, 15 Mar 1893.
only inexcusable crime was to lie, and whose greatest contribution to the school was his "high moral standards". In general, higher grade school heads seem to have assumed considerable status and influence, and many held their posts until retirement, becoming almost legendary figures to successive generations of a particular locality.

As to what went on in the class-room, there seem to have been perhaps surprisingly progressive attitudes to learning, bearing in mind the constant pressure from external examinations. One head worried that "the work done in certain classes is far too superficial for a school of this character. Too much insistence is laid on mere facts or pieces of information while the thinking process is ignored". Another recorded his opposition to the dictating of notes in chemistry, which he saw as a "positive waste of time and as depriving the boys of the benefit of teaching and explanations", and, after a relatively disappointing set of chemistry results (only 81 1st class passes out of 217 entries), he was anxious that the pupils should learn to consider themselves "as students rather than as schoolboys", with more private study and a more thoughtful approach. A third was quite sure of the connection between interesting teaching and the "remarkably good" attendance in the upper part of his school - "it is now exceptional for a boy to absent himself from any other cause than that of illness. I attribute this in a great measure to the popularity of the course of instruction there taken, the practical work the boys are particularly fond of".

Several of the higher grade school heads experimented with what became the normal practice in twentieth century grammar schools, but was not common then - the deployment of staff to teach specialist subjects to all children. This must have seemed an obvious move in an environment which rewarded examination successes, especially once the training of teachers had begun to emphasise expertise in particular areas of the curriculum. One of the earliest examples was at the Bridge Street School where the head arranged in 1884 that "specialist subjects are given over to special teachers, who remain stationary while the classes circulate to them", with the standard work being shared among them. However, after an opening year of problems - his mechanics teacher was guilty of the "grossest insolence to me", his chemistry teacher was "often late, poor discipline and does clerical work in school hours" and the drawing master "impudently complains that I do not use the cane enough" - he reverted to the ordinary elementary school system of one teacher in charge of one class for all subjects.

Other higher grade schools later adopted the specialist system, and can therefore be regarded as pioneers of that particular innovation. But the heads were never completely happy with this scheme of organisation, worrying in particular

1 George Creech (St George) and Ellen Hallett (Fairfield).
2 St George School, Log Book 28 Feb 1896; Bridge Street School, Log Book 13 Mar 1885; 9 Mar 1892; Queen's Walk School, Log Book 30 Sept 1898.
3 Bridge Street School, Log Book 10 Jul 1884, 1 Jun 1885.
that the academic gain to the pupils was outweighed by the loss of personal and moral guidance from the form teacher system. As the head of Mundella School explained when noting three cases of truancy in the upper part of the school: "Such a thing has not occurred in this School for years and I am reluctantly coming to the conclusion that the specializing which I am trying in all the Classes of the School of Science, is not for the good of the Scholars morally. The teacher feels he is responsible only for the Subject he teaches, and the tone of the classes suffers much in consequence". A fellow headmaster registered the same experience - "the tone is far from the desirable point. The 'specialist' system of teaching is not an ideal one as far as the teacher's personal influence is concerned. The Boys and Girls in the Organised Science School especially feel this lack of personal influence". And seven years later he wrote that "there is too little 'esprit de corps' among the older boys. A good form master is wanted for each class. The specialist system is a failure in cultivating a proper school spirit".

Overall, the day-to-day writings of those early higher grade school headmasters are a remarkable tribute to the enlightened and thoughtful attitudes they brought to the job. Quite how good they and their assistants were as teachers is impossible to judge but the evidence is promising. A.P. Laurie repeated drew unfavourable comparisons between the average Oxbridge graduate amateurs of the grammar schools and the enthusiastic, professional higher grade teachers. While the former were "sleepy" and "wanting in vigour", producing "the usual want of attention on the part of the boys in the classroom which is so common when the teacher is untrained", the latter represented "a new type of teacher, young, brilliant, and enthusiastic, students of the best methods of teaching ... everywhere one sees examples of the perfection of method in teaching". He was particularly impressed by a science lesson given by the headmaster of Belle Vue School in Bradford, Richard Lishman, of whose teaching the HMI wrote on successive visits, "left nothing to be desired. The Board ought not to be content with any science teaching which is not of this character"; "a feature of striking and exceptional merit"; and "one of the best taught classes I have visited ... [he] teaches to perfection". Even in this area of subjective opinions, it is hard to dispel the impression that there were some very fine teachers indeed in the higher grade sector of the education system. A headship in that sector was probably the most prestigious occupation to which poorer children had access, and the higher grade/pupil teacher system was the route by which the most able and ambitious amongst them could fulfil their aspirations.

Teaching thus became the only profession which was readily accessible to the working classes, and also the only one which admitted women on any significant scale. There must have been many families in which the elevation to such academic and social heights of a son or daughter was a source of enormous pride. The various school registers contain many examples of

1 Mundella School, Log Book 9 Feb 1900; St George School, Log Book 19 Feb 1897; 29 Jun 1904.
carpenters, gardeners, railway workers and bootmakers whose children, particularly the daughters, became teachers and/or gained university degrees. F.H. Spencer, himself a former pupil and teacher in higher grade schools, had a clear and affectionate idea of the class niceties associated with the job. He was impressed by ILP orators in the 1890s but never joined the party because "between the college-trained certificated assistant master and the orange box there was then an inhibitory gulf", and he concluded "I wish statesmen had been thrown up among that class of teacher, the class of the sober, skilful, essentially respectable artisan class. But it is hardly to be expected, for 'we' are not 'raised' to be leaders". The gulf between the leaders and the led was to be fully exposed in the early years of the twentieth century. This aspiring class of teachers, who owed much to the school boards' investment in higher grade education and to their sponsorship of improved opportunities for their teaching forces, were poorly rewarded by those who shaped England's new system of secondary education.

Having examined the two important characteristics of curriculum and staffing, less needs to be said about a third essential, better buildings and equipment. Most urban school boards had, fairly early in their existence, taken on the responsibility of building new schools, and had become familiar with the necessary procedures and some of the problems. As educational needs grew, 'higher tops' and 'ex-Standard' classes were usually accommodated in existing school premises, and specialist manual instruction and cookery centres designated to serve particular localities. Lowe has taken the school boards to task for their "parsimonious provision" of specialist facilities for elementary schools, accusing them of establishing centres or employing peripatetic teachers in order to "avoid the expense of specialization in individual schools". It can equally be argued that this was a very efficient policy, and that diffusing resources through all the schools would have been less rewarding for the pupils and unacceptable to the ratepayers.

1 Spencer, op.cit. pp 173,228. Some were not so constrained - Tropp, op.cit. pp 149-52, says that teachers (including the NUT leadership) were becoming much more radical; Richard Lishman, the 'premier' higher grade school head in Bradford, was a vigorous campaigner for Socialism and an active supporter of the ILP. J. Jackson, Belle Vue Boys' School (typescript 1976) p 27.

2 M. Seaborne & R. Lowe, The English School (1977) p 15. As now, elementary children spent only a small part of their week on science, woodwork or cookery, and it was not until the 1890s that many of them were staying at school beyond the elementary stage or that the Code permitted grant to be earned on several of these subjects. By 1900, the Board of Education was actively discouraging higher achievement in those subjects.
The needs of a successful higher grade school were in a rather
different league. Occasionally, to start with anyway, existing
buildings were used, but the experiences of the
Birmingham Bridge Street School illustrated graphically how
unsatisfactory that could be. Housed in a factory building
formerly used by Cadbury's, classroom temperatures of between
35 and 45 degrees were recorded in February 1895, and during
the course of one winter, one teacher was away with a kidney
complaint after catching cold in his schoolroom, another
resigned because "he finds the school too unhealthy to work in",
a new appointee declined to come because "the school
premises are not conducive to good health", the headmaster was
unwell with neuralgia and nervous exhaustion, and another
teacher was "extremely ill and overtaxed" and later died.

A high proportion of higher grade schools were purpose-built,
or at least extensively converted, almost invariably as show-
piece schools. They were large even by today's standards; for
example, Fairfield Road in Bristol was built for over 1,000
pupils, Sheffield Higher Grade School had 1,200 and Leeds
Central School 2,400, of whom about 1,000 were in Standard VII
or above. They were better equipped and more spaciously laid
out than ordinary elementary schools, and, it has been
suggested, more ornate in order to "emphasize the achievements
of the school boards" and to connote the special associations
of higher learning. The result was that the "elementary
sector was repeatedly weakened by attempts to provide
facilities for older children comparable with those of the
existing secondary schools". It may well have been that
school boards were hoping to convey a message to parents and
ratepayers through their choice of building style, but there
is little evidence that they were seeking to mimic the
appearance of older secondary institutions. Their higher
grade schools remained much more like elementary schools,
usually contained a proportion of elementary pupils, and
actually had rather better facilities than the vast majority
of secondary schools. Physically they were emphatically part
of the school board elementary system - Jack Church at Murray
Lane Higher Grade School was separated from his brother
Richard in the infants' school only by a set of stairs - and
the distancing of secondary from elementary education was not
something the school boards wished to achieve.

These showpiece board schools were often, along with the
churches, the most impressive buildings in crowded urban
landscapes, not least because pressure on land necessitated a
minimum of two storeys, usually more. They readily became the
focus of admiration and aspiration for local citizens and of
approving interest to the steady stream of outside visitors
which all successful higher grade schools entertained. The
construction of the three-storey St George School in Bristol -
still a striking sight on rising ground at the edge of the
park - was said to have fascinated local residents, and a

1 Bridge Street School, Log Book 6 Feb, 30 Oct 1888, 14
Feb, 12 Apr 1889, 7 Feb 1895.
2 Seaborne & Lowe, op.cit. pp 36, 146.
3 R. Church, Over the Bridge (1955) p 46.
4 T.j.a. Rogers, 'First in the West' in St George Secondary
School, Bristol 1894-1944 (1944) p 9.
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young Walter Southgate found Mowlem Street School in East London an "awesome building". Through Sherlock Holmes, Conan Doyle called the board schools "lighthouses", and to Charles Booth, "each school stands up from its playground like a church in God's acre ringing its bell".

Higher grade schools were nearly always the major capital undertaking of their respective school boards, which took out big long-term loans to pay for them. For example, the St George Higher Grade and Technical School in Bristol cost £14,000 to erect and boasted heating, lighting and ventilation "on the most modern principles", large playgrounds, proximity to a public park of forty acres and "a thoroughly well-appointed Chemistry Laboratory, a large Science Lecture Room, a Workshop, a Dining Room, and accommodation of every kind conducive to the well-being of the scholars". Its bigger sister school under the Bristol School Board, Fairfield Road, cost £24,000 just a few years later and was similarly well-planned, while in Nottingham the High Pavement School moved to a location where "everything possible had been done to make the building as perfect as possible". As well as the usual laboratories and lecture rooms, it had a swimming bath, a gymnasium, a laundry and a garden, all for around £11,000, and Sir George Kekewich personally inscribed in the log book: "I had the pleasure of visiting this beautiful School". In all higher grade schools the provision of good laboratories and workshops was the biggest difference from ordinary elementary schools — and from public and grammar schools — and criticisms or threats of possible loss of grant from visiting inspectors prompted speedy rectification of inadequacies or defects.

In view of the careful planning and heavy financial outlay which the school boards lavished on their higher grade schools, it is clear they were not thinking of short term expedients. Pupil teacher centres, which were smaller and less demanding of facilities, were much more likely to be housed in makeshift accommodation, though by the turn of the century they too were being promised specialist premises in a number of areas. The school boards, having received the necessary Education Department approval to take on big loans, certainly saw their new higher grade schools as major investments for the future educational resources of the district. A number of them are still in use.

It was therefore all the more shattering, both to their pride and their practical capabilities, when the Board of Education started raising fundamental objections to the quality of the

1 W. Southgate, That's the way it was (1982) p 21.
3 St George School Board, Higher Grade and Technical School Prospectus 1894-5.
4 High Pavement School, Log Book 20 Jul 1894, 9 Apr 1895, 23 Nov 1900. According to evidence given to the Bryce Commission (Vol VIII, p 80), Sheffield’s school cost a staggering £52,000 (site and buildings) plus £29,000 (laboratories, workshops, etc.).
facilities after 1900. The Barnsley Board, having in 1897-8 spent £7,685 in carrying out a major reconstruction to turn a warehouse into its Central School, according to the requirements of the Education Department, received an ultimatum just three years later to the effect that recognition as a higher elementary school was "on condition that the present premises which are accepted as temporary, will be replaced by a new building for the same number (300) within two years". While negotiations and improvements were still going on, the school was given "an extremely adverse report" by the HMIs - a "severe shock" to all board members - and their plans for yet more improvements were rejected - "Under the circumstances it does not appear expedient that any outlay should be incurred on the existing premises beyond what is necessary for adapting them to their temporary use".

The People's College in Nottingham was subjected to similarly stringent requirements in its quest to become a higher elementary school, and the only solution seemed to be to expel about a third of the pupils and appropriate much of the girls' school accommodation. The headmaster, with strong local support, resisted as firmly as he could, but compromise was impossible; within five years the school had run down to a "depleted and moribund" state and it closed in 1907. Evidently, the Board of Education's perception of the physical needs of secondary schooling was so much at variance with the local authority's that it preferred to see a thriving school die than accept an alternative approach to the provision of buildings and facilities.

Fees and Class of Pupil

The question of fees in higher grade schools was another area of conflict between the school boards and the central authority. On both sides there were many who believed that it was appropriate to make some charge for non-elementary education, but there the consensus ended. From the school boards' point of view, it was important to make sure that the difference between an ordinary elementary school and a new-style higher grade school was understood by parents who very likely had no experience of either, and who themselves had grown up in a period of rapid educational change. The income derived from the fees was fairly inconsequential to the schools; the message in their existence was what counted. Some boards, like Birmingham, Sheffield and Bradford, relied on getting their message across in other ways and provided higher grade education free to the pupils, but most favoured the charging of fees - anything from 1d to 9d per week. Totalling, at most, £1/13/0 a year, this was much cheaper than any endowed or private school, and almost as important was the way in which the fees were administered. They were payable

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1 Davies, op.cit. pp 185-7.
2 The People's College, Log Book 19 Sept 1901, 2 Jul 1906, 26 Jul 1907. This extraordinary story is returned to in Chapter 5.
weekly, they never seem to have gone up; there was usually an elastic number of free places, and heads sometimes used their own and other resources in cases of need. It has been impossible to find an example of a willing higher grade school pupil being turned away for financial reasons.

The Education Department tortured itself over whether it was alright for higher grade schools to charge fees. It had no agreed policy on the matter, and more memoranda were pushed up and down the various levels of officialdom than on any other question. The granting of free elementary education in 1891 only complicated the matter, and the Act was minutely examined for clues, and precedents desperately sought and quoted. The key paragraph in the Act allowed, exceptionally, schools to receive the new per capita grant and charge fees (not exceeding 6d per week), provided that three conditions were met. There had to be sufficient free elementary school places in the district for those who wanted them, or there had to have been "a change of population in the district", or fees must be shown to be "for the educational benefit of the district". School boards therefore made much in their applications to the Department of the respectable tradesmen, clerks and superior artisans who were likely to patronise their new school, their desire to pay a small contribution, not least because the ratepayers would otherwise have objected to the high cost of building and equipment, and the obvious advantage to the district of a superior level of teaching, a more varied curriculum and access to further courses of study and pupil teachercraft.

Bristol's three higher grade schools, conceived in 1891, 1894 and 1896, well illustrate the muddle surrounding this whole question. The Education Department, having initially been advised by its local HMI that the St George School Board was unlikely to be able to carry out its grandiose plan, was taken aback to be informed in the summer of 1894 that the new school was about to open and a decision on fees was urgently required. Half a dozen precedents were examined before it was decided to "treat the case exceptionally" and allow a 5d per week fee, with 25% free places, for three years. It was argued within the Department that "by our silence" St George had been led to expect fees, and Sir George Kekewich had to get the Vice-President's approval on the case, admitting that the reasonable expectation earlier extended to St George amounted to a 'sanction', and that even if it were illegal, the Department was committed. At the end of the three year period, by which time the school had come under the Bristol School Board, the whole issue was dragged out again. After dire Education Department warnings to the effect that "it was expressly stated ... that the question would (not might) have to be reconsidered", Kekewich again agreed to the fee, on the grounds that the curriculum was higher than an ordinary public elementary school.

Merrywood was just as problematic to the Department, not helped by the fact that the file on St George, to which the Bristol School Board made reference in its application, had gone missing. Kekewich told the Vice-President that he was

1 PRO Ed.21/6162
"very doubtful about this case", particularly because "I gather that it is a Social Higher Grade School (or intended to be) in the sense that a fee would keep out the less well to do children". However, after initially refusing, the Department was eventually trapped into a similar agreement because of its ineptitude over earlier correspondence and decisions. It is interesting, in the light of twentieth century developments, that in connection with the Merrywood case, deep reservations were expressed about the 25% free places, awarded on the results of a competitive examination. The local HMI objected, as Acland had done, that "these so-called scholarships are usually gained not by the poorest children who would be unable to pay the fee, but by the well-to-do children who could easily do so", though as "it would scarcely be possible to ask for a declaration of poverty on the part of the parents it is difficult to suggest an alternative system". His only suggestion was that "free places should in all cases mean unconditionally free to the first applicants" and have nothing to do with ability as demonstrated in a test'

By the time Fairfield Road was under discussion, the Department had accumulated a number of precedents for the charging of fees. It took into consideration the adequate provision of free places in the district and the "superior social grade of the parents", but above all, the higher standard of education. Although the Department had to keep reminding itself that schools of science were none of its business, it was by 1898 making explicit that higher grade schools existed (and the name was freely used), that they were different from ordinary elementary schools, and that they alone of the school boards schools could charge fees and still receive full government grants. The Department and the HMIs seem to have become more familiar, too, with the free places idea, accepting the Bristol School Board's undertaking that "care will be taken that no promising boy or girl shall be excluded from the advantages of the school by reason of the parents' inability to pay the suggested fee".

From the copious correspondence on the various questions of fees, it seems that the school boards understood and interpreted the legislation rather more successfully than did the Education Department, presenting well-argued cases and quoting previous communications of which the Department had often lost track. Parents were sometimes confused and there were occasional complaints that higher grade schools combed too wide an area for their pupils and excluded those who lived nearby; for example, one living near Fairfield Road School alleged that "invitations are sent to parents living at a distance to send their children to Fairfield School, and children living nearer refused". No doubt the higher grade schools were keen to have as many children as possible who were likely to take full advantage of the education offered, by staying longer and taking examinations, and the school boards definitely saw them as serving whole areas rather than particular neighbourhoods. But there is no evidence that they operated anything like the rigorous selection mechanisms of

\[1\] PRO Ed.21/6142  
\[2\] PRO Ed.21/6128  
\[3\] Ibid.
the twentieth century grammar schools—neither the fees nor the entrance test were used for that purpose. Since the majority were also ordinary elementary schools, or at least did higher Standard work, they were very much part of the public elementary school provision of their respective neighbourhoods. The guiding principles seem to have been to fill—and often overfill—the schools and never to exclude a child able and willing to attend. Indeed, after 1902, St George School, which had occasionally struggled to keep up its senior numbers, fought hard to keep its ordinary elementary classes, fearing that the removal of its 'preparatory' school or 'feeding system' would be "disastrous"; the headmaster was even prepared to forego secondary school status if necessary¹. More will be said shortly on this question of the organic connection between the higher grade schools and the elementary education sector.

Even 3d or 5d per week was beyond the reach of some families, and it is undoubtedly true that the poorest sections of the working class were under-represented in the higher grade schools. The Chairman of the Manchester School Board told the Cross Commission that a 9d fee was "prohibitory" for the labouring classes, and regretted that in consequence, "the higher grade schools are not open to the labouring classes as they ought to be"². There is no ready-made statistical measure to identify a point in the income scale at which people could afford to educate their children for longer than the statutory minimum, as so many other factors, like the number of dependents in the family or whether the wife had a regular income, affected individual circumstances. But generalising from the results of various surveys conducted around the turn of the century³, families with an income of up to 30/- a week (the national average for manual workers was 27/- in 1906) spent every spare penny on food. The poorest, under about 20/- a week, could afford only a severely deficient diet; those who earned a little more did not have any money to spare, but were merely able to afford a slightly more varied and nutritious diet. It is not therefore surprising that relatively few families in that situation extended their children's schooling at all, for their earnings made a huge difference to the family's standard of living, especially at a time (1896-1912) when the purchasing power of the pound was dropping by about 20%. At the beginning of that period, skilled workers earned about 40/- a week, and that seems to have been about the lowest income on which extended schooling was normally a possibility; lower middle class white collar occupations, like small shopkeepers, clerks, postal workers and schoolteachers, who all earned around £100 a year, were thus included.

Few of them, however, would have been able to afford endowed school fees, and they formed the solid core of support for the higher grade and organised science schools and pupil teacher

¹ St George School, Log Book 23 Oct, 13 Nov 1903, 6 May, 21 Jun 1904.
centres. This is confirmed by the schools' own records. A
detailed analysis of 316 parents of pupils at the Birmingham
Seventh Standard School in 1892-3 showed that only 5% were
professional people, employers or managers, and 9% unskilled
working class. 19% were semi-professional, merchants and
traders, and 67% were skilled or semi-skilled workers, clerks
and other white collar occupations. Figures submitted to the
Bryce Commission from Halifax Higher Grade School, as far as
can be judged from the different nomenclature, show a
similar pattern - 10% 'professional', around 5% unskilled,
23% clerks, commercial travellers and officials, 20% tradesmen
and shopkeepers (some on a small scale, it was noted) 16%
artisans, 14% managers and foremen of industrial enterprises,
and 12% manufacturers (some very small scale). A return
drawn up in 1897 covering 43 higher grade schools revealed
that the parents were 12.4% middle class, 47.6% lower middle
class and 40.0% working class, compared with figures for 43
secondary schools investigated at the same time of 42.1%, 48.8%
and 9.1%. The suggestion that higher grade schools set out
to attract middle class parents is therefore erroneous, unless an unhelpfully wide definition of 'middle
class' is accepted. If the higher grade schools had wished to
be socially selective, they could certainly have managed it
more effectively by adopting barriers like termly fees, school
uniform or 'extra' charges for some school subjects.

It is also important to remember that poorer members of the
working class were excluded from higher grade education by the
force of their economic circumstances and not by any overt or
covert policy of the schools. In fact it is striking what
efforts were made by families and teachers to keep an
exceptional pupil at school, sometimes with scholarships and
maintenance awards being rustled up from school board or
private sources. One headmaster, referring to the science
examinations in 1904, recorded that he 'offered to pay fees of
£4-5-6 out of my own pocket rather than enforce it from the

1 C.N.J. Scudamore, The Social Background of Pupils at the
Bridge Street Higher Grade School, Birmingham (Birmingham
variety of indices (rateable values of houses, returns of
infectious diseases and distribution of pawnbrokers as
well as occupations), he proved that the school board was
not deluding itself in thinking that Bridge Street School
primarily served the working class, albeit its more
skilled members.


3 Cited in various places, including F. Campbell, Eleven-
Plus and All That (1956) p 140. 'Middle class' was
defined as - independent means, professional, teachers,
heads of firms; 'lower middle class' as - managers,
retail traders, commercial travellers, shop assistants,
clerks, public officials, foremen.

4 N. Morris, 'The contributions of local investigations to
historical knowledge' in T.G. Cook, ed., Local Studies
and the History of Education (1972) pp 166-7. As quoted
in Chapter 1, he said the higher grade schools, like the
endowed schools before them, were "diverting middle-
class purposes funds which were provided for the
labouring poor".
boys and girls"1, and others seemed to manage to 'find' jobs with a minimal wage, such as helping in the school office or the laboratories. F.H. Spencer recounted how, having not left and gone to 'The Factory' at the age of 13 along with many of his classmates, he did odd jobs for the headmaster, including taking the school penche to the pawn shop to exchange for gold, and then, for a wage of 2/- per week, became a 'monitor' to a dozen mentally deficient children in the cloakroom2. So if, in the short period of the higher grade schools' existence, not many of the poorest children climbed all the way from the bottom of the ladder to the top, some did and theoretically all could.

In many of the discussions over the provision of higher grade education and its cost to parents, school boards made reference to the class of person who would willingly pay a small weekly charge but who could not contemplate the fees normally associated with endowed or private secondary schools. There is no reason to disbelieve the accuracy of their assessment, and the higher grade school heads were unshakeable in their conviction that they offered opportunities to children who would not have been able to get them anywhere else. But neither that nor the financial struggle which some families obviously had in the pursuit of education, made much impression on the widely held view that the patrons of higher grade schools could and should pay more. In particular, the grammar school headmasters were absolutely convinced that higher grade schools constituted unfair competition and were stealing their pupils purely on the grounds of cost, an argument which had the merit of excusing them from examining what other reasons might be responsible for their struggle for survival. A.P. Laurie carried out a special investigation into that very complaint in the West Riding and concluded that few higher grade school pupils would ever go to grammar schools, some because they could not afford to and more because they would not choose to, because of the poor teaching and the outdated curriculum. The opinion was echoed in his evidence to the Commission by Dr Forsyth, headmaster of the Leeds Higher Grade School, when he stated: "Higher grade elementary schools are attended by children of all social classes. Parents are attracted by the suitability of the curriculum, not by the low fees"3.

But more weight was attached to the view expressed by a succession of witnesses that secondary education should cost more, and the only point at issue was how much secondary schools needed to charge in order to be self-supporting. Bryce himself had earlier written that £4 - 6 per annum was

1 St George School, Log Book 8 Jul 1904. In similar vein, the head of Wyggeston Boys' School (which in the absence of a higher grade board school in Leicester, took more scholarship pupils than most endowed schools) promised, "I will find the money myself if needs be" to enable a bright boy, the son of "a working man", to continue at St John's College, Cambridge. Wyggeston Schools, Governors' Minute Book 2 May 1900.
2 Spencer, op.cit. pp 69-73.
3 Bryce Commission Vol VII pp 194-5,201; Vol VIII p 98. Laurie was a great admirer of Forsyth.
sufficient only if the teachers starved, and the two men from the headmasters' association favoured £12\(^1\). Such sums placed secondary education firmly and exclusively in the grip of the middle classes, and the advocacy of scholarships for poorer families in no way weakened that principle. It should be remembered that free elementary education had been available only since 1891 and so it was hardly surprising that those whose income already gave them access to secondary education should have found it impossible so soon to contemplate sharing it with everyone. The higher grade schools represented a serious challenge to that well-entrenched viewpoint, which, because of the influential quarters from which it stemmed, managed to resist for another forty years the demands of a less favoured - and much larger - section of the population.

Length and Nature of School Career

So far then, the list of higher grade school characteristics comprises a higher level of education based mainly on the courses of the Science and Art Department, a better qualified and increasingly specialist teaching staff, a higher standard of buildings and equipment, and an acceptance that the charging of low fees was appropriate. Another feature which differentiated them from ordinary elementary schools concerned the age of pupils at entry and departure, and therefore the normal length of school career. As has been indicated, the elementary education system as a whole paid relatively little attention to the age of its customers; attainment, as defined by the Code Standards, was the significant determinant. The planners of the system had not catered for older and older children staying at school, either because they did not anticipate it happening or because they did not think it required any action on their part.

Nationally there was a trend for children to stay longer at elementary school, and during the 1890s, the numbers between ages 12 and 15 rose every year and those over 15 reached a peak of 8,822 in 1896-7 before dropping a little during the years when higher grade education was most under threat\(^2\). In response, legislation during the decade pushed the general leaving age from 10 to 12, and from 1900 permitted 14 if local authorities wished, an option which most of the bigger urban school boards took up. But beyond that, the politicians and the Education Department had left the local authorities to sort out their own problems about what to do with such children - how to place them in schools and what to teach them. In the absence of any other ideas, the development of higher grade schools had seemed an acceptable solution.

In the importance attached to attainment rather than age within the system lay two of the biggest disadvantages under which the higher grade schools laboured. Understandably, they

\(^1\) Bryce's 'Introduction' to Acland & Llewellyn Smith, op.cit. p xix; Bryce Commission Vol VII p 71.
\(^2\) Board of Education, Statistics.
were keener to admit a bright eleven-year old who had passed Standard IV or V than a dogged fourteen-year-old who had just reached the same Standard, but the elementary schools were often extremely reluctant to lose their most capable and willing pupils before they had completed the Standards and any class or specific subjects which they could provide. There are consequently examples of unco-operative, even obstructionist, tactics on the part of ordinary elementary school heads and teachers. The St George School log book noted that elementary teachers "use every endeavour to dissuade parents from sending their children to the Higher Grade Schools", and on further enquiries, found that "parents were hoodwinked by all kinds of statements, and various promises held out to the boys in order to counteract the attraction of the HGS. In at least two cases, statements have been made in front of the whole class, derogating to the work of the HGS". On subsequent occasions, a parent reported that one elementary school head was "making it rough" for her son after she complained about his refusal to supply an application form for the Free Scholarship examination, and another had one son thrown out of his elementary school because his brother was transferring to St George1. One can only imagine the depth of resentment and jealousy which underlay such occurrences; to many ordinary elementary teachers, their higher grade school colleagues were better paid, doing more stimulating work with brighter children, and gaining more prestige and better promotion prospects.

The second disadvantage was that the varying ages and levels of ability of pupils on admission, together with the nature of the courses available, made it very difficult to plan an identifiable 'higher grade curriculum' and therefore to have a 'typical school career'. This did not stop the schools from planning precise and progressive courses lasting four or five years, but with pupils starting and, even more, dropping out at different stages, only a minority actually worked through the whole course. But the Science and Art Department syllabuses were broken down into several stages, so that pupils could be examined each year at a different level, and a range of other tests and examinations could also be attempted. It was thus possible for children to attend for almost any length of time and still have something to show for their stay in terms of progress and qualifications. Headteachers were infuriated by pupils who left part-way through a year and took any examinations, especially as this usually meant loss of grant, but each complete year was, up to a point, self-contained and potentially fruitful to the pupil.

Looking back from a time when all children basically follow the same route through school and aim for the same examinations, it is hard to conceive how the teachers managed to cater for the differing goals and aspirations of their forty or so children. Since their pupils did indeed pass a variety of examinations, one can only assume that they succeeded. Their achievement is all the more remarkable when they only knew with certainty what pupils they would have when they turned up at the beginning of the new school year;

1 St George School, Log Book 14 & 27 Sept 1900, 18 Jun 1902, 29 Jun, 3 & 8 Jul 1903.
teachers and school boards had to be eminently flexible when timetables, staffing, rooms, equipment and syllabuses could be settled only after the start of term. That flexibility might be envied by some present day teachers, for the absence of both a lower and an upper age limit in the higher grade schools must have contributed to an atmosphere of excitement and untapped potential. There may have been no such thing as a typical higher grade course, but obversely, the course could be almost limitless in scope and duration.

All this is not to say that the teachers were happy when their pupils left after just one or two years, and when numbers dwindled in the upper classes. The log books and school board minutes show an almost obsessive preoccupation with keeping children at school longer, especially when course requirements rewarded the third and fourth years with bigger grants, as with the Science and Art Department after 1895 and under the terms of the Higher Elementary School Minute of 1900. Increasingly, higher grade school entrants and their parents were asked to sign agreements or undertakings to remain for a specified length of course, on penalty of paying £2 or 3 to help to compensate for the loss of grant incurred by premature departure. It was a device adopted by the Higher Elementary Minute and often also by the municipal secondary schools— an "absolute necessity" thought one head who had lost £80 the previous year through early departures1. No doubt the higher grade school heads, almost more than anyone, applauded Morant's desire to produce a longer school career for all secondary schoolchildren. But to them, knowing the realities of their pupils' economic and social backgrounds, it was still somewhat a distant ideal, and the imposition of a standardised four-year course was not the answer. While they would have liked far more of their pupils staying right through to matriculation level, they nevertheless accepted that for many, just one year of more advanced schooling was a precious acquisition and a considerable burden to their families.

The single fact that many children left after less than two years in a higher grade school and went into employment would seem to offer incontrovertible proof of their socio-economic background; middle-class parents getting secondary education on the cheap were hardly likely to put their children to work at the age of thirteen or fourteen. The most complete set of statistics illustrative of this point, those of the Birmingham Municipal Technical College Day School, show that of the entrants in the autumn of 1897, when the school opened, 70% stayed two years or less, a figure which had fallen to 50% of the autumn 1902 entrants, an encouraging trend for the school. However, in both years almost exactly half of those were already 14 or 15 years of age on entry, and of those who were 12 or 13, the majority were the children of artisans or employees, or of widows. Almost certainly, most of the school's leavers went to work; only a handful, who were recorded as the children of, for example, a bank manager, a professor of music and a 'gentleman' were likely to have continued their education elsewhere2.

1 St George School, Log Book 19 Feb, 11 Apr 1904.
2 Birmingham Municipal Technical School, Register of Day Scholars.
Overall in those higher grade schools where such information can be traced, the trend was for the age of entry to move downwards towards 12 (generally regarded as the optimum), and the length of school career to creep gradually upwards, with an increasing proportion of pupils staying to the age of 17 or 18. All the signs are that the schools were doing as much as could be done to increase the school life of their various pupils from their differing backgrounds. To fix a four-year minimum course, as Morant did, was not actually to solve the problem but merely to exclude those children who wanted - or could only afford - to do less. Such children were very important to the higher grade schools. The Bristol School Board acknowledged this when, at the very same meeting that it approved the parental undertaking not to withdraw children prematurely, it deputed its two most experienced higher grade headmasters to draw up a scheme of instruction for those who could not remain more than one year after the completion of the Standards1. The schools' capacity usefully to extend the education of such children alongside more able and ambitious pupils was a major achievement and a great loss in the reorganised system. In fact, it is impossible to think of any other type of school which has successfully catered for such disparate requirements amongst its pupils; Morant's secondary schools, with their four-year course and minimum £3 per annum fee, must rank among the least successful.

This hypothesis, that higher grade school children were not casual or irresponsible users of the system, who needed firm rules and regulations to make them 'do secondary education properly', is reinforced by the strong evidence that they liked school very much indeed. Mention has already been made of the generally excellent attendance and of the need for only the lightest of discipline. The schools were nearly always full and bursting at the seams: Sheffield's higher grade school "has to turn away many children who would be glad to come"; Bridge Street School had temporarily to introduce its own entrance examination to weed out weaker candidates; and St George School recorded a November attendance of 91% "without using the attendance officer". Mr Francis, on reopening the People's College in 1901 as a higher elementary school, faced the absurd situation of having 242 more children than the Board of Education said he had room for. While strongly arguing their right to stay, he reduced the numbers as best he could, but refused to eject those who wanted to stay and was obliged to form what he called "the 'shell' or Extra class" which had "to move every lesson to an unoccupied room"2.

Furthermore, the higher grade school pupils seem to have worked very hard to make the most of their opportunity. At examination time 1900, some St George School boys and girls were "close to breakdown according to their parents" because they were working so hard, and a Birmingham parent came to see the head of Bridge Street School to say that "he regrets ... that his sons have been overworked", though they would remain at school for another year nonetheless. A.P. Laurie in the

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1 Bristol School Board - School Management Committee, Minutes 21 Jan 1898.
2 Bryce Commission Vol VII p 174; St George School, Log Book 8 Nov 1901; People's College, Log Book 26 Sept 1901.
West Riding was everywhere impressed by the attentiveness and interest shown by the higher grade school children, and observed that boys from homes where there was little education often came for one year and by "their own eagerness" persuaded their parents to let them stay for two or three. This view was endorsed by a Senior Science and Art Department Inspector, who reported in 1899 that "no one who has not been brought into intimate relations with Ex-Standard classes can realise what an important influence the child's own opinion of his course of work exercises on his continuance at school". It must also have been particularly gratifying for the various heads when scholarship holders at neighbouring endowed schools, like Nottingham High School or Redland High School, Bristol, asked to transfer to a higher grade school.

The Organic Connection with Elementary Education

From two of the points just mentioned - that the length of stay was variable and unpredictable, and that the wishes of the pupils themselves often played a part in determining how long it should be - a further very important characteristic of the higher grade schools can be extrapolated. At the same time that higher grade schools of 1,000 - 2,000 children were full to overflowing, many endowed schools were struggling to find more than a few dozen pupils. For example, Bristol Grammar School was "nearer to disaster" than at any time in the nineteenth century, with the numbers and quality of entrants dropping, Sheffield Grammar School was undersubscribed, with a sixth form sometimes of only 3 owing to the "very great difficulty" in getting boys to stay beyond the age of 15 or 16, and Leeds Grammar School, where the boys were "inattentive" and the masters "sleepy", had lost about 100 pupils.

They lacked what were two of the higher grade schools' main assets, the elements of continuity and familiarity, which were key ingredients in an organic connection with ordinary elementary education. Those schools which housed all ages, from 4 to 19, obviously had the opportunity to get to know their pupils over an extended period and to guide their education in a co-ordinated fashion. And even schools which relied on taking a proportion of their pupils from a large number of elementary schools - and some of them travelled considerable distances - knew, with considerable certainty, what and how their pupils had previously been taught. To the newcomers, who often transferred in blocks or whole classes, the school board higher grade schools must have presented a fairly familiar face in a number of aspects - the structure of

1. St George School, Log Book 6 & 16 Jul 1900; Bridge Street School, Log Book 27 Apr 1898; Bryce Commission Vol VII p 197; Department of Science & Art, Forty-Sixth Report pl1.
2. C.P. Hill, The History of Bristol Grammar School (1951) pp 117, 128. This was presumably in comparison with 1829 when there was not a single pupil! (p 65).
the curriculum, the methods of examination and inspection, the
general style of teaching, the sort of extra-curricular
activities, the amount and weekly payment of any fees, even
the appearance of the building. The alternative was spelled
out in a response from the National Union of Teachers to a
critical speech by Sir John Gorst at the Incorporated
Association of Headmasters' banquet: "Put your higher grade
school at the other end of the town, under separate
management, and with the inevitable 'classy' atmosphere, the
institution is straightway reserved exclusively for middle-
class people and the bright child of the artisan home fails to
find out its existence. He cuts short his school-life on
passing the sixth and seventh standard, to enter the labour
market".

The single generation of children who attended higher grade
schools was unique in that most of their parents had not had
the opportunity of any post-elementary schooling, and most of
their children would have to pay rather more dearly for a
similar privilege. There was therefore no traditional
expectation of what a higher education was like or of what
opportunities could open up, and there was a gradual discovery
of aptitudes and aspirations during the course of the school
career. In other words, most parents of four- or five-year
olds starting at a public elementary school had no idea,
beyond the statutory minimum requirements (and they could
change), of what lay ahead, and it was only the successful
completion of each stage which guided them to attempt the next
one. As has already been shown, the schools responded to this
reality by designing courses which required only a one-year
commitment as well as being part of a more extended whole, and
the inclinations of the children themselves were an important
determinant. They were treading new ground, and familiarity
with the system, the school, the teachers, the type of work
and the cost must have been a highly significant factor in
encouraging their continuance in education.

This was the practical side of a much more philosophical
interpretation of the role of the higher grade schools, which
was widely voiced at the time by their supporters. Acland
and Llewellyn Smith correctly identified the vacant space they
filled when they argued in 1892 that existing secondary
schools were in no way continuation schools for the children
of artisans and that the "most urgent need" was to devise some
form of secondary education which catered for "workmen's
children", preferably in the same schools as the middle
class2. Several witnesses to the Bryce Commission picked up
this theme. Dr Forsyth of Leeds Higher Grade School said that
"the grammar school would not serve the purpose, because of
the difference in its aims and methods", the Clerk of the
Sheffield School Board felt that "ex-7th Standard Scholars
could not go to the grammar school, as the curriculum is
unsuited to them", and Birmingham's Rev McCarthy was emphatic
that "endowed secondary schools [of one of which he was
headmaster] are not continuation schools for pupils who have
passed through public elementary schools"3.

1 The Schoolmaster 19 Jan 1901.
2 Acland & Llewellyn Smith, op.cit. pp 306-7
3 Bryce Commission Vol VIII pp 74,80,98.
It should be pointed out that such statements in no way masked a feeling that public elementary school children were not sufficiently clever or well-educated to transfer to traditional fee-paying grammar schools. In fact, the low academic attainment of candidates wishing to transfer into some higher grade schools from private or voluntary schools was a worry to the headteachers, and they rarely won awards in open competition with board school children. The head of St George School in Bristol, having examined several girls from private schools for admission to Standard V, found that "the majority of them came out very poorly", and he wrote to their parents "advising a further course of study in an elementary school". Possibly such children were those who were not doing very well at their private schools, but it is significant that the school inspector at Bradford noted that "board school boys are among the most industrious, the most capable, and the most teachable of those who have been admitted into the Bradford Grammar School". The impossibility of competing with contemporaries educated at board schools has been cited as one of the main deterrents to middle class girls entering the elementary teaching profession; they required extra private tuition to get into a training college, and the work was physically and mentally harder than they were used to. After 1907, of course, the reservations of many grammar school heads were overcome when they found their 'Free Place' entrants from public elementary schools becoming their academic pace-setters.

The higher grade headmasters constantly reiterated the crucial importance of the organic connection between their schools and the public elementary system, all under the umbrella of the school board system. They were convinced that any break in the connection, or radical change in the controlling authority, would not only ruin their schools, but would leave the type of child for whom they catered adrift in an alien environment. The dangers inherent in an enforced segregation of elementary and secondary education were precisely forecast by Llewellyn Smith some twenty years earlier, in a passage that deserves quoting at some length. Arguing that the mere opening up of a scholarship link between elementary and secondary was not enough, he wrote: "What it does is to take a few boys from one class, and place them among a number of boys of another class, coming from a different kind of home and aiming at a different kind of career. The newcomers must assimilate themselves to their new surroundings under the penalty of miserable isolation during their school career. They are, as a rule, clever boys, and masters say they 'mix in well'—that is, they readily imitate the manner and catch the idea of those around them. In other words, such sons of artisans as secure scholarships tend to receive in the higher school the stamp of middle-class ideas, and an almost irresistible bias towards a middle-class trade or profession. If this be, as it is, a perversion of the aim of continuation schools, some powerful corrective must be applied".

1 St George School, Log Book 31 Aug 1896.
Morant could not have more totally ignored this advice in his determined separation of secondary from elementary education. The imposition of rigid stipulations about course-length, age limits, cost, curriculum and teaching qualifications was entirely alien to the higher grade system. It created artificial constraints on what had been a well integrated system, which permitted efficient but flexible use of buildings, resources and staff, and offered every encouragement to hesitant pupils and families with widely disparate educational needs and goals.

The Final Word - The Views of the Higher Grade School Heads

To conclude this introductory analysis of higher grade schools, it is appropriate to give the last word to the schools' most informed and committed spokesmen, their headmasters*. While they were obviously partisan in their opinions, they were, of course, more intimately knowledgeable about the schools' characteristics and place in the community than anyone else. They seem too to have had a wise view of the educational needs of the total community and a capacity to see the educational process as a whole. From the first, when the idea of a professional association was mooted in late 1892, they were completely confident of the special nature of the job they were doing - and extremely enthusiastic about it. They unashamedly declared themselves to be involved in "education more advanced than is often recognised as 'elementary', but saw it as an unbroken extension of the public elementary education system. Their work was declared to comprise a continuation of ordinary and specific elementary subjects, including manual instruction for boys and domestic subjects for girls; an introduction "for all pupils" to scientific study, particularly mathematics and chemistry; provision of commercial subjects; and due attention to English literature, geography, history, languages (including Latin and Greek if desired) and religious training. The natural development out of the elementary system - "the apex of the broad-based pyramid" - was so obvious to the higher grade heads as scarcely to need stating, at least until the schools and the school boards came under attack.

The headmasters acknowledged that their schools were still evolving and had their faults, but were emphatic that they were involved with an "important type of school ... which, in the opinion of many, is one representative of the secondary school of the future". Yet in no way did they see it as a poor imitation of the secondary school as it was traditionally known in England. In fact, not surprisingly they were somewhat unsure of the exact scope of their work, preferring to label it as "intermediate", somewhere between the rapidly progressing elementary schools and the dramatically improved civic universities. This was a position which no other schools were able or willing to occupy. While they did not rule out passing their cleverest children on to the

* This section is based on reports in The Schoolmaster.
universities, they resisted the idea that universities should dominate secondary education. They saw servicing (with the aid of scholarships) the other variants of higher and continuation education as their special province – the technical colleges, art colleges, evening schools and the like – while also providing sufficient diversity to prepare pupils for the full range of future occupations and training. Civil, mechanical and electrical engineering, surveying, dyeworks, factories, chemical works, architects’ offices, art rooms and designers’ studios were specifically mentioned as likely areas of employment. The heads were happy to accept the paramount duty of educating children for “the practical needs of after life”, but passionately argued their right to access to literary culture and to “knowledge of their own glorious inheritance”.

There is no sign early on that the higher grade headmasters saw the endowed schools as particular rivals or threats to them, though the nature of their work inevitably made them unsympathetic to the class-based view of secondary education, and aware of how much better the nation would be served by an alternative or more varied system. Dr Forsyth opened his first address to the association’s conference with the assertion that “higher education must not in any sense be considered the privilege of any particular class, it must be the common prerogative of all”. Over the years he elaborated the argument, with reference to the widely discussed ‘national interest’ debate; if a secondary education system was to be “truly national”, it must be “within the reach of all, even the poorest classes”. The endowed schools were unfitted to serve the national interest because their exclusive fees and the classical nature of their training debarred far too many of the nation’s children and did not generate the necessary kinds of expertise and skills. Perhaps, it was suggested, the nation’s endowments should be rearranged to benefit the nation’s children as a whole. In achieving this goal, specially elected local boards of management along school board lines had a “very strong” claim to be in charge. They could build on the higher grade and organised science school experience to construct “genuine secondary or intermediate education” such as would serve “the needs of their districts” and also “suit the social circumstances of the great bulk of the population”.

The awareness of local and social class needs were held to be the two determinants which made the higher grade schools unique and gave them their “charter of existence”. Their supporters believed that in a way which no other institution of secondary education could claim, higher grade schools were entitled to “recognition and consideration as national secondary schools”. The headmasters expected to be important people in any reshaping of education, providing a fund of experience for the new secondary school authorities to draw upon, and thereby exercising a formative influence on any scheme of secondary education. In the light of the energy they put into their own schools and their broad understanding of the nation’s educational needs, it is hard to dispute their right so to do, or to remain unimpressed by their optimistic commitment and dedication.
CHAPTER 3

BRISTOL - SCHOOL BOARD AND HIGHER GRADE SCHOOLS, 1894-1903

The Background - Endowed, Proprietary and Private Schools
Public Education Provision
St George School
Merrywood School
Fairfield Road School
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Chapter 3

BRISTOL - SCHOOL BOARD AND HIGHER GRADE SCHOOLS, 1894-1903

The Background - Endowed, Proprietary and Private Schools

For reasons going far back into its history, the city of Bristol had more endowed schools per head of the population than any other major city. Furthermore, it had managed to keep them comparatively accessible to the city's children, including a significant number from less well-off families, despite periodic pressure to develop them in other directions. It had been largely out of frustration at not being able to turn the grammar school into a full-blown, non-local public school that a group of local clerics and professional people founded Clifton College in 1862. And the efforts of the Endowed Schools Commissioners to pool the city's considerable charitable resources to produce an orderly system of fee-paying first, second and third grade schools had failed in the face of local devotion to at least the spirit of the original foundations. Joshua Fitch's five-year battle with the various Bristol trustees was one of the longest and most bitter of any that resulted from the Endowed Schools Act. His original scheme in 1870 was described in a contemporary newspaper as "a revolution ... a very alarming and monstrous innovation indeed", and it has since been observed that the Bristol public just "stopped short of burning Fitch in effigy". The battle has been cited as one of the main reasons for the demise of the Endowed Schools Commission, and it left Bristol's endowed schools fundamentally unchanged.

1 Unless otherwise stated, this section has been compiled from J. Latimer, The Annals of Bristol in the Nineteenth Century (1887); B. Little, The City and County of Bristol (1954); N.G.L. Hammond, ed., Centenary Essays on Clifton College (1962); C.P. Hill, The History of Bristol Grammar School (1951); E.T. Morgan, A History of the Bristol Cathedral School (1913); M.G. Shaw, Redland High School (1932); J. Wright & Co's Bristol and Clifton Directory (various years); Kelly's Directory of Bristol (various years).

2 Best described in Latimer, op.cit. pp 450-3. Latimer, a journalist and historian, was one of the best of the late Victorian civic historians, and though he never footnoted his work, it is almost always found to be reliable.


4 S. Fletcher, Feminists and Bureaucrats (1980) p 86. According to Latimer, op.cit. p 450, feelings were especially aroused because Forster had promised Bristol that its endowments were so well managed that they would not be interfered with.
By the beginning of the 1890s, then, Bristol's secondary education provision looked like this. Quite separate was Clifton College, already a first-grade proprietary boarding school, but always one of the few public schools to emphasise science in the curriculum and to admit day-boys on equal terms. Bristol Grammar School had hung on to its first-grade status, a classical school with a modern side, thanks to nearly £10,000 diverted from other charities. This helped to fund a completely new school building and fifteen free six-year scholarships, and further scholarships came from a share of the 'whisky money' distributed by the Technical Instruction Committee from 1891. Despite a reasonably good academic reputation, the school was struggling to find a role between the prestigious public schools, which it envied, and the developing higher grade schools, which it feared, until the arrival in 1906 of its greatest headmaster, Cyril Norwood. The Cathedral School, after several fruitless reorganisations, took 120 boys between 8 and 17, including 18 free choristers and 5 other scholarship boys, and the Merchant Venturers' gave the best boy each year an exhibition tenable at their technical college. The nucleus of the group of men and women which founded Clifton College was also instrumental in the establishment of Clifton High School for Girls (1877) and Redland High School for Girls (1882), in the mould of the Girls' Public Day School Trust's high schools. Both were flourishing, fee-paying institutions, though the latter also took a number of scholarship girls from elementary schools in return for grants from the Technical Instruction Committee.

Hospital foundations proved to be the biggest stumbling-block to the Endowed Schools Commission, and Bristol had three of them, all lucrative and all fondly regarded by its citizens. Amongst their other charitable works, they traditionally provided residential education for needy children, giving them 2-3 years' post-elementary instruction in useful subjects designed to prepare them for domestic service or apprenticeships. With a conservatism which can be either admired or ridiculed, their respective trustees resisted Fitch's attempts significantly to upgrade them socially and academically by the charging of fees in the region of 25 guineas a year, and they emerged little changed in 1875. The Queen Elizabeth's Hospital or City School remained predominantly a school for poor boys, with 160 free boarders, comprising 60 poor orphans and 100 chosen by examination from the Bristol elementary schools. A few could proceed to the Grammar School, where they were said to have noticeably raised the standards of achievement in mathematics. The Red Maids' School remained a small charitable boarding school with a quaint uniform, and though it was gradually moving away from the thorough preparation of girls for domestic service towards a "sound, practical and liberal education", it was far from being the top-level girls' high school that Fitch envisaged.

1 The Merchant Venturers' Society was an ancient mercantile organisation which had acquired great wealth and influence in the city, especially the Clifton area. Its membership often overlapped with the City Council, and had a long tradition of philanthropic enterprise.

2 50 of these were supposed to come from new day schools founded by DEH, but they never materialised.
The most important foundation, Colston’s Hospital Fund, was in the hands of the Merchant Venturers and supported several charitable institutions in the city, including a boys’ school. This had earlier made a controversial move out of the city centre to Stapleton on the outskirts, which was seen by some as “a flagrant repudiation of the intentions of its founders”. It provided a fairly limited boarding education for £30 per annum to fee-payers and free to 100 elementary schoolboys, with exhibitions to enable the best to proceed to “higher and first-grade schools”. Wise investment of the Colston money by the Merchant Venturers enabled them to carry out their commitment to open a girls’ school – Colston’s Day School – in 1891, “to provide a sound practical education of girls of 7 years and upwards”, and some free places were available. Both schools were explicitly Anglican.

The Merchant Venturers also ran a unique institution, the former Diocesan Trade School, which they completely refurbished and reopened in 1885 as the Merchant Venturers’ Technical College and School. With a moderate fee (from £5 per annum) and a scholarship system, this flourishing institution catered for boys from the age of nine and girls from fifteen right through to university entrance. It had various day and evening departments, and a large and well-qualified staff offering a wide range of subjects, especially on the science and technical side. By the 1890s, it was feeling the effects of the competition provided by the cheaper evening classes of the University College, which also included a Day Training College for women teachers. The Technical College principal, Julius Wertheimer, consequently had some anxieties about the future role of the college, and was sensitive to any possible rivalry from other institutions.

Bristol boasted an array of private schools, a few of them quite long-established and reputable (notably Badminton School) and some no doubt offering a form of secondary schooling. In addition one or two of the dwindling number of schools still in nonconformist hands claimed to be undertaking some higher level work. As yet, the School Board had taken no positive steps in that direction. The main reason must have lain in the relative accessibility of Bristol’s endowed schools. That prevented the secondary education void experienced in other cities, which at least a couple of dozen urban school boards were already attempting to fill. At most of Bristol’s endowed schools, fees were comparatively low and scholarships were available, and the introduction of the Technical Instruction Committee’s scholarship system only added to the impression that poor children of ability were not neglected. Furthermore, the people involved in running Bristol’s educational institutions were an unusually cohesive group. They were apparently more or less united in their

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1 Certain names (Percival, Fry, Winkworth, Wills, Fox) crop up repeatedly in connection with educational activity in Bristol – their cohesiveness was presumably why they were able to oppose Fitz so effectively. H.E. Meller in *Leisure and the Changing City, 1870-1914* (1976) looked at relationships within the Clifton group centred around the Rev Percival (Headmaster of Clifton College), which she saw as a paternalistic interdenominational elite.
dedication to extending opportunities regardless of class, income or sex, and any sectarian squabbles which might have disturbed their work had long since been resolved in the city. Fitch complained that Bristolians were unrealistic about their hospital schools which, he claimed, were monopolised by just 400 families, but even if that were true (and it is impossible to prove or disprove), it meant 400 more families - or at least different families - than would have been the case if substantial fees had been charged. And one of the improvements he did manage to push through was the virtual replacement of nomination by competitive examination as the normal means of entrance.

There is no doubt that the academic potential of some of the schools was stunted by the rejection of Fitch's scheme, but there is something not wholly unattractive about the determination of the trustees to put other criteria ahead of that one. Two more recent commentators have written of the "corrupt conservatism" of the Bristol trustees, and of the "great disappointment" at their failure to establish immediately a well-endowed girls' high school. There really is no evidence of corruption on the part of the trustees, and if there had been, the Commission would certainly have had a much stronger weapon in support of its scheme. Conservative they were, and hence as resistant as most late Victorians to the development of academic education for girls, but their obstinacy in defence of their trusts can only be appreciated in the context of the city as a whole. Bristolians had relied for nearly three hundred years on a basic provision of social services - for the old, the sick, the uneducated, the orphaned, the pregnant, the insane - from charitable sources. Their reluctance to advance with changing opinion towards an entirely class-based system of secondary education probably harmed very few and benefited a good many.

Public Education Provision

So Bristol could congratulate itself, with some justification, on the fact that it was not impossible for the more fortunate and capable of its children, whatever their parents' income, to take their education further than the statutory elementary stage. The School Board had therefore concentrated on improving the provision of elementary schools, while playing a part in keeping open the routes through to the existing post-elementary schools. Early in its life, declining to comment on Fitch's report, the Board had declared that it was not its job to do anything for secondary education and nor did it know anything about it. But it put on record its commitment to favour any scheme which encouraged scholars of the public elementary schools to pursue their education, and its disapproval of the removal of any endowments from the poor.

1 Early agreement on Lewis Fry's syllabus had removed religious controversy from the board schools.
2 Allsbrook, op.cit. p 661.
3 Fletcher, op.cit. p 81.
even should that "raise the cost or degrade the standard of education so obtainable by the middle classes". By the beginning of the 1890s, the Bristol School Board had built an effective network of institutions, including special centres for blind, deaf, delinquent and truant children, but it had not had to face the problem of significant numbers of children demanding more than elementary schooling which prompted the development of higher grade schools in other areas.

The accelerating pace of educational change which was a nationwide feature of the 1890s inevitably affected Bristol. After a hesitant start its Technical Instruction Committee, like most others, was pursuing a fairly narrow and conservative approach in its distribution of funds. One specialist centre, the Cookery School, was launched and evening classes were supported, but most of the money went to existing institutions of higher education by means of annual or capital grants (the Grammar School, the University) or by approval for the tenure of scholarships (the Grammar School, the Merchant Venturers' College, Redland High School). Only one board school, St George Higher Grade School, was ever approved for scholarships, and the School Board received just £40 out of the £39,744 distributed between 1891 and 1897. The School Board, meanwhile, had got involved in post-elementary education for its pupil teachers, who from 1889 attended evening and weekend classes at a centrally located board school. In 1896 daytime tuition was introduced at the YMCA, by which time plans for the Board's own permanent centre were well advanced. Government grants met approximately half the total costs of the Board's schools, a large proportion of which qualified for the highest rates of grant, and the education rate in Bristol had increased from 1d in 1870 to 6 3/4d in 1895 and was likely to rise further.

However, there was no strong move towards retrenchment and economy, though obviously there were advocates of that policy. In the mid-1890s the Tories just held the ascendancy on the School Board, but only one of their number, Mr Froud, consistently opposed all increases in expenditure, and their chairman, the moderate J.H. Woodward, was a devoted School Board man. Most of the clerics on the Board, including the Anglicans, were also generally in favour of educational expansion. Perhaps the long experience of educational effort by the city's charitable foundations and the half-century of success associated with the old Trade School and the propaganda of its most famous supporter, Canon Moseley, had created a climate of opinion in which the merits of different variants of post-elementary education were more readily appreciated. It was a climate nurtured by some of the teachers' organisations, notably the National Union of Teachers, one of whose most vocal leaders, Dr. T.J. Macnamara, was a former Bristol teacher. The NUT had a representative on the school board throughout the 1890s, as did the Trades Council and the Socialist Society for most of the decade.

1 Bristol School Board, Minutes 2 Feb 1872.
2 Information drawn from Bristol Technical Instruction Committee, Minutes (1891-1903); and L.H. Clare, Change and Conflict in Bristol Public Education 1895-1905 (Bristol M.Litt. thesis, 1975).
It was the Trades Council which formally brought the higher-grade question to the fore. From 1889 Bristol experienced an explosion of Trade Union activity and industrial unrest. A contemporary said that the city in 1889 was "a seething centre of revolt. Without organisation, funds or preparation of any kind, various bodies struck for higher wages and better conditions of work", and during the next year, so many different groups of workers struck successfully that the Bristol Labour Revolt was held up to other workers as a model of good organisation, non-violent action, and speedy settlement. But the dispersal by cavalry forces and police of a big celebratory fund-raising march on 23 December 1892, during which 57 civilians were injured, shocked Bristolians and became known as "Black Friday". It increased the determination of Trades Union and Trades Council leaders to win better opportunities for the working class. Among them were John Wall, the 'shoemaker poet', whose fervour for education was diluted only by his hatred of the deference which organised schooling inculcated into the working class, and Frank Sheppard, a full-time union official and chairman of the Trades Council in 1894, who was to give a lifetime of service to the Labour movement, local government and education.

In 1894, just as the School Board in neighbouring St George was opening its higher grade school, the Trades Council presented to the Bristol Board a memorial signed by 762 working men, which spoke of the "desirability of establishing a central Secondary or Higher Grade School, such as exists in Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham and other large cities of industry at which, for a reasonable fee, our young people may continue that education which they have received in their elementary schools". During the 1895 School Board election, there was much talk of the nation's educational needs, higher grade schools, educational ladders, and doing the best for all children, and 14,173 people (43%) voted. H.H. Gore, one of the first true Socialists to be elected to any school board (in 1889), stood on what was regarded as a very advanced programme - compulsory, free, secular state education, better salaries for teachers, free school meals and open access to


3 Hugh Holmes Gore was a solicitor, a Christian Socialist, and a former pupil of Clifton College, who lived in the slums and dressed in robes and sandals. "Universally respected" as a supporter of the Shaftesbury Crusade and the Ding's Boys' Club, he was known as "the workers' candidate", and in 1894 had come within 100 votes of defeating Sir W.H. Wills in a parliamentary by-election in East Bristol. W.M. Eager, Making Men (1953) p 292; and Bryher, op.cit. p 12.
school playgrounds and gymasia. He topped the poll, and the Ratepayers’ Association, with its policy of strict economy, failed to get its candidate elected. Otherwise there was an equal split (6 each) between the Tories and the Progressives, with the NUT candidate and a Protestant Leaguer making up the number.

By the time of the next election, Bristol’s circumstances had changed considerably. The boundary extension which came into force on 1 January 1898 brought under the city’s jurisdiction the school board areas of St George, Bedminster, Stapleton and half of Horfield. They contained 15 schools, 500 teachers and 13,000 school places, a majority of which (10,000) were in board schools, reflecting the weakness of voluntary effort and the ancient foundations in those less favoured districts. They also brought a combined debt of £110,647, coupled with a relatively low rateable value, and by transferring to one large school board, the separate smaller ones lost their ‘necessitous school board’ status, which had entitled them to extra grants totalling £3,381. The Bristol School Board’s expenditure almost doubled (to £56,821) between 1897 and 1900, with most of the increase going to the added areas, and the education rate rose to 13 1/2d.

Some Bristolians were not slow to notice the financial implications of all this, and it is much to the credit of the School Board that it resisted the calls for economy and planned the educational provision for its enlarged area in a generous and forward-looking spirit. It did so, of course, with the consent of its electors. At the next election, in the same year (1898) that the Trades Union Congress met most successfully in Bristol, 20,168 people (44%) voted, producing 7 Progressives (out of their 8 candidates), 5 Tories, 1 Socialist, 1 NUT representative and 1 Protestant Leaguer. The composition of the last School Board, elected in 1901, was similar but slightly more radical, with 2 Labour representatives.

In the last decade of its School Board’s life, Bristol moved decisively into the field of higher grade education. It ended up with three schools which it termed ‘higher grade’, which are particularly good examples both of the basic common characteristics and of the possible variations of this new style of education. Their records also vividly illustrate the contrasting favour they found with their local ‘consumers’ and with the Board of Education, which, on a number of occasions, used the Bristol schools as the basis for major decisions and policy-making. The three schools were: St George, in the district of the same name on the east side of the city; Merrywood, serving the Bedminster district south of the river; and Fairfield Road, located to the north of the city centre. Unlike most cities, where central provision was the priority, Bristol’s entry into the higher grade school world was therefore prompted by its peripheral districts. These, the home of an increasing proportion of the city’s varied industrial activity, were witnessing a boom in house-building for the lower middle and working classes, whose needs could

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2 Clare, op.cit. p 24 & Appendix; Bryher, op.cit. pp 77-8, noted that 188 unions and 1,200,000 workers were represented at the TUC.
not be met by the existing institutions of secondary education clustered in the centre and in wealthy Clifton. Each of the higher grade schools which developed to serve them will be described from its foundation until 1900, followed by a survey from a city-wide viewpoint of the period of turmoil from 1900 to 1903.

St George School

The Location

The birth of the St George Higher Grade and Technical School was in many respects a most unlikely event. The district lies to the east of Bristol on what had always been its more industrial side, running out towards the coal-mining area of Kingswood, where John Wesley had laboured to save the souls of the lawless colliers. St George itself had coal pits, as well as chemical works, the Great Western Cotton Factory, in its heyday one of the largest mills in England, and on the edge of the district, the Lawrence Hill depot and engine sheds of the Great Western Railway. But most important was the production of boots and shoes, for which east Bristol ranked only a little behind Leicester, Northampton and London. During the 1890s, the trade was to undergo the painful transition to factory production methods, from the system based on small workshops, outwork and sweated labour, and run by "staunch individualists, most of them of humble origins and typical of the smaller, self-made Victorian manufacturers".

From the late 1860s, St George had experienced rapid population growth (to 36,000 in 1894), as a result of the building of hundreds of cheap, densely packed dwellings. It was a solidly working class area, whose wealthiest citizens were small businessmen - shopkeepers and artisans turned employers - and which, moreover, was experiencing such hard times in the early 1890s that a neighbourhood relief fund was launched. Trade was bad, and in 1889 serious floods left many people homeless. Later that year, the newly unionised female cotton workers of St George spearheaded a massive labour effort which attracted national attention. Every day for over a month, about 1,500 women and girls marched with arms linked from the factory gates through the city to Clifton, and on Sundays, wearing white aprons and shawls, they gathered outside various churches and chapels eliciting middle class support. Other unions raised funds, soup kitchens and music hall benefit shows were organised, and the climax was a huge open-air rally on the Downs addressed by Ben Tillett, Tom Mann and Will Thorne. Eventually the employers conceded nearly all.

1 Drawn from Little, op.cit. chapter 10; and A.J. Pugsley, The Economic Development of Bristol (1922) pp 25-7,37. It is thought that the boot and shoe trade originated as a pastime for disabled miners; Bristol specialised in hob-nailed boots.
the women’s demands. All this generated a remarkable sense of solidarity in the St George area, and a big lock-out of the boot and shoe workers in 1892 was estimated to have affected 30,000 people. Of all the branches of the National Union of Boot and Shoe Operatives (formed in 1890), the Bristol and Kingswood one has been characterised as the most turbulent, with a propensity for unofficial strikes and Socialist inspired militancy. And after the boundary extension, St George was identified by city-based Socialists as the most promising of the new areas because of the number of residents who were already labour activists and involved in the ILP and the Labour Electoral Association.

As part of Gloucestershire until 1898, St George was largely self-governing, with its own authorities for such services as sewerage, paving and lighting, but the area was poorly supplied with amenities like good roads, baths, libraries and parks. It had a School Board of nine members, which by the 1890s was responsible for six elementary schools, but which was constantly struggling to keep up with the ever-increasing school population and a relatively low income from the rates. A penny rate produced only £270 and the school board was somehow managing to provide each school place for half the national average cost. St George children were not eligible for free places in Bristol’s residential charity schools, and the city’s other secondary schools were both too expensive and too far away. Early leaving was common and attendance suffered when times were hard, and though the School Board prosecuted some parents, it was very aware that poverty was often the cause. In 1890 over 300 children were being excused the small school fee of 2d per week, and the Board instructed that no child should be sent home if it was known that the parents could not pay. The 1891 legislation permitting free elementary education was unanimously welcomed and immediately put into effect in all the board schools, and 3,000 handbills posted around the district announcing the good news. It would seem, then, that the St George School Board had its hands full providing a bare minimum of elementary education.

At that time there were no higher grade schools in the whole of the west of England, let alone in Bristol, and St George must have counted among the least likely areas to pioneer the development. However, the educational idealism of a handful of leading local citizens determined that their district, with all its poverty and problems, should have better educational facilities than its bigger and better-off neighbour. They had been trained to think in terms of bold solutions by their fellow School Board members for six years, the Radical self-made coalowner and M.P., Handel Goss, who had built a

1 Bryher, op.cit. pp 16-19. Hours were cut (to 6 a.m. to 5.30 p.m.) and 3 paid days' holiday (Christmas, Easter and Whit) granted.
3 Bryher, op.cit. p 65.
5 St George School Board, Minutes 12, 19 Feb 1890, 30 Jul 1891.
school for his colliers in the 1860s. In 1870 the Board paid tribute to this "earnest and consistent advocate for the increase of facilities for the education of the people", at the same time that it was busy looking into the possibilities opened up by the Technical Instruction Act. Its progressive outlook was indicated by the introduction of a fixed salary scale for all its teachers, a strong resolution calling for the abolition of 'payment by results' because of the "very injurious effect" it had on the minds of children, and a call in 1893 to the Education Department to bring all elementary, secondary and technical education under one local body elected for the purpose, in order to bring about "an effective improvement and full extension of education in this country".

The Foundation

A contemporary recalled that it was during a visit to the Board's 'best' elementary school, Russell Town, that one of his School Board colleagues commented: "What a delightful thing to have a higher grade school in this part of Bristol". His subsequent proposal to the Board met a good response, especially because at that time it was rowing with the Gloucestershire Technical Instruction Committee over the paltry £60 earmarked for evening lectures in St George. The six key members who came to be seen as the higher grade school's founding fathers were chairman Verrier, a tailor who served on several local government bodies; the Rev Trebilco, a Congregational Minister who "longed for an equality of opportunity for scholars" and for "entrance to the best college of Oxford to be open to talent and perseverance"; a coachbuilder and two grocers all said to be devoted to children; and a shoemaker who was chairman of the Radical Operatives' Association. According to two people who knew them personally, at most one-third "can have had anything like

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1 Cossham was a Congregationalist, son of a carpenter, who became the largest mineowner and employer in the Bristol coalfield, and a well-informed scientist and geologist in the process. Always an exponent of "vigorous Radicalism", his funeral in Bristol (after he collapsed in the House of Commons on 23 Apr 1890) provoked a "public demonstration of unprecedented magnitude".

2 St George School Board, Minutes 19 Feb, 28 Apr 1890, 27 Jul 1891, 27 Mar 1893.

3 Unless otherwise stated, the following sections on the foundation and early history of St George School are drawn from: PRO Ed.21/6162; St George School Board, Minutes; Bristol School Board, Minutes; Bristol School Board - School Management Committee, Minutes; W.T. Sanigar, St George Higher Grade School 1894-1947 (2 boxes of documents and newspaper cuttings); Pugsley, The Door of Opportunity; The Georgian (school magazine, from 1905), including St George Secondary School, Bristol 1894-1944 (Jubilee edition, 1944); and St George Higher Grade and Technical School, Log Book.

4 Russell Town School was taken over from the Congregationalists, and until 1891 charged 4d a week.
a liberal education", but they shared a dream of providing "an avenue for boys and girls of every class to reach the highest posts within the city" together with "means for some of them to reach the Universities".

The School Board did its homework thoroughly, eliciting information about existing higher grade schools, especially Sheffield's, and undertaking visits to Birmingham, Derby and Cardiff. In March 1891 it submitted a preliminary application to the Education Department, arguing that "the population and wealth of the locality are rapidly growing, and the want of such a school is increasingly felt". The Department gave its consent to the general idea, but clearly did not take the application very seriously, following doubts expressed by the responsible HMI "as to the capacity of this Board for carrying out the scheme successfully, although it is scarcely possible to express this opinion to them". He "fully expected that, before matters have taken any very definite form", the Board would have ceased to exist, having merged with the Bristol Board as a result of the boundary extension. He further felt that the proposed capacity of the school, for 500 children, was "somewhat in excess of the needs of the locality", and he prompted the Department to insist on two separate departments because of the "great objections to a Higher Grade School in which boys and girls, a good deal above the age of scholars in an ordinary elementary school, would be taught together". Having given its approval in June 1891, the Department then heard little more and was obviously taken by surprise by "the early completion of the school" in June 1894 and by the urgent requests for rulings about fees, grants and free places.

During the intervening three years, the School Board was busy planning and building its new school. It acquired a good site, persuaded the local authority to turn the neighbouring farm into a public park, as the Radical Operatives Association had long been urging, and offered a prize for the best architect's plan for the new building. It also had to win over local opinion. The initial news spread quickly round St George, producing "tumult and affright" that the Board was "flirting with this outrageous idea"; there was "much adverse criticism, accusations of making the parish a laughing-stock, prophecies of red ruin and desolation, of burdening St George with the most monstrous white elephant it had ever known". However, the keenest supporters of the idea topped the poll in the School Board election of 1892 (as they also did in 1895 after the school opened) and they survived a stormy three-hour public meeting convened after the Board accepted a tender from an experienced builder of schools rather than a slightly lower one from a St George builder. Some opposition rumbled on - there were newspaper references to "Verrier's Red Elephant" and "the Higher Grade School commonly called the Lunatic Asylum" - but as the building progressed, it was recorded that "all St George ... were manifesting a deep interest in this new and wonderful venture". No less than 595 children applied for the first 125 free places, and tickets were snapped up for the ceremonial opening, which the first headmaster recalled as a packed gathering generating much excitement and cheering. The School Board was disappointed not to attract a national figure to the opening, but a number of important Bristolians came, who were said to have "looked with envious eyes" on the achievement of their little neighbour.
What made it special was, in the words of one early pupil and teacher, that it was "conceived and achieved not by the magnate of a wealthy borough but by a group of their own friends and neighbours, men of little showing outside their own world of St George". A newspaper report labelled them "certain wise men in the East ... pioneers of popular and secondary education in the city of Bristol", and the school's second and most important early headmaster later paid tribute to the "brave men who, in the face of all opposition and all kinds of criticism and sarcasm", persevered with their aim of providing "a generous education to those boys and girls who were not gifted with this world's goods - such as the boys and girls in Clifton and the richer parts of the city possessed". It was, according to the first headmaster, a "daring thing for such a small authority to do", not least because a debt of £15,000 was incurred, and he recalled "many scores of hours" spent in consultation with the School Board members trying to stretch the money as far as possible. Quite apart from this understandable mutual congratulation from those closely involved with the founding of the school, St George does provide a striking example of how much a small and far from wealthy school board could achieve. Nearly all subsequent commentators have accepted that, while the minority of big urban boards did a good job, the school board system was basically unsound because most boards were too weak or too poor or too apathetic to cater adequately for their districts. Admittedly, St George was not a tiny rural board, but it was nevertheless a significant exception to the rule, and its smallness and consequent intimacy seem to have generated remarkable local loyalty to the higher grade school right from the start.

The Realisation of an Ideal

Over the summer of 1894, with the building virtually finished, the staff were appointed, headed by Mr F.W. Westaway, B.A., Inter B.Sc. (London), F.C.S., and a nicely printed and illustrated prospectus was circulated. It informed parents that the new school would accommodate 250 boys and 250 girls under a graduate headmaster and a fully trained and certificated staff of assistants. "Great attention" having been paid to heating, lighting and ventilation "on the most modern principles", the school boasted special rooms for science and art, "a thoroughly well-appointed Chemistry Laboratory, a large Science Lecture Room, a Workshop, a Dining Room and accommodation of every kind conducive to the well-being of the Scholars". The Elementary Section, comprising Standards V, VI and VII, studied an impressively broad curriculum, covering literary as well as scientific, craft and commercial subjects. After passing Standard VII, scholars could pass on to the "Science and Higher Section for a three year course designed to "form a sound general education" and to prepare for professional and commercial careers, and for various examinations, including London University Matriculation and even exhibitions at Oxford and Cambridge. The first two years comprised mathematics, chemistry, physics, geometry, drawing, English, French and Latin, with a third year specialising in particular areas of study (including
French and Latin). The fees of 5d per week covered all books and stationery used in school, and 125 free scholarships (25\% of the places) were available on the results of an annual examination. The prospectus stressed that it was crucial for pupils to complete their course of study, and that preference would be shown to parents giving an undertaking to that effect, "as the school is supported almost entirely by grants earned at Examinations". Everything about this document - the quality of staff and buildings, the curriculum content and structure, the anxiety about premature leaving - is suggestive of careful planning and close knowledge of the likely pupils, together with almost unbounded ambition for what they and the school might achieve. One can only imagine the impact it must have had along the villa terraces and rows of artisans' cottages of the St George area.

Despite some last-minute objections about fees and elementary school places from a surprised Education Department, the school opened on 19 November 1894. By the end of the first week, 300 children had been admitted, and admissions continued over the next few months as they transferred from their elementary schools. According to Mr Westaway, the 'cream' consisted of 13- and 14-year-olds drawn from local elementary schools and "picked out for their past successes and for their positions on the examination list", and there were also some from private schools who were "not well-grounded", but soon settled down and caught up. During the first two terms, equipment, cupboards and science apparatus arrived almost daily, woodwork and drawing lessons were begun, a concert was given in aid of the local poor relief fund, piano and drill lessons squeezed into the timetable, and some evening science lectures were given by the Dean of Bristol, with the headmaster working the lantern.

It took several months for a stable staff to settle down. Westaway described them as men and women who "had in some non-university way gained a distinction in a single subject", and he acknowledged their skill in welding together pupils from such a mixture of sources; he was "proud of them all. It was rare for anything to go seriously wrong". The headmaster took much of the science and mathematics himself, and early on discussed with the top form the possibility of taking two or three Science and Art examinations the following May. He found the pupils "the chance to beat these Bristol schools", and despite being beginners in the subjects and only having six months to prepare, St George School came "easily first in the whole Bristol area". Westaway remembered the early pupils being "wonderfully keen, and ... extremely likeable", and said that once the staff and pupils settled down to "really solid work", they all "worked hard, hard". The Drawing Examiner on an early visit was "very pleased with everything shown him", and the HMI's first report on the Standards part of the school noted: "This school has done very good work during the first six months of its existence ... It is a great pleasure to be able to congratulate them on the success which the establishment of this school has met with".

After just a year, Westaway was persuaded to become a Sub-Inspector for the Science and Art Department, and was replaced as headmaster by Frederick Pickles, a prizewinning graduate of Edinburgh University who had previously taught in higher grade
schools and pupil-teacher centres. The school really took shape under his guidance, and while he constantly strove for higher academic standards from both staff and pupils, there was never any question but that St George was a local school, serving the ordinary children of that particular community. Tributes upon his retirement in 1929 stressed his "deep and live sympathy for the underdog" and his determination that the school should "never sacrifice the average pupil to the brilliant". Just a month into his first term, Mr Pickles declared a half-day holiday to celebrate the opening of the first electric tramway in Bristol, from Old Market to St George, and the school helped to organise a tea for the needy of the district on that occasion. Earlier in 1895 had occurred the biggest national lock-out of boot and shoe workers, causing acute distress and suffering until the workers gave in after six weeks, and by the winter 3,000 operatives in east Bristol were unemployed and dependent on the revived relief fund for starving families. At Christmas, the school's new orchestra put on a concert, which was "a splendid success. Albert Hall packed. Audience enthusiastic". A sports' fund was started, football, hockey and cricket matches were arranged between forms and against other schools, all the children had their photograph taken (a novel experience for many poorer children), and the appeal for donations to a library and museum was favourably received both by the children, who "heartily responded", and by such local notables as Sir W.H. Wills, M.P., who gave some books. Almost every one of these initiatives represented an innovation in the neighbourhood, ensuring that St George School's influence extended beyond the classrooms of its pupils into the cultural and social life of the surrounding community.

Growth

Meanwhile the serious work of the school continued. Frederick Pickles persevered with his large classes and his inexperienced staff, worrying that "some of the teachers find it very difficult to get out of the old rut of working for mere results, hence in certain classes there is a lamentable deficiency in thinking power". With a constant influx of new pupils, he found that "uniformity of work is very difficult", and he adopted the expedient of creating temporary separate classes for the newcomers or cross-Standard groupings according to attainment in the specific subjects (French, algebra, cookery). But Inspectors Buckminster and Tutton were "extremely pleased" with what they saw on a surprise visit in late 1895, the latter observing that "the school was perhaps the best in his large district", and at the end of that school year, "their delight at the work accomplished in this first year" was noted. The novelty of the school was such that a steady stream of visitors - M.P.s, members of the Bristol

1 Mullen, op.cit. p 51; Fox, op.cit. pp 227-30. The same pattern of industrial dispute, unemployment and emergency relief was to be repeated in the winter of 1898.
2 He also financed a public library for the St George area.
School Board and Technical Instruction Committee, and
delegates from other schools and areas - came to observe and
admire, to the extent that the headmaster found that "this
'dropping in' of visitors is becoming rather a nuisance".

The organised science school which comprised the senior part
of the school and which represented the really new aspect of
educational provision in the area, was developing well too.
At the start of the school year in 1896, "many of the boys who
thought of leaving are staying on" into the second year of the
course, and the experiment of putting boys and girls in the
same class to cater for the extra numbers was working "for the
mutual advantage of each. With care the mixed system will
work better than the separate one in our Organised Science
School". The first Science and Art Department Report could
hardly have been more glowing: "This new school has made
excellent progress ... The buildings, equipment, teaching and
discipline are alike of an exceptionally high order". And the
grant statistics drawn up by the headmasters of 52 of the
larger organised schools of science showed that St George was
placed first in Great Britain for physics and for 'general
work and equipment', and second for chemistry.

On 1 January 1898, the Bristol School Board took over
responsibility for St George School, and showed every
intention of developing this new area of work. The locals
felt that the new political masters were "not so especially
concerned and liberal in their treatment of the school as the
Founders had been", but, as has been mentioned, they were
accustomed to an unusual degree of intimacy in their small
district. At least the Rev Trebilco, in recognition of his
work in St George, was invited to chair the newly created sub-
committee responsible for the school. The Bristol Board had
already decided that Merrywood should develop into a higher
grade school, and plans were well advanced for the brand new
higher grade school at Fairfield Road, and so Bristol was
firmly committed to the principle of this new style of
education. The headmasters of the three schools were soon
bombarding the School Board with ideas and requests, and
keeping the schools equipped and staffed figured prominently
on the agenda of nearly every meeting of the Board and its
sub-committees. Apart from two instances when a disgruntled
management committee retorted that if Mr F. Pickles was not
satisfied with his salary he could resign, and that if he
wrote fewer letters he would not need the clerk he had
requested, the Board was very responsive.

An early move, strongly supported by Mr Pickles, was for an
increase in assistant teachers' salaries in line with the rise
recently awarded by the St George School Board, and
strengthening the staffs of the higher grade schools remained
a priority. The number of graduates steadily increased,
partly by fresh appointments and partly by the acquisition of
qualifications while teaching. The Bristol Board and its
higher grade school heads always encouraged teachers to extend
their qualifications, giving them time off to attend courses
and sit examinations, and formally offering congratulations
when appropriate. When Mr Cooper, "the best assistant master
that I have ever had in this school", gained his B.A., Mr
Pickles was so delighted that he "at once informed his class
of his great achievement". The Board's only hesitation was
over the validity of a Ph.D. from the National University of Chicago, which it eventually refused to recognise. By 1904, St George’s staff of 19 (11 men, 8 women) consisted of 12 graduates (9 men, 3 women), mostly of London University, with the other 7 involved mainly in craft and practical subjects.

Maturity

In 1898, when St George School was just four years old, all external indicators of its progress were most encouraging. The grant to the school of science reached nearly £900, averaging £6/16 per head, and two of the school’s outstanding early students, Arthur White and Kate Townsend, won £9 and £7/10 respectively in the Science and Art Department examinations, a performance which earned the School Board’s congratulations. And with the exception of one HMI, who "asked a great number of out-of-the-way questions in Geometry" and whom the headmaster had to inform was "at fault" in his definition of a degree, the various Inspectors’ Reports were extremely favourable. The school of science had done "another excellent session’s work ... the Advanced Course has proved equally as successful as the Elementary Courses". Most subjects were "excellent" or "well taught", English subjects "left little to be desired" and the overall standards "reflect great credit on the School".

The following year, two pupils matriculated for London University in the first division, nineteen students passed the city’s pupil-teacher entrance examination, and the Science Inspectors wrote of "considerable progress ... in the advanced course", though they hoped that the numbers (just 8% of the total of 146) would soon increase. Unexpectedly, the Board of Education Inspector was more critical, referring to "very uneven work", particularly in the higher Standards, and threatening to reduce the grant in future. The staff were up in arms, complaining of "many vague statements" in the report, particularly as it was based on a very perfunctory inspection of the six upper Standards, one of which (Standard VII boys) was not asked a single question. That class’s teacher, the esteemed Mr Cooper, was so upset that he decided to move out of the area, to teach in Bradford, causing Mr Pickles considerable distress at this "great loss to the School". He made a formal complaint to the Inspectorate, and though the next visitation "passed off very pleasantly", the main summer one of 1900 again annoyed him; he found it "most difficult to

1 J.W. Knipe asked for recognition of the degree soon after returning from 3 months’ leave of absence, ostensibly granted to him to try to remedy the obvious stammer which affected his discipline and helped to make him unpopular with the pupils. He was an early enthusiast for correspondence courses, which he organised from Bristol (and also enrolled for, it seems!), and he went on to found Wolseley Hall Correspondence College. The courses he offered were under the aegis of the College of Preceptors, of which he was a Licentiate, as outlined by J.V. Chapman, *Professional Roots* (1985) pp 105-7.
glean any real or useful advice or helpful information ... from these two Inspectors. They seem to have few helpful notions about any educational subject". This unhappy episode was an illustration both of the powerful position the Inspectors held in relation to aided schools, and of the ignorant and cavalier attitude of some of them towards elementary teachers.

The school of science continued to perform at a very high level. Kate Townsend was top pupil-teacher in her year and returned to teach at the school, and in 1900 the Science and Art Department grant topped £1,000 for the first time. St George headed the per capita list for the entire country, with £6/7/6 out of a possible £6/10/0 for each of its 162 pupils, a remarkable record for a relatively small school serving a limited and impoverished area. However, there was anxiety that the top end of the school had not grown as much as had been hoped, the 3rd and 4th years totalling just 18 pupils in 1898. A number of measures were therefore introduced to try to boost the numbers. After 1898 parents were required to sign an undertaking to keep their children at school for a fixed period of time, or forfeit £2, and Mr Pickles decided to compete more strenuously for City Technical Scholarships which, he thought, "seemed easy to win". At the first attempt, 6 St George students (3 Senior, 3 Junior) were successful from 900 candidates, an achievement which Mr Pickles' frequent complaint that the School Board regulations drafted away carefully nurtured pupil teachers just as they were about to start the advanced course, was resolved in 1900 when St George was recognised as a pupil teacher centre in its own right. The School Board also granted 50 more free scholarships, tenable from Standard V, which were advertised in the local newspapers, and on posters displayed in elementary schools "where the children can see them".

However, an investigation by Mr Pickles and the Board's own Inspector discovered that at some elementary schools, "boys and girls were prevented by Head Teachers from sitting even for a Free Scholarship. No poster was displayed in many cases and all information as to the Free Scholarship Examination withheld". This was a clear example of the underlying tension between the ordinary elementary schools and the higher grade schools to which reference was made earlier. It is significant that Mr Pickles and the School Board both believed that the problem of premature leaving was best tackled by ensuring that children and parents were fully informed about the opportunities at St George and then guaranteed the financial assistance to take advantage of them. Imposing a longer compulsory school course, as the Board of Education was to do in 1904, was not part of their remedy. Certainly, by 1900 the St George Higher Grade School had accomplished an enormous amount in its six-year life, and must have felt confident that it could solve whatever problems might arise and go on to even greater achievements and successes.
Merrywood School

The Location

Bedminster was another fast-growing industrial suburb of Bristol, separated from the rest of the city by the River Avon. Its population more than doubled in the thirty years to 1891, when it reached 54,194, and was predominantly lower middle and working class. The density of the small, compact houses of Bedminster was compared by a contemporary directory to the Spitalfields district of London, and the total rateable value was proportionately lower even than St George's. Bedminster men made up the larger proportion of the 3,000 or so miners employed in the Bristol coalfield, with the largest single pit at nearby Malago Vale and others dotted among the streets and houses. Robinsons, the big paper bag and cardboard box manufacturer, moved to Bedminster in the 1880s, as did Wills, which then built a factory in 1899 and headed the new nationwide Imperial Tobacco Company formed in 1901. There were also breweries and a tannery and numerous smaller concerns.

Workers in Bedminster were not unaffected by the industrial unrest which swept through Bristol during the 1890s, the miners being particularly active. A long strike during which there was a symbolic march to the workhouse, ended only when funds ran out in 1893. That year the newly-formed Bedminster branch of the Socialist Society - which included amongst its members a nonconformist minister - succeeded in getting two representatives elected to the Board of Guardians. And in the first municipal election after the boundary extension of 1898, which consolidated the Bristol and Somerset parts of Bedminster, the district elected one of the city's four Labour councillors. The success was ascribed to the support of the miners of Bedminster Down, the railwaymen of Knowle, and "the almost entirely working class Brislington section."

Until the end of the eighteenth century Bedminster was part of Somerset, and the physical separation continued to give the district a distinctive identity, which can be detected even today in the local dialect. This independent outlook extended, it seems, to education, for a "massive and unexplained rise" in the number of working class private schools has been documented just before the 1870 Act, at a time when similar schools in the rest of Bristol were reducing in number. At the time of the Newcastle Commission, Bristol coalfield was one of just two areas in the country in favour of 'compulsory' schooling, to be achieved by employers insisting on a certificate of school attendance. Patrick Cumin reported to the Commission that, having talked to the colliers, he found "their unanimous opinion to be, that when a

1 Arrowsmith's Dictionary of Bristol (1906).
2 Little, op.cit. Chapter XI.
3 Bryher, op.cit. pp 59-1,64.
boy presents himself at the mouth of the pit for employment, he should produce a certificate of having attended school for a certain time previously". Cumin judged Bedminster British School to be one of the best schools in Bristol, and, though run by and patronised mainly by dissenters, it was effectively non-denominational - "the truth is that the religious difficulty, as it is called, does not exist". He found that very few children in the area received no education, and left Bedminster believing that the "working classes take as much interest in their children as their superiors in rank".

The Foundation

In 1893-4, the Bristol School Board was planning a new elementary and infants' school in Bedminster. No doubt conscious of the distance between that district and the secondary schools of the city, and probably influenced too by the activities of the neighbouring St George School Board, it was decided to give the new school at least some of the special facilities which would enable it to develop its higher work should the demand arise. While not being explicitly a higher grade school at this stage, it was conceived as a big multi-purpose school to serve the whole area. Its distinguishing features were that it "will be staffed with specially qualified teachers; that a curriculum in advance of that usually found in ordinary elementary schools will be provided; that classrooms will be set apart for Standard VII and Ex-Standard VII scholars; and that a properly-fitted Science Lecture room and Cookery Room have been built in connection with the school".

Merrywood School was planned for 1,167 children altogether, including 420 in the Senior Mixed (potential higher grade) department. It cost nearly £17,000 and would charge a small fee, within the means of the "tradesmen, clerks, and superior artisans" who resided in the locality. On this last point, the local HMI who was asked by the Education Department for his comments, felt that "the experiment was well worth a trial", in view of the "social position of a large number of the residents" and the existence of free elementary places at nearby schools. But the Education Department could not find a precedent to allow this and eventually Sir George Kekewich ruled that there should be no fees at Merrywood.


2 Unless otherwise stated, the following sections on the foundation and early history of Merrywood School are drawn from: PRO Ed.21/6128; Bristol School Board, Minutes; Bristol School Board - School Management Committee, Minutes; Wood, op.cit. Merrywood itself has no surviving records, and it is therefore impossible to build up as complete a picture as for St George.
Merrywood was formally opened on 21 January 1896, on which occasion the Chairman of the School Board, in order "to allay any criticism from Board members", took pains to stress that it was an "upper Standard school" and not a higher grade school. Work began a week later, under headmaster William Crank, a non-graduate trained teacher from Ashton Gate School, and Miss Owen from Mina Road School. Within six months of the school opening, as anticipated, Mr Crank notified the School Board that he would soon have about sixty children who had passed Standard VII, and he proposed forming a Science and Art Class with a new "Special Teacher" to teach elementary drawing, first stage mathematics and science, perhaps chemistry or mechanics. He favoured those particular subjects "because the work in the standards leads up to such a course", which is an interesting assertion that the Education Department's Standards led smoothly to the Science and Art Department's courses, rather than being as ill-planned and disjointed as was often alleged.

The School Board responded swiftly, constituting a committee to supervise the new class and deciding that its curriculum should include mathematics (Stage 1), elementary inorganic chemistry, elementary hygiene, elementary geography, and elementary freehand and model drawing. It advertised for a specialist for "Merrywood Upper Standard School", who should be a certificated master with science qualifications and preferably French and shorthand, and who would be paid £100 rising annually to £150. The Board made a fortunate appointment in James Steger, who later that year took a special chemistry course at the Royal College of Science in London, and went on to gain a London University B.Sc. and become a FCS. It provided essential scientific apparatus (though "heart and lungs" would have to be borrowed!), and the class got under way early in 1897.

Within a few months, Merrywood received a vote of confidence from the HMI and the congratulations of the School Board, and the Science and Art Department's Inspector found the science class to be "well taught". Mr Crank was given a rise in salary, together with one-tenth of any Science and Art Department grants earned by his Ex-Standard scholars. He then suggested developing a fuller higher grade department, including woodwork for the boys and housewifery for the girls. The School Board agreed and from May 1897 the school was to be called 'Merrywood Higher Grade Board School'. Tenders went out for a new 'playshed' and the conversion of the existing covered playground into a woodwork workshop for the use of Merrywood's and other Bedminster board school children, an instructor was appointed and Saturday morning classes for teachers introduced.

Merrywood had thus risen rapidly in local esteem and it could well have been one of the schools in Sir John Gorst's mind when, during an acrimonious House of Commons debate in 1901, he accused some school boards of deliberately misleading the Government about the scope of their educational plans, by acquiring loans for elementary purposes in a covert attempt to finance education beyond their statutory right. This was, incidentally, the same occasion on which he blatantly lied to the Commons in denying any involvement with the Cockerton case. Certainly the accusation was a dishonest representation...
of the facts in Merrywood’s case. A cookery room and science lecture room were named in the loan application, an advanced curriculum, ex-Standard children and specialist teachers were all mentioned in early correspondence, and it was the Department which immediately labelled Merrywood a ‘Higher Grade School’, even though the Bristol School Board carefully avoided that name for another eighteen months. In any case, it was hardly likely that the Bristol Board would have been secretly trying to upgrade Merrywood at the same time that it was openly organising a higher grade school at Fairfield Road.

Growth - and Some Problems

As at St George School, Merrywood seems to have settled very quickly into a successful routine of work. In 1896 the science classes were found to be "admirably taught", though a chemistry laboratory was urgently needed, and student numbers rose to 75. Like Mr Pickles, Mr Crank was keen to encourage more pupils to stay for the science course, and at the School Board’s request the two heads drafted a parental undertaking to apply to all Bristol schoolchildren beyond the statutory leaving age. "Unless prevented by unforeseen circumstances", such as the death of a parent or moving from Bristol, parents had to agree to keep their children at school until a specified date or forfeit £2 to help cover "the loss incurred". Further staff were appointed – in French and art and a pupil teacher – and a graduate science master, who had studied at Borough Road Training College, Jena and Bristol Universities, was added in 1899. In 1900 the school’s pupils gained 67 1st class and 43 2nd class passes in the Science and Art Department examinations, the school was recognised as a centre for pupil teachers, and it was said that in general "the pupils had no difficulty in getting good situations".

However, behind this promising facade of development, Merrywood School was on a far less assured footing. In offering a predominantly elementary education, but with undefined – and therefore unlimited – potential at the top end, it hit the Education Department’s weakest ideological spot. The Department did not like this development but had no alternative suggestions; it had no idea what to do with children of school age (and older) who had passed the Standards. It offered no course of study and no funding, and when school boards found their own solution, it had no more idea what to do with Science and Art classes operating within its schools. It was Merrywood’s misfortune to be tackling the problem at the time when the Department was becoming anxious about the implications of its earlier ‘blind-eye’ policy towards such developments.

The matter first came to the fore in October 1896 when the Bristol School Board asked for a fee of 6d per week (with exemption for poor children) for the new senior class at Merrywood. Over the next three and a half years, all the possible implications received a full airing within the central office. Repeatedly, in this as in other matters, the Education Department found itself in the position of raising objections, scouring its archives for precedents, inviting
learned opinions from within the Department - and then conceding the point, with remarks like "I do not suppose that we need object", "I do not think our case is a strong one" and "We seem ... to be more or less committed to allowing this". The problem even reached the elevated desk of Sir George Kekewich on three separate occasions. At first, his somewhat equivocal advice was that, as in the case of organised science schools, many of which were provided by school boards "in premises built with loans for Elementary" but which are "self-supporting", the Department should "have nothing to do with such schools". One official warned - rather ominously in view of subsequent events - that "it will be for the Auditor to consider whether the expenditure of the Board upon the Class described is legitimate", but another thought that as "the class in question forms but a very small part of the Merrywood Board School", it was probably alright.

But in 1897 the Bristol Board sought to bring Merrywood in line with St George, with a 5d per week fee for all children, except 2d for infants, and 25% free places on the basis of a competitive examination. Supported by HMI Elliott, it argued that "many parents ... prefer to send their children to a private fee School, where the tuition is often far from efficient rather than to a School at which education is free". It observed that children came from considerable distances because of the higher grade character of the school, "passing on their way Schools which they might attend, and crowding Merrywood". The Education Department was sceptical, feeling that some of the Board's reasons seemed "invented for the occasion", and Sir George Kekewich was led to his conclusion (quoted in Chapter 2) that Bristol's intention behind charging a fee at Merrywood was to make it 'a Social Higher Grade School'. In a way, of course, he was right that one of the School Board's motives for having a fee was to attract the more aspiring and committed parents. But the aim was rather to encourage maximum use of the school's costly facilities and thereby raise standards of achievement, than to exclude children simply because they were poor.

It is interesting that there was such disapproval of the Bristol School Board doing exactly what all endowed, private and public schools did in much more exaggerated fashion, and it is difficult to see how not having a fee at Merrywood would have benefited anyone at that stage. Perhaps the Department's instinctive sympathy for this reasoning got the better of it, for eventually it agreed to a fee of 3d per week, with 25% free places, though with the warning that "this approval may be withdrawn at any time". However, the approval that Merrywood most wanted - the recognition as an organised science school which it had requested in 1898 - never did materialise, and the school had to face the turmoil of the next few years without the added status which that designation would have brought.
Fairfield Road School

The Location

Fairfield Road, the third of Bristol’s trio of higher grade schools, was created to serve the fast growing population to the north of the city centre. This was less a defined suburb than either St George or Bedminster, but rather an area of residential development spreading northwards along the Gloucester Road and taking in the districts of Montpelier, St Andrews, Bishopston and Ashley Down. The inhabitants were essentially lower middle class — small shopkeepers and white collar workers such as clerks, supervisors, commercial travellers and minor officials¹. There was little manufacturing industry and relatively few unskilled workers. Within reach of the city centre and bordering middle class Redland and Cotham, this district was not totally cut off from secondary school provision, and Colston’s Girls’ School and the Merchant Venturers’ College, and even the Grammar School and Redland High School for Girls, could claim it within their natural catchment areas.

The Foundation²

However, such schools were too costly for many families with educational aspirations, and the area must have seemed a prime location for a higher grade school. With the impending transfer of Horfield School Board to Bristol and of Horfield British School to the School Board, the Bristol School Board decided on a bold solution in 1896. There would be a new multi-purpose school for 1,054 children of all ages in the district of Montpelier, but from the outset with a more overtly higher grade intention than Merrywood. Immediately, a petition was raised by 47 local residents to the effect that it would be "a nuisance to the neighbourhood and severely depreciate the value of property". Protests soon followed from the Bristol branch of the Private Schools Association against cheap, utilitarian ‘pseudo higher grade schools’, and from three local vicars about increasing the "intolerable strain" the voluntary schools were already under. But a Trades Council survey of north Bristol found that only 84 people opposed a new school, 218 wanted an ordinary elementary school, but 577 favoured the higher grade school idea.

¹ As a sample, one group of neighbours recorded in the earliest admission register comprised a traveller for a silversmith, a buyer at a leather factory, the head of the passenger department office at Bristol Joint Station (Temple Meads), a traveller in wine and spirits, a retired gentleman and a publican’s widow.

² The following sections on the early history of Fairfield Road School are drawn from: PRO Ed.21/6128; Bristol School Board, Minutes; Bristol School Board — School Management Committee, Minutes; Wood, op.cit.
The School Board had to resort to compulsory purchase to acquire the site it wanted, a difficult decision for a body dependent on the goodwill of the ratepayers, but one applauded by the Trades Council. After criticisms of extravagance from Mr Froud, and from the Education Department that the "elevation was too ornate", the building plans were amended and agreed. A loan of £18,000 was sanctioned by the Department, and Dr Cook, the chairman of the sub-committee in charge, visited higher grade and science schools in Birmingham and Manchester to inspect their furnishings and fittings. During the winter of 1897-8 plans and requisitions were approved for chemistry and physics laboratories, science manuals, art materials, tools, American oak furniture, heating, ventilation, drains and a gas supply.

The post of headmaster was advertised at a salary of £275 rising annually to £325, to be responsible for a school of science, a senior mixed department and a junior mixed department. Applicants must be trained, certificated and university graduates - the first time the Bristol School Board had so specified - and preferably have experience of teaching in a higher grade school or school of science. A move to rescind the graduate requirement by Mr Froud, who was presumably worried about the extra cost, was defeated, but the Bristol Teachers' Association registered its anxiety that the trend to appoint graduates to higher grade school headships might produce people out of touch with elementary schools, as well as depriving good non-graduate elementary teachers of the best jobs in the profession. From a field of 48 applicants and a shortlist of 6, Mr J.E. Pickles, M.A., B.Sc. (Birmingham), a lecturer at Birmingham Technical School and brother of Frederick and Miss Pickles at St George School, was appointed. Miss Kate Coburn, B.Sc., was appointed senior assistant mistress, and, having recruited extra new teachers from the training colleges and drawn some of its best teachers and pupil teachers from other board schools, along with the French teacher from Colston's School, the Board advertised for other specialist staff. Clearly, it was intended that Fairfield Road School should start its life with the best teaching staff available.

Again there was a wrangle over fees. After deferring the question several times, the School Board decided to seek approval to charge 2d per week for infants and 5d per week for the rest, with 25% of the places free. It explained to the Department that the school was "situated in the midst of a residential district and the children who will attend it will be principally the sons and daughters of tradesmen, clerks and superior artisans". As far as could be ascertained, local feeling favoured a fee, and if a free school had been contemplated, "doubtless opposition to the school would have been more strenuous than it was ... It is feared that the objection to a free school ... would result in the abstention of a large number of scholars". HMI Elliott concurred, reporting that the curriculum "will probably be rather more varied than that of the ordinary Public Elementary School", and that, in comparison with Merrywood, "the social position of the people living near Fairfield Road School is of a higher character", and adding "I have heard of no demand for free places". Having found three recent precedents (Hull, Burnley and Widnes) for the charging of fees at higher grade schools,
the Education Department gave its conditional agreement, and
the School Board hastened to prove that Fairfield Road
fulfilled all the conditions - the district was "amply
supplied" with free school places; the fee would be to the
"educational benefit of the district" because it would allow
better qualified staff and a higher level of work; and the
parents, being "probably of a better social status" than those of St George, were known to be "willing and anxious" to pay.

The opening of Fairfield Road School was planned for 1
November 1898, with a formal ceremony by Sir George Kekewich
to follow, timed for 7.30p.m. so that manual workers could
attend. The occasion received full coverage in the
sympathetic part of the local press. Sir George told his
Bristol audience that higher grade schools "perhaps in former
days were a luxury, but that now they were something like a
necessity .... such high class elementary schools ... occupied
an important place in the educational organisation of the
country". He was delighted that parents "were taking a
greater interest in the education of their children and
desired a higher and better education for them", and that the
School Boards had stepped in to try "to bridge the gap". He
even compared their willingness to "undertake a duty which was
not imposed upon them by statute" to his own tendency "to
dabble in matters which were not his business, as they knew
his business was concerned with public elementary schools
only". The Bristol School Board could hardly have had higher
or more explicit approval for its new venture.

The school, which had ended up costing over £24,000, admitted
no less than 1,001 children on the first day, with the
Standards' department over-subscribed and the infants'
department slightly undersubscribed. The School Board Clerk
and the Board's Inspector were both present to help the
teachers deal with the "immense number of children", and an
eye-witness, writing approvingly of the school's laboratories,
workshops and drawing-rooms, recorded that the school was
filled immediately after opening1. The entrance examination
for 175 scholarships (100 boys, 75 girls, though in subsequent
years the proportions were equal) had attracted so many
candidates that extra superintendents had to be employed. By
any standards, Fairfield Road School had got off to a very
promising start.

Growth - and Some Problems

However well the new school seemed to be going, recognition as
an organised school of science was a matter of urgency to both
the headmaster and the School Board. The financial advantages
this would bring were a fundamental question of existence, not
just an optional extra. Approaches had been made to the
Science and Art Department some months before the school

1 J. Latimer, The Annals of Bristol in the Nineteenth
Century (concluded) 1887-1900 (1902) p 76. He noted that
"the Board had been encouraged by the Education
Department to establish the school".

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opened, but with forms to fill in and visits from the Inspector for the district, nothing was decided by the time the school opened. The School Board was so confident that this was merely a typical bureaucratic delay that it decided to carry the cost (£4,800) of the necessary extra equipment and teaching staff, and authorised Fairfield Road to begin work as a school of science immediately, in the expectation of recognition in the near future. In its first year, the school had 78 pupils under instruction in Science and Art Department subjects and earned a respectable amount of grant, particularly on the science side, and the numbers increased to 110 the following year.

But in December 1898, Sir John Gorst formally refused Fairfield’s application to become an organised school of science, apparently influenced by an approach from the Merchant Venturers about unfair competition from the cheaper school. The Bristol School Board was horrified. Conservative Dr Cook argued strongly that there could be no question of overlapping between the two schools, since Fairfield Road had been “full from the day of opening and a careful enquiry had shown that not a single student could be traced as having come from any other higher grade school” (i.e. Colston’s and the Merchant Venturers’). A delegation which included the Rev Trebilco, veteran of the St George School Board, and H.J. Walker, the NUT representative on the Board, was planned, but the Vice-President refused to receive it, on the grounds that “no useful purpose” could be served until the conference of higher education institutions in Bristol had reported.

This conference had been recently convened to discuss educational provision in the city, particularly the question of ‘overlapping’, but already a series of meetings had indicated that a quick report was unlikely. The School Board accused the Technical Instruction Committee of dragging its feet on the committee, and relations between the two, never particularly friendly, were unusually tense at this time. At the national level, technical instruction committees were being given increased powers over grant allocation at the expense of the school boards, and in Bristol there was additionally a rather unpleasant argument going on. It concerned the Technical Instruction Committee’s refusal to permit its scholarship holders to study at Fairfield Road, because it had not been recognised as a school of science. As the School Board pointed out, the Technical Instruction Committee did permit its scholarship holders to attend schools which had no official recognition of any kind, but having won its point and expressed its “surprise and regret at the unsatisfactory reason”, it was powerless to do anything more.

One aspect of this wrangle was that the Technical Instruction Committee asked the Departments of Education and of Science and Art “whether a School Board had power to give education in scientific and other subjects to young people between the ages of 16 & 20”. It then placed “the whole matter” before the District Auditor of the Local Government Board, but unlike Mr Cockerton, he declined to declare the School Board’s work ultra vires. Bristol Technical Instruction Committee, Minutes 6 Sept 1898.

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The Bristol School Board realised it would have to fight its own battles, and it tried every avenue to force the Fairfield Road issue. After the moderate Conservative, J.H. Woodward, who served on both the School Board and the Technical Instruction Committee, failed to achieve a compromise, the city’s M.P.’s were contacted. Sir W.H. Wills asked a question in the House of Commons about the “difficulty that had arisen with respect to it being recognised as a School of Science”, and Lewis Fry approached the Science and Art Department. Further communications to the Education Department stressed that Fairfield was at least two miles from any possible rival institution, and that with “houses being erected in every direction” in the neighbourhood, 300 children had had to be turned away. At one point, all correspondence was placed in the hands of the Association of School Boards, in the hope that it might be able to secure a solution.

By the beginning of 1900, when yet another application for recognition was turned down on a minor and inaccurate technicality, the School Board’s confidence was seriously undermined. That Fairfield Road — newly built and equipped, well staffed and full of pupils — could not achieve the only recognition which would have given it a future as more than just an elementary school, alerted them to the fact that far more was going on at Whitehall than they, or almost anyone else, yet knew. The Board of Education’s behaviour at that time was characterised by procrastination, responses containing inaccuracies and contradictions, and a refusal to meet and talk. It must all have been extremely disturbing to a local authority which had just taken on a big commitment and incurred a huge, long-term debt in order to carry out what it believed to be a policy favourably regarded by the central authority. And it guaranteed that what was obviously a popular and much needed school, like a number of others around the country, started life under a cloud of uncertainty.

The Period of Turmoil, 1900-1903

The members of the Bristol School Board were baffled and disconcerted by the unexplained manipulation of events by the Board of Education which gradually became apparent from 1900. When the climate began to change, Bristol’s late entry into higher grade education proved to be a considerable disadvantage, for both Merrywood and Fairfield Road were too new to have acquired a solid record of achievement or an effective lobby on their behalf. Even more serious was that the withholding of organised school of science (and consequently Technical Instruction Committee) recognition had implications for the schools’ status, the full significance of which was not appreciated until later. For their lack of recognition was not only held against them as evidence of their inability to attract older students and reach higher standards, but as proof that they were basically just elementary schools. The Board of Education’s implementation of the 1902 Act was dedicated to building a secondary
education system around existing schools, and so schools which did not 'exist' in the eyes of the Board were at a very grave disadvantage. Whatever the reality in terms of pupils or examination results, those schools which had been supported by public money could be subjected to much more stringent controls than those which, however dubious in quality, were assumed to be secondary schools by virtue of some ancient endowment or independent governing body.

1900 - The Code and the Higher Elementary School Minute

The year 1900 was something of a turning point, when uncertainty caused by lack of information was replaced by unease about unwelcome information. First came the 1900 Code, which the Bristol Board thought sufficiently significant to justify convening an extraordinary meeting¹. While approving the Code's main new feature, the 'block grant' principle, the Board objected to three changes in the rules. The complete withdrawal of 'specific' grants for certain subjects would have a harmful effect on higher grade schools, and there were calls for a bigger block grant for older pupils, as in Scotland, rather than specific grants which encouraged a multiplicity of subjects. Secondly, the reduction in grant for training pupil teachers was "undesirable, especially in the face of the improved training now given to pupil teachers under the 'Centre' system", and thirdly, the limiting of the minimum age at which scholars could earn certain grants "will operate to prevent scholars remaining at school".

During the course of a long debate, the chairman quoted Sir John Gorst's opinion that the reduction in income of the higher grade schools "would not be considerable" and that in any case "expedients will without doubt be devised by which the efficiency of these schools will be protected". He also referred to Joseph Chamberlain's promise to the Birmingham School Board that "something would be done for the higher grade schools"², and though he did not know what that might be, he did feel that there was an "opinion all over the country that something would be done, and that they need not fear the code". His biggest worry was "in Bristol, if their older scholars left them to-morrow, where they could go to continue the education they had started in the board's schools". With just one dissenter, the Board voted to pass its objections on to the city's M.P.'s, in the hope that the new Code might be postponed for at least a year. They continued to debate the new regulations at great length, and a

¹ Bristol School Board, Minutes 3 Apr 1900; and more fully recorded in The [Bristol] Observer 7 Apr 1900.
² Chamberlain was by that time in a highly equivocal position over education. For many years one of the most radical educational voices in the Liberal Party and for the nonconformists, and always extremely proud of the achievements of the Birmingham School Board, he now found himself allied to a party which held diametrically opposite views on the subject. His 'conversion' to the 1902 Act by Morant was yet to come.
letter from "a large number of Board Teachers", followed by a
deputation from the Bristol Teachers' Association, begged that
the regulations be suspended. The teachers saw as a solution
the creation of "a properly constituted Local Authority for
the control of Science and Art and Technical Instruction in
the City of Bristol", to consist of a quarter drawn from the
Technical Instruction Committee, a quarter from the School
Board, a quarter representing the voluntary sector, and a
quarter of co-opted members*.

By then, the second important new development was known to the
School Board, in the shape of the Higher Elementary School
Minute issued on 6 April 1900. This introduced to English
education an entirely new type of school, and one which had
few recognisable antecedents within the existing system. It
was to offer a four-year course of instruction, with
timetables subject to the Board of Education's approval and a
"sufficiency of science instruction, both practical and
theoretical", and with an absolute upper age limit of 15.
Entrants were to have had their previous schooling in public
elementary schools, and must start at the beginning of the
course. The new schools were to be strictly separate from
ordinary elementary schools, but nevertheless firmly under the
umbrella of the Elementary Codes. The Bristol School Board
approved much of the Minute but opposed the restrictions on
entrants and, above all, the fixing of 15 as the upper age
limit. It thereby correctly identified the single clause that
made all else in the Minute inappropriate for the aspiring
higher grade schools, and left the school boards wondering if
this was indeed the Board of Education's resolution of the
years of uncertainty.

To be on the safe side, the Bristol Board submitted a
provisional application for its three schools to be
recognised, for while it did not much like the Higher
Elementary School proposal, it had no idea what the
alternative was. At least recognition would have given the
schools a firm legal existence for the first time. Each of
the three higher grade school heads drew up a detailed four-
year timetable, showing the hours per week allotted to each
subject. There were 5-7 hours English (including history), 2-
5 hours French, up to 3 hours geography, 3-6 hours
mathematics, 3 hours science, 1 hour each of art, singing and
drill, 2-4 hours practical subject, and up to 3 hours business
training, shorthand and bookkeeping*

But it very quickly became apparent that the Higher Elementary
School Minute was not the eagerly awaited solution. As early
as June 1900, the Bristol School Board Clerk told the Board of
Education that "the difficulties in applying the Minute as it
now stands are so great that my Board may even yet be
reluctantly compelled to abandon the scheme unless the Board
of Education can see their way to make modifications in the
Minute". Rather than applying a flexible interpretation to
the Minute, the Board seemed inclined to add fresh criteria to
deter hopeful applicants, including, for example, a maximum
size of 300 pupils, much smaller than most higher grade

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* Bristol School Board, Minutes 30 Apr, 28 May 1900.
* PRO Ed.21/6128, 21/6142, 21/6162.
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schools. The Bristol Board was aggrieved that it was held against Merrywood and Fairfield that they did not have the superior science facilities associated with an organised school of science, since they had so much wanted that status, and in any case, Fairfield was very well equipped. After explaining to the Board of Education that "much earnest thought has been given to the practical application of the Minute . . . but unfortunately the difficulties multiply the more the matter is considered", the applications for all three Bristol schools were withdrawn at the end of July.

This experience was being repeated all over the country, and through the summer and autumn a flow of correspondence emanated from the Association of School Boards. It alerted board members to the increasingly antagonistic attitude shown by the Board of Education to school boards and their higher elementary work, and to the likely damage that would be done to the day and evening Science and Art classes of school boards by a forthcoming court case\(^2\). This was, incidentally, two months before Cockerton delivered his ruling and some months before the case was brought to court. Obviously, much more was in the pipeline.

In this state of suspended animation, the Bristol School Board issued a clear statement of the direction in which it hoped to see education progress by speedily taking advantage of the 1900 Act which gave permissive powers to extend the period of compulsory schooling. It pushed the school leaving age up to 14 and the Standard of total exemption from VI to VII and of partial exemption from IV to V. This meant that many more children would complete all the Standards and would remain at school until at least their fourteenth birthday; the number wanting ex-Standard education was bound to increase. The Bedminster Ratepayers' Association protested (any extension of education cost money), but both the Bristol and District Teachers' Association and the Trades Council were enthusiastic. The latter waxed lyrical about liberal education being the "most precious birthright of our children" and about the depressing effects of child labour and the waste of education if children were withdrawn from it just when they were most receptive\(^2\).

1901 - Cockerton and Borst's Bill

During 1901 the pace of change quickened and the levels of anxiety and anger rose. Numerous deputations were planned and letters were flying round the country, amongst the school boards and between the boards and the central authorities. The news of the Cockerton judgment was relayed officially in a circular letter from the Board of Education on 1 March 1901, drawing attention to the "illegal application of the School Fund to Science and Art Schools or Classes", and reminding the school boards that schools of science could be converted into

\(^1\) Ibid; and Bristol School Board Minutes 30 Apr, 28 May, 25 Jun, 24 Sept, 26 Nov 1900.

\(^2\) Bristol School Board, Minutes 24 Sept 1900, 1 Mar 1901.
higher elementary schools. While emergency legislation maintained the status quo for the time being, during which grants continued to be paid, both the higher grade schools and the school boards were gravely threatened.

The Bristol School Board was, of course, very worried. In order to know exactly the scale of the effect of Cockerton and the other changes, it repeatedly elicited statistical returns from its three higher grade schools—how many pupils paid fees, how many were over 15, how many had come from private schools, how many were in each class and how old they were. And it checked with the Board of Education whether the Local Government Board, which had approved all the "illegal" expenditure, were "parties to the terms of the Board of Education's Circular letter", and particularly whether they had "instructed their Auditors not to surcharge" the school boards during the status quo. It also produced a strongly worded statement about this "national calamity", pointing out that the work of the boards in higher grade schools and evening continuation schools would be "seriously interfered with, if not absolutely prevented". The statement went on to argue that "Higher Grades are a natural development of the Elementary School system; that their establishment by School Boards was encouraged and fostered by the Government Departments". Loans and buildings had been sanctioned and various Presidents and Vice-Presidents of the Department had "expressed their interest in and approval of these schools". The Higher Elementary School Minute, which had been "avowedly for placing these Higher Grade Schools on a legal and legitimate footing", was inappropriate because of the age limit, and in any case, the recognition of schools was being "rigorously restricted" and they were being "refused the necessary liberty to adapt the curriculum to local requirements". The Bristol School Board was using stronger language than ever before in the fight for its own survival and that of its higher grade schools; nevertheless, this statement was accurate in every detail.

Of the three Bristol M.P.s who acknowledged receipt of the School Board's statement, Mr Charles Hobhouse took it particularly seriously, suggesting a deputation to the Duke of Devonshire and Sir John Gorst, and offering his help. He felt that "the case of the Higher Grade School at St George [in his constituency] is so important that some special effort might be made by the Board to preserve its continued existence and activity". A joint deputation of the School Board, the Trades Council and the Headmasters' Association was planned, and Bristol also agreed to join the deputation planned by the London School Board "on the question of promoting legislation for securing the right of School Boards to continue the instruction now given in Day and Evening Schools". This was brusquely informed that "the Lord President ... does not see his way clear to receive a deputation". The Bristol Board

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2. Bristol had four M.P.s at that time: West—Sir Michael Hicks-Beach (Conservative, Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lord Salisbury's Government); South—Walter Long (Unionist); East—Charles Hobhouse (Liberal); North—Sir Frederick Wills (Unionist).
also expressed its "grave concern" over the change in the 1901 Code, which limited grants for practical subjects to pupils over 12, and again called for more flexible administration of the Higher Elementary School Minute.

Next came news of Gorst's Education Bill, which though unsuccessful, made explicit the Government's intention to downgrade the school boards as far as it dared. It extended the status quo for a year, until 31 July 1902, but now the Technical Instruction authorities were firmly in control and no new school board developments would be financed. Mr Crank of Merrywood conveyed the resolution of the Bristol Teachers' Association that "in view of the chaos which generally prevails in our educational system, we were prepared to welcome any measure that would make for order, harmony and progress, but the vague constitution of the proposed Local Education Committee, and the purely permissive character of its powers and the financial limits imposed upon it" prevented them giving the Bill their support. In June, a protest meeting at Broadmead School attracted a mostly working class audience, together with Liberals, Trade Unionists, Free Churchmen and School Board members, and agreed that it was essential for the education of the working class that higher grade schools remained under the authority of the school boards. Another in July strongly opposed specially elected school boards being told what to do by mere sub-committees of local councils.

The School Board drafted another petition, urging that "the contemplated piecemeal legislation" be withdrawn and a "really comprehensive measure" prepared, and deploring the setting up of a second authority as leading to "waste of money, unnecessary friction, and overlapping of work". It favoured instead a single authority for all education based on the school board with co-opted members from the Council and local educational bodies; after all, the school boards "have not only the accumulated experience of 30 years working of the Education Acts, but also have the complete machinery" to continue the job. Messrs Cook and Froud opposed the motion on the grounds that the quality of school boards had deteriorated and, ironically in view of subsequent events, that the changes would get rid of the current excessive Board of Education control. Chairman Jarman dissented: "Why not bring the laws up to the need instead of bringing the schools down to the law? A Board which had successfully cared for 60,000 elementary children could be expected to look after 2,000 pupils attending Secondary schools". He was so incensed by a particularly waspish criticism from Sir John Gorst that he (a Baptist minister) declared, "there is only one word in the English language that is a fitting reply to a charge like that. It is a word of three letters; a word I will not use".

Bristol was not the only area to feel so strongly, and a heated and wide-ranging debate in the House of Commons showed an awareness of the full implications of the legislation.

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1. Bristol School Board, Minutes 29 Apr, 20 May 1901; Minutes 8 May 1901.
The publication of the 1902 Education Bill brought forward more desperate protests. The Bristol Board could see some things to approve, but felt strongly that the school boards had "immense and valuable experience" and, being directly elected and for education only, were "more in touch with the needs of their respective districts and feel more of the responsibility of meeting them". The solution was to improve the school board system, by abolishing the cumulative vote and rationalising the school board areas. The various teachers' organisations responded fairly favourably to the Bill, though J.E. Pickles, head of Fairfield, thought that "it substituted anarchy for chaos and labelled the mess unity!" Between March and December 1902, over 80 protest meetings were held in Bristol, national figures like Acland, Asquith and Macnamara came to speak, and Bristolians travelled to neighbouring towns and villages to address meetings.

Some of this protest was directed against the religious settlement - the Bishop was mobbed in Two Mile Hill near St George - but the denominational issue was much less controversial in Bristol than in some other areas. However, the implications for democratic control of education were spotted by a variety of bodies. There were protests from the boot and shoe workers, and from the Bristol branch of the National Education League, and a big conference of representatives from trade unions all over the South-West called for secondary education for workers' children up to the age of 18. Among over 100 letters to the local press, one from the Bristol South Women's Liberal Association said that "the Government really did not wish the people to be educated. It was beginning to realise that a power was rising up through the education of the people which, if they did not mind, they would find too much for them". The Education Bill featured in sermons, editorials, articles, pamphlets and posters, and was a major issue in the municipal elections of November 1902. The Liberals gained ground on the Tory majority, and "a sitting Liberal who declined to oppose the Bill was defeated by another Liberal".

During these three years of turmoil, the School Board had to keep its schools running, staffed and equipped, with absolutely no assurance of what lay ahead. It had complained to the Board of Education in March 1901 that "the uncertainty as to the future control of higher education makes it very difficult for the Board to decide upon the best course to pursue"2, and it hesitated to authorise any fresh expenditure. Mr Pickles at St George, who badly needed an extra teacher, was asked "to try and manage" with a former pupil then employed as a laboratory assistant because he was "not a great success as a teacher"3. The Board spent its last year quietly

1 Bristol School Board, Minutes 28 Apr 1902; Clare, op.cit. pp 174-8; The Times 3 Nov 1902. After the Act came into force, only 250 out of 72,000 Bristol ratepayers undertook passive resistance.
2 PRO Ed.21/6142.
3 St George School, Log Book 12 Sept 1901.
winding up its affairs, and its last meeting, on 30 March 1903, checking the final accounts and paying warm tributes to its most loyal servants. An evening reception at the Pupil Teacher Centre was attended by many former members, who listened to speeches of thanks and farewell.

The School Board’s Achievement

Before moving on to see what happened when the higher grade schools really came under pressure in 1903, let us pause to review the Bristol School Board’s entry into the field. It had inherited one and created two higher grade schools, and all the signs were that they would flourish conspicuously. No other district cried out for special educational facilities quite as urgently as St George, Bedminster and north Bristol had done, but it is clear that the Bristol Board was thinking in terms of cautiously but positively extending the new opportunities to children in other parts of the city.

Its firm commitment to continuing the development of higher grade education was made clear at a major policy meeting in mid-1898, prompted by a proposal from the Merchant Venturers that in return for closing its junior department, the School Board should give up teaching ex-Standard scholars and therefore end its higher grade school provision. The Board felt that, given the location and the fees of the Merchant Venturers’ College, it simply could not do the same job, and with 743 Standard VII and ex-Standard scholars on board school books (377 boys, 366 girls), the Board must provide for them in its own schools. The continued personal influence of the teacher was an added benefit from such an arrangement. Some board schools in more favoured locations already had significant numbers of ex-Standard children and were encouraged to extend the scope of their teaching. Anglesea Place School on the edge of Clifton added French, business training and bookkeeping to the curriculum, and at Castle School, which had extra facilities like a swimming pool and had earlier accommodated the pupil teacher classes, a new headmaster was brought in with a brief to amplify the work of the upper classes and encourage the attendance of ex-Standard children. In 1898, a second inspector was appointed to the Board, so that one could take special responsibility for all higher grade and Science and Art instruction. It is clear from the Board’s growing investment in the necessary personnel and resources that it saw higher grade education as an important and developing commitment for the future.

In Bristol’s decision to make that commitment, there are three points of significance. The first is that the Bristol School Board members were not natural lawbreakers. There is no
question of them setting up schools in deliberate defiance of
the central authority, or of doing so surreptitiously, or to
gain prestige or bigger grants. They were far from playing
any sort of pioneering role, and they made sure that their
higher grade work was as legal as it could be. They were in
constant communication with all the right authorities, their
applications for loans were approved, the various Inspectors
reported favourably, and Kekewich personally showed his
interest in their major enterprise, Fairfield Road. The work
was always to be financed mainly by Science and Art Department
grants, and Bristol could prove that in the case of a well-
established and successful higher grade school like St George,
far from being an illegal charge on the rates, the non-
armament part of the school actually earned a little more
than it cost. Until quite late on, the fact that responses
from London were often belated, unhelpful or contradictory was
seen as evidence of inefficiency at the top rather than any
secretive attempt to hamper the progress of higher grade
education. There was therefore all the more reason for the
School Board to be dynamic and positive.

The second main point is that Bristol’s higher grade schools
were quite definitely a response to a need. Despite the
efforts of an unusually united and enlightened group of
educationalists, and the city’s network of old endowed schools
and newer proprietary ones (none of which seemed to be
suffering unduly from the higher grade school competition,
despite the dire warnings of their heads and governors), the
supply of secondary schools did not meet the demand for post-
armament schooling. Because it was responding to an
expressed need, the School Board could be more flexible than
would have been possible under central direction – as proved
to be the case after 1903. Each of its schools came about in
different circumstances and assumed a different form, and
where the Board was not quite sure about the strength of local
interest, as at Merrywood, the school was built up
progressively as the demand emerged. That a demand was
emerging was proved by the fact that these large schools were
full, in spite of the fees, the parental undertaking, homework
requirements and so on. Economic considerations and cultural
expectations meant that it was difficult for the schools to
keep their pupils as long as they would have liked, but there
is no reason to believe that the school boards would not, in
time, have solved that problem at least as effectively as the
Board of Education was to do in the twentieth century. They
may even, with their neighbourhood, all-age schools offering
courses which demonstrably met local requirements, have
succeeded in keeping a wider social range of children and
families interested in pursuing education to higher levels.

The third point – and it is a question of retrospective
judgment – is that the Bristol School Board seems to have gone
about its new task extremely well. School boards were
increasingly in communication with each other, seeking advice
and exchanging ideas, and the Bristol Board forestalled a
number of possible problems by consulting or visiting others
which had preceded it in higher grade school development.
Throughout, it moved with commendable speed. Small sub-
committees enabled quick decisions to be made, problems were
rarely deferred, and requests were normally met immediately,
so that equipment and staff were in the schools within a few
weeks of the need for them having been identified. The Board very much took its lead from its higher grade school headmasters, who assumed a role as the elite of the elementary teaching profession, active in various teachers' organisations and unions, and knowledgeable about education in general. By coming late into the field, Bristol was able to take advantage of that novelty in the educational world, the graduate elementary schoolteacher, of whom A.P. Laurie and others spoke so very highly.

There were, of course, some criticisms of the School Board's higher grade school policy, mainly on the grounds of cost - though that could always obscure other, less electorally appealing, reasons. One Conservative Bristol newspaper in 1901 said that "for some considerable time, the policy of the late Board has been severely criticised", especially for the "extravagance of their management". But the general feel of newspaper opinion was of appreciation for the service rendered to the city by the School Board, coupled with concern over the general muddle and restrictions in which it had to operate. As far as one can judge, Bristol's higher grade schools were efficiently and enthusiastically run, well staffed, and full of children studying a wide range of subjects to a variety of levels. In 1903 the oldest of them was just nine years old, but they had already established a clear identity in the city, filling a gap which no-one else could or would occupy, and from there, "reaching out into territory hitherto monopolised by the middle and upper classes".

1 The Bristol Guardian 18 Jan 1901.
2 Clare, op.cit. p 7.
CHAPTER 4

BRISTOL - EDUCATION COMMITTEE AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS, 1903-1910

The Education Committee
St George School
Fairfield Road School
Merrywood School
Some Bristol Comparisons
The Education Committee's Achievement
On 1 April 1903, the new Bristol Education Committee assembled for the first time. After a couple of attempts, it had been agreed by the Board of Education that it should consist of 21 city councillors and 10 co-opted members, the latter, according to one critic, to be "appointed by the Council without reference to the nomination or recommendation of any outside body"1. It was therefore twice the size of the School Board, and it soon set up a structure not unlike that of its predecessor, with committees and sub-committees to handle particular areas of responsibility; they could co-opt further members if they wished. Of the 31 members of the Committee, only 4 had served on the last School Board and 5 more on previous boards. 5 of those 9 were elected to the Council anyway, so the Council saw fit to draw on the school board system for just 4 of its 10 co-opted members, 2 of whom were the women whom it had, by law, to find from somewhere. Only the retiring chairman, the Rev Jarman, and the Labour representative, Cunnington, were carried through from the school board era, much to the disappointment of the Rev Trebilco, the veteran founder of the St George Higher Grade School. The Board of Education insisted on the inclusion of spokesmen from the Merchant Venturers' Technical College, and later the University College, and the other co-opted members selected by the Council were an Anglican clergyman, a voluntary school headmaster and a Roman Catholic banker (all Conservatives), and a council school headmaster and the Rev Henderson, Principal of the Baptist College (both Liberals)2.

Initially the Education Committee, like the City Council, had a Conservative majority, and it chose as its chairman Dr (later Sir) Ernest Cook. A product of the old Trade School which became the Merchant Venturers' College, he was a scientist of some note, an analytical chemist and the founder of the Clifton Laboratory, a private scientific research and teaching establishment3. During his seven years' experience on the school board, he had generally shown a cautious attitude towards the extension of educational opportunity,

often voting against measures which would incur greater expenditure; a commentator on the latter end of his long chairmanship (he retired in 1931 at the age of 76), observed that the Conservative Education Committee adopted solutions which "reflected Cook's own Victorian views of thrift and the party's traditional caution with money". Alderman Jose, another Conservative and former chairman of the Technical Instruction Committee, headed both the Higher Education Committee and its Pupil Teacher and Higher Grade School sub-committee, with the assistance of, amongst others, Dr Cook, Professor Wertheimer from the Merchant Venturers' College, Professor Henderson, Miss Wait and Miss Townsend. Avery Adams, the long-serving Clerk to the School Board, was appointed Secretary to the Education Committee, after a move by the Conservatives to bring in the former Secretary to the Technical Instruction Committee was defeated.

Overall, the political complexion of the new education authority was significantly different from the old one, whose increasingly radical composition was noted in the previous chapter. Furthermore, it has been shown that big discrepancies between the city council wards built into the new system a "serious constitutional weakness", which meant that the Education Committee, like its master the City Council, was "by no means as democratic as it should have been". It did, however, share with the School Board great uncertainty as to the intentions of the Board of Education, with the additional disadvantage of having even less confidence about the extent of its powers as it moved officially into the field of secondary and higher education.

Early priorities on the agenda included apportionment of the annual grants previously allocated by the Technical Instruction Committee to endowed schools and the University College, and attention to the new Pupil Teacher Regulations, which made all recognised secondary schools eligible places of instruction for Pupil Teacher scholarship holders. This change not only seriously undermined the status of Bristol's Pupil Teacher Centre, which was continued for the time being, but permitted Pupil Teachers to attend schools about which neither the Bristol Education Committee nor the Board of Education knew much at all. It was the first sign of one of the recurring themes of the early years of the new arrangements - that endowed and proprietary schools, whose virtual immunity from inspection and public control had become a major cause for concern during the 1890s, were very readily accepted as efficient by the Board of Education. In marked contrast, higher grade schools were repeatedly scrutinised and questioned, and subjected to amendments, delays and last-minute decisions.

The more prestigious secondary schools achieved Board of Education recognition without difficulty, and by the autumn of 1903 Bristol Grammar School, Colston's School and the Merchant Venturers' Technical College School were all on the list. The first qualified as a Division B (more literary) school; the

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2 Clare, op.cit. p 228. 2 Liberal wards of 8,500 people elected 6 councillors; 5 Tory wards of 8,500 elected 21.
other two as Division A (more scientific and more generously funded). Others were approved during the ensuing months, some of them after a little more hesitation, and in all these cases correspondence was carried on primarily between the respective governors and headteacher and the Board of Education. The Education Committee was assigned a role in the background, finding itself in the somewhat embarrassing position of having to request basic statistical information about fees, numbers of pupils and teachers' qualifications from schools over which it was supposed to hold some authority.

The results of this fact-finding exercise occasioned the establishment of a major Co-ordination Sub-Committee, whose guiding principle was firmly stated to be "that existing facilities should not be lessened, nor the cost to the students increased". Welding together the assortment of educational institutions proved to be a formidable task. It was not helped by the mass of regulations, memoranda and reports which emanated from the Board of Education, turning the essentially permissive legislation of the years 1899-1902 into something very different. However, to the members of the new Bristol Education Committee meeting in 1903, all this lay in the future. They must have felt that at last, after four or five years of extreme uncertainty and frustration, the central authority had expressed its confidence in their capacity to organise the education best suited to their city. Among their more significant responsibilities were the three higher grade schools, whose past battles for official acceptance were to prove to have been mere rehearsals for what lay ahead.

St George School

Recognition Sought, 1903-5

The oldest and most successful of the three higher grade schools, St George, had the strongest claim to be upgraded to secondary status. There can have been little question of it becoming an ordinary elementary school, which it had never been, and the local education authorities (both School Board and Education Committee) had no interest in turning it into a higher elementary school. During 1901 and 1902 Inspection

1 Bristol Education Committee - Higher Education Sub-Committee, Minutes 14 Apr 1904.
2 Unless otherwise stated, the following sections about St George School are from: PRO Ed.35/860; Bristol Education Committee, Minutes; Bristol Education Committee - Higher Education Sub-Committee, Minutes; St George School, Log Book; W.T. Sanigar, St George Higher Grade School 1894-1947 (2 boxes of documents and cuttings); A.J. Pugsley, The Door of Opportunity (1944); The Georgian (school magazine from 1905), especially St George Higher Grade and Technical School (Jubilee number, 1944).
Reports were good, grant earnings continued to rise, and the school recorded its tenth success in London University Matriculation, and its fifth Inter B.Sc. There were 207 children in the school of science (in accommodation for 230) and 361 in the higher grade part of the school (accommodation 300), and it was anticipated that this would realise a secondary school of 250 pupils of 12 years of age and upwards. In 1903, plans were drawn up for a new art room, physics laboratory, domestic science centre, dining room and gymnasium. Mr Pickles, whose salary was raised to £400 per annum, lobbied hard for more generous scholarship provision to support his regular appeals to parents to keep their children at school longer, and tried to persuade the Education Committee of the merits of maintenance grants.1

Mr Pickles also aired the possibility of building a new school for the youngest children and turning St George wholly into a secondary school, and found that the HMIs "warmly recommended" the idea and Professor Wertheimer was "greatly in favour". In a wry aside, Mr Pickles noted that the latter, who on various occasions mounted powerful opposition to the higher grade schools because of the threat he believed they represented to his Merchant Venturers' College, reckoned he had "always been a friend to the school, so he said". From the start, Mr Pickles stressed that the Standard school "must be in organic connection" with the secondary school, and was horrified to find that when the Higher Education sub-committee took up the idea, they were proposing to drop the lower department altogether. He regarded this as a "risky experiment" which was potentially "disastrous", and even said that unless either St George had a preparatory school "in close touch" and with "the special business" of feeding the secondary school, or some very special arrangements were made with other elementary schools, he would prefer "to defer the conversion". This says a lot about his commitment to the school as he knew it, and he expressed great sadness when, after numerous discussions, the lower department and its staff was disbanded in 1907.

Following the Secondary School Regulations of 1904, Bristol Education Committee submitted a revised application for the recognition of St George, setting out the details which so qualified it. It had formed a separate 4th year class, and appointed new staff, all of them either graduates or well-qualified in their field. This brought a complaint from the existing staff, supported by the headmaster, that "in making certain recent appointments their claims for consideration appear to have been overlooked", though there is no evidence that any St George teacher was displaced, as happened in some schools under pressure from the HMIs. In addition, Mr Pickles took a leading role in devising an entrance examination for the municipal schools which would be a "better test of mental capacity", and in discussions about the possibility of introducing a leaving certificate for secondary school leavers. St George then numbered 566 children, slightly over

1 He was envious of the "splendid system" of valuable scholarships he had learned about from the visiting chairman of Cardiff School Board. He did manage to get St George approved for city junior scholarships, which were extended to 4 years, and for senior scholarships.
the approved accommodation, of whom 260 were in the secondary school course, the 1st year comprising 120 boys and girls with an average age of 14.1 years and the 4th year just 19 pupils – 4 boys (average age 15.5) and 15 girls (16.7). The school worked for 44 weeks a year and still charged a 5d a week fee.

The Board of Education objected to this last piece of information, arguing that such a low fee was "open to serious objection on general educational grounds" and that £3 per annum was the minimum acceptable. It was willing for pupils of "intellectual promise" to be exempted after an examination, but stated that these should "in no circumstances exceed 25% of the total in the school". Bristol Education Committee replied in strong terms. Without St George School, they said, the education of many public elementary school children over the last nine years "must have ceased at a much earlier age", and a substantial rise in the fee would undoubtedly keep out "a large proportion of eligible scholars whose parents are unable to pay the higher fee". This would be an "educational calamity" since St George was the "only school in Bristol giving a course of Secondary Education at a fee within the reach of the industrial classes whom it was intended to serve". The Committee affirmed its commitment to encourage "children to prolong their school life, and to increase the number of those pupils passing from Elementary to Secondary Schools", a standpoint which it felt "should have the unqualified support of your Board".

The Board refused to concede, stating that higher fees were necessary to ensure "the attainment of the aims proper to a Secondary School", which included appropriate staffing, the intellectual fitness of the pupils and their length of time at school, not wasting funds on the wrong pupils and not providing undue competition with other schools. This last "proper aim" says a great deal about the Board's attitude to the higher grade schools, and the conflicting beliefs about secondary education could hardly have been more clearly stated by both sides. However, since the school's first full inspection was scheduled for February 1905, a final decision would be taken then.

First Inspection and Recognition as a Secondary School, 1905

Four HMIs spent three days at St George School, and their consequent report, like others of its kind, contained much factual information about the school, as well as expressing a number of the ideals about secondary schooling held by the Board of Education and its Inspectorate. On the factual side, the pupils consisted of 245 boys and girls, nearly all from Bristol, 200 of whom were aged 13, 14 or 15, most of the rest being older than that. In the categorisation labelled 'Class in Life', the largest single group came from artisan homes (94), followed by clerks (68) and retail traders (37), with merchants and bankers (26), professional and independent (16), farmers (5), deceased (5) and elementary teachers (2) completing the total. This represented a heavier weighting towards the lower end of the list (only deceased ranked below 'artisans, etc.') than even most higher grade schools.
The building was found to be more or less adequate, if rather dirty and neglected, though the absence of an assembly hall, library, reading room, swimming bath and gymnasium was commented upon, as was the fact that "there are no racquet or fives courts". Their mention of those two sports vividly illustrates the social gulf between the HMIs and the St George area. Of most concern, however, was the fact that the elementary school library, the playground and the lavatories were shared by all pupils. There had been "no attempt to separate the Secondary from the Elementary School classrooms, it being necessary in some cases to pass through the classrooms of the one School to reach those of the other". The HMIs looked forward to the time when the buildings would be used exclusively by a secondary school of 300-350 children. This determination not only to create separate secondary schools but to prevent all contact between their pupils and elementary children was to be reiterated obsessively over the next few years, and was one of the 'new' features which most education committees had to learn from scratch. Close links between elementary and higher grade schools and the 'end-on' nature of the resulting education were intrinsic to the old system, and the local authorities found it hard to grasp why it was so damaging for older pupils to mix with younger ones, who were very likely to be relatives, neighbours or friends.

Turning to the staff, the HMIs found that although the headmaster’s qualifications and experience were considerable, "it must be noted that he has not been connected with any Secondary School, and can hardly be expected to give his School the impress of Secondary School traditions and ideals". They had mixed feelings about Mr Pickles' attachment to art and the training of the aesthetic faculty, which he "justly regards as one of the great ends of education" but was "liable to obscure his exact sense of proportion". More seriously, they felt that "as one who has been trained in the official atmosphere of Elementary Schools ... he appeared to look upon the School as an aggregation of classes rather than of individuals". The same preoccupation coloured their assessment of the rest of the staff, who were well qualified and enthusiastic, but too scientifically biased and experienced "almost exclusively in Higher Grade Schools". The suggested solutions were to raise the headmaster’s salary so that the school could "secure the services of a first-rate Secondary School Head Master", and to recruit to the staff in future "a more literary element and as far as possible Public School experience". It was unusual for HMIs to be quite so explicit about their intention to replicate the public schools in the municipal secondary schools; they generally used more subtle phrases like 'wider teaching experience' to mean the same thing. But the comment is in line with what Tropp has described as "a general tendency for inspectors to urge the introduction of teachers with direct knowledge of grammar or public schools (preferably Oxford or Cambridge graduates). They were most insistent on this in the higher grade and municipal secondary schools."¹

¹ Mr Pickles repeatedly noted in the Log Book problems with the caretaker, including several appearances of his drunken wife. He managed to replace them in 1905.

As often was to appear in HMI Reports on former higher grade schools, this general desire to transform the teaching staff contrasted sharply with the acknowledgement of a high standard of actual teaching. At St George, this was "of a very high order of merit ... the teachers are familiar with modern methods, are much in earnest and on the whole successful in interesting their classes to a unanimous degree". The HMIs criticised the excessive amount of science teaching and urged that more time should be given to English and French, and also to Latin, since in a school of 250 there must be many wanting to learn Latin or Greek, and "it is to be regretted that no boy or girl has a chance of learning Latin". Again, the disparity between the priorities of the Inspectors and the realities of life in St George, even for its most capable children, is striking. In the absence of Latin, English, in which "some very good work is being done", would have to be the basis of the grammatical and literary training of the pupils, and must therefore "be severe, classical, and, if such a word may be used, scientific". Among lessons visited, history was "admirably taught", geography was "excellent in every detail", French "decidedly good", chemistry of a "truly advanced character", physics "likewise excellent", mathematics "little fault to find" and moral and religious instruction "in all respects satisfactory".

The HMIs' recommendations included more care with writing, which helps to "mould the character of a child", and more attention to mending, darning and patching in needlework, which was both useful and "has a moral and educational side also". A more suitable science course should be devised for the girls, rather than the one which "is largely a duplicate of the boys' course"; the Inspectors had been surprised to see 4th year girls working on advanced electrical measurements and felt that unless they were planning to become telephonists, their time would be "better spent on domestic Science or Hygiene". This compilation of curricular recommendations reveals some very muddled thinking on the part of the Inspectors, centreing especially on their obvious uncertainty about what kind of child went to a municipal secondary school and why. Drawing on what they knew to be important in a public or high school education and on what they believed to be the needs of the lower middle and working classes, they produced a peculiar amalgam of the classics plus darning, and fives plus hygiene.

In conclusion, the Inspectors returned to their opening theme. While acknowledging that the discipline of the school and the conduct of the scholars were faultless, and that the teachers were "a loyal and dutiful body ... who do their utmost to make the school the best of its kind", they were nevertheless unhappy. There was "a great amount of public spirit in the School" and yet "the general tone can hardly be regarded as that of a Secondary School", nor was it "easy to see where the traditions and ideals of a Secondary School could come from". As if anticipating the likely bemused response to this, they attempted to explain themselves by saying that "the Secondary School spirit is more easily recognized than defined; if it is a spirit that is produced on the one hand by the teacher's readiness to give full weight to the importance of the individual pupil, and on the other the pupil's generous recognition of his duty to sacrifice himself for his School,
it is safe to say that there is not enough of that spirit at
the St George's Secondary School". If Mr Pickles and his
colleagues were able to make much of that definition, they
might conceivably have felt that the secondary school spirit
was something St George could do without.

The Report's main recommendations in the quest for that
elusive goal were the replacement of the headmaster and staff,
the teaching of Latin, and the "very urgent" ending of the
"unfortunate circumstances" which put the elementary and
secondary schools into "such close contact". Standards V and
VI should constitute a preparatory department and Standard VII
upwards the secondary school, and no more pupils should be
admitted to the elementary department unless they planned to
go on to the secondary school. As was indicated in Chapter 2,
this last recommendation made unrealistic assumptions about
most lower middle and working class parents, who were simply
not in a position to make long-term commitments of that nature
even if they knew in advance what education they would ideally
choose for their children. The Inspectors wanted the school
day shortened, since 41.5 hours per week was too much, and the
introduction of that "excellent thing", a compulsory school
cap for boys and badge for girls. In addition, some sort of
morning assembly should be introduced for the whole school,
and "everything possible should be done to foster the
corporate spirit of the School". As a result of the
conference held during the Inspection, Mr Pickles came away
with a list of requirements covering the above points,
together with Point No.8 - "Re-organisation of the school on
public school lines".

Rather surprisingly, the question of raising the fees was not
mentioned and soon after, in response to a House of Commons
question from Dr MacNamara, the Board of Education confirmed
its continued sanction of the 5d per week fee. Perhaps the
visiting HMIs had been influenced by seeing for themselves the
poverty of the neighbourhood. St George was thus one of a
tiny handful of schools in the country to resist the minimum
£3 per annum charge and to continue to express its fee in
pence per week1. In June 1905, the really important decision
arrived - recognition as a secondary school for the year 1904-5,
at the higher rate of grant payable to former Division A
schools. For the first time in its life, and after five years
in the wilderness, the school had an official status.

It still had to carry out the changes listed by the HMIs, and
all local education authorities were obliged to take their
recommendations very seriously. By the time of local HMI
Theodosius' next report a year later, he was able to note
"some progress", including improvements in cleaning the
building and in the lunch arrangements and cloakroom, shorter
school hours, the introduction of a school cap and badge, and
the launching of Latin as a voluntary subject - all advanced
students were "at liberty to join" and the attendance was
"excellent", according to Mr Pickles. But while paying

1 According to the Board of Education, Statistics 1910-11
(1912), there were just 2 schools with fees not exceeding
1 guinea per annum, and a further 10 (9 of them Council
Schools) with fees between 1 and 2 guineas.
tribute to the staff's "efforts to stimulate the life of the children both in and out of school", Theodosius still insisted that more teachers "of the highest qualifications, or wide secondary school experience" must be recruited, if necessary by increasing salaries and holidays.

This must have reinforced the unhappy response of the St George staff to the 1905 General Inspection Report, when Mr Pickles found them "much depressed at certain references made to them". He told the Higher Education Committee that he had "tried to my best to cheer them up, but I cannot remove a certain uneasy feeling". It must indeed have been disheartening for the staff to be so warmly applauded for their skill and dedication by the sternest of critics and yet to be told repeatedly that only some other kind of teacher could really do the job properly. They had nearly all gained the highest academic and professional qualifications accessible to them, and the fact that the school consistently earned grants so high that the Board of Education came to regard them as excessive, must have added weight to their belief that they were effective teachers.

There was no way, as the Board perfectly well knew, that such teachers could acquire loftier literary (i.e. Oxbridge) qualifications or public school experience, any more than could the pupils in their classes, the aspiring teachers of the future. So they were all in essence being told that although they were the cream produced by their kind of education and amongst the most successful members of their communities, they would not be welcome in their own schools in the future. The only route the careers of typical higher grade school teachers could take was down into ordinary elementary schools, of which, in fact, relatively few of them had experience. In any case, there is evidence that many of them felt a strong commitment to the kind of children they worked with, and genuinely felt that they were involved in a vital part of the educational system, for which they were uniquely well equipped. But certainly in the first decade of the century, if not for longer, teachers in municipal secondary schools felt beleaguered and threatened, as almost every early Inspector's Report produced a similar mixture of comments about the excellence - and the inadequacy - of the teaching staff.

Problems with a Difficult HMI, 1906-7

The feeling that the HMIs and the Board of Education would much rather be dealing with somebody else may also have occurred to the Higher Education Committee, as it came under increasing pressure to constitute new governing bodies for its municipal secondary schools. Quite early on Mr Pickles had written to the Board asking for a model scheme of government to help arrive at a "desirable mutual working relation" between the headmaster, the governors and the education authorities, but the Board had to reply that it had no such model and the whole matter was "somewhat in a state of flux". Then in 1906, Mr Theodosius called a meeting in Bristol to settle the administration of the municipal secondary schools,
which he wrongly said had been "severely criticised at the inspections of 1905". He particularly disliked the fact that relations between the Education Committee and its headmasters were essentially the same as in the elementary sector.

Theodosius' proposal was standard Board of Education policy, soon to be made explicit. He wanted a separate governing body for each secondary school, consisting of some Education Committee members together with prominent residents, who would receive the central grant for that school as a capitation grant direct from the Board of Education. While he congratulated himself that his remarks had been received "in a most friendly manner, and were sympathetically supported by some of the more enlightened members", the outcome was actually a fairly half-hearted compromise on the part of the Bristol Education Committee. Each school would have its own governing or management body, but its members would be drawn only from the Committee and would remain very much under its control. This evidence of the Board's new-found interest in the governing bodies of municipal secondary schools can be seen merely as an attempt to bring them into line with the practice with which it was familiar in the public schools and which presumably it believed to be best. But it is not unlikely that, having found some local education authorities both determined and opinionated about their own schools, the Board decided to try to remove all secondary schools from their clutches and place them in the hands of bodies who would be more amenable to influence. Like most other authorities, Bristol declined to give away the schools in which it had such an important interest.

HMI Theodosius may have found the Bristol Education Committee friendly and sympathetic, but behind the scenes he was doing little to promote the interests of the city's former higher grade schools, particularly St George. In a long private letter to Chief Secondary Inspector Fletcher in May 1907, his frustration with Bristol poured out. "Frankly", he opened, "there is no case whatever for St George's getting such an enormous grant except the fact that they have had it ever since they were Cockertonized", and continued, "it was publicly boasted some years ago that this school with its fee of 5d a week plus the Board's grant contributed £100 a year to the rates of Bristol. How such a state of things could have been allowed to exist, I cannot understand, but probably the Board knew nothing about it". Certainly, St George School's consistently high level of grant (£1,500 in 1906-7) was unusual - and a source of great pride to the school - but since it was the Board which paid the money, it was ludicrous to suggest that it was ignorant of the details.

To Mr Theodosius, the crux of the argument was that in view of the Board's generous funding, the Education Committee ought to be prepared to spend far more of its own money in order to finance higher salaries and attract "more expert staff". He complained that a meeting with the Committee to discuss the issue, produced "nothing definite ... only vague promises", and that the Board's letter to the same effect "was much resented by the Committee, and, I believe, a dilatory answer has been sent". One member had asked "what reason the Board had for taking such a paternal interest in these schools", and the chairman cannily remarked that "one might suppose the
schools were to be managed by the Board and not by us". "This", Mr Theodosius roundly declared, "will show you that the attitude of the Committee is not very satisfactory", and he was no less displeased that "they also cling to their policy of promoting their Elementary teachers" so that not a single teacher in the three municipal secondary schools had experience outside an 'elementary' school. Clearly, relations between the HMI and the Bristol Committee were very strained, and the disagreements between them on basic points prevented consideration of even the more reasonable parts of Mr Theodosius' proposals. The Committee could see absolutely no reason to spend more of its own money on changing a successful school in ways with which it did not agree, and it was showing signs of an increasing confidence in asserting its views.

Mr Theodosius was therefore delighted to learn that his private letter had been favourably received by Fletcher, and he planned his attack on St George School. He knew he could not reduce the grant on the grounds that the level of work had deteriorated - "on the contrary, it has considerably improved" - so he concentrated on the inadequacy of the staff, feeling that as he had "so often given this warning to the Committee ... they cannot be astonished". He thought a cut of £279 "severe enough" for that year, though he was happy to recommend a larger reduction if the Board agreed. His 1907 Report on the school spelled out his irritation: "No attempt has been made by the Committee to improve the quality of the teaching, by the appointment of specialists with high qualifications ... Until these [at this point he wrote "somewhat elementary" but this was deleted by the Board] facts, which have been repeatedly pointed out to the governors, are frankly recognised, it is not likely that the quality of the work at St George's will attain the fulfilment of its highest promise". He did feel obliged again to note the "devotion and loyalty" of the staff and the "responsive attitude" of the pupils, and concluded rather miserably that "under the circumstances the best is being done that can be done". This was slight improvement on his verdict of the previous year - "this school and the work of the teachers are as good as they can be under the present depressing conditions" - which had given scant comfort to Mr Pickles, who saw it as "about all the encouragement the teachers get in their arduous round of duty". In the face of this annual discouragement from above, it is a comment on his leadership that the St George staff managed to maintain their morale and level of performance as successfully as they did.

Fletcher obviously thought that some of the issues raised by Theodosius deserved a wider airing, and the Bristol situation became the stimulus for a major appraisal of the way in which the new secondary school system was settling down. In a sort of early century 'Black Paper', which was printed and circulated to all HMI's, Theodosius argued that Bristol was experiencing "a breakdown in the 'educational ladder' at the top". He opened with a resounding tribute to the "older grammar schools of every grade", which "never let a really brilliant boy escape notice" and then ensured that "every nerve was strained to bring his work to university scholarship

1 PRO Ed.12/139 - Grading of Secondary Schools 1907-11.
standard", even though that meant that "the work was frequently done to the neglect of the less intelligent boys". His top priority was "to secure the highest education for the best brains" and "to bring the few richly endowed to the highest development of their powers", which was much more important than risking the best brains ending up in "an environment calculated to dwarf their higher development", or sending "children of inferior capacity in huge numbers to our secondary schools".

Theodosius' underlying assumption was that "it is generally recognised that our new Municipal Secondary Schools are and must remain second grade schools". The inevitability of this was primarily due to the staff, who being "elementary teachers who have obtained a London BA or BSc in the intervals of their professional work... who have ceased to be students at the age of 19 or 20", could not "as a rule, attempt anything like university scholarship work" which came easily to proper university graduates who "have only taken up their profession at the age of about 23". What he wanted to see was the first grade secondary schools - which in this context he identified as Bristol Grammar School, Redland and Clifton High Schools for Girls - taking first pick of the talented 12-year-olds in public elementary schools. The "superior culture" of those schools' headteachers should enable them to devise a suitable examination, which, with a redistribution of scholarships, would ensure that "the best children might be caught before they entered a municipal school".

The elitist views expressed by Mr Theodosius were extreme even for the times, and not all his HMI colleagues concurred. Some disagreed on the staffing issue: for example, "I should not put any stress on the different quality of teaching staffs in municipal and first grade schools" since many of the former would soon be all graduates. Another, referring to the growing number of municipal school teachers who had pursued "a regular University course", said: "I do not see... why it should be supposed... that these Schools are unable to provide for children of exceptional capacity the opportunity of advanced education". Staff Inspector Dr Scott did not agree "that our Municipal Secondary schools are and must remain second grade Schools" or "that there is... only one educational ladder, viz: that leading to Oxford or Cambridge" or that "the right solution is to give the Head Master of the First Grade School... the pick of the scholars". He even wondered if some of those who had been to Oxford or Cambridge might have been better off elsewhere. His fellow Staff Inspector, Spencer, reckoned it was wrong to assume that "municipal" and "first grade" are, and always will be, mutually exclusive", and he indicated that he well understood why some local education authorities were "distrustful of first grade schools" or even "justifiably sceptical as to the reality of the claim of a so-called first grade school to give a better education than that given in their own schools".

These men seem to have caught something of the mood of optimism for the potential of municipal secondary schools, as well as recognising that the old grammar schools and Oxbridge did not have a monopoly of good education. Their comments contrast markedly with Theodosius' views, and it is hard to imagine that his attitude did not convey itself to the Bristol
teachers and administrators with whom he had dealings. The proportion of Bristol children receiving aided secondary education was low (4% compared with a national figure of 7.6%), and to assert that only Bristol Grammar School, with a total of about 300 places, was capable of providing real secondary education for boys, was an extraordinary notion. It is no wonder that there was some tension between the Bristol local authority and teachers and the HMI who had so much power over them, and it does seem that Bristol was unfortunate in being assigned HMI Theodosius. The strength of opposition to his views among other HMIs was sufficient to restrain the Board of Education from any dramatic action in the direction of the formal grading of secondary schools. Fletcher and Headlam, who had indicated that they felt some sympathy with Theodosius, consoled themselves with the hope that better scholarship provision would help to match the cleverest children with the 'best' schools, and the 1907 Free Place Regulations were very much in line with that viewpoint.

From Higher Grade to Secondary School, 1907

By 1907, St George School was starting to look more like the kind of secondary school Theodosius envisaged. After a year when the school was so full that three classes had to be accommodated at Redfield Wesleyan Sunday School, the Education Committee was able to report in August 1907 that all elementary pupils had transferred to the new Rose Green Elementary School. There were "now no elementary scholars at the St George Council School, the premises of which will in future be used entirely for secondary school education purposes". The accommodation was limited to 300 (having been built for 500 and considerably added to since), and for the first time all new entrants had to sit an entrance examination, if they had not already gained a scholarship of some sort. This examination, devised and conducted by the three headmasters, applied to all three municipal schools; children of 11.5 (the minimum age) were tested in English grammar and composition, arithmetic, easy geography and English history; at age 13, boys should also offer algebra and geometry, and girls algebra and drawing; and 14-year-olds French too.

The annual entrance examination was a big step towards turning the schools into the grammar schools which became familiar in the middle of the century, and institutionalised a much more rigid selection mechanism than had been found necessary before. The higher grade schools hardly ever turned away pupils. Many of them had been brought on through the schools' own elementary departments, or they could be given special attention to bring them up to standard, and the desire to study seems to have been a sufficient qualification for entry. If, as regularly happened, there were more candidates than expected, the normal solution was to create an extra class, find a room somehow and appoint an extra teacher - not to devise a test designed to discard the surplus. Bristol had been bludgeoned into taking that step by the Board of Education's constant complaints, accompanied by veiled threats to withdraw recognition, that the small proportion of pupils
completing the secondary course, especially at St George, was
evidence that the schools were not getting the 'right' pupils.
The Education Committee had protested that the Board's
statistics were inaccurate and in particular did not take
account of pupil-teachers who often came off the schools' registers just before the end of the year. It also felt strongly that a recent change in the Board’s regulations
aggravated the problem by effectively ruling that children
would be older by the time they finished a secondary course.
From 1905, 13 was to be the minimum age for special (i.e. 3rd
and 4th year) secondary courses instead of the average age,
which the Committee thought "sufficiently stringent".

Accompanying the new entrance procedure in Bristol in 1907 was
the introduction of an agreement which all parents had to
sign, promising to keep their children at school until they
had completed the four-year course. This apparently desirable
object exemplified the great difference between the
comfortable middle class attitude to education and the
uncertainties which dominated the lives of the majority of the
population. Presumably, parents of all sorts who were able and
willing to keep their children at secondary school for
four years did so anyway, and making them sign an agreement
did nothing to enhance either their ability or their
willingness. The sometimes expressed suggestion that it made
parents take education more seriously may have had some
significance in homes where money was not a problem, but is
not very convincing in view of the financial sacrifice which
most parents had to make to prolong their children's
schooling, even if scholarships were won. And it was rather
different from the parental undertakings of the higher grade
school days, which were usually for one year at a time, and
which were dictated by the necessity to recoup grant awarded
on the end-of-year examinations for pupils on whom money had
been spent during the year. As late as 1944 one affectionate
chronicler of St George was arguing that the agreement to keep
children at school until they were 16.5 should be scrapped. He
could see no merit in keeping pupils at school longer than
they wished to be there, nor any way of predicting at the age
of 11 their educational progress and wishes. He was convinced
that since "the only way for an ordinary wage earner to get a
secondary education for his child" was to sign a four-year
agreement, "many a conscientious parent has refused to bind
himself in view of economic uncertainty".

So 1907 was the year when in three important respects, St
George stopped being recognisably a higher grade school. It
contained no elementary children, it examined those who wished
to enter, and it made their parents sign a relatively long-
term commitment. And only at the end of the four years would
they have any qualifications to present to the outside world.
In the summer of 1908, only 49 candidates came forward to sit
the entrance examination, compared with 168 the previous year.

1 Pugsley, op.cit. p 38.
2 The 1904 Regulations said no pupil should sit
examinations until the age of 15. Already the range of
examinations formerly taken in higher grade schools was
being reduced, though the universal School Certificate
examination was still a long way off.
Mr Pickles reluctantly admitted nearly all of them, though "the usual high standard of work exacted had to be lowered to bring some of these candidates into the Pass list", and he requested an urgent meeting with the Education Committee to discuss the "proper feeding of the school". He was convinced that the removal of the elementary part of the school, which he had so strongly opposed, was a crucial factor. There was now a "paucity of suitable candidates from the elementary schools", and many of them were of "too advanced age", having been kept at their elementary schools until they were 14 and had to leave. Several parents subsequently confirmed that "no notification had ever reached them anent the entrance examination to the Secondary School".

But Mr Pickles also acknowledged in the school magazine of 1907 that the "lengthened school course will mean much self-sacrifice on the part of many parents in East Bristol", and in subsequent years he regularly appealed to readers to spread the word about the merits of an education at St George School. A contemporary felt that the loss of the elementary school was a "severe blow", particularly because it was so useful in avoiding the "violent change" from elementary to secondary school; the replacement new Rose Green School "never fulfilled its intended purpose of being a preparatory one to the Old School. Few pupils passed on from it. It never filled". All these observations contribute to an unavoidable impression that the character of the school was transformed. By a series of gradual and often quite subtle changes instigated by the Board of Education, the vital organic connection between elementary and post-elementary schooling was severed, and St George ceased to be the school of its own people. There had been every indication that the developing higher grade school would draw more and more people through its doors, people who had never considered that post-elementary education was for them or their children; in sharp contrast, the selective secondary school held them at arm's length, constructing a number of obstacles sufficient to deter all but a determined minority.

Second Inspection, 1908

In November 1908, St George School was subjected to its second General Inspection. At that time the school was 314 strong (131 boys, 183 girls), of whom an unusually high number (52 boys, 83 girls) held scholarships. Parents comprised barely a handful of professional and independent people, 96 retail traders, 52 commercial managers and 156 of the lowest category which the Board of Education characterised as 'Services (domestic and other), Postmen, etc., Artisans'. Again the majority of children were aged 13 and 14, though 34 were 16 years old and 8 were 17 or more. The Report noted that the result of the Education Committee's "very considerable efforts ... to retain the children longer in the School is at present somewhat disappointing", though it conceded that the effect of the four-year undertaking had "hardly had time as yet to be appreciably felt". The buildings were satisfactory and cleaner than on the previous visit, but the school badly needed a playing field of its own, and the Committee was urged
to erect wooden paving on the street outside, since the noise "adds much to the nervous and physical strain on both teachers and pupils". The Inspectors really were ill at ease in busy urban areas like St George!

The Report noted that the curriculum had changed "considerably", with less - though still too much - physics and chemistry, more domestic economy and cookery for the girls, and the introduction of Latin to the four upper forms. The HMIs found it rather quaint that the teachers were using a Latin textbook designed for younger children, and were keen that "some of the more subsidiary subjects such as Drawing and Manual Work might be dropped or partially discontinued" to allow time for more Latin and for starting it with younger children. In the meantime, English lessons must include more grammar, rather than "the nerveless methods which prevail throughout the School, and render the subject useless for purposes of discipline". French, which was in the hands of an "excellent" and "highly cultured" new teacher, should concentrate on "severe drill in systematic grammar", such as the teaching of auxiliary verbs and conjugations to 1st year pupils. Various individual lessons were less favourably viewed than in 1905, and though the energy and enthusiasm of the teachers were again commended, they continued to lack "mature experience" and "severe intellectual training".

The HMIs concluded with the lukewarm comment that "on the whole the general progress ... may be recorded as encouraging". This time they wanted four main changes. A library should be set up to help in "raising the literary tone of the School", and despite several new appointments to the staff, still "the most pressing want is a master of high literary attainment". They believed that "the narrowing of the curriculum towards the end of the course should be definitely aimed at", and there should be more generous financing of the school both by the local authority and by increased fees. All of these recommendations were somewhat puzzling. On the first, it may be remembered that one of Mr Pickles' first actions in 1895 was to found a school library, but maybe it was not of sufficient calibre, or too elementary in character, to satisfy the HMIs. The second was a more familiar complaint. The HMIs were displeased that despite several new appointments, the general character of the staff was unchanged; perhaps they were beginning to realise that Bristol's selection of teachers was a considered policy rather than a naive error of judgment. Mr Theodosius was cross to find the following year that the newly appointed English teacher was "a promising young man ... altogether without experience and has yet to 'win his spurs' as a teacher".

The third recommendation related to a complaint that the timetable was merely a "stereotyped copy of its predecessor", reflecting a "slavish regard to the Regulation which requires a comprehensive Curriculum, irrespective of time or season". It is difficult to make much sense of this, especially in view of the 1904 allocation of hours per subject, which the Board had only recently slackened. It does hint that schools which broke the Regulations were favourably regarded. And more importantly, it indicates that before venturing to pass opinions on the shaping of the secondary school curriculum after 1902 - including the extent to which the higher grade
school areas of expertise were merged with the more literary tradition — full account must be taken of the relentless moulding which was carried out by Inspection Reports. The 1904 Regulations tell only a small part of the story. They convey little of the attachment to Latin, the insistence on a heavily grammatical approach to English and French, the erosion of science time, and the low status given to practical subjects (with the exception of domestic skills for girls which were strongly promoted). All of these were at variance with the higher grade school tradition, but were carefully nurtured to become such an entrenched part of grammar school education that the balance has still not been fully adjusted.

On the fourth point, the Inspectors were disturbed that at 11 guineas, the average cost per head was "considerably below the sum usually required for the maintenance of a School in a high state of efficiency". A higher fee which covered all schoolbooks need not affect the "large number of children from poor homes, to whose parents the purchase of the necessary schoolbooks is a very considerable burden", because they could win scholarships. The scholarship/free place argument had already won firm favour as a conscience-salver amongst those whose incomes saved them from having to compete, but people better acquainted with actual circumstances could see the flaw. As Mr Pickles eloquently explained in the school magazine, for poor children to win scholarships was "almost an impossible achievement, so long as a competitive examination is the only test of merit. They often have no books of their own, little or no opportunity for private study, the home atmosphere is perhaps against them, and the necessary word of advice or encouragement often remains unspoken".

St George School's Early Achievements

In fact the consistency of Mr Pickles' concern for the poorer child was remarkable, and was not deflected by the changed status and character of his school. In 1905 he had said that "it would be much better for England if it were recognised once for all that Secondary education is neither for the rich nor the poor per se, but for the capable children in whatever rank of life they may be found". In 1907 he imagined that "some day, I suppose, it will be recognised that the poorer a district and the more unfavourable its environment, the better its schools and teachers should be .... At present in this country a good deal of national talent is running to waste merely for lack of cultivation. It is a loss which the nation can ill afford". And in 1909, he hoped that the newly chartered universities would "open doors to the poor student of ability as well as the rich", with a scheme to enable "every able child" to move through elementary and secondary schools to university.

On his retirement twenty years later, Mr Pickles was proud to estimate that of the 70 St George pupils who had gone to university, "not five of them would have reached there had it not been for the school", though he had never made that the main business of the school. As his first graduate pupil said on the same occasion, Mr Pickles possessed a "deep and live
sympathy for the underdog", and "never sacrificed the average pupil to the brilliant ... He was inspired by a courage due to his vision of the possibilities of education ... During difficult days he played a great part behind the scenes through his enlightened personality in determining the position of the school in the framework of education in Bristol". For much of the time, he had the solid assistance of Alderman Frank Sheppard, an early stalwart of the Labour movement in east Bristol, whose association with St George School lasted nearly 50 years. As chairman of the governors from 1909, he "strenuously resisted" any moves to downgrade the school, and gave Mr Pickles every support in maintaining St George’s position as "the chief educational centre for East Bristol". In the light of this story of the first fifteen years of the school’s life, their work of extending educational opportunities for the children of the St George area was clearly achieved in spite of the central authorities, rather than because of any help or encouragement from them.

Fairfield Road School

Fairfield Road School presented a different challenge to the Board of Education. Less than five years old at the time the Bristol Education Committee took over from the School Board, its senior section had never achieved the school of science status for which it was built, despite everyone’s best endeavours. The Board of Education could therefore choose to regard it as an ordinary elementary school - or at best as a higher grade board school - but under either label it was a long way from being a secondary school in the Board’s eyes. It could thus pretend that Fairfield was a completely new secondary school, which placed it in any even weaker position than schools which were conversions from (unofficially) recognised higher grade schools. Unlike St George on the unfashionable eastern side of the city, and Merrywood over the river to the south, Fairfield was located in an area which both geographically and socially was of interest to the older secondary schools.

1 When Bristol did consent to appoint governing bodies for its secondary schools, the chairman at St George was the city’s most distinguished Socialist. As mentioned in Chapter 3, Frank Sheppard was a trade union official, an early member of the Social Democratic Federation, and at various times served on most of the city’s official bodies. He became Bristol’s first Labour Mayor in 1917-8. He was said to be “beloved of his comrades, and respected by all who have come into contact with him” by S. Bryher, An Account of the Labour and Socialist Movement in Bristol (1929) p 46. He later approached a number of the original founding families of St George School to help raise money to launch a proper Sixth form, a “cherished dream” of his. St George Secondary School, Bristol, 1894-1944 (1944) p 15.
Recognition Sought, 1903

Bristol's application for the recognition of Fairfield Road as a 'Division A Secondary Day School' was despatched in May 1903, the urgentcy being explained by the fact that, unlike St George, Fairfield's senior department was not recognised as anything coherent and was consequently losing funds. According to the first headmaster of the secondary school, his predecessor had already "very wisely" drafted a number of students up into the senior classes to create a secondary school nucleus and strengthen the school's claim. The Board's refusal was prompt and abrupt, following the dismissive comments of Science Inspector Buckmaster that "unless any Higher Grade Board School doing good work of its kind can be considered a 'Secondary School', then this school is not eligible". The Education Committee quickly appealed, hoping for a more favourable decision in time for the new school year, but the Board of Education always worked even more slowly than usual during the summer months, and it was the end of September before Assistant Secretary Bruce could receive a three-man delegation from Bristol.

At that interview, there were two main sticking points. Mr Bruce recalled that before the Cockerton judgment put an end to the hopes of secondary education at Fairfield, the Merchant Venturers had expressed strong opposition. He warned that the question of "overlapping and undue competition" would have to be investigated again now the idea was being revived. He would invite comments from the Merchant Venturers and Colston's and Redland Girls' Schools, and probably "a local enquiry would be held at which the Committee would have the opportunity of stating their case and meeting objections if any raised". As far as Bristol was concerned, it was not the idea which was being revived, but the quest for official recognition of it. The Education Committee was likely to be placed in the awkward position of defending - and possibly discontinuing - a school in which it had a major interest, because of the claims of others over which it now had nominal responsibility and with which it was trying to develop cordial working relations. Incidentally, neither Colston's Girls' nor Redland was recognised as an efficient secondary school at that time.

Mr Bruce's second concern was whether, in view of the "large number of girls in the School [103] out of 1661 and the class from which the students generally were drawn ...the needs of the district would not be better served by recognition of the school at Fairfield Road as a Secondary School Division A". To the Bristol representatives, this was a strange suggestion for a school designed only five years earlier to specialise in science, and they were emphatic that Division A best met the needs of the district. However, Mr Bruce intimated to them that he was not in principle unsympathetic to their proposal.
and "without officially authorising the Headmaster to do so", suggested that Fairfield Road should develop in the way the Education Committee wanted, in the event that "recognition be given in the course of the next few months". This was better than an outright refusal, but was an unsatisfactorily equivocal message to send back to a headmaster trying to build up a new school and a local authority busy sorting out its educational and financial priorities.

At the Board, Bruce referred the matter to Morant, indicating that the case seemed a sound one and that the "deputation did not shew much fight over it". He explained that "the growth of population in the neighbourhood has been rapid and has taken place to a large extent on the side of the proposed school away from the Merchant Venturers' School from which opposition came five years ago". Also the 'existing' provision for girls was inappropriate on the grounds of distance, cost, the fullness of the schools and the "quite different class" for which they catered. But he expressed reservations about the Division A/Division B differentiation of secondary schools and thereby contributed to the growth of a consensus which was soon to end the split - and make the lives of former higher grade schools more precarious. He advised Morant that if the Board of Education was to continue to recognise a more specialised science curriculum with higher grants, then "much greater care than has hitherto been taken must be exercised in sanctioning the adoption of that curriculum". This struck the right note with Morant, who agreed that "we must not consent to a wrong type of school merely because at present that type brings in the best income from our Board". He thought the Fairfield case might be of interest to Sir William Anson, who in turn adjudged that "this seems to be a case in which the interests of the students will be sacrificed to the financial advantages of the A grant ... The case illustrates the need for a reconsideration of our scheme of grants to Secondary Schools". Little did the Bristol deputation know that in seeking to retain Fairfield's original character, it had helped to seal the fate of all schools specialising in science.

Recognition Disputed, 1904

Eventually, the Board notified Bristol Education Committee that recognition of Fairfield Road was withheld until it was "satisfied that the School is not unnecessary, and that the curriculum of a Division A school is that which is best suited to the circumstances of the case". Bristol Grammar School, the Merchant Venturers' School and the Colston's Schools (which were managed by the Merchant Venturers) were asked for their observations, and two of them were forthright in their objections. The governors of the Merchant Venturers' School asserted that "there is no evidence that more Secondary instruction, either free or at a nominal charge, such as would be supplied at Fairfield Road School ... is needed here at present", and cited the 280 public elementary school children who received free instruction at the Colston's Boarding School, the Queen Elizabeth's Hospital and the Red Maids' School. Since one third of the Merchant Venturers' students
lived within a mile of Fairfield Road, there was bound to be competition, especially as "in the matter of schooling, expense is regarded by many parents as the first consideration". They were tempted to save the difference between the 5d per week at Fairfield Road and the "more adequate, but still unremunerative" fee of £6/10/0 per annum at the Merchant Venturers' School. Furthermore, the governors' earlier hope that the higher grade schools might fulfil their "natural function as a feeder" to their college had been stymied by the School Board's determination to keep pupils in its own schools.

On behalf of the Colston's Girls' School, less than a mile from Fairfield, the governors argued that the difference in fees (£1 per annum at Fairfield as opposed to their £6) would "damage it seriously and perhaps permanently", especially as about half their pupils were "apparently of the same social class as those who attend at Fairfield Road". They believed that their school was "of the kind in which (it may be assumed) your Board wish candidates for Pupil Teachership to pass their preliminary time", in contrast to Fairfield, where however good the instruction, "its tone and and mental atmosphere could hardly fail in a large measure to remain those of a public elementary school". They referred to "sundry secondary schools" in Bristol not being full and deprecated the opening of any "fresh Schools of the same kind which by underselling the existing schools, would deplete them, and involve them in a ruinous competition".

The Education Committee put together an impressive reply to these objections, which even Bruce conceded seemed to constitute "a very fair case". It pointed out that the 160 places in Fairfield's senior classes were all taken, a considerable number of candidates having been refused, and that the Colston's Girls' School was quite full. It was therefore impossible for Fairfield to "rob them of a single student", and in its opinion, the two schools met the needs of different classes of children. Fairfield Road catered for the "class above the very poor, but yet not able to pay the fees charged at those two Institutions, especially where the family consists of several children of school age". The Committee expected that the rapid growth in population in north Bristol would provide plenty of pupils for all the schools. Colston's could cater for those who could pay its fees, and who "prefer the more liberal education of more varied scope ... in addition to the more limited amount of Science ... besides securing the 'tone and mental atmosphere' ... which prevail". At Fairfield, on the other hand, "there is no demand for classical education ... and a training chiefly literary would not be calculated to best fit the students for the business they may have to follow". Many of the boys, it was said, went into engineering trades, building, plumbing, carpentry and joinery, and a number of girls planning to become pupil teachers specialised in cookery and domestic science.

Early in 1904, the Board of Education brought together all the interested parties for a major conference. It seems to have been a fairly heated encounter, described with phrases like "much dispute", "insisted strongly", "laid great stress" and "strongly opposed". The opponents, of whom Alderman Jose and Professor Wertheimer were the most vociferous, put forward the
argument that Fairfield had "failed to grow into an advanced school of the A type". Dr Cook for the Education Committee countered with the assertion that the number of older pupils was steadily growing in the six-year-old school, and that Fairfield's organic connection with its own elementary school, "from which two-thirds of the scholars in this department come", was vitally important. The Committee was convinced that amongst the 53,000 people in north Bristol there were "two classes of population", well able to support both a 5d-a-week school and a £6- or £6/10/0-a-year school. Its most potent argument was based on the calculation that 10 secondary school places per 1,000 of the population over 12 years of age "was no more than an adequate provision", and that Bristol was therefore 1,250 places short of the 3,500 required. It was very difficult for the spokesmen from the other schools to dispute this, either factually or in principle. Buckmaster noted that "the others did not seem inclined to contest" these figures, and "on being pressed, conceded no objection to Bristol having the full amount of secondary provision".

Having successfully established the fundamental point that Fairfield was not unnecessary, the question became one of arriving at a fee which the opponents, especially Professor Wertheimer, did not regard as unfair competition. The Division A/B issue was still unresolved and "somewhat unevenly balanced". The Board of Education continued to favour Division B, and though Buckmaster wondered if it "may be desirable" for pupil teachers and other girls to have the choice between an A course at Fairfield and a B course at Colston's School, the general assumption was that the B course was more suitable for pupil teachers. Other ideas that were drawn into the discussion included the need to look at the south side of the city more urgently than the north, since at Merrywood the "elementary and secondary sections of the school use the building indiscriminately"; concern that the "large percentage of free scholars (25%) requires very serious consideration when the free admissions are to Secondary and not to Elementary Schools"; and a revival of the suggestion that Fairfield should become a higher elementary school feeding the other schools, an idea which local Elementary HMI Elliott particularly favoured.

Far from resolving the future of Fairfield Road School, the outcome of this conference was to refer the matter back to the Education Committee for "further consideration", with an indication that the Board was "not finally refusing the application". The Committee was desperately anxious to get the school organised properly and to appoint a new headmaster to replace Mr J.E. Pickles who had left in November 1903 to become Education Secretary in West Bromwich. As a result of the conference, they were at least fairly confident that Fairfield could become a secondary school, though it would

1 Buckmaster, Chief Technical Inspector at the Board since 1904, drafted a detailed report of this meeting in PRO Ed.35/846. In 1908 he was demoted by Morant, who launched a savage attack on him, accusing Buckmaster of evasion and untruths and publishing his own devastating version of events. E.J.R. Eaglesham, 'The Centenary of Sir Robert Morant' in BJES Vol XII No 1 (Nov 1963) p 9.
effectively have to be on terms laid down by people representing rival institutions, who were assured of the Board of Education's support. The Education Committee really could not see the other institutions as rivals, remaining convinced that better-off parents, seeking different things in the education of their children, would continue to patronise them. After much heart-searching, they did agree to a slight increase in Fairfield's fees, to a maximum of 9d per week, but were emphatic that "a large number of residents in the district cannot afford to pay the fees at these latter Schools, and their children could only enter them by means of free scholarships". Almost defiantly, the Committee passed a motion later in the same meeting calling for "free, or nearly free, places" in all suitable secondary schools.

They also rejected the suggestion that Fairfield should become a higher elementary school, since "the status of Fairfield Road School, with its existing laboratories and proper equipment" was something they were keen to enhance, not downgrade. And, having checked their figures, they strongly refuted the charge that the small number of older pupils proved that the school was superfluous. To say that the upper school of 159 had yielded only 9 advanced students was wrong, because the upper school had only just reached that number, having grown from 96 in 1901. The Committee justifiably pointed out that the main difficulty in retaining scholars after the second year of their secondary course was "owing to the unsettled status of this department", for which, of course, the Board was entirely responsible. With 21 parents already committed to two more years' schooling for their children and with the prospect of pupil teachers remaining in the school, there was every indication that "the demand for secondary education in the district is increasing", and a speedy response from the Board of Education was therefore earnestly sought.

Much of this well-reasoned statement was acceptable to the Board, but the fee was not. Buckmaster insisted that "the minimum fee for a Secondary School is £1 a term", and indicated that he did not like fees quoted in terms of pence per week because it smacked of elementary schools. The low numbers in the top classes may have "compared passably" with other higher grade schools in the past, but was "just what is not enough now". So the ruling went out from the Board - no recognition for Fairfield Road School unless the fees went up to £3 a year. The Education Committee found the refusal "more than a great disappointment" and wrote to Morant personally. At the ensuing interview, the Bristol spokesmen argued that 5d per week had been sanctioned at St George, and that by making Fairfield more expensive it was "much more likely" to compete with other schools for the same kind of parent. The worry about low numbers in the advanced course would soon be solved when the school could be properly organised and unsuitable children drafted out, especially as the local parents were "very keen for the school, and would certainly consent to pledging that their children should remain for the full four years". They spoke of the "very great difficulty" in getting the rest of the Education Committee to "pass a fee as large as £3", though Morant felt that "this should not be so" as long as they "put forward prominently" the number of free places in the school. The Board delivered its final terms - a £3 fee
with 25% free places, and a parental guaranteed to cover the full four-year course — and the deputation was warned that unless it did exactly as it was told, the recognition of the whole school might be withdrawn.

There was nothing more the Education Committee could do. On 1 July 1904, it agreed that Fairfield Road should become a school without the special science bias for which it had been designed, and at an annual cost to parents of over three times as much as the Committee wanted, payable for four years. It did its best in the circumstances, allowing all present pupils to continue at 5d per week, and 36 prospective pupil teachers and 30 Science and Art scholarship holders to complete their courses free of charge, although their awards no longer covered the increased fees.

Recognition as a Secondary School, 1904-5

The formal Board of Education letter confirming recognition of Fairfield Road as a secondary school for the school year beginning in August 1904 arrived in the second week of July. The school was consequently planned in a frantic hurry, with three urgent meetings with the new headmaster in the space of a week. He was Augustus Smith, a London science graduate and trained teacher, formerly head of a Clifton elementary school. An illustrated prospectus was hastily produced, letters of explanation sent to existing parents, a form of parental undertaking devised and the examination to select 10 new scholarship holders organised. At last Fairfield Road Secondary Day School could get under way, and a body of pupils, comprising 54 from the old Science and Art Classes, three quarters of whom were free, 65 from Standards VI and VII and 45 from outside the school, was cobbled together in four classrooms. The curriculum was arranged to give two years of a general literary education, leading to two advanced years following either a more scientific Division A type of course or the more literary emphasis associated with Division B. This unusual arrangement had been suggested by the Board of Education as a possible solution during the wrangling over whether the school should be Division A or Division B. Although it seems eminently sensible and was "actually pressed upon the LEA", the Board rapidly went off its own plan and was looking to cancel it within a year.

1905 also brought other more serious problems. Around the time of recognition in 1904, the Board of Education had told Bristol that it did "not regard as satisfactory" the arrangement which made the same man headmaster of both the elementary and secondary schools at Fairfield Road. The Education Committee ignored this letter for five months, perhaps because they were too busy trying to sort out the new school and were learning that there were advantages in doing things and then telling the Board afterwards. Or perhaps they genuinely failed to appreciate the Board's perception of elementary and secondary schools as completely separate entities. Anyhow, they got a ticking off from the Board, which itself took seven weeks to respond to Bristol's belated reply, because it "drifted away to Whitehall".

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The Board was extremely displeased to find that the plan was
for Augustus Smith to be head of both schools, with two acting
headteachers in the senior and junior departments under his
general superintendence. Various officials indicated that
they thought it undesirable and in need of "serious
consideration", and Assistant Secretary Mackail\(^1\) said that if
he had known about it in time, he would have "advised a
refusal of sanction of the arrangement" and got it altered
before the secondary school was recognised. It seems
Bristol's delay paid off! Morant himself regarded it as "a
very undesirable arrangement", and recalled some similar
instances where solely "to prevent hardship and injustice" to
about 20 or 30 long-established heads, the joint headship was
temporarily permitted. But he judged that Fairfield was
different. Mr Smith had been appointed "long after Cockerton
days, and at a time when the new situation was well-known - he
took the risk with eyes open, and indeed has no long-standing
position as a claim for special treatment". Morant thought
the Board could refuse to recognise him as headmaster of the
secondary school beyond the current session "and thus perhaps
get a better Head for it", while Mr Smith became head of the
elementary school "for which presumably he is sufficiently
qualified". In fact, Augustus Smith had been appointed to
Fairfield on 1 December 1903, when the 'new situation' was far
from well-known to anyone outside - or even possibly inside -
the Board of Education. As a man of 40, with good
qualifications, 15 years' experience as a headmaster and
contacts through part-time lecturing at the Pupil Teacher
Centre, the Merchant Venturers' College, the Clifton
Laboratory and the University College, he must have seemed to
the Education Committee the ideal person to raise the
standards and status of Fairfield Road at this critical point in its history.

First Inspection, 1905

No doubt Morant's wishes were known to the HMIs when they
visited Fairfield Road on the occasion of the school's first
General Inspection in February 1905. Theodosius and Tutton
were so upset by what they saw that they immediately submitted
an unofficial advance report to the Board of Education. They
had found that both Fairfield and St George were still known
as higher grade schools to Bristol people, and both were
"secondary in little more than name", a statement which was
underlined twice. They cited as evidence from Fairfield the
fact that the elementary school shared the same entrance,
stairs and playground, the class of children was the same, the

\(^1\) Eaglesham wrote: "A scholar to his finger-tips, Mackail's
interest was reputedly less in administration than in his
classical researches ... Latin must be compulsory for
all. This view Mackail strongly maintained". E.J.R.
Eaglesham, 'Implementing the Education Act of 1902' in
in The Audit of War (1986) p 225, Mackail was "sublimely
oblivious, or dismissive, of Britain's urgent educational
needs as an industrial society".

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headmaster and staff were "almost without secondary school experience", and "the atmosphere of the two types of school is the same ... the children of the Secondary school regard themselves as being in the higher forms of the Elementary". At both schools, the headmasters, "with the best intentions in the world, are groping in the dark after secondary school ideals of which they have only the vaguest conception". Furthermore, the Bristol Education Committee, which was "a practical body of men bent upon doing the right thing", nevertheless treated the new schools like elementary schools, dealt with the headmasters in a similar way, and could see "nothing inconsistent or unsuitable in having an Elementary and Secondary school under the same roof". Theodosius' and Tutton's highly critical report is another striking example of the gulf in attitudes between the HMIs and the Bristol authorities; what to the HMIs were instances of misguided thinking or sheer ineptness, were to the Education Committee and its teachers desirable and vitally important features of their developing secondary school system.

Not surprisingly, it was the HMIs' interpretation which accorded more closely with that of the Board of Education. Mackail passed the matter on to Bruce with the comment that the "case of these two Bristol schools (with which you are only too familiar) has now come to a point where it is necessary to take a definite line". He was cross that the joint buildings and joint headmaster had not been "definitely raised" by the local authority when they visited the Board - although the Board did not ask - and he wanted a higher fee at St George, and an end to the split advanced course at Fairfield. He thought that "the whole situation is so intricate" that a conference of the heads of the office was needed to resolve it. Bruce, in moving the file up to Morant, particularly drew his attention to "the striking description of the Bristol Higher Education Committee as Governing Body given by Mr Theodosius". Morant then passed it on to Anson with an observation which rings almost like a battle cry: "St George's School and Fairfield Road School will be important cases for our main fight as to the standard of Secondary Schools. Mr Theodosius's papers ... are profoundly interesting and instructive".

In the event, the heads of office meeting was less dramatic than the build-up to it implied. The dislike of the governing body arrangements was reduced to a "willingness to cooperate in the formation of another Governing Body if desired", and St George was to keep its 5d per week fee as long as the school remained efficient. Concerning the joint headmasterships, strong disapproval was expressed, but Mr Smith would be allowed to remain at Fairfield as long as the school was found to be efficient from year to year. But they did plan to "put strong pressure" on the Education Committee to separate the buildings without delay, since reports "clearly show how unsatisfactory is the joint use of buildings by Elementary and Secondary Schools". This information was to be conveyed to the Education Committee as soon as the Report of the General Inspection was available, which was not until June 1905.

A conference of the heads of the office was the highest decision-making mechanism at the Board.
This Report has an added interest because the Board of Education file contains a draft version to which a few significant corrections were made before publication. It noted that Fairfield Road Secondary School consisted of 62 boys and 97 girls, mostly aged 13, 14 and 15, and that the fathers of nearly half of them (73) were clerks, 29 were artisans, 17 'professional', 16 retail traders, 9 merchants and bankers, 8 deceased, 4 elementary schoolteachers and 3 farmers. In assessing the buildings, the Inspectors seem to have been obsessed by their dislike of elementary and secondary school children and teachers mixing. The secondary school was said to consist "merely of the few classrooms on the ground floor which happen to be unused by the Elementary School", and although the specialist science, art and practical rooms were good, the boys' and girls' dining rooms were "used by the children of both schools. This cannot be considered a satisfactory arrangement". The cloakrooms, washroom and offices (lavatories) also had to be shared, as did the playground, "with the result that the noise, which seems incessant, is almost intolerable". As there was only one staff room, all the teachers used it, "which is undesirable". They were adamant that the accommodation for the secondary school, which has "neither the position nor the dignity which a Secondary School should have", must change. They recommended moving out the whole elementary school, leaving the building to the secondary school with a preparatory department for 3-400 children altogether; this was in a building approved and currently used by 1,200 children.

Turning to the staff, the headmaster was said to have "his heart entirely in his work and devotes himself enthusiastically to all the interests of the School, he is popular with boys and masters" and has in great measure the confidence of the Governing Body". But the HMIs felt that any secondary school head "ought to have had Secondary School experience, and should as a rule have had a somewhat broader academic career than is implied in the diploma of B.Sc.". They concluded by saying that a secondary school headmaster "is expected to bring to the School a high type of tradition". The last five words were inserted in place of the deleted "the highest public school traditions", a phrase which says a great deal about the attitudes of the Inspectors, and also arouses curiosity as to why someone at the Board of Education deleted it. The senior assistant mistress exerted an "excellent influence", and the rest of the staff were "exemplary", displaying great devotion, enthusiasm, keenness and "an excellent spirit". They were particularly commended for giving "every support to games". But their qualifications were rather one-sided towards the science side, and there was "no one with any special classical training" (originally "distinction") who might be responsible for the Latin syllabus. As at St George, future appointments should aim to "secure the services of first rate teachers of the type that a Secondary School should have", especially those with previous secondary school experience.

1 Fairfield Road was, of course, a co-educational school with a mixed staff.
2 One wonders how the University of London would have reacted to its degrees being described in that way!
The curriculum was "suitable", though a six-hour day was too long, and "somewhat more time than is necessary" was allotted to science, mathematics and drawing. Less than three hours of Latin and just over three hours of French a week were "very short, especially in the case of Latin". The syllabus in that subject "shows a complete want of experience" and the senior pupils [who were in their first year of Latin] "ought to be in a position to read Caesar by the Summer Term". Other than that, most of the individual lessons were very favourably commented upon, though the science syllabus had not yet escaped from "the thralldom of teaching for specific subject grants". On the grounds that it led to neglect of the literary training which it was most important to strengthen, the HMIs hoped for a speedy end to the "bifurcation of the highest Form", the solution to the Division A/B dilemma which the Board had come up with just a few months earlier.

Overall, the conduct of the pupils was "most satisfactory", and the discipline "good - questions of punishment hardly arise". But the Inspectors closed their Report by returning to their opening concern: everything about the school, "its buildings, its organization, its government, its staff ["Head Master included" was omitted], in the attitude of teacher to pupil and pupil to teacher, are the spirit and atmosphere of an Elementary School; nowhere could the Inspectors discover the elasticity, the individualism, the personal initiative or sense of responsibility that may reasonably be looked for in a Secondary School". The secondary school must have the building to itself so that it could make "a fresh start". Even if the headmaster and the Education Committee had wanted a fresh start for Fairfield so that it could develop into the sort of secondary school the HMIs idealised, it was most unfair to expect Fairfield to have achieved that special atmosphere in the six months since it was first recognised as a secondary school. The final sentence of the draft version had said that the problem was quite simply that elementary and secondary were "two distinct types of School ... each with its own special functions", and that Fairfield, "though nominally of the Secondary, is in reality more of the Elementary type". Again, somebody had thought it politic to delete this bald statement before publication, and confine the sentiments it contained to the Board of Education and its servants.

Progress and Problems, 1905-8

We do not know if the Fairfield staff were as dejected as their counterparts at St George after their first General Inspection Report, which contained the same message of praise for their work and regret that they were in the school at all. It seems, despite the criticism and the continuing uncertainty about the direction in which the school was to go, that they had great faith in the job they were doing, which generated a mood of buoyancy in the new school. Certainly Mr Smith was optimistic in his contribution to the first edition of the school magazine at Christmas 1905, feeling that "we are adopting the spirit and character of a good Secondary School, and are establishing traditions that we hope will make "Fairfield" a name of which old scholars, parents, and
citizens will be proud. He was delighted that the Old Boys were planning a rugby club and that last year's Standard VII girls, many of whom had moved on to "various situations" and were "reluctant to sever their connection" with the school, had organised an Old Girls' Club.

After Fairfield Road Secondary School's first year of operation, a report by the Education Committee's Inspector predicted that on the present level of admissions (160 in 1904, 260 in 1905 and an annual average of 90-100 expected), the school would soon be 360-400 strong, provided "a good feeding ground is maintained, and the conditions of Government Regulations are no more stringent than at present". It would then need 13-14 classrooms plus specialist rooms, and would have to take over the whole building. Even Mr Theodosius was a little more pleased with the school in 1906-7, noting that staff with "higher special qualifications" were gradually being appointed, the work was "steadily improving", and "unusually good progress" had been made in Latin. But the school was "full to overflowing" and the elementary school must move out as soon as possible, a warning which was reinforced in a qualified renewal of recognition for 1907-8.

However, by 1908 he had returned to his customary critical stance. He reported that "changes in staff have been far too frequent, and the difficulty of finding suitable teachers is daily growing greater", and that "I have seldom, if ever, visited the school without finding temporary teachers at work". He said there were no suitable candidates for the vacant post of senior mistress (a former Colston's School pupil with a 1st class London B.A., specialising in Latin, was subsequently attracted from her post at the Pupil Teacher Centre), and only 2 of the 60 applicants for the post of head mathematical master were "in any sense of the word mathematicians". He thought all these problems, as at St George, were caused by the miserly attitude of the Bristol Education Committee, which had recently decided that "the cost per scholar is not to be increased by one penny". This strengthened the view "that I have always taken of the illusory powers of the governing Bodies of these Schools", and he believed that central grants should go directly to the school sub-committee and not through the Education Committee, and be withheld if the "other resources of the schools" were inadequate. Morant saw this and referred it to the grant-awarding section of the office, drawing their attention to the "very unfavourable account of the teaching in the school".

Second Inspection, 1908

In November 1908 Fairfield School received its second General Inspection. There were 269 pupils (120 boys, 149 girls), holding 39 scholarships (much less than at St George), and the bulk of them were 14, 15 and 16 years old with 27 older than that. Although they were "the same class of children" and nearly all from public elementary schools, they were staying longer, which created something of a problem because Fairfield was recognised only for a four-year course up to the age of 16. Most older pupils were intending teachers operating under
different Regulations, but those who just happened to be still at school after the age of 16 had no official status, and 325 attendances towards the end of the school year were "disallowed" by the Board. The largest single category of parents was commercial managers (92), and there was still a considerable number of retail traders (40) and of the lowest category of artisans and service jobs (52). But in both the top group, 'professional and independent' (55), and the next, 'merchants and manufacturers' (34), there was a significant proportional increase on 1905, suggesting a gradual change in parental perceptions of the school. Most of the school's leavers went into commercial life or elementary teaching.

Theodosius' influence was discernible in the Report's strong criticism of the staffing of the school, which "lacks scholars of a high order". There were too many changes of staff, some caused by "breakdowns from over-work" and some by "dissatisfaction with the conditions of work", particularly the poor salaries and short holidays. Again, though, the present staff were praised for their "energy and enthusiasm". Latin was making fair progress in the school, and the HMIs were pleased to note the introduction of a monitory (prefect) system, a school choir and magazine, a former pupils' association, excellent lunch arrangements and better organisation of games. These all helped to generate a "better corporate spirit", and overall there had been a "very considerable improvement" which could be extended further when the 400 elementary children moved out.

Everyone concerned had come to accept that this last change would have to happen. Mr Smith had found it an increasing worry to juggle his admissions each year to fit the accommodation, regardless of the keenness or suitability of the candidates, and there were terms when he could take only a handful of new pupils. He was under pressure to keep more of his pupils through to the 3rd and 4th years of the course, and numbers in the 4th year class were indeed growing (26 in 1907, 44 in 1908). He also wanted to get his entrants younger - he favoured 11 - and, while they were in the higher standards of what he still referred to as the higher grade school, to "have the Secondary School in view and ... cultivate what is known as a Secondary School Spirit and tone". But by 1907 the secondary school could expand no further and suitable children were being turned away. The Education Committee was eventually able to satisfy him and the HMIs when it opened the new Sefton Park Elementary School in January 1910. It took 400 juniors from Fairfield Road, together with the infants who had already moved out to temporary accommodation, and from that date Fairfield Road was exclusively a secondary school.

Parental Pressure

One interesting feature of this story of the early development of Fairfield Road School is the evidence which points to an articulate and self-assured parent body. Both the School Board and the Education Committee had always been convinced that the class of people moving into the area - clerks, commercial travellers, small scale artisan-employers and
shopkeepers - was just the right sort to support publicly-provided secondary education. The hillside rows of neat terraced houses with small gardens which still characterise the area, are strongly suggestive of the respectable, aspiring lifestyle of the lower middle class at the turn of the century¹. Generalising somewhat, it seems that Bedminster residents tended to express their views through operatives' or other associations and St George parents often complained in person to the headmaster. But Fairfield parents usually acted individually, sending well-written letters direct to the authorities, including the Board of Education itself. A complaint about access for local children has already been alluded to in Chapter 2; three other issues raised by parents are of interest.

In 1901 Mr E.H. James of nearby York Road was so incensed when Mr Pickles insisted that his son in the higher grade part of the school obtain books necessary to do his homework, that he forwarded the correspondence to the Board of Education. He argued that his son was only in the 5th Standard, and that he should be supplied with books "for which I pay in the rates ... and the fee of 5d per week". In his opinion, "everything seems to be done to close the Schools against the Working Classes and pack the School with children living at a distance. This is the only school in the neighbourhood I can send my children to". Whether or not the School Board or the Board of Education agreed with these sentiments, Mr James was in the right and Mr Pickles had to be instructed that the buying of books for homework was purely voluntary.

One of the more subtle aspects of the change in the school's status was that when another parent raised the same point in 1904 (again by a direct approach to the Board of Education), the answer was that Fairfield could now charge for books. Mr G.E. Chambers, a neighbour of that parent, then took up the wider issue. Objecting strongly to the changed status and cost of Fairfield which was two minutes' walk from his house in Richmond Road, he reminded the Board that "Fairfield Road School was built for elementary education and for the people in the district ... and in accordance with that idea there was no opposition at the time of its erection, as the voters were given to understand it was for elementary and secondary tuition". He thought that his two children should be entitled to free elementary education at Fairfield. This time the Board was on stronger ground and, having checked with the local HMI and the Education Committee, was able to tell Mr Chambers that his children could receive free schooling at one of the three elementary schools within about a mile of his home, but that at Fairfield the fees had been legally sanctioned. In fact, Fairfield never had been completely free, but it is significant that this protest was made within days of the start of the term when fees of £3 per annum were charged for the first time. It would, incidentally, have been more accurate for the Board to say that the higher fees had been 'forcibly imposed' than 'legally sanctioned'.

¹ As described from personal experience by R. Church, Over the Bridge (1955); and M. Grossek, First Movement (1937); and analytically by G. Crossick, ed., The Lower Middle Class in Britain 1870-1914 (1977).
In 1907, Philip Jolin of Philip Jolin & Co., Electrical Engineers and Machinists, protested to the Bristol Education Committee about one of the important new features introduced that year. He wanted to know "under what Law my son Charles Jolin at Fairfield Higher Grade School is threatened with expulsion if I will not sign a paper binding myself to keep him at that school for four years", and how it was that he could be "turned out of a school that I have to pay for through the rates". The whole business seemed to him "so absurd" and "really amounts to persecution", and he threatened to involve his M.P. if necessary. The Education Committee was unsure how to deal with this and asked the Board for a ruling on whether they were entitled to make the agreement a condition of admission. They had ascertained from the headmaster that the boy had repeatedly been asked to return his form as the other pupils had done, and that "the boy is a good boy, and as little fuss or show about the matter, as possible, has been made ... surely this does not amount to persecution". The Board of Education declined to interfere, and although Mr Jolin argued that when his son applied for a place there had been "nothing in the rules" about signing, the Board thought that the local education authority was within its powers and after all, was acting "in pursuit of the four year course we think desirable". This boy can be traced through the school's admissions registers; he did complete a four year course (1906-10) with the help of a two year scholarship awarded in 1908, and left to become a maker of scientific instruments.

It is possible to identify certain common strands in correspondence of this type. Elementary education had been generally available for little more than thirty years and free elementary education for only ten, and yet there was a strong sense among these parents that children had a definite right to it. And the payment of rates entitled them to some influence over the type of school supplied in their area; they were quite proprietorial about their neighbourhood school and reluctant to patronise one a little further away. None of these parents criticised secondary education as such or its development within their school, but they did object to it taking over from elementary education, which appeared to be subordinated to the needs of the secondary side. The style of education with which, in not much more than a generation, they had become familiar, was being changed and taken further from them, and they did not like it. And when they complained to the highest authority, they found that their rights were much more vaguely defined than when elementary codes and regulations covered virtually every eventuality; the Board seemed to take the line that if the school and the local authority were behaving in a way that the Board basically approved, then the parents would just have to fit in. The transition to the new style of secondary school involved an unmistakable change of character at Fairfield as elsewhere, and at least a proportion of parents were left feeling angry and alienated in a way that never seems to have accompanied the evolution of higher grade schools.
Of Bristol’s three higher grade schools, Merrywood was in the weakest position to withstand the critical eye of the Board of Education after 1903. The School Board’s policy of allowing the higher grade part of the school to evolve in its own time and providing resources as the demand arose, meant that for official purposes it was the least developed of the three. Like Fairfield, it had failed to achieve the all-important school of science status, and this had been cited as the Board’s reason for refusing Bristol’s half-hearted application for its recognition as a higher elementary school. Bristol was in no doubt that Merrywood was doing much more than just an elementary school but the Board could, if it chose, take the line that it was an entirely new secondary school and therefore susceptible to rather more moulding than if it been an established higher grade school. However Merrywood had one saving grace — it was located in a densely populated district which everyone agreed needed something more than ordinary elementary education, but which no ‘existing’ school could adequately serve.

Merrywood School

The Bristol Education Committee proceeded with caution in its plans for Merrywood, partly because the wrangle over Fairfield took so long to resolve, and also because Merrywood had had a foretaste of what to expect from the Board of Education. Early in 1901, HMI Elliott suddenly decided that the manual instruction room was not up to the standard required for grant-earning, even though it dated only from 1897 and had received the usual Education Department approval at that time. His reasons were contained in a private letter to the Board of Education, which the recipient said “throws a good deal of light on the case”, though he regretted that “we cannot of course use it as a basis of our refusal”. The School Board immediately wrote to “express their astonishment”, adding that “they can only think your letter must have been written under a misapprehension as to the facts”. Elliott reluctantly had to concede, but he contrived a sting in the tail by decreeing that no other school’s pupils should have access to Merrywood’s manual instruction centre. The room had been expressly intended to benefit boys from other Redminster board schools, and a slightly longer morning session was operated so as to fit in two two-hour lessons. But despite Bristol’s puzzled and irritated entreaties, Elliott insisted that bad weather, the fatigue of the master, and the interruption to the rest of the school from boys returning at odd times, made it unsuitable for such intensive use, and he would sanction only one two-hour lesson per morning. This episode — apart from serving as an example of an HMI issuing a ruling without checking his facts — illustrates a basic dichotomy in attitudes between the central and local authorities which was to dominate much of Merrywood’s early life as a secondary school. As discussed earlier, the idea commonly held by school boards that specialist educational facilities should be used by as many people as possible, was completely alien to the Board’s conception of secondary schooling.

1 PRO Ed.21/6142.
Recognition Sought, 1904-5

By the end of 1904, the Education Committee was ready to turn the senior department of Merrywood into a secondary school. 100 pupils were by then qualifying for Science and Art grants and two teachers had recently gained degrees. But it was not that simple for the Board of Education. HMI Theodosius did not like the central hall being used for teaching or the science rooms by children in the Standards, and the cloakroom was inadequate. He told the Board of Education that if St George and Fairfield were to be secondary schools, then Merrywood had better be as well, but he felt that "there is little doubt ... that if all these schools had to make fresh application, they would be recommended to come under the new Higher Elementary Code and I think rightly". The Education Committee did its best, arranging for 300 infants to move into temporary premises in a nearby chapel, and planning some structural alterations at Merrywood. It would then accommodate 420 boys and 450 girls, approximately 250 of whom would comprise the secondary school.

The Board broadly accepted these efforts, though thought the "parents of boys attending the Secondary School might very likely object" to the common playground for secondary and elementary boys; they seemed unable to grasp the fact that the secondary and elementary children very likely had the same parents. To hasten a decision in time for the new school year in 1905, Bristol sent a deputation to the Board of Education which produced acceptance on principle of a mixed secondary school at Merrywood. But a number of conditions were attached. Firstly, there must be a sufficiency of alternative elementary school accommodation; and if any existing (secondary) institutions were affected, the Board "expressly reserve the right to re-consider the position ... should representation that undue competition arises be made and substantiated". Again, the vital importance of being an "existing institution" can be appreciated. Secondly, the building must be clearly divided for secondary and elementary schools, with joint use of facilities permitted only temporarily. The secondary school should cater for about 200 children, with two laboratories, a lecture room and a cookery room, and it must have "a staff of its own, entirely separate from the Elementary School", including its own headmaster. Those older children not planning to proceed to the secondary school - again the feasibility of long-term planning was assumed - must be provided for in the elementary school. And finally, "provision must be made for organised games ... this is an essential element in the life of a well-equipped Secondary School", and particularly important at Merrywood which suffered the "grave inconvenience" of a playground shared with the elementary school.

1 The following sections on Merrywood School are based on: PRO Ed.35/855; Bristol Education Committee, Minutes; Bristol Education Committee - Higher Education Sub-Committee, Minutes. As before, the records relating to Merrywood are less good than for the other two Bristol schools.
The Education Committee proceeded to implement the Board's requirements as far as possible, creating within the same premises an elementary school for 550 and a secondary school for 200, the latter having seven classrooms, chemistry and physics laboratories, a science lecture room, cookery and art rooms and a central hall. The necessary alterations would cost £950, which the Committee found much more acceptable than the estimated £20,000 involved in HMI Elliott's suggestion to use the whole of Merrywood as a public elementary school and build a new small secondary school. The Board of Education was displeased to find no provision for better playgrounds or a playing field or completely separate staffs, and was still wondering if Merrywood was in "a sufficiently convenient situation" to serve the district, or whether a higher elementary school, which Theodosius favoured, would be the best solution.

**Parental Pressure, 1905-6**

At this point (autumn 1905), an interesting new voice entered the negotiations. F.R. Arscott, a commercial traveller living in Stackpool Road, just two minutes' walk from Merrywood School where he had four children, launched a campaign against its conversion into a secondary school. He contacted his M.P., Walter Long, got together a committee of parents, and distributed 5,000 handbills advertising a public meeting at the Temperance Hall in Bedminster. 500 ratepayers turned up and listened to arguments from members of the Education Committee to the effect that there was "a large demand in the district for secondary education", but only 14 voted in favour of the conversion. A protest resolution was also received from the Bristol and District Radical Operatives' Association, which was always strong in Bedminster. The Board of Education dismissed these objections as being "chiefly on the grounds of expense", but in fact Mr Arscott's suggested alternative was for Merrywood to remain an elementary school, and for a new 'Central School' to be built in "our enormous Victoria Park". The term 'central school' was little used in Bristol at that time, and it is impossible to know quite what form the Bedminster parents thought it should take. But their campaign does indicate both a resistance to their school being interfered with, and a lack of interest in having a secondary school as defined by the Board of Education. It was not an aversion, on cost or any other grounds, to developing some form of post-elementary education.

Mr Arscott wrote again in November, referring to another protest meeting, and urging the holding of an independent enquiry to investigate the proposed conversion. Morant became interested, asking to be "kept informed of this case". He suggested that one of the Board's officials should scrutinise the local newspapers to discover "whether the meeting referred to was important, and the points serious", and whether there were any grounds for holding an enquiry. Mr Arscott then asked that, if the conversion had to go ahead, it should at least be delayed until a new school was built for the displaced elementary children, some of whom had waited 12 months to gain admission to Merrywood. He said that all three
Bedminster councillors and the local alderman opposed the Education Committee’s proposals, and he expressed the opinion that the whole scheme was a conspiracy between certain members of the Education Committee and the teachers. Chairman Cook “has an Evening School in Berkeley Square [Clifton Laboratory], where the higher subjects are taught (most useful to teachers),” one of the part-time lecturers there was Augustus Smith, the head of Fairfield Secondary School, and two schoolteachers were co-opted members of the Committee; hence, “the temptation appears to many persons that it is a case of looking after the interests of Teachers rather than parents and ratepayers.” This accusation hints both at a feeling that the Education Committee was remote and untrustworthy, and at a resistance to having a higher fee/Fairfield Road type of school in Bedminster. After fairly thorough checks by the Board of Education that their secondary and elementary HMI’s were happy, Mr Arscott’s request for an inquiry was turned down. Mackail thought that the local opposition was “understood to be mainly due to certain personal jealousies”, and that it was up to the local education authority “to vindicate the wisdom of the scheme by making it a practical success”.

But Mr Arscott was nothing if not tenacious. He described the Board’s decision as “most disappointing to those who are really interested and know the facts of the case. It is simply a disgrace that children and parents should be deprived of a school so urgently needed in the district for elementary purposes and where practically no demands exist for Secondary Schools”. And more important, he put his finger on a real weakness in the Board’s case. He had read in The Daily Telegraph that in London, the legality of turning buildings constructed for elementary education over to secondary use had been questioned, and that a Bill was being considered to regularise the position. Did not the same apply to Merrywood?

Nobody at the Board of Education knew how to answer this, and eventually Mr Arscott’s letter was discussed by the President and Morant, who came up with an extraordinary solution. Early legislation was being planned, and decisions about the legitimate use of maintained school buildings were technically the responsibility of the Local Government Board, the auditing body for any associated loans. However, the Board would continue for the time being to give grants to secondary schools and pupil teacher centres functioning in ‘elementary’ buildings, though it was of the utmost importance that “this Department should not seem to give any form of sanction ... to any Institution conducted on an illegal basis”. The obvious parallel with the Cockerton judgment on the higher grade schools did not escape Morant, but while it would be “improper, to say the least” for the Board of Education to appear to condone this current irregularity, he was confident that “a careful statement ... as regards the possible illegal use of the building”, stating that the Board’s sanction of the school did not legalise it, would smooth over the difficulty. This remarkable exercise in sophistry demonstrates so very clearly how the Cockerton problem could have been handled had the Board of Education wanted to save the higher grade schools. It is also reminiscent of the case with which endowed school buildings were put to uses different from those specified in their deeds.
As a result of Mr Arscott's campaign, a letter arrived for each of the three schools in Bristol, saying that "if the premises of these schools were originally erected either wholly or in part for the purpose of Elementary Education, the use for Education other than Elementary of the premises is open to question on legal grounds and the recognition of these Secondary Schools must not be regarded as legalising such use". The warning caused considerable consternation to the Bristol Education Committee, just at the time when it was finally getting its schools sorted out; there was nothing it could do to change the original purpose of the buildings, and it can only have served to throw back into question the hard-won secondary status of the higher grade schools. The Board had a new weapon to brandish, particularly useful in its crusade for segregated, self-contained secondary education. Morant wrote that he hoped the transformation of the senior mixed department at Merrywood into a secondary school "does not mean solely a change of name", and he assumed that "a new and efficient Head Master and Staff are being appointed" along with an appropriate governing body. One very important way in which the school was altered was in the raising of fees to £3 a year, which, after its Fairfield experience, the Education Committee did not bother to contest.

Merrywood Secondary School', still unrecognised, opened in January 1906, and after a visit in March, HMI Theodosius recommended that it should be recognised by the Board of Education. The recommendation was conspicuously lacking in enthusiasm, and the file trailed around the Board's offices for four months while various objections and doubts were raised. The proper accommodation of the infants ran into covenant difficulties, and the arrangements for organised games was queried, but Bristol promised that a playing field was being obtained. Approval for the Merrywood package was suspended, then deferred, then suspended for a week, then - at last - given conditionally after the Education Committee had secured a new site for the junior department and taken steps to ensure that "the Head Master has now no connection with the Elementary School and for all practical purposes the Departments are quite separate and distinct". It sorted out the finances so that the secondary part of Merrywood received 3/5 of the total, but did not, as instructed, appoint a new 'properly qualified' headmaster. It preferred to place its confidence in the existing head, William Crank, a trained certificated teacher with thirty years' experience. At last the Committee could advertise its three secondary schools around the elementary schools, urging the heads there to do their best to ensure that "a sufficient supply of scholars from 11-12 years of age be sent on to the Secondary Schools".

First Inspection, 1907

Merrywood's first General Inspection took place in May 1907. There were 102 boys and 137 girls on roll, 31 of whom had scholarships, and they were predominantly 14 or 15 years old.
Only 19 had come from sources other than public elementary schools, and 93 of their parents were 'commercial managers, etc.', 61 were in the lowest 'services, artisans etc.' category and 48 were 'retail traders'. In general the Inspectors felt that Merrywood was "in the nature of a continuation school", depending almost wholly on entrants from public elementary schools. They thought that once the elementary school moved out, the building would be a "thoroughly good" secondary school, with excellent science rooms and a playing field a few minutes' walk away. The cost per head was "far too low" at £9/10/0, and, as with the other municipal secondary schools, the Education Committee was urged to spend more than the 50% of costs that it currently met. In particular, higher salaries were needed, without which "it will be useless to look for that high standard of specialists which no Secondary School should be without, and which alone can give to it, the character which is requisite to a really good standard of work".

The Inspectors found that Mr Crank "devotes himself unsparingly to the work", and was a headmaster of long standing, though "none of this experience has been gained in a Secondary School". His staff of 16 were all certificated but included only four graduates, and the teaching was thought to be "mechanical and wanting in the inspiring power" which was achieved by real specialists with "high academic qualifications and wide experience of teaching in Schools where the initiative, responsibility and co-operation of the scholars play a much larger part". They were "a devoted and loyal body, and spare no pains in their efforts to bring the School to a high level of efficiency, giving most generous support to all school institutions"; the keen support for games, the introduction of a prefect system, the beginnings of school and former pupils' societies and the rare use of punishment were all pleasing to the HMIs. But although most of the lessons observed were competent or better, the general standard of work was "at present low ... nowhere is the work really bad, but nowhere does it rise above a level of uniform mediocrity". In particular, the pupils were allowed to be "passively receptive rather than actively energetic or effective", and the teachers should remember that encouraging children to "take initiative and responsibility" was "a key part of their education". In addition, French, as the only foreign language, must be made more systematic and grammatical, in order to serve its function as an "instrument of general literary training".

Problems and Progress, 1907-10

It was on receipt of this Report in Bristol that a major misunderstanding came to light. Both the Report and an accompanying letter said that the elementary school must move out of the Merrywood premises, but the Bristol Education Committee thought they had met the requirements by separating the two schools within the building, and told the Board of Education that it was "under a wrong impression". HMI Theodosius was furious. He said that Bristol's letter represented "a complete change of front", and that it was
clearly understood by everyone concerned that a new school was to be built for elementary pupils. His explanation for what he regarded as a deceitful volte-face was that "the new Bristol Docks are responsible... no one in Bristol dare suggest any additional expenditure for anything, and the Docks are being made an excuse for a general neglect of public duties. The Education Committee have taken alarm and will do nothing for these Municipal Secondary Schools unless the Board insists". This was a very unfair assessment of the Education Committee, which, despite financial constraints, had clearly demonstrated its commitment to the three municipal secondary schools. But in so doing, it was guilty of the sins of maintaining the close links between elementary and secondary schooling and of wanting to make optimum use of school buildings. With a hint of vindictiveness, Theodosius went on to advocate that "in view of the repeated refusal of the Committee to meet our suggestions", the additional (and variable) grant should be "withheld altogether", and the three former higher grade schools should be "made into Higher Elementary Schools, seeing that Bristol finds difficulty in supporting the expenses of secondary schools". In this last suggestion, he had Education Committee allies in Professors Wertheimer and Henderson of the Merchant Venturers' and the Baptist Colleges respectively, who were always prickly about potential rivalry from up and coming institutions.

Hard as they tried, the officials at the Board of Education could find nothing in the papers requiring all the Merrywood elementary children to move out, only a letter of 1905 clearly acquiescing in the two schools' joint use of the building. A cautious voice advised, "we do not seem to be in a position to take up a very strong line", and doubted "whether it is expedient at this moment" to pursue the higher elementary school suggestion. Theodosius was disbelieving, and insisted that the original file definitely said that the secondary school would be recognised only if the elementary school moved out, and in a fit of pique, complained that "the change of policy on the part of the Local Education Authority has been accepted by the Board". He proposed a technical fiddle involving changing the official status of the site, so that the elementary rather than the secondary pupils were the temporary guests. This would "deprive the Education Committee once for all of the argument that they have no space for the expansion of the Secondary School, which they are sure to urge when we begin to press them", an argument which they were also likely to use to "strengthen their position if they wish to unduly prolong the existence of the Pupil Teacher Centre which they are not unlikely to do". The disgruntled HMI had to be informed that the Board had nothing to back up his mistaken conviction, and that unless Merrywood Secondary School exceeded its 200 pupil limit (which it did not), it was difficult to apply any pressure in the direction of separate school premises.

Theodosius therefore had to be content with a rather miserable visit to Merrywood in 1908 - the staff had "not been materially improved" and the standard of work "remains low" - and with a nagging reminder from the Board to the Education Committee that real specialist teachers, especially in English and mathematics, must be added to the staff. To achieve this, Mackail made the remarkable suggestion that at the time of the
next vacancy, "it would be desirable for full particulars of the person proposed to be appointed to be submitted to the Board for their approval before an appointment is made". This overt distrust of the governing body (and therefore the Education Committee) and the blatant interference in the matter of staff appointments, which was always considered the prerogative of each school's managers, was unprecedented.

The Education Committee seems to have ignored Mackail's suggestion, or at least not had the opportunity to implement it, and by the time of the second General Inspection in October 1910, the Inspectorate in general was taking a less critical line, so the Education Committee escaped further harassment. On that occasion, the teachers were said to work very hard, to have 'responded cheerfully to criticisms' in the past, and to be "well above average ... in teaching power". There was keen competition for the 200 places and a "happy increase" in the number staying longer at school before moving on to higher education or commercial or industrial life. And there had been improvements in games and corporate life, with the children being better trained in initiative and self-government. The gradual progress was confirmed at the 1914 Inspection, but a private note, for "the Office only", expressed concern that at 61, Mr Crank was "probably a little past his work". He was described as "a very nice old man, with much charm and gentleness of character", but he failed to exercise vigorous control, the result being that the school was "rather too easy-going in the matter of work ... probably due to his rather nerveless authority". In the absence of corroborative evidence, it is impossible to know how justified this estimation was. Certainly Mr Crank would, but for the War, have been coming to the end of his teaching career, a career which had included the prolonged and occasionally acrimonious battle to win secondary school recognition for Merrywood — perhaps he deserved to relax a little.

He may have considered one of his more notable achievements to have been the creation of a secondary school at Merrywood without the sacrifice of the whole of the elementary school. Few people managed to defy the Board of Education's obstinate stance on this issue, and Merrywood thus became one of a small — and diminishing — number of combined elementary and secondary schools, at least in urban areas. This not only preserved the organic connection between the two so valued by the higher grade school headmasters, but gave scope for experiments in school organisation that the uniform secondary school model could never do.

One such was considered in 1909, when Bristol approached the Board of Education with an original plan to replace the usual infants/elementary/secondary pattern at Merrywood with the creation of two equal (500 strong) departments, with a transfer age to senior school of 9 or 10. The experiment was already working well at Sefton Park, the new elementary school associated with Fairfield Road, and at Parson Street, within Merrywood's catchment area. The Board was quite taken with this idea, particularly liking the resemblance it bore to the preparatory arrangements "of our big public schools". A senior official passed it up to Morant's deputy, soon to succeed him, Selby-Bigge with the comment, "this will interest you ... I have no doubt this will be the natural organization
in future in large towns". Of course, others did have doubts and the Bristol plan never became official policy, but the idea of varying the age of transfer was an imaginative move which could have opened up various possibilities. A number of local authorities were to experiment in that area over the next 30-40 years as, with all too little help from the central authority, they sought to make the education of the unselected majority of children more worthwhile.

Some Bristol Comparisons

While Bristol's three higher grade schools and their progress after 1902 are the main focus of this Chapter, it is worth dipping into the annals of some of Bristol's other secondary schools to see how they fared. Most informative for the purposes of this study are schools which shared some characteristics with higher grade schools - either their newness, or their strength in science, or their small number of older pupils - rather than the more obviously favoured schools like Bristol Grammar or Redland Girls' High. In the relations between all these schools and the Board of Education, there are striking contrasts with the general tone adopted towards the local education authorities and their schools. For example, when the Merchant Venturers were told in 1904 that their school did not conform to the Regulations because it did not include enough English, and Latin was not one of the two foreign languages taught, they simply replied, "we prefer German", and the matter was dropped.

From the first, the Board reserved the right to communicate directly with the managers and governors of non-municipal schools, and a sense of mellow rapport is rarely lacking from the correspondence. It was as if the heads and governors of the various schools knew that they had a sympathetic audience at the Board of Education, while the Board trusted them to be doing basically the right thing with their schools. That might require the odd regulation to be waived or the governors given extra time to sort out a deficiency, and it often meant that the views of the local education authority were ignored - or rather, not even solicited. There seems to have been very little contact between the Education Committee and the voluntarily-provided secondary schools, except when the latter were seeking financial support or giving notice of some decision agreed between them and the Board of Education. The Education Committee, on the other hand, did not appear to have any pretensions to increase its influence over such schools, but its attempts to co-ordinate its secondary school provision were greatly hampered by the privileged access which the older institutions had to the Board of Education.

PRO Ed.35/2576. The HMIs had been greatly impressed in 1903 by the "exceptionally high level of organization", the headmaster's "great business capacity" and the "almost overanxious" boys.
One group of people who were interested in starting new schools around the turn of the century were the Roman Catholics. The early experience of the Christian Brothers' College (later St Brendan's) in Bristol illuminates some interesting aspects of the Board of Education's priorities. This Roman Catholic boys' school started in one room of a private house in Berkeley Square in 1899, charging fees of between £2 and £6 a year, and by 1903 was educating 54 boys between the ages of 8 and 17 and earning small grants from the Science and Art Department. The Catholics were "most anxious" to develop their own secondary schools and Father David O'Brien applied for recognition of the Christian Brothers' College (Division A) and the Convent of Mercy High School (A or B) in October 1903. The Board of Education expressed some reservations and the HMI's visited twice in the first half of 1904, as a result of which the girls' school was turned down at that time for lack of numbers.

At the boys' school, the rooms were found to be "much smaller than I generally recommend for recognition", and the Brothers' plan to "crowd 80 in them" was "unthinkable". Of the four rooms which comprised the school, two were equipped as laboratories, and a third as a combined physics laboratory/art room/classroom, in which the desks were extremely close together; all the rooms were "very stuffy". The boys used the nearby Brandon Hill for exercise, though its steep slopes ruled out the playing of organised games, and of the so-called playground - the back garden of the house - the HMI said, "I do not think it should be accepted", especially as the Brothers were thinking of building another room extending 34 feet into it. A third of the boys were in the junior preparatory class, and only 5 in the 3rd year or advanced part of the Board of Education's four-year course, though because there were only three teachers, those boys had to be taught with boys still in the elementary part of the course. There seemed to be no way of providing for any 4th year pupils. As to the boys' eligibility for the course, "no doubt a small proportion of them are", and "possibly" they would be able to benefit from it. The teachers were all trained by the Christian Brothers' Society in Ireland, without degrees or experience of English secondary schools, and though the teaching was "too much of the nature of lecturing", it was regarded by the HMI's as satisfactory.

Despite this catalogue of imperfections, any one of which would have furnished cause for a major battle with a higher

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1 This section draws on PRO Ed.35/838; Bristol Education Committee, Minutes; and Bristol Education Committee - Higher Elementary Sub-Committee, Minutes.

2 E. Halevy, Imperialism and the Rise of Labour (1926) pp 185-9, described the striking growth of Roman Catholicism at this time - up to 1,000 conversions a month, including the son of the Archbishop of Canterbury - and noted that regarding their schools, the Catholics "were even more determined than the Anglicans to preserve their denominational character".

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grade school, recognition as a secondary school was recommended, initially for a year. The Inspector explained his decision: "The contrast between the premises here and the other A Schools in Bristol is so very great, that were it not that this is a Roman Catholic School, not expected to compete with others, and unopposed by the Education Authority ... I should unhesitatingly have recommended refusal of this application". The school was, incidentally, not confined to Catholics - a fifth of the boys were non-Catholics. A lone voice in the Board of Education felt that "I do not think we should grant any kind of recognition" until there were "definite proposals for improving the accommodation and staff", but Mackail and Bruce were happy to proceed. Recognition for grants was even awarded retrospectively, from January 1904, when the school was clearly below standard, and the "precise character" of the recognition (A or B) could be delayed until later. The school was therefore assured of its future promptly and without fuss, and with what might be regarded as almost an excess of the sort of flexible common sense which any new school needs.

When compared with the treatment accorded by the Board to the higher grade schools, it is difficult to refute the charge of double standards. Perhaps the College's willingness to forget its science bias and become a Division B school helped it to gain such favourable treatment. Certainly it could not have been due to its prompt attention to the Inspectors' criticisms, and it had to be nagged into improving its accommodation. The planned room in the back garden/playground having been rejected by the Board as "grotesquely inadequate", the Brothers said they would try to buy the next-door house. HMI Tutton was unhappy about their proposals, not least because the house in question was not for sale, but said "I will not stand in the way" if the Board approved. When pressed, Father O'Brien suddenly found that the house was for sale, and he wanted speedy recognition of the College in order to "strengthen and encourage" the Brothers in their dealings with the local authority. They then repeatedly applied to the Bristol Education Committee for funds to carry out essential improvements, despite early statements that the Christian Brothers' Society was happy to meet all costs¹. Understandably, the Education Committee declined almost as repeatedly.

Probably even more important to the College's good relations with the Board of Education was the fact that the HMIs obviously felt comfortable at the school. At the time of the first General Inspection in 1906, the following points were noted: the majority of the boys, who were mostly sons of clerks and commercial managers, left school at 15 or earlier - only 6 out of 55 were over 15; 20 were under 12 years of age; about half came from public elementary schools; there was "a dearth of really first class achievement" amongst the teachers; the headmaster had so many duties outside school that he "delegates much to a senior assistant"; and more could be done to develop "a strong corporate spirit". And yet the

¹ St. Brendan's College eventually moved from Berkeley Square (still basically the 2 houses) in 1960, when the school numbered 600.
Inspectors firmly declared, "this School is of the Grammar School type". The grounds for such an assertion are extremely hard to appreciate, even allowing for the fact that, like the Board of Education, the HMIs had a sort of sixth-sense approach to what grammar schools should be like, which no amount of regulations or observable facts and figures could define. They very much liked the family atmosphere in the school and the "happy relations existing among all concerned", and they thought the headmaster wise and devoted and the teachers keen and willing. Although "judged by the ordinary standards of criticism there are undoubtedly some things wanting", they concluded that the school "must not be judged quite on ordinary lines". A cynic might conclude that since the College was unlikely to cost the Board of Education much - as well as the boys' fees and the Irish Society's support, the monks worked without salary - they did not very much mind how it was judged, and after all, the school was strong on Latin!

Colston's Girls' Day School

Another place where the HMIs felt thoroughly at home was Colston's Girls' Day School. Speedily recognised as a secondary school (Division B) in 1903 and obviously flourishing, this school demonstrated particularly clearly the advantages of being in direct and sympathetic contact with the Board when disputes arose with the Bristol Education Committee. One such was over the recognition of Fairfield Road, to which Colston's Girls' School put up such stiff resistance. Miss Hughes was the only headteacher invited to the big conference on the matter in February 1904, and when HMI Tutton dropped into the school two days later and found her dissatisfied with the way the discussion had gone, he encouraged her to write personally to Mr Buckmaster. In her letter she claimed that Fairfield could never become a "real Secondary School" without completely changing, particularly in raising its normal age of leaving, "for on this alone the whole essence of Secondariness depends". And she asked, "is there some magic in the terms 'Division A' and 'Secondary' by which the incomes of these parents (too poor now to pay endowed school fees) shall be so increased that they will be able to postpone for several years the age at which they need their children to earn money?". It is hard to imagine her using such a tone to a complete stranger or someone of whose response she was unsure. She certainly contributed to the lobby which succeeded in imposing some key changes on Fairfield against the wishes of the Education Committee.

An unusually large team of six from the Board of Education visited Colston's Girls' School early in 1905, and were enormously impressed - they found it "difficult to exaggerate the high standards of excellence". They enthused about the headmistress, her loyal staff, the "exceptional cleanliness,

1 This section is drawn from PRO Ed.35/844 & 35/846; Bristol Education Committee, Minutes; Bristol Education Committee - Higher Education Sub-Committee, Minutes.
tidiness, and brightness" of the buildings, the "uniformly excellent" lessons, and the "refining influence" the school had on its pupils. With a fee normally of £6, the parents were predominantly clerks (118), retail traders (81) and professional and independent people (55), with very few artisans (13). A number of girls were admitted from public elementary schools, which "puts some strain" on the middle part of the school. The Inspectors therefore paid a warm tribute to "the special care and watchfulness of the Head Mistress" which ensured that "the very high tone which characterises other parts of the school is maintained there ... it is astonishing how rapidly scholars who may have been brought up in other surroundings, assimilate to their environment". This classic statement of the merits of social and behavioural manipulation shows that that is how the Inspectors believed elementary school children and the secondary system ought to be brought into correlation. The children should be admitted in manageable numbers and then changed or 'refined', rather than allowing the development of their own schools, out of which they would emerge better educated, but still recognisably of the social class and background from which they started.

Within a few months of the Inspection, Colston's Girls' School applied to become a recognised centre for pupil teachers. This was a logical development for the school, but the Education Committee wanted a little time to see how it fitted into its master plan for the co-ordination of secondary and higher education. This was nearing completion, and the Committee was particularly concerned about how it would affect its own threatened Pupil Teacher Centre. But almost immediately (and four days before Christmas), HMIs Elliott and Theodosius, who were aware that the Education Committee might be reluctant to agree, turned up at the school to discuss the plan. The next the Education Committee knew of the matter was that the Board had given its approval, backdated it by nine months, and authorised a loan of £4,000 for urgent building. The headmistress then informed the Committee that the Board had also agreed to changes in the school's constitution which included raising the leaving age, so it should be added to the list of institutions eligible for senior scholarship holders.

This was all too much for the members of the Committee, who protested to the Board that "they should have been consulted before the Board finally sanctioned this alteration". But matters progressed smoothly without them, and by June 1906, the revised scheme governing the school was complete. This time the Education Committee responded that "it views with much apprehension the proposal to raise the fees at Colston's Girls' School so far as it affects Bristol children, and also the proposal to increase the age at which it is possible for girls to remain in the School, inasmuch as it seriously affects the scheme of co-ordination in Bristol". There was little the Committee could do to express its frustration, except to be uncooperative in small ways, in the areas over which it did have some control. Thus, three city scholarship girls who wished to remain at Colston's were told they must "select some other institution at which ... the unexpired period of the scholarship may be held", and requests for financial assistance for the proposed pupil teacher centre at the school were turned down, firstly on the grounds that "the
Authority has sufficient accommodation at its own Pupil Teacher Centre", and later because, it said, the funds for building grants were exhausted. The disagreement rumbled on for several more months, but there was never any real doubt about its outcome, especially once the Board of Education achieved its goal of closing down all pupil teacher centres not attached to secondary schools.

The Colston's Girls' School episode is a good example of how local authorities could be relegated to the role of insignificant bystanders while the endowed and independent secondary schools sorted out their own affairs with the Board of Education. Notification of decisions often reached them only after they had been made, decisions which could have far-reaching implications for the educational structure of the city over which they were supposed to hold responsibility, as well as incurring financial liabilities for the local education authority. On the other hand, the promptness and consideration which such schools invariably encountered at the Board point strongly to a special relationship, which meant that trust deeds could be changed, poor buildings overlooked, and practical difficulties ignored. It was as if the Board willed that certain schools should become secondary schools, whatever the problems, and one suspects that the schools themselves were never in any doubt about their future.

The Pupil Teachers' Centre

This dispute affecting Bristol's Pupil Teacher Centre reminds us of an area of higher elementary education which was transformed during the first decade of the twentieth century. At the beginning of the decade, pupil teacher training lay firmly in the same sphere as higher grade school education, with which it shared a number of characteristics. It had long been the main route by which working class children could advance their education and social position, and had been developed primarily by the school boards. The higher grade schools fitted fairly smoothly into the system, with significant numbers of their pupils moving on to training, some of their staff members helping out with lectures, and the schools themselves offering good teaching practice experience.

By the end of the decade the system had been virtually dismantled, with pupil teacher centres abolished, bursaries and student teacherships introduced, and most intending teachers undertaking at least four years of the new-style secondary education in a large number of institutions. It was a transformation which had not been anticipated by those at

As well as the Christian Brothers and Colston's Girls', financial help from the local authority was sought within the first 3 years by Bristol Grammar (manual instruction workshop), Redland High (science laboratory), and the Cathedral School. The Private Schools' Association also hoped for aid in funding a "Visiting Teacher of Science Instruction to those private schools which are or will be recognised by the Board of Education".
the local level, who took some time to realise that changing
the nature of the teaching profession was a high priority at
the Board of Education; indeed, it has been suggested that
Morant’s main interest in reforming secondary education
stemmed from his desire to achieve that goal.

Along with most of the larger school boards, Bristol had taken
advantage of the Education Department’s acceptance in 1880 of
the merits of grouping pupil teachers for central classes
given by special instructors. From 1889, evening and
Saturday morning sessions were being held at the centrally
located Castle Elementary School, and in 1896 daytime classes
were inaugurated in premises rented from the YMCA in St James
Square. A quarterly examination screened the hopeful
candidates, and pupil teachers from voluntary schools were
charged £2 a year. The classes enjoyed considerable success —
in 1897, 18 out of 44 students (2 boys, 16 girls) were placed
in the 1st class of the Queen’s Scholarship examination for
admission to training colleges and only 4 failed, and in 1899,
27 out of 45 achieved a 1st class pass and just 1 failed.

The obvious advantages of this style of training encouraged
the Bristol School Board to plan its own permanent centre, and
a loan of £6,676 was raised for a new building in Broad Weir,
incorporating a special basement science centre from which
the city’s peripatetic science demonstrator operated. It was
opened in 1899 by Bishop Percival of Hereford, formerly
headmaster of Clifton College and a prime mover in several
innovations in Bristol education, and admitted 440 pupil
teachers, 320 from board schools and 120 from voluntary
schools. At least one local newspaper heartily approved,
recalling that the Royal Commission ten years earlier had
labelled as “the weakest part of our educational machinery”
the system introduced as a temporary expedient in 1846, and
taking pride in the fact that Bristol was keeping in line with
the best school boards.

The Centre made a promising start, despite a few initial
problems, two of which derived from the strongly feminine
nature of the pupil teacher world. No less than five women
teachers were appointed in quick succession and either never
arrived or left very soon after, and the Manchester graduate
who eventually accepted the post of assistant mistress had
to consult her parents first. And there was concern about

1 By L. Holcombe, Victorian Ladies at Work (1973) p 37.
2 Bristol School Board - Management Committee, Minutes 8
Apr 1897; Bristol School Board, Minutes 24 Jan 1898.
3 Clare, op.cit. p 10.
4 The Bristol Mercury 17 Dec 1898.
5 This may have had some bearing on an unexpected ruling by
the School Board (Minutes 12 Dec 1900) that “Women
Mistresses and Assistants who marry must previously
resign their appointment under the Board, as except under
exceptional circumstances no married woman will in future
be engaged as a permanent teacher by the Board”. Since
nothing precedes or follows this decision in the records,
it is difficult to know what to make of it, but it was
not unusual for the times; London was one of the few
cities never to impose a bar on married women teachers
and to re-employ them after the birth of a child.
the poor performance of girl pupil teachers in parts of the examination, particularly geography and history, for which the Board of Education's emphasis on needlework and cookery was largely responsible. The Bristol School Board was not very enthusiastic about the merits of cookery, at one time refusing to build a cookery room at St George Higher Grade School, and leaving it to the Technical Instruction Committee to establish a central school in Great George Street and branch schools around the city. The dedicated school board member, Miss Townsend, took up the cause of the girl pupil teachers, and persuaded her colleagues to instruct the heads of all elementary school to arrange for girls to study geography instead of extra needlework and to do drawing with the boys.

A further difficulty centred on the admission of pupil teachers at what was the normal leaving age (14) from ordinary elementary schools, but which for higher grade schools was often in the middle of a course of study. Mr Pickles at St George repeatedly complained of the "many inducements held out by the School Board for future PTs to leave at the earliest possible moment", and on one occasion accused the Board of "a distinct breach of promise" in luring away the students he badly needed to boost his advanced course numbers. It was then agreed that intending pupil teachers could complete their courses at their schools, before transferring to the Pupil Teacher Centre without having to sit the entrance examination and with a reduced period of apprenticeship to follow. This arrangement worked well, apart from one hiccup when Alderman Dose acting for the new Education Committee and apparently ignorant of this agreement, accused Mr Pickles of holding back candidates for the examination in what the latter regarded as an "extraordinary letter" which was "not only unjust but quite untrue". In some respects it anticipated Morant's changes in the direction of a normal secondary education for intending teachers. By the end of 1900, numbers sitting the entrance examination had trebled since 1895, and the Centre was instructing 643 pupil teachers, an unusually large number.

But it was the misfortune of the pupil teacher centres to enter what looked like being their most flourishing period just as they came under threat, alongside the higher grade schools and the school boards themselves. The Board of Education agreed to fund Bristol's new centre for the year 1901-2 because of the "uncertainty" over its legality, but after that, application had to be made to the City Council for financial support. The Regulations of 1904 spelled out the Board's long-term plans for pupil teachers - that from the age of 12 to 16 they should receive a "sound liberal general education" in the company of non-pupil teachers, i.e. in

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1 Bristol School Board - School Management Committee, Minutes 14 Jan 1897, 13 Jul 1898; Bristol Technical Instruction Committee, Minutes 29 Jul 1891 ff.
2 St George School, Log Book 1 Feb, 1 & 8 Mar, 29 Nov 1897, 24 Jul 1899, 29 Mar 1900, 19 Jul 1904.
3 Early in 1902, the judgment in the case Dyer v. London School Board made pupil teacher centres financed by the rates illegal; later in 1902, the Education Act empowered local education authorities to train their teachers.
secondary schools. The committee looking into the co-
ordination of education in Bristol was concerned that, like
many other areas, the city lacked secondary school places for
girl pupil teachers, unless "ordinary paying pupils of
Secondary Girls' Schools take up the teaching profession in
Elementary Schools in much larger numbers than they have done
hitherto". Such a development would no doubt have delighted
Morant, but it was to be at least another decade, during which
the profession experienced a dire shortage of recruits, before
elementary school teaching became a respectable occupation for
middle class girls. So the Bristol Education Committee
decided to keep up its Pupil Teacher Centre, which was
reaching a "high level of efficiency" according to the HMI in
November 1904, and it made plans to improve the facilities,
increase the number of students and employ six permanent
teachers, most of them graduates¹. The Bristol Centre, with
62 boys and 302 girls, was then the largest in the country,
only three others (Bolton, Islington and St Pancras) having
more than 200 students².

These plans represented a serious misinterpretation of the
intentions of the Board of Education, which by 1906 was
becoming impatient. Following a further HMI visitation and
conference with the Committee, it recommended that the Pupil
Teacher Centre should close. The local authority
prevailed, arguing that until its co-ordination scheme was
complete, it would not take "action on the lines suggested"
. The Board reluctantly agreed that it would "not refuse to
recognise" the Centre for 1906-7, but urged that "definite
steps on the lines of the Board's suggestions" should have
been taken by the end of the year. Eventually, of course,
Bristol fell into line. 1907 saw it experimenting with twenty
of the new bursaries for teacher training³, and the Pupil
Teacher Centre was closed in 1912, though not without
something of a local outcry because, it has been suggested,
"the Centre provided for the poorest pupils an entry into the
teaching profession" which free places at secondary schools
did not wholly replace⁴. In any case, for some years the
intending young teachers in secondary schools mixed little
with the other pupils, generally being placed in separate and
self-contained classes with their own teachers, facilities and
playground⁵.

¹ Bristol Education Committee - Higher Education Sub-
Committee, Minutes 16 Nov 1906, 21 Jan 1907.
² Board of Education, Statistics for 1903-4-5 (1905).
³ Bristol Education Committee - Higher Education Sub-
Committee, Minutes 2 Nov 1906, 21 Jan 1907.
⁴ Wood, op.cit. p 49. As Tropp has shown in op.cit. pp
186-7, the bursary system followed by training college
postponed earning until the age of about 20, which was a
formidable deterrent to working class entrants to the
profession.
⁵ In older secondary schools they were segregated for
reasons of social prejudice; in municipal schools, they
were a separate group because they were the only pupils
entitled (and financed) to remain at school after the age
of 16. Ellen Nallet, a bursar at Fairfield Road School
before the First World War, cannot recall any other
senior pupils—the bursars were the 'Sixth form'.

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The transformation of the pupil teacher system thus becomes another instance of the way in which an apparently commendable educational reform can be viewed in a very different light upon closer examination. From the student’s point of view, the chief differences compared with the higher grade/pupil teacher centre system, were that they studied little science, or even none at all; with or without a bursary, they had to maintain themselves for much longer before they started earning; and instead of being the senior pupils of the institution in which they had studied for much of their school lives, they were often treated as unwelcome and rather secondary intruders in the older established secondary schools. Morant did not bring about a dramatic improvement in the general education of such pupils. Instead, he so ordered things that the teaching profession attracted different recruits — and for a while very few of them — thereby reducing opportunities for poorer children and cutting away the working class roots of the teaching profession.

The Education Committee’s Achievement

From its early optimism in 1903, Bristol’s new education authority had to learn a great deal about its role and powers in a very few years, particularly in relation to secondary education. The 1902 Act refrained from saying anything and the 1904 Regulations tell nowhere near the full story. The Cockerton Judgment and the abolition of the school boards created a vacuum into which the Board of Education and its Inspectorate could move, meticulously tailoring all secondary schools to their own preferred pattern with little regard for local wishes. Bristol, like other new education authorities all over the country, was brusquely acquainted with the details of that pattern as, under pressure, it discarded many of the characteristics which it had assumed to be intrinsic to publicly-aided secondary schooling.

One of the more curious features of the Board’s policy towards the new secondary school system was the almost complete absence of statistical or demographical information. The only time that the number of secondary school places required in Bristol was raised, nobody questioned the Education Committee’s suggested target of 10 places per 1,000 of the population. But despite Bristol’s success in turning all three of its higher grade schools into secondary schools, this proportion was not achieved and the Committee was shocked in 1913 to discover that only 4% of the city’s children were able to proceed to secondary schools, a figure considerably lower than the national average. The Board and the Inspectorate seem to have relied on a ‘rule of thumb’ approach on the numbers question, being much more interested in the quality of schooling available than the quantity which might be desired. The only measure it applied was based on totals of older pupils within the higher grade schools, which was a spurious test of demand since the schools were operating under different conditions — and in Fairfield’s and Merrywood’s cases, very uncertain ones.

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Given that there were no guidelines on numbers, the clause in the 1902 Act which stipulated that local education authorities "shall have regard to any existing supply of efficient schools or colleges" could be used to great effect. Unlike 1870, this 'gap-filling' exercise had no finite statistical limits, but was subject to personal judgments and prejudices. The definition of 'efficient' was virtually meaningless at the time the Act was passed, and the description 'existing' could be selectively applied. All the older endowed and proprietary secondary schools clearly 'existed', and were thus given a privileged position which many of them scarcely merited on other grounds, and which bestowed on them a status, almost a mystique, which has not yet been dispelled. Newer institutions, trying to solve the problem of what to do with the children the selective schools do not want, have thus always been faced with the unenviable choice of trying to emulate them or resigning themselves to a lower status.

The central authorities after 1902 attempted both ploys with the higher grade schools. Bristol's Mr Theodosius was a prominent example of the kind of HMI who really wanted the higher grade schools to be downgraded in status - and used that as a threat whenever his wishes were challenged. Then when it became clear that they would become secondary schools, he nagged them into adopting the traditional features of the older grammar schools and shedding many of the characteristics which had made them unique. The higher grade schools were extremely vulnerable to that kind of pressure. They were dependent on public funds, their inventors no longer existed (though the new education committees often proved to be loyal defenders of the schools they had 'inherited'), their governors and headteachers had no special rapport with the people who mattered, and their main beneficiaries were neither influential nor rebellious. The evidence from Bristol shows that at least some local people cared very much that 'their' schools were being changed, but in the realm of secondary education, they had no statutory rights on which to take a stand, and it was impossible to convince antipathetic officials of the special merits of a style of education so different from the one that had nurtured them. The Education Committee, the heads and teachers, and prospective parents were all forced to accept that if St George, Fairfield and Merrywood were to exist at all as secondary schools, it would have to be on the Board of Education's terms - and they had to fight every inch of the way even to achieve that. They never became quite like the older grammar schools¹, but they certainly resembled them more closely than they resembled their own earlier versions. As higher grade schools, their complete accessibility to all children, and their ability to devise a worthwhile education for a wide variety of pupils, however long they stayed and whatever their aspirations, gave them a unique slot in the city's educational provision which the new-style secondary schools did not even try to fill.

¹ As well as practical differences, they never challenged them in terms of prestige. Bristolians making choices about secondary schools later in the century recall that St George, Fairfield and Merrywood sat around the bottom of the list headed by Bristol Grammar School. Almost by accident, Fairfield is still called a grammar school.
Conceivably, a different kind of local education authority might have put up a stiffer resistance on their behalf, for, as one writer about Bristol has suggested, the new administrative system tended to "muffle or distort the expression of local feeling on education" and "had a subtle effect on the whole position of public education in the local community. It removed it a stage further from the public gaze; it caused it to be a stage less responsible to the public; it made its direct relationship with the public more tenuous". But on the whole, the transition from school board to local education authority was accomplished more smoothly than might have been expected - "anticipations of trouble and friction have been singularly falsified", observed a contemporary source - and the new authority does not seem to have been lacking in commitment or interest. Nor did it meekly give in to the Board of Education and the Inspectorate; it quickly developed the same kind of proprietary and protective instinct towards the municipal secondary schools as the school board had had towards the higher grade schools, and it discovered increasing reserves of obstinacy in its dealings with the Board.

In the resistance put up by the Bristol Education Committee to the raising of fees at Fairfield or the removal of the elementary school from Merrywood, it is hard to see how any local body could have done more. Its success in the second of those two struggles, as well as the maintenance of the low fee at St George, rank as notable victories, rare amongst any local authorities. While the Board of Education and the HMIs were sometimes patronising about the efforts of the Bristol authorities and teachers, Morant was never quite as hostile towards them as he was to the representatives of some other areas, and it is likely that they achieved as much as could have been achieved in the face of that formidable autocrat. If they spent cautiously and failed to plan any new schools, at least they ensured the continuance of the three higher grade schools they had inherited. The fact that the schools had lost many of their most precious characteristics was not their doing, any more than was the failure to continue the development of additional schools of the same type. That was the work of a central authority which had decided to banish those characteristics from the realms of secondary education, and was prepared to ride roughshod over any local authority to mould that authority's schools to fit its own preconceptions.

One student of the subject has asserted that "Bristol never seriously attempted to provide 'Secondary Education for all'"; but that the realisation in 1913 of it poor performance in secondary school provision spurred it into considering other alternatives. A joint committee of Education Committee members and representatives from engineering firms made plans which resulted in 1917 in the opening of a Junior Technical School offering a two-year course from the age of 13 or 14, and in the 1920s three 'Central Schools' were set up in the north, south and east of the city. But they were given

1 Clare, op.cit. pp 229,233.
2 Arrowsmith, op.cit. pp 229,233.
3 Various committees met 290 times in the first 2 years.
4 Wood, op.cit. pp 64,68.
second-rate buildings and, to prevent competition with the secondary schools, pupils were not allowed to take scholarship examinations or transfer schools. They never really prospered or developed a distinctive identity, and serve to prove that the elementary education system could have no satisfactory or enduring apex once its natural progression had been curtailed.

The secondary school, one Bristol commentator has observed, was “an implant, based on middle class models, grafted unnaturally on to a working class system”, and in Bristol, as all over the country, there was a high rate of refusal even to try for scholarships or free places. A preliminary examination was introduced in 1912 to encourage parents to consider the possibility of secondary education for their children, but up to a half of those who ‘passed’, chose not to sit the final examination – perhaps not surprisingly, when there were 10 successful ‘preliminary’ candidates for every subsidised place. George Creech recalled that from his class of 60, only 12 opted to take the Bristol junior scholarship examination, 2 of whom passed, and that financial considerations were the main reason for the rest dropping out. Such children were undoubtedly the biggest losers in the reorganisation of education after 1902, and there is now a growing body of evidence, particularly from oral sources, which shows that many of them found the later part of their schooling extremely frustrating and depressing. As elsewhere, elementary schools quickly adjusted to the demands of a competitive scholarship examination, though in Bristol public criticism of the special coaching they laid on brought a ban from the Education Committee – which merely encouraged

Though it is unfair to suggest that the central schools were not successful within the confines assigned for their operation. The South Central School was said to have developed a strong ‘esprit de corps’ and to have produced a number of local primary school headmasters; the North Central School flourished under the headship of James Steger, the early recruit to Merrywood’s first science class in 1896; and the East Central School was said by a former pupil to have had an “excellent staff”, though only in the pupils’ last year was there any “deviation from routine subjects”. This school, in the buildings of the Rose Green Elementary School built to serve St George Secondary School, resisted extinction and for a while became a girls’ grammar school in the hands of a determined headmistress. Wood, op.cit. pp 66-8; Harrison, op.cit. p 110; Glyn Morgan in conversation.

1 See especially S. Humphries, Hooligans or Rebels? (1981), or his shorter ‘Radical Childhood in Bristol 1889-1939’ in Bristol Broadsides (Co-op) Ltd., Bristol’s Other History (1993) pp 5-29, both of which draw heavily on the Bristol People’s Oral History Archive comprising over 200 interviews conducted in 1979-80. The evidence of disaffection and truancy among older ‘elementary’ schoolchildren presents a startling contrast to the impression gained from reading the log books of the higher grade schools, with their minimal punishment, excellent attendance and hard-working, committed pupils.
teachers to coach pupils for a few out of school hours\textsuperscript{1}. One Merrywood pupil recalled being promoted from his Standard VI class of 62 children to the new secondary school in 1905. But he was there for just one morning before it was discovered he was too young, and he was assigned to the elementary school hall, where two classes, comprising Standards VI, VII and Ex-VII, were accommodated. There, the curriculum (for his last eighteen months of schooling) was "devoid of frills such as Woodwork, Science and French, so it is only to be expected that I have very little to remember". He left school early, on his thirteenth birthday, and commented: "Had we been allowed to continue in 'Higher Grade' the last year or two would certainly have given us a wider education. Those of us who were caught in the transitional period could be said to have been deprived"\textsuperscript{2}.

He was, it must be remembered, just a tiny part of the 96% of Bristol children in that situation, and it was a situation which lasted for rather longer than the word 'transitional' usually implies. Though many of them would not have continued their schooling beyond the statutory minimum, under the higher grade school system they could have done so. The new-style secondary schools, with their higher fees and extra costs, their selective admission and four-year 'academic' curriculum, and their physical and cultural separation from the elementary schools, very effectively closed off any further education for the majority of the population. It became abnormal for ordinary children to continue their education, thereby producing a range of expectations which were to be relayed down through generations of parents who lacked the resources or the will to challenge the educational package delivered to them by the politicians and civil servants who so ably represented the early twentieth century elite.

\textsuperscript{1} Wood, op.cit. p 6.
\textsuperscript{2} A.C. Hone, quoted in Clare, op.cit. Appendix I.
CHAPTER 5

THE HIGHER GRADE SCHOOLS AFTER 1902

Management of the Schools
A Distinct Identity
Curriculum
Staffing and Organisation
Premises
Fees and Class of Pupil
Length and Nature of School Career
The Organic Connection with Elementary Education
A Post Script - The Higher Elementary Schools
Conclusion
THE HIGHER GRADE SCHOOLS AFTER 1902

The purpose of this Chapter is to widen the discussion from the confines of Bristol to see how higher grade schools, and the educational principles they embodied, fared in other parts of the country. We have seen that Bristol’s three higher grade schools survived in different guises, and with what some would say was enhanced status, but that they did so at the expense of several of their key distinctive features. From being the best that the public education system could offer, they were obliged to occupy the lowest level in an educational structure designed for quite different purposes. Reference has also been made to certain features which were peculiar to the Bristol situation, so the important question remains as to how far that city’s experience was typical. Were other local education authorities more in accord with Board of Education policy, and were they therefore allowed greater control over their own schools, or were they subjected to the same kind of official harassment? Did their higher grade schools manage to become secondary schools, and if so, did they have to change much? And what of those which took a step down in status, to become higher elementary or even ordinary elementary schools? Did children and parents view the new-style schools in a similar light, or did the Board of Education accomplish a fundamental revision of educational and social attitudes?

Chapter 2 painted a portrait of the main characteristics of the higher grade schools, discovering a number which were unique to the system. This Chapter will look for those characteristics in the new secondary system, with particular attention to how the higher grade schools fared in the reorganisation. The focus will be primarily on the higher grade schools which became municipal secondary schools. They were the majority and secondary school status was what many people at local level believed to be, if not the proper destiny for the schools, at least a just recognition of their achievements — anything else would have meant a downgrading and a betrayal of their efforts to date. To give a wider view, evidence in this chapter is drawn mainly from schools outside Bristol, though the Bristol examples should be borne in mind for similarities and contrasts. The analysis which follows adopts the same format as Chapter 2’s depiction of the characteristics of the higher grade schools, grouping them under seven headings — A Distinct Identity, Curriculum, Staffing and Organisation, Premises, Fees and Class of Pupil, Length and Nature of School Career, The Organic Connection with Elementary Education — with the addition of a preliminary section entitled Management of the Schools (an aspect which had no special relevance to the higher grade schools but which was crucial in the new system), and some observations about Higher Elementary Schools by way of a post-script. As before, detailed information about girls’ education will be reserved for Chapter 6.
A recurring theme will be the difference in attitudes which existed between the central and the local authorities. Along a whole range of considerations, from major issues of principle to trivial practical points, the priorities and models from which the Board of Education was working emerge as startlingly divergent both from the needs of ordinary children and the preferences of local education authorities. The rumbling dissonance between the central educational authority and a number of the local ones was an ever-present accompaniment to the emergence of England's publicly-aided secondary school system. The bitterness with which some of the more controversial issues were enjoined proves how deliberate was the construction of the 'typical' maintained secondary school; if at first the Board of Education was behaving more or less from instinct, the ensuing struggles forced it to act more consciously. There may not have been much self-doubt or re-examination of the issues at the Board, but it was at least obliged to develop an increasingly explicit rationale for its policies.

Management of the Schools

A guide to current educational legislation produced in 1903 declared that "all the active work of education will, under the Act, now be done by Education Committees ... selected by popularly elected bodies, with the addition of co-opted members". While the assumption contained in the first phrase may have been in need of revision within a few years, the rest was an accurate statement of one of the few definite, mandatory aspects of the 1902 Act. The structure and composition of each new education committee had to be approved by the Board of Education and the pages of The School Government Chronicle in the early part of 1903 were full of the submission and resubmission of schemes. These produced as a typical education committee, a large body (30-40 people), of whom at least 2/3 were councillors and the rest co-opted, including 2 statutory women and, on the Board's insistence, representatives of universities or other institutions of higher education in the area.

A smooth transition from the previous administration in terms of personnel seems not to have been a priority either for the councils drawing up the schemes or the Board approving them. A handful of school board members generally did crop up on the new education committees, but many more were discarded, and some notable figures refused to serve on principle. Thus, Birmingham education lost the services of the school board's most distinguished and long-serving member, the Rev McCarthy, who likened the dissolution of the school board to the assassination of Julius Caesar, and while wishing the education committee well, avowed his intention to stand apart

1 H.C. Richards & H. Lynn, The Local Authorities' and Managers' and Teachers' Guide to The Education Acts (1903) p 32. Both authors were barristers, Lynn acting as counsel to the NUT, and Richards an M.P.
and "still fight as strenuously as ever in the ranks of Liberalism". His retirement was honoured by remarkable tributes from local teachers, the Midland Education League of which he was chairman, and Sir George Kekewich who attended a special farewell dinner. And in Leeds, G.J. Cockburn was so insulted by the city council's picking and choosing whom they fancied from the school board that he "could not bring himself to accept the invitation". His long letter of reply consisted of an uncompromising attack on the new education committee, alleging that it was no more than an instrument for doing the government's dirty work, and that the power of electors had been "reduced to a farce". He did have the satisfaction of seeing Leeds swing so overwhelmingly to the Liberals in the 1904 municipal elections, that The Times wrote: "Not for a quarter of a century ... has such a defeat been sustained by the Conservatives. The education question considerably influenced the result."

The majority of education committees took two early steps - a survey of existing secondary education provision, and the appointment of a director or secretary of education. The first often proved to be a redundant exercise because local authorities had overestimated their control of the situation in relation to the Board of Education's direction of affairs. It also tended to be an unexpectedly long and complicated affair, though those authorities fortunate to obtain the services of Michael Sadler received invaluable advice. The second was an unsurprising development of the school board practice of relying heavily on a clerk or secretary, who had become far more than a clerical or legal subordinate; many holders of the post were extremely knowledgeable and influential figures in local education circles. It was obvious that the new local education authorities, with much larger responsibilities, would need similar assistance, and the role was likely to grow in importance because the majority of committee members did not necessarily possess any expertise on education but did have other council commitments.

However, this unexceptional trend took the Board of Education, and Morant in particular, by surprise. It seems to have been expected in those quarters that the school board clerks would disappear with the school boards, and that the clause in the

1 Described as "that uncommon personage ... a reasonable and Radical clergyman", McCarthy was the Anglican head of one of the King Edward grammar schools. He believed that "the Church had not, and ought not to have, any jurisdiction over the intellect of the nation", and was "wholly committed to doing the best for the children of the people during the limited time they were at school". The School Government Chronicle 18 Apr, 2 & 16 May 1903.

2 E.W. Jenkins, 'A Magnificent Pile' (1985) pp 81-2. Cockburn was a Liberal nonconformist who had devoted himself to education in Leeds, especially the higher grade school. Following the dramatic by-election success in North Leeds in July 1902 of a Baptist Liberal fighting solely on the Education Bill, Cockburn challenged Gerald Balfour, brother of the Prime Minister, to resign his Leeds seat and fight it on the education question. The Times 2 Nov 1904.

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1902 Act which said they should be compensated was designed to get rid of them rather than recognise their merits. Instead, not only the job, but in a number of instances the same individuals, reappeared in the new system, often with enhanced responsibilities and powers. Possibly, it has been suggested, local authorities were keen to save the cost of compensating them¹, though salaries were generally raised at the time to quite high figures, such as £500 per annum plus expenses in Warwickshire, or in Leicestershire, £500 for the director and £400 for the secretary². Internal Board of Education documents reveal that Morant deplored this development and did his utmost to minimise the importance and influence of the new local education officers. Throughout his tenure of office, the Board of Education's correspondence with the directors' professional association was full of a hostility which was surpassed only by his disparaging treatment of certain individuals³.

A further, very important deterrent to local education authorities was that if they did take the big decision to provide and maintain secondary schools, the Board of Education expected them to relinquish virtually all control of the institutions to semi-autonomous governing bodies. The 1904 Regulations laid down that recognised secondary schools must be conducted by a body of governors approved by the Board, and explained that the "Board attach importance to direct communication with the Governing Body, and to preserving for the Governing Body as much responsibility, independence and freedom of action as is consistent with effective control" by the local and central authorities. This requirement was not rigorously pursued at first, but after three years of passing references to the undesirability of centralising the management of individual schools in the hands of the education committees, the Board ruled in 1907 that all grant-aided secondary schools must have an approved 'instrument of government'. It produced a model 'instrument' the following year, which attempted to move control of secondary schools a long way from the hands of elected local representatives.

The local education authorities opposed this trend on several grounds. It represented a break with the familiar school board practice of them having sole responsibility for their own schools; it would have made for formidable practical difficulties to let assorted governors decide the needs of individual schools at a time when most local authorities were trying to organise their overall resources; and it challenged what they believed to be their legitimate right and duty, as authorised by Parliament, to make provision for the educational needs of their areas. But they could appreciate the advantages of delegating some responsibilities to smaller management bodies. The pattern which many of them arrived at was for sub-committees of the education committee, sometimes with co-opted local representatives, to look after the interests of institutions of secondary and higher education.

² The School Government Chronicle 14 Mar, 2 May 1903.
³ Some instances of this are cited towards the end of Chapter 7.
The Board criticised this format over and over again and was extremely reluctant to compromise, and there often ensued protracted negotiations picking over the minutiae of the organisation and personnel. Worcestershire made moves in the right direction, but Yardley School's local committee of ten, with its nominees from the Yardley Charity, did not please the HMIs because its powers were "very limited" and "in no way defined". Birmingham was less compliant, unanimously dismissing the Board's model instrument as "unnecessary for Council Secondary Schools, seeing that they are under the control of public representative authorities". The most solid resistance came from Leeds, whose director of education, James Graham, thus earned himself a place high on Morant's personal blacklist. Not only did Leeds submit an unacceptable instrument of government and then refuse a wholesale revision, but Graham rallied his fellow directors, eventually forcing Morant to climb down, much to the delight of the 45 local education officers who wrote to congratulate Graham.

The disagreement over governing bodies thus became both a cause and a result of the poor relations between the local education authorities and the Board under Morant. Because he did not trust the education committees to run secondary schools of the desired type, he pressed for independent governing bodies in direct contact with the Board. This had the added advantage of giving headmasters the autonomy typical of the public schools, along the lines argued during a dispute at Nottingham High School by the Rev Percival - "local interference has two bad effects, it disheartens and paralyses the Master, and it makes both parents and boys unduly critical". To relinquish control in that way was totally unacceptable to the local authorities, who believed that they had arrived at a rather more satisfactory sharing of responsibilities. But all that they achieved by resisting the Board's advice and arguing their own case, was to confirm Morant in his belief that they were unsuitable authorities for secondary school management.

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1 PRO Ed.35/2584 & 35/2554. Birmingham did not introduce governing bodies for its schools until 1982.
2 Greenhalgh, op.cit. pp 103-7.
3 The problem of governing bodies is still with us. Seen on the one hand as "the incarnation of the English commitment to diversity and public control" [A. Corbett, Much to do about Education (1978) p 641], they are also susceptible to the sort of criticism expressed by Walter Hyman in the West Riding in the 1940s: "Experience has not convinced me that so-called free-governing bodies exercise a benevolent influence on their schools". [Quoted in P.H.J.H. Gosden & P.R. Sharp, The Development of an Education Service (1978) p 158].
4 A.W. Thomas, A History of Nottingham High School 1513-1953 (1957) pp 225-8. Percival (first head of Clifton College) was speaking as chairman of the governors of Nottingham High School, in support of the headmaster against a serious challenge from a committee of parents which wanted less classics, more modern subjects and teachers to be trained. The antagonism between the school and the Nottingham Education Committee after 1902 is returned to later in this Chapter.
Chapter 2 began with a firm assertion that the higher grade schools had an identity. To local people - administrators, teachers, pupils, parents, residents - they were known to be different from ordinary elementary schools, but not like any other type of educational institution. It is now a well-established fact - and some additional evidence has appeared in the preceding pages - that the central authority also accepted them as a recognisable type, and had adjusted its rules and practices to accommodate, and even encourage, their development. However, when the political tide turned against them, it was relatively easy and extremely convenient to proceed as if the higher grade schools were nothing unusual, no more than a bungled attempt to solve a problem which the Board of Education was itself now ready to tackle properly.

In this context, 'properly' meant the dissemination of the values associated with the traditional English secondary school, whose 'raison d'être' was the mastery it was assumed to have developed in forming the character of young middle class men. Academic work, lessons, the classroom, were only a part of the whole experience which secondary education should comprise, and so schools needed to have the facilities and the organisation to cater for the other constituent parts equally effectively. The boarding school education which most of the Board's officials had received not only allowed, but required, the greater organisation and socialisation of any residential, closed community, and they sought to carry many of those principles into the urban day schools for which they were now responsible. One suspects that a sizeable part of their often unexplained hostility to elementary styles of education lay in the fact that its pupils failed to experience education in its wider sense - to have their ideas and values influenced, their characters moulded, their relationships with their peers shaped. It would be different for the pupils of the new secondary schools. They would have a recognisable ethos, maybe a poor imitation of the great independent schools but unmistakably in the same tradition, and if that represented a significant divergence from elementary school traditions, so much the better.

The term 'corporate life' crops up so repeatedly in Inspection Reports on the new aided secondary schools that it seems at times to be the single most important yardstick against which they were measured for suitability. 'Corporate life' is, of course, an intangible quality, though certain activities were taken as evidence of its existence, and the HMIs soon took to devoting a separate section of their reports to each school's progress in that area. At George Dixon School in 1914, for example, having commented on the nice religious service each morning, the "excellent system" of prefects, the arrangements for meals, the popularity of games and boxing, the summer camp, the orchestra, debating, chess and old boys' clubs, the HMIs concluded that the school had "improved in many ways".

Significantly, it was often omitted from reports on more traditional secondary schools, as if taken for granted. PRO Ed.35/2554.

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The higher grade/municipal secondary schools were not necessarily resistant to the idea of corporate life; indeed, in a happy and successful school, it is difficult to prevent it happening of its own accord. The heads of those schools were pleased and proud when it did show signs of developing naturally — when, for example, former pupils maintained contacts, or a school magazine was started, or inter-form cricket and hockey matches organised.

But the Inspectors' unrelenting emphasis on 'corporate life' suggests that they were looking for something altogether more pervasive. Every new secondary school was encouraged to start the day with a religious service, and its existence and quality were always commented upon. Hence, St George School was advised in 1905 to introduce "some sort of opening ceremony every morning" and was soon conducting daily prayers, and, perhaps surprisingly, the Christian Brothers were told to do more to "develop a strong corporate spirit" by starting morning prayers. This apparently simple change had important implications for the design of school buildings and for the general atmosphere of secondary education, both of which will be discussed later. A school magazine was regarded as a good sign, preferably with a badge and Latin motto on the front cover, and the same badge should appear on a compulsory school cap. This, St George School was told, was an "excellent thing", which would presumably help it to be more like the Colston School boys whose caps the Inspectors found to be pleasingly recognisable and familiar around the city of Bristol. In Leeds, a school cap emblazoned with LCHS (Leeds Central High School) was introduced when Leeds Higher Grade School ceased to exist, at the same time as a Latin motto and the wearing of gowns by members of staff were adopted. In addition, mention was always made of any chess, literary, debating or musical clubs within the school, and of old boys' societies and reunions. Prefects, monitors and a house system were very much approved of, and the HMIs particularly liked Waverley Road's 'school committee' at which each form's elected monitor could meet the headmaster.

But top of the list was undoubtedly games. The relationship between corporate life and organised games was assumed to be so close that they were often juxtaposed in the same sentence as if meaning the same thing. For instance, at Waverley Road School in 1907, it was noted that "care has been taken to develop a sense of corporate life" through good use of a hired playing field, and George Dixon School's recent acquisition of a games field in 1909 "cannot fail to strengthen the vigorous corporate life which already flourishes in the School". It seems almost that it was the sole test of credibility for an aspiring secondary school. Passes were awarded to local authorities which secured a playing field, to teachers who supervised games, and to pupils (especially boys - girls were less significant) who participated enthusiastically. And much could be forgiven or ignored in a school if passes were gained.

1 PRO Ed.35/860 & 35/830.
2 PRO Ed.35/860 & 35/845.
4 PRO Ed.35/2979.
5 Ibid & PRO Ed.35/2554.
Education committees had little choice but to buy or rent fields and to provide gymnasia and other facilities, some of the implications of which will be considered in the section below on premises. Bradford gradually added the necessary buildings to its eight municipal secondary schools, in several of which the HMIs deemed that "a gymnasium on the spot is a pressing necessity", and the pupils of two of them were commended for raising the money to build "a serviceable pavilion" at their loaned playing field. Local authorities did, however, manage to avoid some of the more foolish suggestions that emanated from the Board of Education. The Inspectors' concern at the absence of a fives court at St George School has already been mentioned; the Consultative Committee of 1906 thought that rifle-shooting was just the thing for higher elementary schools. Mark Grossek recalled that the London County Council was so keen to follow the Board's line that it issued a circular expressing "the wish and hope that their scholars would enter fully into the life of the schools which they attended. This meant that their scholars should take part in those outdoor antics which, under the Union Jack, accompany education unfailingly".

He also had vivid memories of the impact that going to a grammar school had on his appearance and general manner. As the son of a tailor, he was probably better dressed than many elementary schoolchildren, but he found quite a difference at the Whitaker Foundation School, where the boys all wore clean white collars and some even cuffs, and there was no daily search for dirty necks and ears. "I should have to 'tog up'", he concluded, changing his collars more often and wearing his best clothes every day, and above all, flaunting his new school cap with its badge, which was the surest sign that "I had made a distinct advance in the social scale". Gone too were the days of eating icecream or toffee in the streets, or joining in street games, it being necessary to become "altogether more genteel", which included "improving my speech" to match the nice accents of his new classmates. Similarly, Walter Southgate realised at about the age of 14 that there was a whole different language from that of the cockney street — and it required of him "great effort and concentration to drop the accent".

1 PRO Ed.35/860 & 35/2584.
3 M Grossek, First Movement (1937) p 140.
5 W. Southgate, That's the way it was (1982) pp 45,90. This was when he left school to look for a job (wearing his first pair of long trousers + bowler hat). His family was too poor for him to go to secondary school, but he continued his education at evening classes.
The discarding of their local accents seems to have been obligatory for scholarship pupils all over the country. It was a particular concern of London's Chief Inspector, especially in the case of intending teachers, and at Thornton Grammar School in Bradford the English teachers were said to have made great efforts "to correct the provincial accent". This must have furnished one of the easiest ways of discriminating those who had been assimilated, albeit superficially, into middle class life from those who stood completely outside it. It could be argued that it was only natural for middle class children at school to speak and dress as they normally did, and for working class children, always the minority amongst them, to struggle not to be conspicuous by their difference. But the introduction of school uniform into the maintained school system was a deliberate policy to achieve something rather different. With some exceptions, the wearing of anything distinctive to school was abnormal, and the adoption of school uniform in the new secondary schools was a means of proclaiming a common identity, both to the schools' own pupils and to the outside world.

School uniform was also one of the more significant 'hidden' costs of secondary education. In the elementary sector, the problem was more for some parents to acquire second-hand clothes for their children, and for teachers to check (daily) that pupils were not lousy or suffering from ringworm. There seems to have been no particular embarrassment or social stigma attached to wearing shabby clothes, and in many cities charitable 'boot funds' were administered by the education authorities. After 1902, the rare scholarship pupil at a grammar school, 'toggled up' like Mark Grossek, must have really stood out in such neighbourhoods, and there could be disadvantages to sporting a distinctive appearance. In comfortable Bournemouth, which had a profusion of private schools, the opening of the municipal secondary school in 1901 "caused a good deal of jealousy among boys who remained in the elementary schools and the first pupils found themselves ..."

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1 F. Campbell, Eleven-Plus and All That (1956) p 146; & Wilson, op. cit. p 296. Thornton Grammar School was an endowed school, which by 1905 was run mainly by the local authority as a small, low-fee co-educational school.

2 Or, as Gathorne-Hardy put it, "in England accent has been to class what colour is to race" in The Public School Phenomenon, 599-1977 (1977) p 127.

3 Distinctive clothing was originally the invention of charity and reformatory schools, to proclaim the poverty or delinquency of its wearers, often by the selection of unusually old-fashioned garments. Some charity schools, especially the hospital foundations, turned their 'uniform' into a symbol of status on becoming fee-paying middle class institutions.

4 In girls' schools, 'tunics' and 'gym slips' were originally introduced, against strong resistance, to enable girls to exercise properly; thus they "escaped the confines of stays and skirts, only to encounter institutional control" as 'young ladies' were transformed into 'schoolgirls'. P. Atkinson, 'Fitness, Feminism and Schooling' in S. Delamont & L. Duffin, eds., The Nineteenth-Century Woman (1978) pp 117-20.
in danger on the way home of assault by stone-throwing from boys of other schools. In fact the local press reported that a policeman had to be stationed to prevent a free-fight developing, and the Mayor dealt severely with the first offender brought before him.\(^1\)

Normally the municipal secondary schools remained a little different in ethos from the endowed ones, and there is evidence\(^2\) that working class children did settle more readily into them, not least because there were proportionately more of them. Despite changes, the municipal schools hung onto their closer affinity with lower middle/working class people in ways that the Board of Education constantly criticised. A teaching staff experienced in the public elementary school system, children drawn predominantly from public elementary schools, too many on scholarships, a tolerant attitude towards pupils who had to leave prematurely—all these were causes for complaint by the HMIs. The pressure on heads and local administrators to make their schools more like the middle class institutions which attracted approval and prestige, must have been enormous, and over the years nearly all ‘grammar’ schools moved irresistibly in that direction. Malcolm Muggeridge, from his early century experience of a South London borough secondary school, characterised it as "limping along after the older-established grammar and public schools, cordially detested by them, but aiming at turning out a similar product.\(^3\)" It is not unusual though to find decades later, when access to all maintained secondary schools was through the 11+ examination, or even after they had all become comprehensive schools, that the former endowed schools in an area still retain a certain mystique, ranking higher in parental esteem than the schools with municipal origins.

Curriculum

The 1890s had been a lively time for curricular issues, when, for the first time, science and technical subjects achieved sufficient academic respectability and a strong enough foothold in the education system as to alarm those who doubted their value. By then, almost all types and levels of educational institutions had been obliged to take cognizance of the development, albeit for differing reasons and with varying degrees of enthusiasm. Those provided mainly out of

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2. From oral sources, e.g. Bristolians Ellen Hallett (Fairfield Road) and George Creech (St George School).
3. M. Muggeridge, ‘Forgotten in Tranquillity’ in B. Inglis, John Bull’s Schooldays (1961) p 108. In Through the Microphone (1967) pp 28-9, Muggeridge said: "If Waterloo was won on the playing field of Eton, the class war was assuredly lost on the asphalt playgrounds of secondary schools like mine [Selhurst Grammar] .... Our South London cockney grated on the ear. Despite prefects’ colours and other trappings reminiscent of Tom Brown’s Schooldays we were irretrievably urchins of the suburbs".
public funds - technical colleges, evening classes and civic university colleges - were all expressions of this new trend. And the higher grade schools, while offering a broad span of school subjects, were most clearly distinguished from other institutions of secondary education by their systematic teaching of science and technical subjects. This was partly because they were dependent on Science and Art Department grants, and partly out of a genuine belief that such subjects were both intellectually valid and particularly useful to their pupils; the higher grade heads, it may be recalled, were firmly of the opinion that the latter was the more important reason, the former being merely an expression of it.

Since the actual content of the curriculum of most endowed grammar schools seems to be little known, the former higher grade schools provide invaluable evidence of the Board of Education's attitude to specialisation in science. By 1904, when the main Secondary School Regulations were drawn up, the higher grade school curriculum had advanced a long way from the early days of the organised schools of science. The liberalisation of the Science and Art Department's requirements from 1895 indicated that the trend was away from the exclusive sponsorship of science and technical studies, and the enjoyment and competence in science subjects shown by higher grade school pupils have already been noted. It might be thought that, if the Board had been genuinely looking to achieve the balance, flexibility and responsiveness to local needs which it said it valued, there would have been room for a proportion of more scientific secondary schools, especially as the classical curriculum was safely ensconced in the prestigious schools over which the Board had no control.

Instead, the Board's 1904 pronouncement that central grants were primarily designed to "give impartial encouragement to all well-considered local effort towards developing a general system of Secondary Schools through many channels and in varying directions" was soon proved to have no substance at all as far as curricular choice was concerned. Science and technical subjects were constantly under attack, while the merits of Latin, Greek, modern languages and English were regularly and thoroughly expounded\(^1\). Excellence in the latter range of subjects was to be a goal for all secondary schools; excellence in the former was commented upon unfavourably, as if a temporary aberration from the past. Schools were put under intense pressure to seek Division B status, as if that represented the 'proper' curriculum for a secondary school, with a strong implication that such a course would ease their path to recognition. Those that speedily gave up their science bias were applauded, sometimes with empty expressions of the hope that the literary side would be strengthened "without detriment to the science and mathematics"\(^2\).

\(^{1}\) E.g. "the increasing tendency in Secondary Schools to drop Greek altogether" justified a special pamphlet (1904-5 Report); "Latin is the necessary basis of a thorough linguistic and literary training" (1905 Regulations); municipal schools were "too predominantly scientific" (1905-6 Report); "the Board attach so much importance to the inclusion of Latin" (1906-7 Report).

\(^{2}\) As Waverley School was told in 1906. PRO Ed.35/2579.
On the other hand, the anguished pleas from various local authorities that the ending of Division A status would seriously reduce their grant, met with little sympathy at the Board, where their correspondence was annotated with remarks like "this somewhat extraordinary letter", "a piece of intentional stupidity", and "so much in the nature of conjecture that I should prefer to leave it alone". The apparently sensible solution recommended and adopted at Fairfield Road School in Bristol—a common two-year course followed by a choice between two years of more literary or more scientific work—was ditched within months of its introduction, not without some embarrassment at the Board of Education. It has in fact been impossible to find an example of any HMI giving a firm vote of confidence in the science and technical teaching of a school which prided itself on its work in those areas. The good qualifications of the science staff and the high standard of the pupils' achievement were often commented upon, perhaps because they were such a novelty to the HMIs, but the advice was always to reduce the amount of time, the scope of the work, or the level of achievement. Hence in Birmingham, George Dixon School, whose future as a secondary school was extremely uncertain in 1903-4, was persuaded to cut the amount of physics in its advanced course, and Waverley Road was told that its chemistry laboratory was too big, while at Leamington's pupil teacher classes, "too much time is devoted to Elementary Science". The staff at St George School decided in 1904 "to drop Science Examinations altogether after this year and adopt an academic Examination" and two years later physics was removed from the fourth year girls' timetable.

Equally out of favour were commercial subjects and manual instruction, both of which had a ready appeal for school leavers and their parents, and which had been positively encouraged by HMIs up to about 1900. After that date, there was a steady erosion of the time and status accorded to those subjects, again by a combination of official pronouncements and HMI pressure. The 1901 Code withdrew grant from manual instruction for boys and girls under 12, a ruling which affected children in almost every higher grade and many elementary schools, and brought forth protests from their school boards. In the new secondary schools, manual instruction for boys was one of the favoured targets for pruning, to make room for Latin and more English, though girls were much more likely to lose science and mathematics time, with their cookery and needlework being safeguarded. At Waverley Road School, the headmaster was informed that machine

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1. PRO Ed.12/119.
2. PRO Ed.35/2554 & 35/2579; and Leamington Education Committee, Minutes 14 Dec 1903.
4. The interpretation advanced by A.M. Kazamias in Politics, Society and Secondary Education in England (1966) Chapter VIII, that vocational and practical courses did not flourish because parents, LEAs and teachers were slower to change than the Board of Education really does stand the facts on their head.
5. Both occurred at St George School, Bristol. PRO Ed.35/860.
drawing, book-keeping and shorthand were all unacceptable and
should be replaced by history and geography, even though the
school's timetable had been approved by the Board six months
earlier. The head himself was said to be "very sceptical as
to the intellectual value of Shorthand", though he knew that
it was one of the subjects that kept his older pupils at
school. Presumably, the Board of Education either did not
mind if such children left, or was confident that by giving
the new secondary schools a more elevated status, they would
be popular with sufficient parents and children whatever the
omissions in their curriculum.

The constant drive from the HMI's was to enhance the allotment
of time, the qualifications of the staff and the levels of
achievement in literary subjects, especially Latin. It should
be remembered that the higher grade schools taught English,
including literature, as well as modern foreign languages, and
a few also offered Latin, generally as a voluntary subject for
older pupils. But not surprisingly, their performance in
those subjects was not what the typical HMI was familiar with,
and it seems to have been absolutely taken for granted that a
secondary school could not exist as such unless it taught
Latin seriously and continuously. Its presence on the
timetable, the content of the syllabus, the competence of the
teachers, and the progress of the pupils were always commented
upon, usually at some length and with forceful exhortations to
enhance its place in the school. There were never any
justifications as to why this should be, nor any attention to
whether the pupils were getting more out of their Latin
lessons than they had been from the subjects it elbowed out.
The 1904 report on George Dixon Girls' School was pleased to
find that Latin was replacing commercial subjects, and the
boys' school was encouraged in 1909 to extend Latin throughout
the school at the expense of German. At Thornton Grammar
School in Bradford, standards in French were so low that "it
would be better if it were dropped from the curriculum and the
time given over to Latin", as if that would miraculously solve
the problem. At Waverley Road in 1906, Latin was "receiving
more attention", and in 1907 was reported to have got off to a
good start, though the sixth formers, grappling with this new
and unfamiliar language, were said to be "timid", as if they
"feel themselves on perilous ground and ... hesitate for fear
of making false step".

There, as at all similar schools, the biggest criticism was
the absence of a real specialist classics teacher, which gave
rise to the Board's recurrent concern that the municipal
secondary schools lacked a "background of scholarship",
regardless of their achievements in science or other subjects.
A charitable interpretation of the Board's stance on the
curriculum would say that its members honestly believed that
secondary education was meaningless if it did not introduce
pupils to the intellectual discipline of learning classical
languages. We can now say with confidence that they were
wrong, but even in the context of the early twentieth century,
England's Board of Education was addicted to the literary
style of education in a way which no other country quite

1 PRO Ed.35/2579.
2 PRO Ed.35/2554; Wilson, op.cit. p 296; PRO Ed.35/2579.
shared. Shut off from and disdainful of other approaches to learning, it did not mind too much if excellence in science and technical subjects remained peripheral to the prestigious parts of the education system\(^1\). Nor was it too worried that sections of the population who looked to post-elementary education to supply them with the skills and qualifications which could advance their occupational and social prospects, felt excluded from pursuing their education in the new state secondary schools.

Staffing and Organisation

The Board of Education’s unswerving loyalty to a particular educational model was, if anything, even more graphically illustrated with regard to the staffing of the new secondary schools. There are clear hints that the Inspectorate genuinely expected newly constituted secondary schools to be staffed by ‘proper’ secondary teachers, and were surprised when local authorities retained the services of the higher grade school teachers and heads who had built up their schools to a level which made it possible for them even to contemplate becoming secondary schools. There is, as has been seen, very little evidence that the school boards cramped the style or the ambitions of their pioneering higher grade school heads; rather, the former were enthusiastically responsive and supportive in following the lead given by the latter. But the Board of Education could see nothing to recommend in a close working relationship between local authority and headteacher, and seems to have assumed that the ‘potentate’ style of headship familiar in public schools was what all secondary school heads should be like\(^2\). Its belief in headmasterly autonomy did not, incidentally, extend to heads whose ideas conflicted with its own—like Dr Forsyth and co-education in Leeds or Frederick Pickles and his St George elementary department. In such instances the typically close cooperation between municipal school heads and their employers was seen by the Board and the HMIs almost as a conspiracy to pervert the development of true secondary education\(^3\).

\(^1\) Under Morant’s Board of Education, there was nowhere where scientific and technical education flourished. Science was downgraded in all types of schools, technical colleges were neglected and provincial universities guided in other directions, and evening class enrolments dropped sharply after 1902 with the re-imposition of fees and the introduction of ‘grouped’ courses.

\(^2\) As characterised by T.W. Bamford, ‘Public School Masters’ in T.G. Cook, ed., *Education and the Professions* (1973) p 41: the public school headmaster "was a potentate and there was no other job quite like it". He suggested that it was only the great power and status of the job that attracted men to "the battlefield" from the "quiet contemplation" of Oxbridge colleges.

\(^3\) E.g. during the bitter dispute with Nottingham Education Committee, Morant enlisted a ‘spy’ who sent back very unflattering descriptions of the local headmasters.
But the selection of staff was the responsibility of the local authority, and even the Board did not generally presume to interfere in individual appointments. So the HMIs had to find other ways of expressing their disapproval, and of attempting to convey, without actually articulating their preferences, what sort of teacher was needed to create 'proper' secondary education. They bemoaned the unattractively low salaries and short holidays offered in municipal secondary schools, and repeatedly recommended the appointment of teachers with "a background of scholarship" or "high literary attainment" and with "wider" (i.e. different) teaching experience, as if that was enough to convey their meaning to anyone who understood about these things. They pressed for the separation of elementary from secondary children, on the assumption that the headteacher would stay with the elementary part of the school, and urged that secondary heads be afforded much more independence from the local authority. But significantly, they could never produce enough evidence to carry out their periodic threats to withdraw recognition of a school if, as they clearly expected, the headteacher was found wanting.

It is nevertheless very difficult to find a municipal secondary school where the Inspectors were happy with the staff they found. Over and over again, as in Bristol, teachers were commended for their dedication and competence, but told explicitly that they were unsuited to the job. Thus at Birmingham's Waverley Road in 1907, the staff were "adequate in number" (27 for 445 children), the teaching "seldom fails to be clear and effective", the discipline was such that "there is little punishment or detention and little need for any: the teachers are well able to encourage their pupils to do their best by other means", and even the headmaster and senior mistress were well regarded. And yet, salaries must be increased if the school were "to reach its proper development" or even maintain "its present level of efficiency". Since the Waverley Road teachers could reasonably see themselves as being at the pinnacle of their profession (and presumably more or less content with their salaries), the barely hidden message from the HMIs was that a completely different type of teacher was desired.

The hasty efforts of the new education authority in Worcestershire to create eight new secondary schools at once in areas long neglected, met with even greater reservations at the Board of Education. The assistant teachers of the fledgling Yardley Secondary School were inadequate, the assistant mistress being "of the Elementary School type", and all the schools suffered from "weakness in staffing". Somewhat unusually, the new Yardley School headmaster passed the Board's hidden test of competence, with his "valuable experience on the staff of good Schools", though he was having to learn to cope with a co-educational school; he obviously came from the right kind of teaching background.

1 Though note the instance mentioned in Chapter 4, when Merrywood School was encouraged to submit 'full particulars' of the next chosen candidate for the Board to approve before the appointment was made.

2 PRO Ed.35/2579.
Significantly, remembering the minimal punishment at Waverley Road, or Fairfield Road where "questions of punishment hardly arise", this headmaster resorted to corporal punishment "somewhat frequently". The rest of the Yardley staff did not match him in the Board's eyes; their "very limited" experience was "much to be regretted", since it was "quite impossible for a staff to create the tone and atmosphere of a Secondary School unless a majority of them have experienced as teachers what is meant by these almost indefinable terms". This comment echoes almost verbatim the verdict on Bristol's St George School quoted earlier, where the secondary school spirit was said to be "more easily recognized than defined", and it was probably just as much use to the teachers.

The Board's frustration at finding that the local education authorities were not willing pupils when it came to staffing their secondary schools was given vent in the 1906 Report, by far the most critical to date. The general condemnation of the municipal secondary schools which it contained did not omit references to their teachers, who were "underpaid and often overworked", unfitted for the work and inadequately qualified; an "improved standard of teaching power" was at the root of the necessary changes in such schools. In fact, what was becoming increasingly clear was that the local authorities were staffing their secondary schools as they were, not because they could not attract or afford the products of public schools and Oxbridge, nor because they had not realised until the Board told them that that was where 'proper' secondary teachers came from.

On the contrary, the various education committees were very anxious to see their schools succeed, and were unlikely to sacrifice them for the few hundred pounds (if that) per annum required to raise the salaries of a handful of teachers. But they were able to fill vacancies without difficulty and maintain teaching staffs whose competence and enthusiasm even the HMIs could rarely fault, so there was absolutely no motivation to revise their policies on staffing. They were no doubt fortified by the strong current of opinion which disdained - and sometimes caricatured - the ineptitude of the untrained Oxbridge graduate teacher. To A.P. Laurie, for instance, "secondary schoolmasters are merely amateurs as compared with the trained elementary teachers ... It is remarkable that the secondary schoolmaster is as convinced now as he was then (1868) that he can teach by the pure light of nature, and that teaching is the one profession for which no special training is required".

1 PRO Ed.35/2584.
2 It brings to mind Gatherne-Hardy's opinion that "nuances of class can only be felt, they cannot be explained" in op.cit. p 133; and also the criticism levelled by P. Gordon & J. White in Philosophers as Educational Reformers (1979) p 175. at the influential group of late 19th century English philosophers who did little to convert their idealist theories into guidance for the greatly enlarged teaching profession.
4 Bryce Commission Vol VII pp 145-6. Laurie was the son of Scotland's leading educationist and teacher-trainer.
But the Bryce Commission came out in favour of public school teachers being drafted into higher grade schools, and the Board of Education’s enthusiasm for the same idea became a highly contentious issue. The spokesman for the higher grade school heads was not at all impressed, asserting that "I am quite sure we do not want these men unless they are teachers. We have no room in our busy schools for amateurs or improvers, all must be good and competent workmen". Even The Times declared: "Let the Grammar School bring itself to that state of efficiency which has been forced upon the Higher Grade School by the hostile criticism it has had to meet and the public inspection to which it has all along been submitted. Let the Grammar School train its teachers". There can be little doubt that if the local authorities had thought that their schools would be better served by staffing them with imports from the public schools, they would have taken the necessary steps to effect that. They did appoint some such teachers, and do not seem to have had any wholesale prejudice against them, but in general preferred to entrust the future of the most precious schools in their system to teachers who had themselves known and prospered in the system.

From much of what has been said about staffing, two interesting exceptions can be identified. Girls' schools and day schools attached to technical colleges escaped most of the critical badgering, and unless one believes that those two types of institution were uniformly excellent, another explanation must be sought. Both were relatively new and the local authorities developed them as integral parts of their educational provision, holding more or less equal status with their boys' secondary schools. But the Board clearly saw them as outside the mainstream, and far from being the equal of the boys' grammar school which was to be the keystone of the new educational structure. Their teachers were treated much more kindly by the Inspectorate than those in municipal secondary schools, and it seems likely that for various reasons different standards were being applied. In both cases, there was no accepted model to bring into operation, and since neither type of institution was involved in educating the nation's leaders, it mattered less if the ethos was different from that desired in the typical grammar school.

So whilst Inspectors visiting girls' and technical schools were pleased to see recognisable secondary school characteristics like corporate spirit and organised games, they regarded them as something of an optional extra, rather than as a fundamental feature of the education offered there.

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1 Reported in The Schoolmaster 7 Dec 1895. This was, of course, a time of great progress in teacher education, especially with the establishment after 1902 of municipal training colleges, often linked to university colleges.

2 The Times 22 Sept 1897.

3 Technical day schools should not be confused with later creations bearing the same name. These were commonly offshoots of technical colleges and were often organised science schools, though not exclusively scientific and technical. Apart from being funded a little differently, they functioned much like higher grade schools.

For more about girls' school staffs, see Chapter 6.
Criticisms of the staff were rare and the absence of literary excellence was not a cause for concern. The leniency which was shown over the Board's own Regulations - no Latin in technical schools, and optional science in girls' schools - was a manifestation of the same attitude, as was the application of criteria which were never applied to municipal secondary schools. In the case of the Birmingham Municipal Technical Day School, for example, the fact that the school was well suited to the needs of the city was cited as an asset, and it was congratulated on being "a School in the true sense of the term" despite being housed in a labyrinth of a building. Technical day schools were the sole alternative to secondary schools permitted by the Board (in 1905), showing that they were seen as something different, but the lack of real encouragement for them stunted their development for many years to come.

In the main (male) part of the teaching profession, meshing together the two types of secondary schoolteacher proved to be a slow process. The Board was fond of advocating the appointment of teachers with wide experience of different kinds of schools, but it would be a mistake to infer from this that the staffs of public/endowed schools on the one hand, and higher grade/municipal secondary schools on the other, were expected to indulge in a mutual sharing of expertise and ideas. Tropp cited a few occasions when Inspectors recommended to a badly staffed older grammar school the employment of trained, ex-elementary teachers in order to "put the school on its feet", but on the whole, that type of teacher found it very difficult - and probably made little effort - to penetrate the endowed/public school world. The traffic was definitely intended to be one-way in the opposite direction. Furthermore, the Board did its best to maintain the distinction between the two types of teacher by regulating them differently at the training stage. It explicitly discouraged teachers in training from tackling degrees, and intervened to reverse the laudable efforts of training colleges and university departments to co-ordinate their courses and share responsibilities for all education students. The patchy but slowly growing lobby for secondary school teacher training made almost no impression on the Board of Education, which continued to regard the trained teacher, even if a graduate, as an unwelcome intruder - or at best, a junior colleague - in the new secondary school system.

1 PRO Ed.35/2576. A similarly benign attitude was shown over the curriculum of the Merchant Venturers' Technical College School in Bristol (see Chapter 4), where there was also no objection to the absence of a playground or the necessity of a train journey out of the city to reach the school's playing fields. PRO Ed.35/845.

2 Chapter 11 in A. Tropp, The School Teachers (1957) details how passionately keen was the Board, and Morant in particular, to resist the growing rapprochement between the 'elementary' and 'secondary' parts of the teaching profession. The shameful behaviour of the Board on the issue of a teachers' register certainly fuelled the onslaught on Morant over the Holmes-Morant Circular - "only violent personal hostility can explain the venom with which the NUT officials attacked Morant" (p 198).
Whatever the Board of Education's wishes, even a cursory reading of the Schoolmasters' Yearbook and Directory or the staff registers of individual schools reveals that the male teaching staffs of municipal secondary schools remained predominantly of the kind employed in the higher grade schools - successful products of the elementary school and pupil teacher systems, training colleges, provincial universities and part-time degrees. Women teachers came from more diverse educational backgrounds, but there was always a strong element produced by publicly-provided institutions. Sometimes when new secondary schools were being founded or reorganised, the local education authority took the opportunity to juggle the staffing or headships, but it was nearly always from within their own resources. There was no apparent desire to import 'experts' from the endowed or public school sector, in the way that the Board of Education not only favoured, but assumed would happen. It was only when those first heads reached the end of their careers, often in the 1920s, that there is any noticeable pattern of their replacements being drawn from the ranks of Oxbridge graduates, and even then, it was far from uniform. Education committees, like the school boards before them, understandably felt a commitment to those young teachers whom they had sponsored and whom they regarded as their most successful and deserving products. They were resistant to the idea of displacing them from the best jobs they could offer in order to make room for 'outsiders', as well as being keen to integrate the functioning of all the institutions of the public education service, so that the national teacher-training system serviced the provided secondary schools as well as vice versa.

The whole question of staffing is an excellent illustration of the Board's narrow approach to the new secondary school system. It seems that as higher grade schools earned recognition as secondary schools, the Board envisaged a virtual clear-out of the staff, with perhaps a few remaining to take care of the diminished science and technical side, but under the guidance of heads and senior teachers who knew what a 'real' secondary school was like. According to the NUT's historians, it became "very difficult for elementary teachers to teach in secondary schools, or for working class children to learn in them", and it was almost entirely due to the obstinacy of local authorities that trained teachers maintained a presence on secondary school staffs. The Board was not without weapons or influence in trying to achieve its goal, but the appointment of staff was one of the few areas in which it was unable to supervise the local authorities too directly. Its Inspectors therefore tried persuasion with varying degrees of subtlety, but they could find very little that was definably wrong with the vast majority of municipal schoolteachers - and no doubt they were looking! This strongly points to the conclusion that the local education authorities were correct in believing that their secondary schoolteachers were up to the job they were doing, and that the Board of Education was at fault in refusing to recognise excellence in others or to accept that there were valid alternatives which could offer much to the new system.

Premises

Chapter 2 showed what pride the school boards took in the physical setting they provided for their higher grade work. Their successors, the education committees, naturally expected to continue using the relatively new buildings, which often represented their major capital investment and heaviest debt, and to construct new schools along similar lines as they became necessary. Generalising somewhat, the typical higher grade/municipal secondary school was located in the heart of urban areas to serve the densest concentration of population; it occupied a comparatively small site, so that buildings were tall and substantial rather than elegant, and playground space limited; it was extremely functional, with facilities fully used by the maximum number of pupils during the school day, as well as at other times; and it happily accommodated children from the age of 4 or 5 upwards with flexibility and a remarkable capacity for instant ‘growth’.

By the turn of the century, a number of urban grammar schools had succeeded in moving out of city centres to more spacious premises with playing fields, located in the middle class suburbs which supplied, and paid the fees of, their pupils. Increasingly, the only secondary schools likely to be operating in areas of dense population were those maintained by public authorities. One senses at the Board of Education an underlying distaste for these solid brick buildings in their urban settings. Visiting HMIs seem to have been ill at ease, viewing as an intrusion into the hallowed realms of secondary education the noise and bustle of the city streets, the proximity of industrial and commercial activity, and the ubiquity of the ill-educated lower classes. Sneyd-Kinnersley, for example, arriving in Manchester in 1903 to take charge of the North-West Inspectorate after pleasant spells of duty in Anglesey, Norfolk and Chester, hated the city’s smoke, gloom, rain, noise, traffic and stone pavements.

Like Bristol’s St George School, George Dixon School in Birmingham was advised to build a new pavement to “deaden the noise of the heavy traffic”, and Wyggeston School in Leicester was told that the acquisition of a “better site in a more open part of the town should be considered as one of urgency”. In rejecting the chosen site for the new Yardley School on the edge of Birmingham, the Inspectors complained about the number of surrounding roads, the nearby brickworks and the excavations of the Great Western Railway in the neighbourhood. Worcestershire’s Director of Education found all these objections “trivial and baseless”, particularly as the new railway station would positively benefit the school by enlarging its catchment area, and in an angry aside which brought no response from the Board, he exclaimed: “I have yet to learn that it is an objection to a Secondary School to be bounded by roads on three sides”.

3 PRO Ed.35/2504.
The Board was not so foolish as to expect that all secondary schools could enjoy the rural settings, stylish architecture and spacious facilities of the great public schools, and it did have the sense to refrain from laying down too much in the way of minimum standards. There were far too many run-down old endowed school buildings and newer small (particularly girls') schools operating in private houses to make detailed regulations feasible. Since a blind eye was often turned to imperfections in the facilities of schools of which the Board otherwise approved, like the Christian Brothers' and Merchant Venturers' Colleges in Bristol, the treatment accorded to the former higher grade schools provides an invaluable insight into the differing perceptions of what a secondary school should look like.

The Board of Education seems to have taken the view that if secondary schools had to be located in uncongenial urban settings, at least they should be insulated from their surroundings as far as possible. Out of favour went the ‘typical’ higher grade school building, which was very much part of and accessible to the local community. In came the more spacious grammar school, the building itself spread over a larger ground area, with specialist rooms under-used, and with several acres of playing fields, all enclosed by a wall or fence to keep out anyone who did not belong to the school, as well as, for much of the time, those who did. Secondary schools became single-purpose, single-sex, single-age group institutions, a development which can be seen as an admirable clarification of their purpose, but which also represented a dramatic narrowing of the role which higher grade schools, simply by their physical presence, had played within their neighbourhoods. They also, it has been suggested, became more uniform in design, due to the constraints imposed by the Board’s insistence on such facilities as a central hall to permit morning assemblies, a suitable entrance for visitors, and the separate accommodation of boys and girls.

One of the commonest causes of disagreement was the way in which the Board nagged all local education authorities to make their municipal secondary schools more spacious by reducing the number of pupils. Schools which had been built and approved for 600 or 1,000 pupils, and functioned successfully as such, were told that they had room for only a half or a third of that number. The Board’s method of calculating the maximum capacity of newly recognised secondary schools was much more stringent than had previously been the case. For a start, it discontinued the customary elementary and higher grade school practice of filling the school so that the average attendance, rather than the number on roll, matched the accommodation (though, as has been noted, the normal attendance at higher grade schools was very good), and it counted only ordinary classrooms in its calculations. This meant that at, for example, Waverley Road School in Birmingham, it discounted the chemistry and physics laboratories, the lecture theatre, the cookery, woodwork, metalwork and art rooms, and the gymnasium, which together had accommodation for upwards of 270 children, as well as the

assembly hall which could hold 340. The school was thereby reduced to a maximum of 420 pupils — and that was a recently revised figure based on 30 pupils per classroom instead of the previous 25. Birmingham also had problems over its George Dixon School, for which it was more than happy to construct a fine new building. There was an eight-year tussle with the Board before the school was finally settled, during the latter stages of which it was informed that secondary school recognition was unlikely on the grounds that the new building lacked a library, museum, sixth form room and adequate provision for games. Despite the Board’s best endeavours, it was a continuing trend for council secondary schools to contain more pupils than endowed ones, though the residual affection for small, cozy schools remained powerful, and it was many years before local authorities repeated what was common experience for a number of nineteenth century school boards — the running of viable schools of 1,000+ pupils.

The importance of organised games in creating the grammar school ethos has already been referred to, and in this section on buildings and facilities, it is impossible not to be struck by the Board’s obsessive preoccupation with playing fields. It crops up in every single application for recognition and in every single subsequent Inspection Report, often as the first and most persistently urged pre-requisite. And it was always couched in terms of the inestimable value to corporate life, with all its implications for character building, team spirit, group loyalty and healthy competition; it seems to have had almost nothing to do with physical health or fitness.

One of the chief causes of the Board’s irritation with Worcestershire Education Committee was that the latter “makes little effort” to acquire playing fields for its planned secondary schools. The HMI reported that he had managed to secure one at Oldbury from a local manufacturer with “so little trouble that it was evident that the County Authority

1 PRO Ed.35/2579.
2 PRO Ed.35/2554. This school moved twice between 1898 and 1906 when its new building was completed. Th first time, the Board was responsible for several delays, then refused to compensate the school board for loss of grant incurred because the premises were not ‘efficient’. The second time, because of the absence of a museum, 6th form room, etc., the Board thought it should become a higher elementary school. At one point, it was only a lone voice of conciliation at the Board saying “this seems to me a very strong line to take at such short notice” that the school was allowed to continue at all.
3 The Board’s Statistics for 1910-11 show that of 128 boys’ secondary schools with less than 100 pupils, only 12 were council schools; there was less discrepancy with girls’ and mixed schools, though non-council schools were much more likely to have elementary/preparatory age pupils to include in their totals. The largest category then was ‘over 500’ — just 19 schools in the whole country.
4 Seaborne & Lowe, op.cit. p 96, said that concern for the welfare of pupils, which was important in elementary schools, “did not extend to secondary schools, whose pupils were expected to be ... sound in wind and limb”.

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could easily have done so", and the only objection which Secretary Bruce had to the first proposed site for Yardley School was that it "does not afford room for organized games such as cricket, football and hockey. It is very desirable that such provision should be made". When the county council objected that having paid over £2,000 to buy a good site, acquisition of a further 3-4 acres was out of the question, the Board replied that in that case, Yardley could not be a secondary school. What was especially frustrating for the education committee was that by arrangement with the Yardley Charity Governors, a wealthy trust which had been involved in planning the new school, a public recreation ground was to be laid out, to which the school would have access. Not good enough, said the Board of Education, the school must have sole use of the recreation ground. Eventually the school acquired a field about a mile away, which more or less satisfied the Board, and Yardley thus became one of the many secondary schools which tramped its pupils long distances so that they could receive their weekly dose of organised games.

The principle that each school should have its own exclusive playing field was extended to other specialist facilities. School boards took it for granted that good laboratories, cookery rooms, workshops and swimming baths should be used by the maximum number of people, and that duplicating facilities was a waste of money. In contrast, the pseudo-monastic educational experience of the Board of Education's officials told them that a secondary school was a self-sufficient unit, providing for all the needs of a residential community, and virtually closed to the outside world. When they came to apply this almost instinctive preference to urban day schools, it could be harnessed very conveniently to achieve two practical targets dear to the Board's heart - the complete physical separation of public elementary from secondary and even higher elementary education; and the separation of the sexes. These goals had been somewhat half-heartedly pursued before 1902-3, with HMIs fussing about extra entrances, cloakrooms and playgrounds for different sorts of pupils at the same school, and separate amenities for different members of staff. But while they were prepared to compromise over public elementary schools, secondary schools really mattered, and the Board was resolute to the point of obstinacy in the imposition of this aspect of its favoured model.

1 PRO Ed.35/2584. Playing fields could be as much as 3 miles - or a train journey - away.

2 They seem to have been ingeniously efficient at fitting pupils, pupil teachers and teachers on courses into whatever facilities were available in the schools or colleges in their area. This does not seem to have posed any particular problems, but it has taken our education service most of the rest of the century to return to the idea that it is enormously wasteful to provide specialist facilities to which only a few hundred children have access, and which are locked away both from them and from the rest of the community for much of the time.

3 Both are examined in some detail later - the separation of elementary from secondary in the next-but-one section of this Chapter, and the separation of the sexes in Chapter 6.
The question of the fees charged to pupils constituted one of the issues on which the higher grade/municipal secondary school tradition differed most fundamentally from the whole of the rest of secondary education. This was partly a matter of hard economic fact - in the absence of proper state support or generous private endowment, most had to charge fees - but there were certainly other considerations. By far the easiest way to ensure social selectivity was to make it expensive, and the endowed schools showed no inclination to reduce their fees as a result of state support. In contrast, municipal secondary schools and local authorities were always unhappy about raising fees, and they maintained a larger proportion of free places than the older secondary schools, thereby making the statistics for all aided schools look quite respectable.

The Board of Education issued a clear challenge to the more progressive higher grade schools in the 1904 Regulations, which specified that "unless local circumstances can be proved to require exceptional treatment the Board will not recognise a school in which no fees are charged". Subsequently, in dealing with reluctant local education authorities, the oft-quoted rationalisation was that fees must be sufficient to ensure 'efficiency', which was, of course, defined and measured by the Board. The draft of the 1905 Regulations included the statement that "a fee of a substantial amount is desirable", though Morant ordered the deletion of the phrase, "not less than £1 a term or £3 a year", which would have committed the Board to a minimum it did not much like and hoped to raise. The justifications given in that document were to guarantee schools' financial stability; to "emphasize the fact that the education provided is of a superior kind and consequently of a greater value to the scholars"; to convey the message that "good education cannot be bought cheap; it must be paid for"; and to ensure that low-fee schools (even, presumably, if they were efficient and financially viable) did "not compete injuriously" with other secondary schools in the same locality.

Bristol's experience of the Board of Education's intransigence on fees was consequently repeated nationwide. What became the accepted minimum secondary school fee of £3 per annum (expressed as and payable termly), was a compromise which pleased no-one. It represented a doubling or even a trebling of higher grade school fees where they existed, and the local authorities knew that it was just too high for many of their parents, especially when it was accompanied by a four-year commitment. On the other hand, there was a strong and persistent lobby within the Board of Education that was never happy with so low a figure, and was constantly trying to edge fees upwards. Waverley Road School, for instance, was told that the Board considered it "undesirable

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1 PRO Ed.12/119; Board of Education, Report for 1905-6 p62.
2 Dr Macnamara, one of the NUT's M.P.s, wrote in 1905 that "the working-class parent will throw up the sponge in despair" at the £3 fee; quoted in P. Gordon, Selection for Secondary Education (1980) p 168.
that no fee should be charged", and Yardley School was bound
to be inefficient because "of the very low fee of £3 a year".1
Even some endowed schools did not escape the pressure.
Wyggeston Boys' School in Leicester had, in the absence of a
higher grade school in the city, developed an unusually good
record of liaison with the local authority, and took
considerable pride in the number of its former elementary
school scholarship pupils who won Oxbridge exhibitions. In
1903-4, during discussions about a new scheme of government
for the school, the Board of Education ruled that "the range
of fees prescribed by the existing Scheme is extremely low for
a School of the type in which Greek is taught, and they
hesitate to make any change unless fees generally charged in
the School are of adequate amount". Although there is nothing
to suggest that the Wyggeston Foundation needed the money, the
fees were duly raised, to a maximum of £12 per annum.2

It was with pleasure that the Board noted in 1906 that of the
685 secondary schools recognised, only 4 were "wholly free"
and only 28 had fees of less than £3 per annum, while 46
charged £3.3. So only 78 schools in the whole country had a
fee that most education committees regarded as excessive for
the kind of parents their schools were designed to serve.
Many of the remaining 607 had sought official recognition
primarily for the financial reassurance it brought - in other
words, the poorer schools - and the vast majority of
unrecognised secondary schools were secure enough not to have
to sacrifice their independence in that way. Taking the
picture as a whole reinforces how completely the Board of
Education succeeded in maintaining the middle and upper class
dominance of secondary education, in the face of what they saw
as a challenge from below. And the pressure was for fees to
rise; for example, from £1/2/0 to £1/11/6 per term at
Leamington Secondary Day School in 1905, and from £3 to £4
per annum at all Birmingham's municipal secondary schools in
1912.4 By 1911, just 1 recognised secondary school still
charged no fees, and only 50 (45 of them council maintained)
charged 3 guineas or less; 5-6 guineas was the most popular
range (137 schools), except for foundation schools which
favoured 7-10 guineas, while nearly all the Girls' Public
School Trust schools charged 17-18 guineas.5

Evidence about the effect which these changes had on the
socio-economic class of pupils entering secondary schools is
not as readily accessible as might be hoped. The Board of
Education was quite interested in that aspect of the schools

1 PRO Ed.35/2579 & 35/2584.
2 Leicester Education Committee - Secondary Schools Sub-
Committee, Minute Book 5,13 & 27 Sept 1904; Wyggeston
Schools, Governors’ Minute Book 9 Mar 1904.
4 Leamington Education Committee, Minutes 10 Jul 1905; PRO
Ed.35/2554.
5 Board of Education, Statistics 1910-11 (1912). The lone
free school was Todmorden Secondary School in Yorkshire.
It must be stressed that none of these statistics took
account of the array of unrecognised secondary schools -
those that could maintain themselves independently of the
state, usually by charging fairly high fees.
it was aiding and heads were required to categorise their pupils ready for the HMIs. But the Board kept changing the categories, and so accurate comparisons are impossible. It is clear, however, that until at least 1907 municipal secondary school parents in the 'professional and independent' category rarely exceeded 10%, and could be as few as 5% (Hanson Boys' School, Bradford) or 3% (St George School, Bristol). Endowed schools could expect at least 20% of their parents to be from that background, and there was an even bigger difference in the next group, 'merchants and manufacturers', who made up around 40% of endowed school parents but only 10% of those connected with municipal secondary schools. The biggest category for all former higher grade schools was the lowest one, 'service (domestic and other), postmen, etc., artisans', who numbered between 35% and 50% of parents, followed by the next lowest, 'commercial managers', at around 25%.

These figures confirm the view that before 1907, the socio-economic background of municipal secondary school pupils was little changed from higher grade days. A detailed analysis of the information contained in the early Admission Registers of four higher grade/municipal secondary schools proves beyond doubt that the schools were patronised primarily by lower middle and upper working class families. Using a division of occupations into four broad categories\(^2\), about 50% of parents belonged to the second category and around 35% to the third, with about 10% in higher status occupations and 5% in unskilled ones. In a poorer area like St George in Bristol, where fees were kept lower than in most secondary schools, the figures were weighted more towards the lower end of the occupational categories, with, in descending order, 5%, 27%, 57% and 11% respectively. Until 1907, too, most of the municipal schools offered larger numbers of scholarships than the Board of Education thought desirable - 27% of the 445 pupils at Waverley Road, 45% at the newly-established Yardley School and 64% at St George School in Bristol.

After that date, the free place system and teaching bursaries guaranteed that poorer children were not completely excluded from secondary schools, but few authorities displayed a genuine dedication to that principle by offering maintenance awards as well. Books, uniform, dinners and travel were all costs to be considered, as well as four years' loss of earnings, and maintenance awards were entirely discretionary. To its shame, the London County Council between 1908 and 1911 used this as a weapon against about 100 scholarship children.

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1. Compiled from various HMI Reports in the PRO files, and Wilson op.cit. Appendices E & H.
2. See Appendix 3 for the full details of this analysis. Group I is defined as 'Professional etc.' and includes accountant, architect, bank manager, doctor, solicitor. Group II - 'Intermediate' - includes, for example, bank clerk, civil servant, clerk, commercial traveller, draughtsman, manager (of works, etc.), nurse, teacher. In Group III - 'Skilled workers' - are found baker, builder, carpenter, chemist, engineer, jeweller, printer, salesman, silversmith, tailor, telephone operator, etc. Group IV - 'Unskilled workers' - includes caretaker, errand boy, housekeeper, quarryman and stoker.
whose "moral, hygienic and physical qualities" gave offence to
some secondary school teachers. Arguing that the ending of
maintenance support would have "a bracing effect" on the
children, it engineered the withdrawal of most of them. And
the West Riding, one of the 'best' authorities for awards, had
to bow to government financial pressure in the 1920s and 30s
with the result that "thousands of the best brains of the
Riding would find themselves unable to remain at school." Evidence of this sort of behaviour rather undermines the
tendency among historians to echo the Board's own
interpretation that the free place system made secondary
education accessible to the children of all classes. Of
course, having free places was better than not having free
places, but they can hardly be claimed to have "placed
advanced instruction within the reach of the ... very poor," or to have "enormously facilitated ... the passage of children
from the elementary school to higher institutions." Nevertheless, the alarm that was felt by influential people at
the Board's acceptance of Labour plans for a free place system
is highly significant. The Board had, after all, chosen a
model of secondary schooling which was expensive and in some
ways wasteful of resources, and it constantly berated local
authorities for trying to offer their own version more
cheaply. And yet the prospects of giving a slightly fairer
chance to poorer children and of raising intellectual
standards within the secondary schools were not welcomed. Sir
William Anson was worried that the free place system would not
only spoil the secondary schools, but would "very often
fatigue and embarrass the unfortunate children who were sent
up to occupy these places", and the Headmasters' Association
argued that there ought to be fewer free places, for fear of
turning "innumerable good artisans and domestic servants into
very inferior and wretchedly paid clerks." Even ten years
later, Fisher was telling the House of Commons that working
people should not want more education "in order that they may
rise out of their own class, always a vulgar ambition." While
one should not ignore those free-place children who
copied and succeeded, they do not disguise the fact that a
ruthless meritocratic test was applied to the 90+% of the
nation's children who could not afford the advantages the
other 10-% took for granted.

1 Campbell, op.cit. p 74.
2 P.H.J.H. Gosden & P.R. Sharp, The Development of an
3 J.W. Adamson, English Education 1789-1902 (1930) p 471.
4 C. Birchenough, History of Elementary Education in
   England and Wales (1938) p 160.
5 Birchenough (ibid p 435) suggested that even by the 1930s
   there was an "utter unwillingness" to face the true cost
   of educational opportunity for all children, as
demronstrated by the mixed feelings about central schools
   - the local authorities' 'cheap' solution to the problem.
6 Quoted in O. Banks, Parity and Prestige in English
7 Quoted in C. Griggs, The Trades Union Congress and the
8 These are approximate percentages; in a number of areas
   it was more like 95% and 5%.
Without doubt, one of the more remarkable features of the higher grade schools was their flexibility in responding to the needs of a wide variety of pupils. It was a feature forced upon them by the circumstances in which they operated, but the skill with which they made a virtue of necessity was one of their chief strengths. The range of abilities and aspirations which they successfully accommodated, often in the same class at the same time, with minimal absenteeism and disciplinary problems, really was worthy of note. At Nottingham's People's College, for example, within the space of a few weeks the headmaster was lamenting the pressure on boys to leave early and start work, and rejoicing in the award of a three-year science research scholarship to a former pupil. By 1905, when the People's College was about to close its doors to older pupils because the Board of Education did not believe Nottingham needed a third municipal secondary school, its former pupils boasted 9 Ph.D.s, mostly gained abroad in science\(^1\). Looking back from a time when the binary examination system, mixed ability classes and special needs children are seen as making major demands on secondary school teachers, (though the length and general shape of school career are now fixed), one wonders how the early teachers coped. The Board of Education's adoption of a four-year course of general education as the kernel of secondary schooling - and the only one which would receive financial support from the state - represented a major switch to standardisation from the variety and flexibility those teachers handled as a matter of routine.

The Board also felt no need to provide or endorse any means of examining pupils during or at the end of the prescribed course, and it expressly forbade the taking of external examinations before the age of 15. Its attitude reflected a growing dislike of examinations among certain sections of the educational world around the turn of the century. By the 1890s, there was something of a reaction to the mid-Victorian enthusiasm for written examinations, which were increasingly seen as "an unholy combination against general understanding and moral culture"\(^2\). Most heavily criticised of all were examinations as they had functioned within 'payment by results' systems, of which the Science and Art Department's was cited as the most recent and bureaucratic example. This reaction roughly coincided in time with the emergence of an alternative method of 'certification' for high status occupations in the shape of a public school education per se, which was a safe way of discarding overt patronage, and, it has been suggested, prevented the development of more systematic, skills-based methods of recruitment\(^3\). On all counts, examinations lost out as an appropriate accessory to the education envisaged by the Board of Education in the new secondary schools.

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\(^1\) People's College, Log Book 31 Jan, 16 & 21 Feb 1900, 3 Jul 1905.
\(^3\) W.J. Reader, Professional Men (1966) pp 115-6.
In fact academic standards, as they came to be understood, were not to the fore in the early days. The right style of curriculum was very important, as was the notional possibility of entrance to the old universities, but beyond that, schools were not expected to furnish proof of achievement against any measurable standard. Only scholarship pupils were examined on entrance, which was in itself a big change from the normal elementary/higher grade school practice of accepting successful completion of a certain Standard as sufficient evidence of suitability to take the next stage. Secondary schools generally ran their own entrance tests—often rather ineptly, it seems—with scholarship or free place candidates being required to reach a higher standard than fee-payers. Although HMIs were supposed to certify that all pupils in grant-aided secondary schools were 'eligible' and 'suitable', the definition seems to have been intentionally loose, and was certainly interpreted that way.

The Board of Education was simply not in a position to expect more, given its rationale of secondary education—the development of character, with intellectual training of a general nature, for those who could afford to pay for it. Whereas higher grade schools had never excluded pupils who could not pay for their education, secondary schools did not turn away any who could. Mark Grossek's opinion of some of his classmates at the Whitaker Foundation School—"a dull, stolid lot", including some "loutish young troglodytes...for whom the word dunce seemed almost too flattering a description. Not even at Gibraltar Street [his board school] had I come across so close an approach to mental deficiency"—may or may not be typical. But it was generally true that at the beginning of the century, the average grammar school was not distinguished by its intellectual excellence.

An interesting sidelight on this point is that one of the HMIs' more consistent early complaints was that the former higher grade schools all worked too hard—hours were too long, holidays too short, and the pressure of work too great. As a general rule, a 9 a.m.—5 p.m. day for 44 weeks of the year was normal, which fitted reasonably well into the working pattern of most lower middle and working class families. The middle class expectation of schooling was nothing like so demanding. The whole perception of adolescence could afford to be more leisurely, the speedy acquisition of marketable qualifications was much less important, and there was an underlying assumption that, unlike their working class contemporaries, middle class children (particularly girls) benefited from spending time in their homes with their families. So, one finds the Inspector at George Dixon School in 1902 criticising the heavy timetable, the "undue exertion" of pupils and teachers, and the excessive 6-hour

1 P. Gordon, op.cit. p 174 ff. Manchester Grammar School ran 2 examinations a year, for foundation scholars and for "fee-payers and the less able". J.A. Graham & B.A. Phythian, eds., The Manchester Grammar School (1965) p 95.
2 Grossek, op.cit. p 83.
3 This attitude was expressed with stark tactlessness by the 1906 Report on Higher Elementary Schools, quoted in the section on those schools which follows.
day, 5-day week, and the Birmingham Municipal Technical Day School was strongly recommended in 1907 to reduce its hours. Given that secondary schools were increasingly likely to be located in middle class suburbs (a policy deliberately perpetrated in London), the spare hours of scholarship holders tended to be filled with travelling or hanging around during the fairly long lunch break, because it was too far to go home.

It is not just with hindsight that one feels the Board of Education was rather naive about the lifestyle and educational needs of the majority of children. It showed an ignorance of how important it was for poorer children to get a quick return from their extended schooling, primarily through the acquisition of examination qualifications. These had become the single most important vehicle for social and occupational mobility, and were especially important for youngsters trying to break into fresh areas of the labour market, notably clerical work and the new technological trades. But they had to be obtainable quickly, after a year or two's intensive study, or at least in courses which could be planned and completed a year at a time. The commercial and scientific/technical courses of the higher grade schools had been ideal in that respect. Walter Southgate, a clever boy from a very poor family, was unable to pursue his education except through evening classes, but at least his 7th Standard merit certificate, with its four distinctions, got him a respectable job in a City law office. His brother became an electrical engineer, the first in four generations in his family not to follow a dying trade - their father was a quill-maker. For the many children like them, the school system was failing if it did not measure their attainments and record them in a tangible form. The higher grade schools were well acquainted with that harsh fact of life, and though the multiplicity of examinations on offer may have looked rather a muddle, they did guarantee that each year's study by each child was potentially of use to him or her in the labour market.

Comparisons between the occupational backgrounds of higher grade/early municipal secondary school parents and the career destinations of their children show a clear upward movement. As noted earlier, around 50% (or 25% at a poorer school) of parents were employed in 'intermediate' or lower middle class occupations, whereas a remarkably consistent 75% of school leavers moved on to jobs in that category, of which teaching and clerical work were by far the most popular. Discounting girls who were recorded as being 'at home' and pupils whose destination was not known, a mere 4 out of 662 leavers on record took up unskilled work, a figure all the remarkable in view of the youth and inexperience of many of them. All the

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1 PRO Ed.35/2554 & 35/2576.
2 Campbell, op.cit. p 43. Mark Grossek at the Whitaker Foundation School (hours 9.45-1, 2.30-4.30) used to leave home at 8a.m. to walk to school, in order to save the train fare, and was given 2d a day to buy his own lunch - a fairly daunting regime for a small boy (op.cit. pp 87-8,248).
3 Southgate, op.cit. passim.
4 See Appendix 3 for the details of this analysis.
remainder entered occupations which required training or further education, carried some status, and offered above-average security. Very few (16 altogether, considerably less than their parents) entered 'professional' jobs or the training associated with them, and though some might have moved in that direction in later life, higher grade school children obviously did not slip smoothly into careers associated with the comfortable, professional middle class.

Nor, in fact, did many of their contemporaries in the older secondary schools where access to professional occupations was traditionally held to be a high priority. The 'premature' departure of 15- and 16-year-olds from such schools was an acknowledged problem, and the Bryce commissioners had visited a number of endowed secondary schools with no recognisable sixth form. So, despite the Board of Education's resistance to the idea, the new secondary schools were compelled to bow to pupil and parental pressure on the question of examinations, and look to outside bodies. Most popular were the Oxford and Cambridge Locals, especially the junior level, together with some drawn from assorted bodies like the Royal Society of Arts, the College of Preceptors and the London music colleges. They made up a more theoretical package than the examinations used in higher grade schools, though in a number of subjects the modernisation of content and methods dates from this period¹. Somewhat ironically, in at least one London endowed secondary school, tests seem totally to have dominated the supposedly examination-free years leading up to the Cambridge Junior Locals. Mark Grossek's most vivid memories of his disappointing three years at the Whitaker Foundation School were the masses of wearisome learning by heart "without a word of explanation" from the teacher; the repetition in chorus, which "reduced everything to a dead level of boredom"; and the endless tests - "more tests than teaching" - which he was amazed to find the boys marked themselves, since "most of our teachers ... disliked extra jobs, and avoided them whenever they could"². There are shades of the old-style rote learning of chunks of the classics in his description of the teaching style employed, though it sufficed to get him through the necessary examinations.

¹ See, for example, M.J. Price, 'Mathematics in English Education 1860-1914' in HESJ Vol 12 No 4 (Dec 1983), in which he described the battle between the non-establishment reformers who favoured a more practical syllabus and the "markedly conservative" mathematicians of the public schools, Cambridge University and the Mathematical Association. G.R. Batho in 'Sources for the history of history teaching in elementary schools 1833-1914' in T.G. Cook, ed., Local Studies and the History of Education (1972) referred to a similar "lively debate" over history as a school subject; and the establishment of English in the secondary school curriculum (initially as a linguistic and literary rival to the classics) has been outlined by M. Mathieson, The Preachers of Culture (1975).

² Grossek, op.cit. pp 74,85-6,103. He was left "with a discomfited feeling that an inferior substitute for what I really wanted was being foisted off on me".

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But for many children from poorer homes, even if it seemed worth their while to take up a secondary school place, a lot could happen in the four years before they could take any examinations, and they might very well have nothing to show for their efforts and expense. Early leaving continued to plague the secondary schools as much as it had their predecessors, both higher grade and endowed, and although the average school leaving age was moving gradually upwards, some 30% of pupils left before they were 15. The municipal school heads were generally sympathetic, and local authorities normally refrained from imposing the financial penalty to which they were entitled. The Board of Education and the HMIs, on the other hand, were highly critical of this laxness and inefficiency, seeing it as clear evidence that the wrong children were being admitted to secondary schools. As was suggested in connection with Bristol, the Board's apparently commendable attempts to increase the normal secondary school career showed so little understanding of the real causes of early leaving, that it did nothing to solve the problem as far as the majority of the population was concerned.

The Organic Connection with Elementary Education

One of the fundamental guiding principles of the early century Board of Education was its assumption that for the new secondary schools to succeed, they had to be as unlike and distanced from the elementary system as possible. Morant was one of the strongest exponents of this almost instinctive belief. Time after time the message was repeated to the former higher grade schools seeking to raise their status, though it tended to be another of the preferences for which the Board found difficulty in articulating reasons. It was one of the features of the new system which the local authorities and their headteachers were slowest to understand. The organic connection between elementary education and what followed it, whether higher grade, school of science, pupil teachership or technical college, was so much an integral part of the local authority system that it was hard to see how it could be otherwise. It was not just an issue of principle, but a routine, practical feature of the organisation, any alteration to which would require complicated restructuring of buildings, equipment, staff and children.

Within the Board of Education the initiative for a firm ruling came first from Bruce, who wanted authorisation to order separate accommodation and headteachers for the elementary and secondary parts of Brighton Higher Grade School and "others in a like predicament". Mackail was "very glad you are doing this, as it is much needed", and stressed the particular importance of a separate head, to emphasise the "fundamental distinction" between the two. Bluntly he stated that "the

1 The average leaving age rose from 15.5 for boys and 15.11 for girls in 1906 to 15.7 and 16.0 in 1914. But the 30% who left early (and therefore did not complete the secondary school course) persisted well into the 1920s.
conception of a secondary school as a sort of top storey to an elementary school will I hope become obsolete. Morant agreed, so did Anson, and a major change in direction was thereby effected early in 1905. But all three civil servants agreed that it was to be put into effect discreetly. Bruce favoured it appearing in a prefatory memorandum rather than a specific regulation, Mackail thought "we shall have to feel our way", and Morant condoned that advice - "we should gradually apply pressure ... It must be done cautiously and not upon one uniform rule". Such diffidence indicates that the top officials were aware of how unpopular this policy would be, and the difficulty in presenting a convincing rationale did not help. The twin arguments that a secondary school "must correspond to its title, and must give an education higher in scope and character than that of an Elementary School", and that the Board therefore "cannot regard with satisfaction" elementary and secondary schools under one headmaster lacks a logical link. Many local authorities who were completely in accord with the first, were unable to appreciate its bearing on the second.

Through its own ineptitude, the Board of Education was forced to give up the battle to separate the elementary and secondary departments of Merrywood School in Bristol, but in almost every other instance, it bludgeoned reluctant schools and local authorities into effecting a change that few of them could see the point of. Dr Forsyth, head of the Leeds Central Higher Grade School, was one of those who fought to maintain his school intact. As early as 1901, the Leeds School Board had petitioned the Board of Education to the effect that elementary scholars did not benefit from continuing education as much if they transferred to secondary schools, with their different curriculum and methods. Acting on the same principle, the Education Committee tried to retain the elementary part of the Central School under the guise of a preparatory department to the new secondary school. The Inspectors were not pleased. They wanted smaller classes, a broader curriculum, including more Latin, and an end to those customs which gave all the school's work, both preparatory and secondary, an elementary quality - such as the marching of pupils between lessons, the absence of 6th form prefects, and the dependence on terminal examinations. If needs be, it would be best to abolish the elementary school altogether, in the interests of the secondary work. Leeds adjusted the school to enhance the appearance of complying with the Board's wishes. From August 1906, the 'preparatory' school parents had to commit their children to a minimum of two years in the secondary school and a fee of half a guinea per term, measures which led to "a great falling off in attendance of the pupils of preparatory school age". But in 1909, the HMIs were cross to find that the so-called preparatory school was still

1 PRO Ed.12/119. Mackail's choice of analogy is interesting in the light of a speech given by Morant in 1898, which contained a "brilliant metaphorical description" of the education system as a basement (elementary), a first floor (secondary) and upper floor (university)! Cited in J. Graves, Policy and Progress in Secondary Education 1902–1942 (1943) p 10.

officially an elementary school and was organised as such, and the local education authority was told to remove the anomaly at once. It took until 1911 to sort out the formalities, including the complicated business of legally appropriating the land for purposes other than that for which it was originally bought, and Dr Forsyth was able to introduce a new curriculum and set about drumming up parental interest in the preparatory department.

Nottingham was another authority which spotted this opening, and attempted to exploit the Board’s equivocal stance on preparatory departments. Having lost the battle to get all three higher grade schools recognised as secondary schools, its secretary, Mr Abel, proposed that three schools (two higher grade and one ordinary elementary) be designated to provide for the “special preparation” of children for entrance to secondary schools. The local elementary HMI thought this was a good idea—it would “facilitate the preparation of children for Secondary Schools”, would be much like preparatory sections of secondary schools, and would comprise a “select body of scholars drawn chiefly from the middle and lower-middle class”. They would, for legal and grant purposes, be ordinary public elementary schools, though it would be necessary to discriminate them from ordinary elementary schools by means of a small fee (£1 a year), extra subjects in the curriculum, and the admission of pupils from all over the city and beyond. Morant was suspicious—“I have long known Mr Abel ... to be a person whose dealings are tortuous ... We cannot be too careful in probing Mr Abel’s presentation of things”. The local elementary and secondary HMIs, who, significantly, did not normally work together and claimed to know little of each other’s job, were told to visit the Nottingham schools together, “to see everything” [sic] and satisfy themselves that their respective areas were alright “without trenching on the other’s”. Their detailed report showed that the proposed preparatory schools were to be independent under separate headteachers though in consultation with the secondary school, information which seemed to satisfy the Board.

It is not a simple matter to identify precisely the effects of the Board’s success in severing the organic connection between public elementary and secondary education. There is no need to repeat the feelings expressed by a number of early century elementary school children who were aware of the enormous gulf that lay between them and the next stage of education, a

1 Jenkins. op. cit. pp 93-5.
2 PRO Ed.20/116. The interpretation advanced by Gordon (op.cit. p 99) that Nottingham was elitist in bringing a form of streaming into its elementary school system is a little unfair; it was primarily interested in finding a legitimate way of maintaining the educational opportunities which had existed before 1902.
3 Orally, and also in J. Burnett, Useful Toil (1974). H.C. Dent, who went to an elementary school in 1900, wrote of the “widespread suspicion (not altogether unjustified) of secondary schools, as middle-class institutions, not for working people”, in 1870-1970—Century of Growth in English Education (1970) p 64.
feeling that never existed when the next stage was located upstairs or in the next classroom. The Board had little sympathy for the unease of such children, and was much more forthright about the importance of accomplishing the change than its reasons for doing it. The preoccupation with preventing contamination of secondary by elementary children amounted to a simple truth: preparatory departments were good; elementary departments were not. But the differences were not the sort that could be proclaimed to the local authorities or the electors. For it was not the youth of the children that made them unwelcome in the Board's secondary schools, but the kind of children they were.

Nor did their levels of attainment pose a problem for the secondary schools, for once they had swotted up a bit of Latin they more than held their own. Mark Grossek was bitterly disappointed by the lessons he received during his first year at an endowed secondary school, because he had been doing much of the work for months at his elementary board school. But the social atmosphere, the tone, the corporate ethos of the secondary school were vitally precious, and too many children straight from elementary schools might spoil that. Secondary schools which lacked those qualities were constantly urged to do better and leave their elementary origins behind them, while those that managed to safeguard their 'tone' and 'assimilate' a proportion of scholarship children were congratulated. Either way, the message was clear that the products of the public elementary system, however clever, deserving or anxious to succeed, had no automatic right to be in a secondary school. The Board of Education was operating in an area of finely-judged subjective impressions, hard to categorise or regulate, and it is not surprising that the impact of its determined severance of the organic connection between the public elementary and the secondary education systems was one of a subtle change in attitudes, rarely enunciated but profound nonetheless.

A Post Script – The Higher Elementary Schools

The higher schools which were organically connected to the elementary system are almost as difficult to fit sensibly into this thesis as they are to place into any coherent pattern or tradition of English education. But in a discussion of higher grade education, they cannot be ignored. The higher elementary schools, invented almost out of thin air in 1900, remain one of the curiosities of English educational history. They never grew sufficiently in numbers or prestige to make much impact on the system, and are as under-researched as the higher grade schools, though perhaps more deservedly so. They were subject to more specific regulations than any other set of institutions in the country, yet there was enormous uncertainty, in all quarters, about what they were actually for. Heralded as the long-awaited legitimisation of the higher grade schools, it quickly became apparent that the higher elementary schools were no such thing, and education committees which had not rejected them out of hand were left puzzling over how to fit them into their education provision.
The local authorities did not have the benefit of Morant's detailed explanation contained in a memorandum to Balfour, which was peppered with phrases like "limit their scope", "on restricted lines", "safeguards are necessary" and "kept within proper limits". It was hardly the language with which to launch an exciting innovation, the intended new summit of the burgeoning elementary school system. Higher elementary schools, Morant continued, would replace organised schools of science, with the loss of their more advanced courses, and would "just suffice to permit the scholars to have a sound education" by the time they were 15, when they would be compelled to leave. They were to be "definitely stamped" as elementary schools, to ensure that they would "not compete in any real sense with ... the education offered in Secondary Schools", and to put a stop to "the practice by which children stay on in a school ... thus ... gradually raising the level of the work done in the school". Furthermore, there were not to be plenty of these schools, to serve the needs of the majority of the population; it might have been thought that, having been assigned a permanently low status from which there was no escape, they could have been allowed to proliferate. But the avowed aim was "to restrict the multiplication of these Schools", to guarantee which Morant insisted that the Board held an "absolute power to veto" any plans.

It came as something of a shock to many people - in Parliament, at local level, and even within the Board of Education itself - to realise just how limited were Morant's plans for the higher elementary schools. The Minute had been introduced to the Commons in a thoroughly positive speech by Professor Jebb of Cambridge University, and, with the proviso that some practical adjustments were needed, was greeted in the same spirit by many supporters of the public education service. But within a matter of weeks, the Board had turned down London's application for recognition under the Minute of 79 higher grade departments, a decision which The Schoolmaster heard "with amazement certainly, and little short of dismay". In March 1901, by which time only 2 out of 190 applications had been approved, a Commons debate of censure centred on the feeling that the Government had been deliberately misleading; even duplicitous, in its original presentation of the Minute. There was talk of "fraud", "fatuous rulings" and "inconsistencies", and Bradford's leading higher grade school head added the accusation that the Minute was becoming "an educational 'Index Expurgatorius' in which shall be inscribed a list of subjects which must not be taught to the children at a fixed age".

1 Reproduced in E.J.R. Eaglesham, From School Board to Local Authority (1956) Appendix B.
2 E.g. "a new model and a new hope" (Yoxall); at long last establishing the higher grade schools' "official position for the future" (Gray); it "aptly crowns a series of changes in the right direction" (The Leeds Mercury); it "marks an important stage in the progress of popular education" (The Schoolmaster). All quoted in The Schoolmaster 5 May 1900.
3 The Schoolmaster 30 Jun 1900, 9 Mar 1901.
It is difficult to divine Morant's true intentions over the higher elementary schools. It seems impossible that he was so out of touch as to believe that a restricted number of small, closely supervised schools could mop up the higher aspirations of the whole elementary system. And if he intended that as a result of the Higher Elementary Minute, the problem of the higher grade schools would go away, he also ensured that by rigid administration of the Minute, they were unlikely to do so of their own volition. School boards which made a genuine attempt to apply the Minute found the Board of Education intractable on just about every issue, from the general role and purpose of the schools, to the minutely practical—down to the mandatory shelves in the science preparation room and the two-feet wide gangways between the regulation-sized desks'. Most local authorities soon decided to ignore the Minute altogether, and so higher elementary schools remained small in number (30 in 1906; 52, the maximum, in 1910; and 45 in 1917 just before they were abolished), and highly localised in their distribution (mostly London and Lancashire).

Furthermore, institutions which had spells as higher elementary schools seem to be rather embarrassed about the fact, never portraying it as one of the prouder parts of their history, and local authorities which maintained them tended to spend much of their time trying to turn them into something else. Hence, the former Albert Road Higher Grade School in Aston, on the edge of Birmingham, had a quiet time as two higher elementary schools (boys and girls), having reduced its numbers by a third, curtailed its curriculum and limited its aspirations. And there was a similar story at the Ardwick Higher Grade School, one of five converted higher elementary schools in Manchester, whose education committee was so disillusioned with the whole idea by 1910 that it turned them into central schools, without the blessing of the Board of Education. The reasoning was that "on financial grounds and in the best educational interests of the children... it is not possible to take full advantage of the opportunities they afford and at the same time comply with the regulations of the Board of Education affecting Higher Elementary Schools". Disillusionment of this kind means that it is hard to build up an adequate picture of what higher elementary schools were like, but their experiences do have some interesting implications for our understanding of the higher grade school movement.

The first observation to make is that, whatever Morant thought, most school boards did not see higher elementary schools as the natural replacements for higher grade schools. However, central funding was too scarce to be ignored, so they tried to fit higher elementary schools into their educational provision in other, apparently logical, ways. Birmingham, for example, thought that 10 of its more successful ordinary elementary schools, not the higher grade schools, would make

1 Regulations reproduced in A.M. Davies, The Barnsley School Board 1871-1903 (1965) Appendix IX.
good higher elementary schools (3 for boys, 5 for girls and 2
mixed). But it was so surprised that the Board wanted "such
well equipped laboratories and other necessary appliances in
practical scientific work as are now required in the existing
Schools of Science" that, following an unsuccessful deputation
to Sir John Gorst, the idea was dropped. Nottingham really
wrestled with the Higher Elementary School Minute. The school
board there thought that it had possibilities, but in
conjunction with, not in place of, the higher grade and
organised science schools. But Morant suspected Nottingham’s
motives, and the lengthy negotiations which ensued became
increasingly acrimonious. The whole business makes for a
remarkable story, which illuminates in graphic style several
aspects of the Board of Education’s attitude to post-
elementary education in general

The Nottingham School Board moved fast when the Higher
Elementary Minute was announced, and in June 1900 submitted
applications for the conversion of its three higher grade
schools, detailing facilities, staffing arrangements and
curriculum. The Board objected to shared use of some
facilities, otherwise "high grants would be obtained for very
little expense", and ruled that it "could not recognise the
proposed Higher Elementary School and the School of Science
side by side. They would be practically duplicates". With
rather less enthusiasm, the Nottingham School Board revised
and resubmitted its applications the next year, this time
successfully. The schools were duly reorganised from August
1901 in a way that the School Board thought complied with the
Minute, though the High Pavement School continued to call
itself 'the High Pavement Higher Grade School and School of
Science and Higher Elementary School'. There was a hectic
start at Mundella School, where 470 pupils turned up to occupy
the 300 places the Board had designated there; the headmaster
recorded that "numerous visits have been made by parents
seeking for information and guidance", and "many objections"
to the increased fee had been raised. And at the People’s
College, the headmaster clashed with the supervising HMIs: "I
expressed the opinion that Government had no right to limit
our numbers to 340 when 580 children were willing to enter the
Higher School and to pay its fees, and that the right of the
taxpayer to this better education was higher than Government
departments". He was also extremely irritated that "desks and
rooms considered quite good enough to earn a £6 grant from the
 Secondary Branch of the Education Department, are now neither
good enough nor adequate to earn a £2/10/0 grant under the
Elementary Branch of the Education Department!!"

Unsure how to proceed in the face of such resistance, the
Board of Education managed to make a real mess of sorting out
the People’s College. The HMIs "very strongly" favoured the
idea of creating a completely separate girls’ higher

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1 Birmingham School Board - School Management Committee,
2 The next three pages contain a much abbreviated version
   of this extraordinary saga. It is drawn from PRO
   Ed.20/114 & 20/116; Nottingham School Board, Minutes; Log
   Books of High Pavement & Mundella Schools & the People’s
   College.
elementary school, but the Board of Education deliberately decided not to convey this solution to the Nottingham School Board. Sir George Kekewich advised leaving the School Board "to make their own proposals, and not suggest anything to them", and Sir John Gorst agreed - "they are sure to apply for one, and we can then consider the application without being already committed". This was strange behaviour from a government department supposedly implementing a new and poorly understood policy, and helping to guide local authorities towards the best possible organisation of their schools. And the subterfuge misfired. Nottingham did not apply for a separate girls' higher elementary school, mainly because it could see no point spending £3-4,000 on new laboratories, when the present arrangement worked perfectly well and enabled them to squeeze in the extra pupils who wanted to attend.

But this did not please the Board of Education, where someone angrily rejected Nottingham's application in 1902 to continue the existing arrangements, on the grounds that there was no reason to alter the previous decision "merely because Nottingham School Board delay to do what they ought to have done last year... It should be remembered that the School Board have deliberately ignored our ruling to reduce the number of students at this Higher Elementary School to 340". A calmer voice interceded - "What ought they to have done last year? Our letter told them nothing... we are treating the Nottingham School Board rather unfairly". In an interesting aside on what at least one Board of Education official thought of the higher elementary schools, that note concluded: "Our sole idea, not communicated to them, appears to have been that they should convert a 'very good girls' School' into a girls' Higher Elementary School. It is conceivable that they do not yearn to spoil [crossed out] break up [inserted instead] their girls' School by converting it". This was later contradicted by the HMIs, who said they viewed it more in the light of "a lift-up" than a "break-up", but for the rest of the School Board's life, the People's College continued exactly as before, an oversubscribed mixed school of dubious status.

The new Education Committee was even more opposed than had been its predecessor to the three higher elementary schools remaining as such, and proposed either that they should all become Division A Secondary Schools, or else a Secondary School 'crown' should be added to each. The second suggestion was out of the question according to Morant, and so the Committee pressed "unanimously and emphatically" for implementation of the first. Morant then despatched HMI Dale on a confidential mission to check if Nottingham was doing as it had been told, after which the latter reported back that he had "tried to check as far as possible by the Registers. I do not think they imagine that the information was obtained for the Office". He hoped that his accompanying statement "may be something like what you want". That statement revealed, as Morant had no doubt suspected, that the three Nottingham higher elementary schools were not turning out their 15-year-olds, but had been teaching 52 of them alongside other pupils, though listing them on a separate register and deducting their attendances from the grant submission. Morant was furious both with the Education Committee and the local HMI who had been conspicuously supportive towards the Nottingham schools, at one point declaring privately (and untruthfully) that the
With Morant in such a mood, the Nottingham Education Committee stood little chance of success, but it was passionately keen to turn all three higher grade/higher elementary schools into secondary schools, discontinuing one in due course if they did not succeed. In its desperation, the Committee overstepped the mark. Arguing that its "means for establishing the exact nature and extent of the educational requirements are not less complete than those possessed by the Board of Education", it told the Board that it "feels so strongly upon the subject that even failing the consent of the Board of Education ... they will be compelled to retain the scholars beyond the age of 15 ... even though such retention may involve forfeiture of recognition and grant for the scholars above the age of 15". Morant's terse response to this defiance was that "if they try this in a Higher Elementary School we shall stop the grant for the whole of the School". In fact, this obsessive determination to turn 15-year-olds out of school had not been fully appreciated even by the Board's own senior officials. A few days after Morant's ultimatum about Nottingham, Secretary Bruce had told the local M.P., who happened to be the N.U.T. General Secretary, Yoxall, that there was nothing to prevent higher elementary schools keeping their 15-year-olds provided no grant was claimed. Morant was quick to respond: "No, this is incorrect. Article 40(ii) specifically prohibits this, in order to prevent competition with Secondary Schools", and in the event of Yoxall taking the matter further, he carefully briefed Sir William Anson, who promised to say that if the higher elementary schools broke the age rule, "they will suffer materially".

A further fruitless interview between Mr Abel and the Board meant that nothing was settled by the start of the 1904 school year, with the result that "the whole of the work of the three Schools in question is seriously and increasingly disorganised". Morant, apparently believing that only dishonourable motives could account for such resistance from a local authority, then sent another of his personal "confidants" to Nottingham, to find out what he could about the political and personal loyalties tied up in the whole affair. The contents and wording of his report bring to mind the world of espionage rather than that of national educational policy. He hoped "to get wind of any fresh move", and would let Morant know "if anything of importance should reach my ears". He reckoned that Mr Abel was becoming "generally disliked" because of the extravagance of his policy, and that the Education Committee were a weak bunch, a good many of whom "secretly feel that one Secondary School would have been sufficient", but lacked the courage to say so.

1 The local HMI, Mr Wager, had confided to one headmaster that "Higher Elementary Schools were to be dropped altogether" and "it was contemplated to fuse the Schemes A and B of the Secondary Branch, and make one class only".
This confidential report strengthened Morant's inclination to hold Mr Abel personally responsible for what went on in Nottingham education. The latter, meanwhile, had to cope with the predicted hostile reaction when it was announced that High Pavement and Mundella would become secondary schools and the People's College an ordinary elementary school. "Great opposition was aroused" among parents of the 224 High Pavement children told to move to the People's College, and only 6 consented to be transferred. Public meetings were held, and at the start of the school year in 1905, parents of 150 of the debarred children turned up "in a body" and insisted upon them being admitted. Mr Abel, it was alleged by the Board, arranged for a superficial re-examination of the children, rejecting only those who were "palpably unfit", thereby producing 6 first year classes of more than 40 pupils each, and a secondary school of 634 instead of the 480 approved. He then challenged the Board to turn the children out and prove his re-examination at fault, adding, correctly, that there were no regulations about the size of classes in secondary schools or the manner in which pupils should be admitted.

Eventually the reorganisation in Nottingham reached a resolution - its three higher grades, after unhappy spells as higher elementary schools, became two secondary schools and one ordinary elementary (which was soon closed down). It had been an extraordinarily messy business, full of deceit, bitterness and personal invective - all, incidentally, dramatically different from the friendly discussions with Nottingham High School in its time of need. The Education Committee's fall from favour exactly coincided in time with an appeal from the High School to the Board of Education for support in a dispute with the local authority. The School wanted to keep its government grants without sacrificing any of its independence, and was also trying to appropriate £7,000 from a local charity for a new cricket ground. The powerful intervention of James Gow, a governor and former headmaster of the school, ensured "constant contact" between the school and the Board, as well as HM1 Leach, who had begun to take a warm personal interest in the school, promising "we will see you through". The Board's help in "frustrating the Nottingham Corporation's efforts" was thereby secured, and the High School not only got the money it wanted, but a further sum in 1908 for building improvements, even though it was not on the "aided" list. It continued to enjoy favoured treatment from the Board of Education for many years, illustrating vividly the value to a school of friends in high places.

1 The People's College head moved to High Pavement with most of his staff, where he was said to be popular and successful. Under him, the school remained essentially a higher grade school, according to a teacher who later welcomed the introduction of "many of the best features of the public school system". The Pavior (Sept 1955).

2 A.W. Thomas, A History of Nottingham High School 1513-1953 (1957) pp 241-51. James Gow was then head of Westminster School, and an active member of the Headmasters' Conference and the Board's Consultative Committee. It was he who as head of Nottingham High School had received Percival's support in frustrating an attempt to increase parental influence over the school.
Among a number of points which emerge from Nottingham's experience of implementing the Higher Elementary School Minute - and then trying to extricate itself from it - three are of particular interest. Firstly, Morant was closely involved throughout, directing the Board's strategy, stiffening the resolve of colleagues, and setting the tone of their responses to the Nottingham Education Committee. He chose to set the three schools up as rivals and leave them to fight it out for the two prizes of secondary recognition, and he showed scant heed to the problems created in the city by virtue of this irresponsible policy. The unpleasantness and wasted time and effort which Nottingham had to endure go a long way towards explaining why other less resolute authorities failed to protect, let alone advance the claims of, their municipal schools. It would have been so much easier to give in quietly and go along with the Board's wishes.

The second point was the significant omission from all the Board's utterances about Nottingham of any justification as to why two municipal secondary schools were just the right number for the city. One can only guess that Morant did not dare to advocate less than two, which he might well have preferred, but as in Bristol there was no statistical evidence about secondary school places in relation to total population, merely an undefined 'feeling' that two were more than enough. Nottingham has been cited by a later writer as an example of the Board's very necessary policy of keeping a close eye on the amount of municipal secondary school provision in order to ensure its quality1, but there is not the slightest hint in the Nottingham records that the Board was guided by that principle. Rather, it was determined to make secondary education a scarce commodity, which might be expanded only after a clear demand had revealed itself.

The third and perhaps most striking feature which emerges from Nottingham's experience is that Morant cared as little about the higher elementary schools as he did about local preferences. He had no belief in the value of the kind of education they embodied and no real interest in promoting it or them. They were a convenience, to get the higher grade schools out of the way, and so hedge them with confining restrictions that they could not break out and challenge the secondary schools. There were to be as few as possible, and as was seen in the case of the People's College girls' department, local authorities were not even told when the Board thought a higher elementary school was the right answer. At no point in all the correspondence with Nottingham, was the purpose or value of higher elementary schooling explained; it was an entirely negative strategy, to stop upstart schools from being what they really wanted to be - and showed every sign of becoming. One Board official nearly gave the game away, with his 'spoil'/'break up' comment, and all the evidence points to that being the dominant, if normally unspoken, view at the Board. From the evidence assembled here, the suggestion that "having got rid of the higher grade schools, Morant did not wish to find himself saddled with a substitute for them"2 is entirely convincing.

1 Banks, op.cit. p 62.  
2 S.J. Curtis, Education in Britain since 1900 (1952) p 46.
The 1906 Consultative Committee Report on Higher Elementary Schools adds weight to this interpretation. Riddled with class prejudice, it lamented the decline in moral qualities among the working classes, especially habits of discipline, ready obedience, self-help and pride in good work. It portrayed the homes of higher elementary school pupils as ones which "at best, do little to favour the ends of School education, and at worst are antagonistic". According to the Report, the whole point of higher elementary school education was to offer to pupils their only glimpse of humanitarian training, and to produce handy and willing unskilled workers. Shorthand, machine drawing, book-keeping, industrial chemistry and typewriting were ruled out as "trade instruction", and modern languages had to go because they represented "an approximation towards 'secondary' education... that we shall have occasion to deprecate". In general, the big danger was that "under the influence of an ambitious headmaster and staff", a higher elementary school may "gradually tend to develop into a pseudo-secondary school", and for the same reason, external examinations were ruled out.

Even by the standards of the Board at that time, this was a reactionary perception not only of education, but of society in general - or perhaps it was more that the Report tactlessly blunted out in public, views that were normally confined within the walls of the Board of Education. It certainly confirmed the dismal future of the higher elementary schools, which were consistently undersubscribed, and though a 'new type' was invented with slightly different rules and only a three-year course, all higher elementary schools were abolished in 1918. Until then, those that had not managed to pull themselves up to be secondary or central schools, either dragged on as higher elementary schools, or reverted to ordinary elementary school status, though it seems the majority never gave up hope of re-emerging when the climate was more favourable.

Conclusion

At the end of Chapter 2, an attempt was made to recreate the impact on the lower middle and working classes of the opening up of possibilities which the higher grade school movement represented, and to register the perceptions of the schools held by their own headmasters. The question of what happened to the spirit of optimism and excitement that accompanied their early history is one of the most important to consider.

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1 This report can be found, amongst other places, in PRO Ed.12/139.
2 The concern and interest shown by higher grade school parents certainly belied this arrogant statement. Remarkably similar anxieties about "antipathetic or even hostile" homes were expressed 50 years later by R. Birley, D.R. Harris & R.J.S. Curtis, The Future of the Independent Schools (1957) p 45.
3 In 1907 accommodation was 17,744 & 14,213 were on roll. 219
in evaluating the post-1902 changes. The answer requires more than the utilisation of statistics about secondary school expansion or free places which are generally proffered. The preceding pages have included numerous references to particular points of conflict which arose when the model of the secondary school to which the Board of Education and His Majesty's Inspectorate adhered, clashed with the priorities to which the local education authorities, especially the urban ones, were obliged to be committed. Not that the higher grade schools and their associated institutions furnished the local authorities with a ready-made and polished model to offer as an alternative. One of the most striking features of the schools was their flexibility; their strength rested upon their ability to respond to changing circumstances and to assimilate widespread diversity under one umbrella 'model'.

The Board of Education stated firmly in its 1906 Report that when it came to the provision of secondary school places, "supply must in the main follow ... demand", a principle whose apparent rationality has not infrequently been used to justify the parsimonious provision of services and benefits by those who have easy access to them. For it presupposes that 'demand' can come into existence out of thin air, that it is possible to want something of which one has no knowledge or experience. The higher grade schools came about not so much for the opposite reason, i.e. that demand followed supply, but because the two progressed hand in hand. As parents and children came to appreciate the value of elementary education, so some of them felt reluctant to accept that it should end at the age of 12 or 13. That was not at all the same as their having a clear idea of what they did want, or for how long, and even less was it the case that they thought that the independent school sector could provide anything of use to them. The higher grade school movement was born out of that imprecise but growing yearning. It offered to those parents an upgraded version, in manageable quantities, of the sort of education with which they were familiar and in which their children had so far been successful. And it worked well — the parents and children wanted more, the schools found ways of providing more, and so the movement flourished. The shortlived higher grade school era stands out as being the most important time in our educational history when a democratic surge can be identified and described — when ordinary people demanded more schooling, shaped the schools to suit them, and felt that the schools belonged to them.

There are no others with which to compare the higher grade schools, and so it is difficult to predict what would have happened had they not been superseded. But a fairly safe guess is that they would have gone on growing, both in quantity and scope, and that the happy coactivity between parental demand and local authority supply would have continued. There were effectively no barriers to entrance into the higher grade school system, and there would seem to be no identifiable reason why the 'demand' which had so far come mainly from the lower middle and upper working classes, should not have percolated further through the various social class strata, in time drawing in children and parents who in 1900 would not have considered voluntarily prolonging their formal education.
The Board of Education in the first decade of this century halted any possibility of that development. It placed the privileges of secondary education more firmly in middle class hands than ever before, relying on the shared understandings of a minority class to justify its policy and smooth its path, and on the carefully controlled admittance to those privileges of a tiny, mouldable minority of the majority classes. In so doing, it gave an emphatic and lasting stamp of approval to a particular style of education, and thereby delivered a major blow to the development of any alternatives. With them went such progress as those alternatives had made in formulating a more varied and useful curriculum, in which there was a place for specialisation, scientific excellence, technical competence and vocational training. The higher aspirations and talents of the majority of the population were diverted into the pursuit of the few spaces accorded to them in the middle class educational world with its liberal curriculum, which was the only way to achieve occupational and social advancement. The opportunities offered to the rest were dismal, and the fact that many of them preferred that, to competing for one of the few places for social advancement, is a remarkable comment on how estranged they felt from the newly shaped secondary education system.

George Creech of Bristol recalled that 12 out of his 60 classmates took the scholarship examination in 1920 (2 passed); in Cambridge in the 1920s and 30s anything up to 60 boys a year turned down the places they had won at the Grammar School (A.B. Evans, The Cambridge Grammar School for Boys 1871-1971 (1971) pp 49-50); and in London in 1926 only 46,000 out of an eligible 75,000 sat the preliminary examination for secondary school selection (Campbell, op.cit. p 97). No part of the country seems to have been able to solve this problem.
EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIRLS

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Chapter 6

EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR GIRLS

The Issues

In the considerable body of literature about the development of England's secondary school system, the female side of the story has been badly neglected. Women teachers and girl pupils creep around the fringe of the picture, being either specifically excluded from the scope of a particular study, or ignored in the course of the text. On the other hand, feminist historians who have looked at topics like occupational patterns or marriage rates pay relatively little heed to the historical role of education or, at best, confine their attentions to developments in middle class girls' schooling. And more surprisingly, the small body of recent and otherwise well-informed work on the history of girls' education seems hardly to know that such things as higher grade schools existed. What follows in this Chapter therefore comprises genuinely new information on the subject, which calls for significant adjustments to be made to both the 'educational' and the 'feminist' lines of enquiry.

The consensus among both kinds of historians is that from the mid-nineteenth century onwards, the educational advancement of women was steadily pursued in the face of considerable obstacles by certain middle class women of "ferocious will-power and total dedication". This "ferment of middle class...

1 The worst culprits are the male historians of co-educational schools, e.g. D. Woodhead, A Century of Schooling [At Ardford, Manchester] (1980); D.L. Cattell, The Development of Albert Road Higher Grade School [in Aston, near Birmingham] and the Education Department (Birmingham M.Ed. thesis, 1981); J.M. Jones, George Dixon - The Man and the Schools [in Birmingham] (1980). M. Price's announcement that he ignores girls, at the beginning of 'Mathematics in English Education 1860 - 1914: Some questions and explanations in curriculum history' in HESJ Vol 12 No 4 (Dec 1983) is more honest, not more chauvinistic, than most.

2 For example, D. Gittins, Fair Sex (1982); or L. Holcombe, Victorian Ladies at Work (1973).

3 The schools are not mentioned in either S. Delamont & L. Duffin, eds., The Nineteenth-Century Woman - Her Cultural and Physical World (1978), or C. Dyhouse, Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England (1981). J. Purvis, 'Domestic Subjects Since 1970' in I. Goodson, ed., Social Histories of the Secondary Curriculum (1985), devotes a paragraph to higher grade schools, which is totally inaccurate because it assumes they were the same as higher elementary schools.
activity" was formally recognised by Morant's Board of Education, whose changes to the scale, nature and status of girls' secondary schooling constituted a major step forward. Approval is commonly expressed of three main aspects. Firstly, Morant is held to have strengthened the voice of women in the higher levels of educational administration — a "welcome innovation", said Leese — and reference is made to his respect for Margaret Macmillan and Dame Maude Lawrence. Secondly, the significant number of maintained girls' grammar schools which can trace their foundation to the first decade of the century is taken as evidence that the 1902 Act stimulated the provision of more secondary school places for girls, and that, according to Archer, it was actually "more beneficial" to girls than to boys. And thirdly, the assumption is made that the education they received there was better than what was available before. On the last point, Banks made much of the "central role" assigned to the new girls' secondary schools in the education of future teachers, assuming that the accompanying shift towards a broader, more literary curriculum was entirely beneficial, since "it was obvious that a predominantly scientific course would not best meet their needs". Cruickshank has echoed this interpretation more recently, asserting that in freeing girls from the narrow vocationalism of the pupil-teacher centres, the new secondary schools were "a much neglected landmark".

All three of these interpretations contain truth and the developments they commend should not be minimised as advances on what preceded them. But they very much take their lead from the "official" presentation of affairs, the major limitation of which was that it was wholly and exclusively middle class; in fact, if anything, it was upper middle class shading to aristocratic in its outlook. It consequently based itself on the perceived needs of a small minority of women, and ignored or patronised the rest to a disturbing extent. It seems to have given rise to a temptation among subsequent writers to avoid looking either beneath the surface — at how girls were actually affected — or sideways at alternative possibilities — what might have happened instead. Delamont, who did look beneath the surface, concluded that the middle class pioneers adopted an "elitist solution to feminist dilemmas" and advanced their own educational opportunities at the expense of a greater confinement of their working class contemporaries within a sex-specific curriculum based on the Victorian domestic ideology. But in firmly excusing the pioneers on the grounds that at the time they could not possibly have challenged either the domestic ideal or

3 R.L. Archer, Secondary Education in the Nineteenth Century (1932) p 323.
4 O. Banks, Parity and Prestige in English Secondary Education (1953) pp 44,49. It may be recalled that the HMIs at Bristol's Fairfield School in 1904 made precisely the same assumption.
5 M. Cruickshank, 'A Defence of the 1902 Act' in HESB No 19 (Spring 1977) pp 6-7.
prevailing educational practices, she failed to acknowledge the important alternative contained in the higher grade school movement, which was characteristic of neither the middle class nor the working class model¹.

In order to pass more than a superficial judgment on the significance of educational progress for girls around the turn of the century, it is essential to know something of the wider issues of women's role in society and the economy, and to understand some of the expectations, constraints and aspirations which surrounded them. This chapter is therefore divided into five parts, which reflect the key role played by social class. The first looks at middle class attitudes to various classes of women, and the second at how well these accorded with the actual situation of most women, especially in relation to patterns of employment and consequent educational needs. It then returns to the middle class standpoint, to discuss the late nineteenth century development of girls' secondary schooling of the 'high school' variety, before, in the fourth part, offering a comparison of how girls fared in higher grade schools. The final part focuses attention on what happened to girls' secondary schools after 1902, during the course of which the three interpretations outlined above are discussed further.

The Middle Class View of Women's Educational Needs

With only rare exceptions, middle class women with an interest in social affairs were as firm in their preconceptions as middle class men. Regarding the lifestyle and values of women of their own class, they had the confidence of intimate knowledge, but what they learned about the lives of women of the lower classes disappointed and worried them. The solution that appealed to them was to concentrate on changing the women rather than the circumstances of their lives, and education was the prime vehicle for accomplishing this mission. The whole question of the role and nature of education for girls was therefore even more rooted in social class differentiation than it was for boys. This was rendered more significant by the fact that, at the turn of the century, education for girls and women was a much blanker sheet on which to work. A great deal freer of venerable tradition and less subject to pressures from vested interests, it could have been open to influence from a variety of directions. So the women who held sway in educational matters, including those introduced into the Board of Education, were in a powerful position, especially as their male colleagues were often ill at ease in that area of expertise.

¹ S. Delamont, 'The Domestic Ideology and Women's Education' in Delamont & Duffin, op. cit. p 184. Purvis, op. cit. pp 148-59, makes a similarly sharp demarcation between the schooling of working and middle class girls (with domestic instruction again the key difference), which her confusion over the higher grade/higher elementary schools appears to substantiate.
The Middle Class View of Middle Class Needs

At the root of the educational ideals of these middle class women and men lay a serious ignorance of the reality of life for most women. This lack of awareness, maintained in spite of a growing body of factual evidence to the contrary, made it hard to find an agreed purpose or direction for female education. Put quite simply, what were girls being educated for? For upper and middle class boys, the model of an extended full-time education which was in some way intellectually stimulating, developed the character and created improved career prospects, was long established through the old grammar schools, the public schools and Oxbridge. For the rest of the population, there may have been different ideas on such matters as curriculum, age ranges and fees, but unanimous acceptance that most boys of all social classes were preparing to earn their living for the rest of their lives—and, by extension, financially support the female part of the population. About the educational needs of girls, there was much less certainty because of fixed ideas about the limited role of women in society and the economy. This had not been helped by the progressive exclusion of girls from the nation’s strongest educational tradition, the endowed schools and colleges, or as one late nineteenth century feminist put it, "the rich acquire what was meant for the poor; boys what was left to children".

One fact of life was clear—and wholly desirable—to middle class educationists at the turn of the century: upper and middle class women did not normally work. They certainly did not earn money, and they did not work in the home either, beyond exercising general guidance of their children and supervising the servants. The enthusiasts for improved educational opportunities for middle class girls consequently struggled to justify their crusade, including even sometimes to themselves, since the home was so widely accepted as the rightful domain of all women. The capacity to earn one’s living came in a very poor second, at best a handy but unwelcome alternative, and intellectual stimulation for its own sake was still regarded as unfeminine and eccentric. It has been described elsewhere how the notable pioneering headmistresses, in order to allay their guilt at choosing to be clever and independent, took refuge in dowdy respectability, or exaggerated maternalism towards their pupils, or a highly spiritual sense of vocation. Whatever their particular stance, they were unanimous about the true role of women. For example, Sophie Bryant wrote that “the chief function of women is the making of the home and the preservation of the social side of society”, and Sara Burstall, referring to the honours board of academic successes in her school, said that “one reads perhaps with most satisfaction the names of those who are happily married, and who have proved that high intellectual distinction, and a

1 C.S. Brenner, Education of Girls and Women (1897) p 90.
2 Dyhouse, op.cit. pp 35, 74-8; & Delamont, op.cit. pp 178-9. The latter says that beautiful celibacy was the only combination which escaped all criticism of educated women, some of which was extremely scurrilous.
successful College career, are no impediment to a woman's natural vocation as a wife and mother". Such views seem incongruous coming from women who, by their own way of life, confounded the very principles they so consistently voiced.

Within that restricted framework, better schooling for the comfortable middle class girl had three possible functions. It made her more marriageable, conveniently filling the awkward years of adolescence when she had no status and nothing to do, but from which she was expected "to emerge like a butterfly", while her brothers were banished to boarding schools to reach the same goal out of the public eye. Assuming she then succeeded in capturing a husband, she would be a better wife, mother and 'home manager'. As the committee responsible for Manchester High School expressed its aim, "to fit girls for any future which may lie before them, so that they may become intelligent companions and associates for their brothers, meet helps and counsellors for their husbands, and wise guides and trainers for the minds of their children". And thirdly, she could use her days of leisure while her menfolk were busy at work, to nurture the social, cultural and aesthetic welfare of the community. In particular, thought Sara Burstall, she could help to elevate the "mental tone" of the English commercial class towards higher standards of taste and culture. This, the more cerebral version of essentially the traditional domestic role, required a sound liberal education for middle class girls, not because it was desirable in itself, but because it would permit them, as women, to do their duty on behalf of the nation.

The Middle Class View of Working Class Needs

If that was to be the lifestyle envisaged for middle and upper class women, the rest of the female population had just two functions: to service their social betters, and to devote themselves to running their own homes and raising their families - probably in that order of importance. A number of writers have been intrigued by the Victorian/Edwardian domestic servant phenomenon, with its enormous size, symbolic

1 S. Bryant, 'The Curriculum of a Girls' School' in Education Department, Special Reports on Educational Subjects Vol 2 (1898) p 100; S.A. Burstall, The Story of the Manchester High School for Girls (1911) p 100. Sophie Bryant, widowed at 20, became head of the North London Collegiate School; Sara Burstall was head of Manchester High School for Girls and later Lecturer in Education at the University of Manchester.
2 L. Davidoff, The Best Circles (1973) pp 50-2. In her analysis of Victorian social etiquette, she stressed the crucial importance of marriage - "serious for a man, but imperative for a girl" - as the point of access to high status and a form of independence, at least by comparison with the alternatives.
3 Burstall, op.cit. pp 44-5.

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importance, and hierarchical niceties, and as one critical contemporary said, "there were more grades of service — and snobbery — in feeding and looking after the comforts of the professional and leisured classes than in any other trade or profession". Quite clearly, the lower classes were ideally suited to the service role, and their educational needs not only could, but must, be tailored accordingly. For girls, this meant a basic command of the three Rs, religious instruction and as much as possible in domestic skills, which would also, of course, be useful to them in their own home lives, to which their energies and talents should otherwise be devoted.

This limited approach to the education of girls of the lower classes had a long pedigree, and was given a formidable boost around the turn of the century by the apparently sudden realisation that Britain was not a healthy nation. The middle and upper classes were shaken to learn that the birth rate was declining, the death rate was falling but infant mortality was not, epidemic diseases would not go away, and thousands of recruits for the Boer War had to be discarded because of their poor physical condition. Out of their anxiety, which was as much a panic over the future of the nation and the empire as concern for the suffering involved, grew an assortment of remedial activists — the social Darwinist-eugenist movement, national campaigns for physical efficiency, a series of government-organised conferences, voluntary groups for infant and maternal health, promoters of milk depots, and a number of major books and surveys. They were almost unanimous about the cause of all the problems — the irresponsibility and ineptitude of urban lower class women. They went out to work, they neglected their children and husbands, their homes were filthy, they drank, they were lazy, ignorant and spendthrift. There was even emotive talk of murderesses and infanticide, and Dr George Newman, Chief Medical Officer to the Board of Education, whose 1906 book on infant mortality became a classic work, was in no doubt that "expressed bluntly, it is the ignorance and carelessness of mothers that directly causes a large proportion of the infant mortality".

According to that kind of analysis, poverty, epidemic disease and malnutrition were nothing to do with environmental factors, but were curable by thrifty housekeeping and responsible motherhood, knowledge of which could best be disseminated through the education system. The Board of Education was speedily and profoundly influenced by such views, partly because they accorded well with its own traditional attitudes to girls' education, and partly because they had a special appeal to Morant with his belief in

1. W. Southgate, That's the way it was (1982) p 65.
2. It can be traced to the late 18th century Sunday school/charity school movement, and to pioneers of that time like Hannah More.
4. Quoted in Dyhouse, op.cit. p 96. The Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration (1904) was particularly influential.
'national efficiency'. The National Association for the Promotion of Housewifery had been actively engaged since the 1870s in getting more domestic subjects into the curriculum of public elementary schools, including the enthusiastic promotion of thimble and table-laying drills to music for infants, and the mending of the clothes of local gentlefolk for older girls. Needlework had been a compulsory subject for girls since the Revised Code, sometimes occupying as much as a third of the week while the boys did extra arithmetic or geography, and by 1890 domestic economy was a compulsory specific subject, and cookery, laundry work and hygiene were optional grant-earning examinations.

Domestic subjects received a further important boost in the 1890s from the money available under the Technical Instruction Acts. Local committees seemed often to be struggling to find 'technical' subjects for girls to do, their more conservative middle class composition apparently guiding them towards a narrower view of the role of women than the school boards. Hence, Bristol's committee introduced its plan for a central cookery school with the justification that "any provision for the instruction of females ... should relate to employments wholly or chiefly appropriate to women, especially domestic management". The East Riding's programme entitled 'Lectures to Women and Girls' comprised laundrywork, hygiene, cookery and dressmaking, Norfolk offered two-month courses in cookery for 10 girls at a time, and Essex boasted of giving a fair share of the money to girls by offering "Domestic Economy, including Cookery, and other subjects suitable for them". Gloucestershire was fairly typical in offering four times as many 'technical instruction' scholarships to boys as to girls, a situation which was not always easy to avoid even had committees wished to. Wiltshire, for instance, reported that "for girls, there is not a single available school", and the national figures summarising capital grants to secondary schools for laboratories and workshops confirm that boys' education did very much better than girls' out of the Technical Instruction Acts.

Miss Bremner complained bitterly in 1897 about the unfairness of all this. She cited the encroachment that 4-5 hours per week of sewing made into girls' education, especially when "they have seldom shown much liking" for it, and it was in any case "largely rendered useless" by ready-made clothes and sewing machines. And she summed up the mood of opposition in forceful terms: "It is remarkable how sound educational axioms seem to be flung to the winds in the case of girls; for them, sewing begins in the infant school. The School Boards and Education Departments alike seem to conspire to deprive girls of that broader general training which is necessary even to technical skill. And now we see small children of eleven learning cookery, housewifery, laundry work, as if little girls could not be too easily pressed into a narrow mould". But hers was a rare voice of enlightenment in a chorus which ever more loudly and confidently sung the praises of domestic

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2. The Record of Technical and Secondary Education (various months, 1892-3).
subjects as a crucial element in the education of girls. It was as if they alone could solve the problems of poverty, malnutrition and disease, at the same time as they satisfied the intellectual and occupational aspirations of the majority of the nation's girls.

The arrival at the Board of Education of Morant did not bring any revolutionary new attitudes towards domestic subjects. He was more interested than many there in the theories about the nation's physical efficiency but, like most of his contemporaries, tended to be satisfied with generalisations and unsubstantiated assumptions. His contribution to the regeneration of the race was outlined in succeeding Codes and Reports, the substance of which prompted a later Chief Woman Inspector to identify the years 1902 to 1914 as witnessing "the greatest expansion of domestic subject teaching in elementary schools in England and Wales". The emphasis throughout was on simple, practical, down-to-earth instruction - plain needlework and mending not embroidery, economical stews not toffee and buns - the most serious defect being that such instruction too often failed to "correspond with the needs of cottage households as they are shown to exist in actual life". Teachers who tried to add interest and variety to nine or ten years of mending and plain cooking were told off for being "too theoretic, too ambitious, and too inclined to scientific terminology". And yet the educational, 'formative' value of domestic subjects in the education of girls apparently had no limits, as, over the years, the Board commended their potential for developing intelligence, training aesthetic tastes, building character and inculcating thoughtful attitudes in adult life. As Morant himself put it in a telling comment in 1910, when singing the praises of infant care as a new elementary school subject, "what is commonly called book-learning has in the past years been too much regarded as the supreme purpose of our elementary schools".

The Reality - Women's Lives at the Turn of the Century

For most women the reality of the situation was very different from the dutiful domesticity envisaged by the upper and middle classes. Admittedly, the influence of that vision percolated downwards to the next social stratum, which was aspiring to join their ranks, or at least ape the more attainable aspects of their life-style. Hence, among some members of the lower middle class, the keeping of a servant was a vital outward sign of respectability, and many writers have described the amount of energy and subterfuge which was employed to keep the

2 Board of Education, Report for the Year 1904-1905 (1905); and Special Report on the Teaching of Cookery to Public Elementary School Children in England and Wales (1907); see also Bramwell, op.cit. pp 119-26.
visible parts of the house looking spick and span. Above all, a "working wife endangered a husband's status and self-respectability", and the marked division of labour which accompanied the growth of suburbs on the end of railway or tram lines therefore produced a lot of bored, lonely women with very little to do and few contacts with their neighbours or local community. But that kind of attachment to preserving an aura of middle class respectability was always a rather fragile facade, sought after by only a minority, and successfully maintained by even fewer.

Marriage, Children and Employment - The Official Figures

The activities of most women were much more serious and demanding. To understand the reality of their lives - and the role of education in them - it is necessary to correct a number of popular myths; for example, that working class women had high rates of illegitimacy, married early, had large families, and were employed only briefly and spasmodically. The next three paragraphs will examine the statistical evidence relating respectively to marriage rates, fertility, and labour force participation, before drawing in information from other sources to illuminate the questions of 'invisible' employment and new employment areas for women.

The first very important fact is that only about half the nation's women were married at any given time. This was typical of the West European pattern throughout history until the Second World War, which was characterised by the fact that "Europeans have married very much later than others and far more of them have remained unmarried throughout life". In addition, "the proportion of women never marrying rose to levels probably unprecedented in much of north-western Europe by the end of the nineteenth century". In England and Wales, of every 1,000 women over 15 years of age recorded in 1901, 497 were married, 395 single and 108 widowed (or divorced). The highest proportion of married women occurred in the 30-39 age group (nearly three-quarters of all women of that age), but only half the women of 25-29 and a quarter of those of 20-24, were married. The average age at marriage at that time was just over 25, and rising rather than falling. Given that

1. E.g. Southgate, op.cit. p 11; and M. Groszek, First Movement (1937). The front door step and any brass was regularly polished and the front parlour kept spotless, even if that meant clearing it of beds each morning.
4. C. Rollett & J. Parker, 'Population and Family' in A.H. Halsey, ed., Trends in British Society since 1900 (1972) Tables 2.16 & 2.18. In Scotland, the figures were 443 married, 445 single, 112 widowed of every 1,000 women over the age of 15 in 1901.
most of those women would have left school at the age of 14 at the latest, and stood a 1 in 10 chance of being widowed, they had a lot of years of not being married, and, as one contemporary woman writer said, "it is perfectly plain that not all women can be maintained by men, even if this were desirable". 

Another common misconception is that Victorian and Edwardian working class women were totally absorbed in producing and rearing large broods of children, whether in or out of wedlock. In fact, the average number of live births for each woman married between 1900 and 1909 was 3.53, and illegitimacy was never particularly high, at about 8 births per 1,000 unmarried women, and falling. Differences in the birth rate between social classes were perceptible but not dramatic, and while some manual workers, notably miners, had unusually large families, others, like the Lancashire textile workers, traditionally had only one or two children. There is now absolutely no doubt that Victorian and Edwardian parents limited the size of their families, primarily for economic reasons, and late marriage was one of the ways of doing that. One researcher found evidence that for some working class parents, aspirations for their children's education "seems to have been an important motive for restricting family size quite drastically", and changing employment opportunities were certainly an additional incentive.

According to the censuses of 1901 and 1911, women comprised just under 30% of the registered working population. Over one third of all women were officially employed, a proportion which was gradually rising, though there were wide variations in the different age ranges. At the ages when three-quarters of women were married (30-39 years), only a quarter were employed, but up to the age of 20, three-quarters were occupied, and from 20 to 25, nearly two-thirds; even 11% of women over 65 still recorded themselves as working*. In other words, it was the normal practice for most girls to enter employment when they finished at school, and to expect to remain there for at least ten years before they married, with a strong likelihood of working again at some point in their lives. The kind of job which girls were equipped to take was

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1 B.L. Hutchins, Women in Modern Industry (1915) p 80.
2 Rollett & Parker, op.cit. Tables 2.29 & 2.37. Figures for live births according to the occupation of the husband included: professional 2.33; employers 2.64; salaried employees 2.37; non-manual wage-earners 2.89; manual wage-earners 3.96.
3 Gittins, op.cit. A surprising omission from her list of reasons for women becoming more competent at controlling their fertility was the increased dissemination of general physiological knowledge through science teaching in elementary board schools.
4 G.S. Bain, R. Bacon & J. Pimlott, 'The Labour Force' in Halsey, op.cit. Tables 4.3, 4.4 & 4.5; and Hutchins, op.cit. p 82.
5 Though their preferred occupation might well be closed to them as married women, A number of local education authorities and all branches of the civil service operated a marriage bar.
Therefore a matter of no small consequence. Contemporary investigators found plenty of evidence that there was a well-understood and minute ranking of good and bad jobs even within the same trade, and that young women with better jobs found them so rewarding that they were reluctant to give them up. One team researching Birmingham's metal industry discovered that dipping and japanning were done by a "very rough class of women", and enamelling by a poor class of girls who were undernourished and prone to disease, but burnishing was an excellent trade socially and "one of the best which an intelligent girl can learn", and lacquering attracted such socially superior girls that they refused to share a dining room with the dippers. All in all, the writers concluded that the desire for respectability through her work could easily become the "ruling power in a girl's life", with the result that "rigid class distinctions permeate the rank and file of manual workers" to an extent that the use of the general term 'working classes' entirely ignored'.

The Unofficial Workforce

The Birmingham researchers also encountered a very large number of older women who had been domestic servants before marriage, and who were said to "bitterly regret this fact in after-life", because they had no trade to return to. This was one aspect of their surprising discovery of a whole "subterranean department" of home-based, paid work among married women who, as Booth had found in 1891, were "to be found in every grade of society, among the wage-earning class, in the home of the middle class clerk and in the room of the dock labourer". According to all the official statistics, these women were not in employment. There were two kinds of work. Women who had earlier learned a suitable trade in a factory and maintained a good record with their employers, resumed it at home on piece-rates soon after marriage and child-bearing, fitting it around the demands of family life. The members of the Birmingham team were enormously impressed by the incessant labours of such women, regularly from 4a.m. to 1p.m. and sometimes into ripe old age, which they found "little short of miraculous", especially when commonly accompanied by a "kindness and patient struggle that amounts to heroism".

The majority, who for various reasons could not return to a previously learned trade, generated income from extending their domestic skills. Charring, washing and laundry work were largely done by married women and widows, baby-minding

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3. Cadbury, Matheson & Shann, op.cit. pp 145, 157, 164-5, 169, 173. They encountered one 86-year-old who had worked all her life, including 60 years for the same firm, to help support a delicate husband and 16 children. In Birmingham, 'carding' - mounting small metal items onto cards - was a common domestic trade.

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was popular with young mothers and ageing grandparents, taking in lodgers was considered a respectable way of helping to pay the rent, and small shops could be opened in private houses overnight, the acquisition of a set of weights and a few items of stock being the only outlay. Walter Southgate's mother was an expert at managing the pawnbroker on behalf of her neighbours, and she also worked in the home-wash laundry, went charring, and helped with local nursing, births and laying out when necessary. A recent study of Bristol's working class private schools, including the much-maligned 'dame schools', revealed how very common these were among home-based women with some education, though they were not always declared to officials like census enumerators'. This adds weight to the hypothesis that paid work played a far more important part in many women's lives than was reflected in official figures - and consequently in analyses based on them. It was nicely summed up in the recollections of one early-century wife, who told her interviewer that she had "never worked", but concluded her list of non-stop paid washing, ironing and cleaning with "I'd do anything to earn money!"2

New Employment Opportunities

Entry into employment was certainly not confined to working class girls, nor to manual or unskilled work. The message brought back to the Bryce Commission by its assistants was a clear one - for all but the most comfortably off, it was normal for secondary school girl leavers to get jobs or undertake some form of vocational training. In Birmingham, where the King Edward schools provided an unusually large number of places (1,225) for girls, Mrs Glynne Jones was told by the headmistress of one of the schools that 90% of her leavers "eventually earned to some extent their own living", and by another that she knew of only 6 of her last 69 scholarship holders who were "at home". While conceding that the education of girls could not ignore preparation for home life, (Mrs Glynne Jones was adamant that it must also prepare every girl for a career "just as definitely as a boy"), James Headlam in suburban Surrey found "a very large number of girls who, as soon as they leave school, have to earn money in some way or another", and attitudes were obviously changing in Norfolk, where parents had "hardly realised the idea that their girls are possible bread-winners", but a large majority of those girls "now think of getting some employment". Mrs Kitchener came away from Lancashire convinced that working women were held back by their lack of skill or training, and that a thorough investigation was needed into the place of girls and women in the labour market, so that their education could be more effectively geared to preparing them3.

2 Bryce, op.cit. p 115.
3 (Bryce) Royal Commission on Secondary Education (1895)
The information gathered about the kind of jobs which better-educated girls went into, showed a consistent pattern nationwide. As well as growth in the more traditional feminine occupations of teaching and nursing, the last third of the nineteenth century saw the large-scale entry of women into a number of occupations previously monopolised by men, notably the civil service, clerical work and as shop assistants. All those were expanding occupations, and the improved education given to girls after 1870 enabled them to take advantage of the new openings. Hence, between 1881 and 1911, teaching, in which women outnumbered men by about 3 to 1, occupied 50% more women; and nursing, which had been a predominantly feminine occupation even before Florence Nightingale transformed it, 119% more. Corresponding increases in the participation rates of women in the 'growth' occupations were 504% in the civil service, notably in the Post Office, where by 1911 female telegraph and telephone operators outnumbered men, and 40% of clerks were female; and a staggering 1,845% in general clerical work, so that by 1911, 18% of all clerks and a third of those employed in commerce or business, were women, compared with less than 1% fifty years earlier. Also by 1911, 35% of all shop assistants were women, again a growth from almost nothing, and the most important one for bringing girls from the working classes into personal contact with members of the middle class. These were the 'best' jobs available to girls leaving school, partly because of fairly good wages, but even more because of the levels of skill required, the security of the jobs, and the respectability and status which accompanied them.

All of this adds up to a perhaps unexpected picture of women being very actively involved in the economic process, in terms both of the role they performed in the manufacturing and service industries, and in the often crucial financial contribution which they made to the maintenance of their homes. A recent history of the 'common people' stressed the importance of the latter, arguing that the earnings of women and older children were "essential for the family to function effectively ... the working-class home was dependent on family earnings, not just the income of the male breadwinner".1 Somewhat against the odds, the working-class family thereby survived as an economic as well as a social unit, despite the break-up of home-based industry which the factory system brought, and contrary to the fervently patriarchal sentiments of the middle class. It would therefore be very surprising if the possibility of enhanced educational opportunities had been of no significance to them. And it was not, as in the case of upper and middle class women, so that they could thereby become sufficiently cultured to raise the mental tone of society, nor, as middle class women thought should be the aim of the rest of the female population, so that they could cook and sew and manage their homes better. Rather, the skills and qualifications gained at school, could mean entrance to a completely different type of job, better in all respects - in both the short and long term, and in the status as much as the material rewards.

1 Figures drawn from Holcombe, op.cit. Appendix; & Bain, Bacon & Pimlott, op.cit. Table 4.3.
2 Harrison, op.cit. p 302.
This was especially true because no occupation which was open to women was selective on the basis of social class, or required extended training in a specialised institution or milieu. The 'best' jobs for women were all characterised by a mixing of the social classes - they were regarded as respectable for middle class girls, and as a significant step up for working class girls. For the latter, there was intense competition to gain entry, in which the training and qualifications they had already acquired could well be the main asset they had to offer. And even more than for working class boys, those qualifications had to be gained quickly and efficiently since girls were less likely to have a continuous working life. But they were likely to live at home for a number of years before they married, so their families had to weigh up the potential long-term advantage against the short-term loss of earnings and extra costs. The latter part of the nineteenth century witnessed major improvements in the training of elementary school teachers and nurses, as well as something of a boom in 'commercial education' of all sorts, ranging from broad-based courses in more expensive private establishments to specific training in skills like typewriting and shorthand, both of which made their entry into the business world in the 1880s. Suitable preparation and training for the new jobs were increasingly demanded of the public education system, and the higher grade schools and allied institutions found themselves playing a key role.

There seems to have been a concurrent reaction on the part of parents against the Board of Education's growing enthusiasm for domestic subjects. Most working class mothers were, by force of circumstance, skilled and ingenious at maintaining their homes, and resented the fact that valuable school time was taken up - particularly when attendance at special centres was required - with teaching their daughters what they would better learn at home. There were reports that, following the introduction of cookery onto the timetable, many parents complained that their daughters were wasting their time doing dirty work, and the London School Board's first superintendent of cookery recorded that the "prejudice against it was almost insuperable, and parents put every possible obstacle in the way of their children attending the classes". In a special report for the Education Department in 1897, Mrs Pillow expostulated that "extraordinary as it may seem in the face of the general ignorance on culinary matters, mothers frequently complained that their daughters 'wasted their time in going to cookery lessons'". In Halifax, a new cookery course attracted only 12 students, and a dressmaking class in a Leeds school just 2.

1. So few women were able to penetrate the barriers to become doctors that medicine cannot be counted as an occupation open to them in England.
2. See Holcombe, op.cit. passim.
4. J. Kamm, Hope Deferred (1965) p164; Dyhouse, op.cit. p90.
5. Education Department, Special Reports on Education Subjects (1896).
And some school boards, perhaps because they were better attuned to the attitudes of ordinary parents, dragged their feet over domestic subjects. Birmingham constructed just one kitchen for 230 girls at its otherwise superbly equipped Waverley Road Higher Grade School, and Bristol, it may be recalled, refused to build a new cookery room at St George School, left the establishment of a specialist centre to the city’s technical instruction committee, and ordered that girls should study less needlework and more geography to enhance their chances in the pupil teacher examinations. Allegiance to the domestic ideology in girls’ education was therefore becoming another of the topics on which central and local authorities were moving apart. Rooted as it was in issues of class differentiation, its merits were perceived quite differently by members of different social classes. To aspiring lower middle and working class families, education, particularly of an extended nature, had much more important things to offer than the basic domestic training believed to be essential for them by their social superiors. The schools of the latter were caught in something of a quandary, but, as will be seen in the next section, continued largely to adhere to their role in preparing girls for a life of domesticity, leisure and good works.

Before 1902 - Girls in High Schools

The nineteenth century has often been credited with the origins of equal educational opportunities for women. Tributes are paid to the sterling efforts of certain pioneering individuals in gaining access to public examinations, in founding the first ‘proper’ secondary schools for girls, and in forcing an entry into the university world. The Schools Inquiry Commission has been called a “landmark”, the Endowed Schools Act “the Magna Carta of girls’ education”, and the Girls’ Public Day School Company has been credited with “outstanding progress” in the establishment of “excellent schools for girls”. By comparison with what had preceded these significant occurrences, progress was made in secondary schooling for girls, not least in starting to overcome the “mountains of inertia and prejudice”. By the end of the century it had become possible - and fairly acceptable - for girls to pursue serious academic studies, sit examinations, enrol at universities and take degree courses. However, accounts of those developments tend to exaggerate the impact they had, omitting mention of the very narrow stratum of society to which they were directed, and clouding over some of the less impressive aspects of the story. This section will therefore concentrate on the weaknesses and limitations of the developments in secondary education for middle class girls, paying rather less attention to the areas of progress which have been described elsewhere.

2 M.B. Shaw, Redland High School (1932) p 9.
Limitations of Scope

The first important point is that although the new-style endowed and proprietary schools were successful examples of one possible model of secondary schooling for girls, they affected a very small number of pupils. The Endowed Schools Commissioners did enhance the share of endowments devoted to girls' education, but on a far more limited scale than the Act's proponents, both male and female, had hoped. In some areas resistance was ferocious, and though 94 girls' and 7 mixed secondary schools were created, they represented barely 20% of the total, and the original deficiency was much more marked. Moreover, by the end of the century the steam had definitely gone out of the Commissioners' work; the establishment of new schemes for endowed secondary schools was a dying rather than a growing business, or, as one writer has put it, "the thick end of the wedge came first". The rate of expansion under the Girls' Public Day School Company also tailed off after a good start. By 1876 it had 36 schools and 7,200 pupils, more than half of them in London and the Home Counties, which provoked one contemporary critic to observe that "as far as numbers are concerned, success can hardly be regarded as phenomenal".

Both sorts of schools were directed at a closely defined section of the population, with little provision, or desire, for contact with the lower classes or the public elementary school system. It seems that the daughters of the professional middle class were the first to patronise the new 'public' girls' day schools, and though some of the schools were soon priding themselves on the mixture of social classes they accommodated, this in fact comprised only a narrow band of the comfortable middle class. Others aimed explicitly at social exclusiveness, and various investigators made reference to the intense snobbishness they often encountered at girls' schools, deriving, they thought, from the pressure on teachers from parents who would otherwise patronise select private schools; the girls themselves were said to be much freer of class consciousness than their parents or brothers. In any case, an estimated 70% of girls receiving any secondary education were in private schools, which were estimated to number between 10,000 and 15,000 nationwide. They were of extremely variable quality and mostly very small (as few as half a dozen pupils) in order to preserve a refined, family atmosphere. To compete with those, the new schools had to be prepared to accept girls at any age, quite often in their mid-teens for a year or two 'finishing', and to be very tolerant of erratic attendance and half-hearted academic efforts. There was also much talk of 'taste', 'refinement' and

2 Bremner, op.cit. p 93. Though the chairman of the Company told the Bryce Commission (Vol VIII p 25) that there was "a sufficient provision for Secondary Education in England", which the GPDSC had "to a great extent" supplied.
3 Delamott, op.cit. pp 174-6.
4 Zimmern, op.cit. p 167.
'cultivation', together with a desperate desire to preserve decorous, ladylike standards and avoid competitiveness and 'over-pressure'.

The English Girls' High School

The English high school, as shaped by the Girls' Public Day School Company and increasingly imitated by the endowed sector, emerged as the most important and influential prototype of the new 'serious secondary schooling for middle class girls. It took as its guiding purpose the formation of character by means of a 'liberal', arts-biased education, with a special emphasis on high spiritual and moral values and service to the community. The schools were committed to extending the intellectual capacities of their girls, though not necessarily to the limits of those capacities, and they consciously minimised the social 'accomplishments', sometimes against the wishes of parents. Most of them avoided putting domestic subjects onto the timetable, on the grounds that their class of pupil was trained at home - unlike rich girls who had no such need or poor ones whose mothers were likely to be 'ignorant, improvident, or out at work'. A reasonable intellectual standard was guaranteed by their teaching staffs, a proportion of whom were the earliest products of the London and Cambridge colleges of higher education, and who have been described by one contemporary as 'highly educated, exerting great moral force, and ruling with justice and kindness'.

However, in a number of ways, girls' schools of the high school type were built around an almost unquestioning acceptance of the conventional middle and upper class role of women in society. It was assumed that "the normal work of a woman is to be the maker of a home, to be a wife, and above all a mother", and that for those for whom 'breadwork' was necessary, "marriage closes a girl's career". Sara Burstall warned that "one must always remember that the girl has her home and her home duties and joys. She must not be taken away from family life, from being with her father and brothers at the close of the day and at weekends, from going out with her mother and helping her". Adherence to this principle inevitably affected the organisation of girls' high schools. They were nearly all day schools, and in order "to offer the

1 See especially Mrs Armitage's report on Devonshire to the Bryce Commission (Vol VI pp 85-107), which was highly critical of many of the schools she saw. Just 6 'public' schools in the county were educating 500 girls, and at only one (Paignton) had there been a "tacit agreement among the high castes to swallow their prejudices, and allow their children to mix at school with tradespeople's daughters". Elsewhere, to the "naval and military mind the very idea ... is still repugnant".
2 S.A. Burstall, English High Schools for Girls (1907) p 193. Her writings are used as the basis for the description which follows.
3 Brearler, op.cit. pp 93-4.
4 Burstall, English High Schools pp 13, 53, 193, 207.
advantages of a solid education without taking girls too much away from their homes", they worked only in the mornings, school hours being normally from 9.00 to 1.00. This was generally regarded as the best time for "brainwork", and had the advantages of getting the girls home in daylight and avoiding the undue social mixing which would occur during a midday break. It produced a working week of about 18 hours, which, with 13 weeks holiday a year, meant that in the course of a year the typical high school girl worked about half the number of hours of her higher grade school contemporary. There was additionally an assembly to start the day and a mid-morning break for "light luncheon", followed by drill.

Even so, the schools worried greatly over the delicate constitutions of their staffs and pupils. The long summer holidays were said to be vital for the mistresses to recover their strength, and it was strongly recommended that they should be given an "ample supply of couches for reclining" in their common rooms, as well as "more allowance in the matter of absence due to illness". Their fragile health was held by Sara Burstall to justify fully their receiving lower salaries than male teachers, though a more enlightened contemporary thought it was about time that comparative health tables were drawn up, to show "what the difference between the sexes actually amounts to. Women have suffered far too much in the past by guesses at their inefficiency in one field or another". It was certainly true that most women secondary teachers were relatively badly paid, and a number of understaffed schools were only able to keep going because of the financial self-sacrifice of their teachers.

The schools were also constantly aware of the criticism that they put their pupils under too great a strain. Miss Burstall advised that "girls need more rest; they are more susceptible to injury through nervous strain during the years of secondary education; they should not do as much work in a given period as boys", and she particularly deprecated the taking of external examinations. She blamed Miss Buss of North London Collegiate for introducing that "grave error" into girls' secondary education merely to imitate the boys' schools, thereby ignoring what most commentators, then and since, have agreed was one of the key factors in raising the standards of girls' and women's education. Equally out of favour were science and mathematics. The former was only useful — indeed essential — as a preparation for domestic duties and the care of children, and the latter "should be kept at a minimum for girls; it does not underlie their industries as it does many of the activities of men ... an excess of it, the subject being useless to them and disconnected with their life, has a hardening effect on the nature of women".

On these grounds, the GPSDC schools rejected Dr Elizabeth Garrett Anderson's advice that a midday break and afternoon school would be less stressful and more healthy. P. Atkinson, "Fitness, Feminism and Schooling" in Delamont & Duffin, op. cit. p 114.

Burstall, English High Schools pp 59-60.

Brenner, op. cit. p 169.

Burstall, English High Schools pp 13,110; & Manchester High School p 43.

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It is easy to make fun of this kind of over-solicitousness, and one sometimes wonders how far it was a publicity exercise to appease reluctant parents and resistant males. The high schools were probably the first secondary schools to monitor and record the physical development of their pupils, using consultant doctors, maintaining medical records, and issuing firm instructions about diet, exercise and sleep in cases of concern. But the women heads and teachers, more than anyone, must have been aware of what has been observed as the remarkable robustness and energy of the typical high school girl, who had a formidable appetite for work and such an attachment to school activities and games that it was difficult to get her to go home. No doubt she relished the intellectual stimulation, the company and friendship just as much as her social inferiors in the higher grade schools, even if the material and occupational rewards were of less pressing significance. One late nineteenth century feminist reckoned that the high schools were producing "a new type of girl, self-reliant, courageous, truthful, and eager for work ... sometimes blamed for want of grace ... but lacking helplessness and silliness ... Physically, morally, and intellectually, these schools may claim that they are improving large numbers, and with them surely the race."1

In the prevailing social and cultural climate, the schools were circumscribed by the expectations of the parents on whom they depended, and middle class girls were almost certainly better off being educated in high schools than by any of the alternatives which their parents would have considered utilising. But one still feels a lingering irritation that the schools were not a little more adventurous, possibly leading the way in changing attitudes as they became more established and admired. Some middle class women were prepared to take a very radical stand on women's political rights in the first decade of the century, but in education the 'pioneers' took a much less challenging line. As will be seen in the next section, there were a lot of women working in education - supported by some in related fields like medicine and physical training - whose belief in the capabilities of girls was altogether more egalitarian than those whose views largely confirmed the preconceptions of the officials of the Board of Education. But the latter furnished a model of girls' secondary schooling which most middle class males found acceptable, and which conveniently solved their problem of what to do with the female half of the population in the new national system of secondary education.

1 L. Duffin, "The Conspicuous Consumptive: Woman as an Invalid" in Delamont & Duffin, op. cit. Chapter 2, argues that the useless life assigned to Victorian ladies may have adversely affected their health - that "sickness filled the gap of inactivity so effectively that it came to pervade middle-class female culture". The grim treatment they were likely to receive from their male doctors did not help, especially after about 1870 when crude gynaecological surgery became a popular remedy for a whole range of complaints. The fact that secondary education coincided with puberty made it especially vulnerable to criticism.

2 Zimmern, op. cit. pp 76-7.
Like most educationists at the time (and since), school boards and their headteachers were genuinely unsure about what was the ideal curriculum for girls. As the Education Department Codes became more liberal, and Science and Art Department courses made their appearance in ordinary schools, teachers and administrators in the public education service had more choice in the matter, though they were never free of the strictures of centrally approved courses and grant distribution. Whatever their preconceptions, they did show a willingness to innovate and to trust the evidence of their own eyes, whether it was the sight of girls engrossed in their work in science laboratories or the mass exodus of their pupils to employment. It is very probable that had the higher grade schools been allowed to continue, the content and purpose of girls' education would have been one of the major areas of experimentation.

'Commercial' Education

The higher grade schools were always constrained by the practical circumstances in which they operated. They had no choice - but, it seems, not too much enthusiasm - about teaching the domestic subjects so prized by the Education Department, and even the Science and Art Department belatedly made cookery compulsory in its schools of science. But most did try to accommodate the growing demand for 'commercial' education, and, perhaps influenced by the prevailing opinion that chemistry and physics could not possibly be of value to girls, they tried out subjects like hygiene and physiology. What emerges strongly from the evidence, some of which is cited below, is that the girls themselves were determined that, while their education should be useful to them when they left school, they would not be fobbed off with a second-rate education; their subjects and courses must carry the same status and lead to the same qualification as the boys'.

So, given the choice, many of those who hoped to enter clerical or commercial work, preferred to remain at a higher grade school than shift to a private specialist institution. Under pressure from parents, Birmingham's Waverley Road Higher Grade School offered an optional commercial course to older pupils, and HMI's at Mundella Higher Grade School in Nottingham noted that "efforts to give the literary work a more commercial turn, without diminishing its educational value, is very interesting, and appears successful". London, which experienced by far the greatest expansion in female clerical and shop work, was much more interested in developing a bias towards commercial courses than scientific ones for its post-elementary schoolchildren, and Bradford designated two of its higher grade schools to specialise in commercial work. Manchester's Central Higher Grade School was able to run a

\[\text{PRO Ed.35/2579; Mundella School, Log Book 16 Jul 1900.}\]

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separate commercial department financed by the school's success on the science side, which greatly impressed Mr and Mrs Kitchener on behalf of the Bryce Commission; it had its own woman head and about 150 girls in 1895.

It should be noted that what higher grade schools called 'commercial courses' were not narrowly skills-based or vocational. The Bryce Assistant Commissioner in Birmingham discussed at some length the English, geography, mathematics and French taught to the higher grade schools' commercial pupils, and at Manchester, the timetable consisted of religious knowledge (3.75 hours per week), arithmetic (3 hours), English language and literature (4), French (2), geography (2), art drawing (2), class music and singing (1), manual instruction (2), domestic economy (1), drill (1) and book-keeping and shorthand (2). The absence of science was the main difference from the normal higher grade school curriculum, which had implications for pupil teachers when HMIs tried to guide them onto the commercial side in the belief that a non-scientific education was more appropriate. But it is difficult to see quite why commercial education fell so badly out of favour at the Board of Education, or why, as Eaglesham has said, vocational education of the commercial variety, was "for long anathema" to Morant, who behaved "almost as if no education was preferable" to it.

Scientific Education

However, although 'commercial' education was a key attraction to girls staying on at school, it was not the only one. Middle class visitors to higher grade schools were repeatedly impressed by the enthusiasm shown by girls for mathematics and science, and went away racking their brains as to why the girls should be so keen to participate in something assumed to be of no earthly use to them. Mrs Kitchener in Lancashire, who was convinced that Science and Art Department courses were inappropriately scientific and 'masculine' for girls, was particularly intrigued by this phenomenon. She noted that at the Bolton Higher Grade School, where 65 girls were in the organised science school, "the girls looked so bright and interested that it was clear that they were using their minds, though not on the most useful subjects", while in an algebra lesson at the Ducie Avenue Higher Grade School in Manchester, "the girls were so intent on the subject that hardly a head was turned when I passed through the classroom", and at Waterloo Higher Grade School in Oldham, 20 girls looked "uncommonly bright and happy" working alongside 48 boys in the school's splendid chemistry laboratory. She learned from Miss Moss at the Manchester Central Higher Grade School that a surprisingly large number of girls (about half) chose to go

into the organised science school rather than her own commercial section, including those who were planning to become pupil teachers. In Miss Moss's experience, the girls emerged "more intelligent, more alive in mind" at the end of a year in the science school, and Mrs Kitchener herself acknowledged the evident value to girls of studying subjects like chemistry and mathematics as a form of "intellectual gymnastics, in strengthening the mind". She also recounted the remarkable lesson learned by the Liverpool School Board when it planned a central science school for boys only, on the assumption that girls would prefer to stay with their elementary school teachers and not have to walk about the streets². The girls of six board schools organised a petition "asking that they might have the same advantages as the boys", and when the school board agreed, 120 girls put their names down for the science school. There they made up half the numbers and were said by the headmaster to do very well. Mrs Kitchener regarded this as a very striking example of girls demanding knowledge for its own sake. She went on to explore the "curious fact" that girls seemed not to be more eager for what she thought was a suitable education than for the unsuitable one on offer in organised science schools, and was forced to conclude that the girls she had come across opted for the best teaching and the highest standards of work and qualifications that were available to them³.

Equal Education

Higher grade school girls seem, too, to have responded well to being treated as virtual equals. Headteachers expected their female pupils and staff to attend as regularly, and to perform as well as their male counterparts, and were neither over-solicitous for their welfare nor surprised by their achievements. The majority of schools were co-educational, even if some of the classes within them were segregated, and both girls and boys did much the same work, for the same number of hours per week, and sat the same examinations. In the case of Science and Art Department examinations, this could mean 13-year-old girls not getting home till 11 o'clock at night. There was a point of view that higher grade schools were "less attended by girls than boys"⁴, but in the schools examined for this study, there were roughly equal numbers, with, if anything, rather more girls in the senior science classes. And they were certainly no burden to the schools. The head of Bras Street in Liverpool was "very proud of his

² The London Technical Education Board's earliest plans, as stated in the Record of Technical and Secondary Education Vol II No 10 (May 1893) were based on the "very definite plan" that for "girls of the artisan class, the higher departments of the elementary schools are of considerably greater importance than secondary schools proper".  
³ Bryce Commission Vol VI pp 253-5.  
⁴ Kamm, op.cit. p 226.
girls" (the ones who had petitioned to be allowed in), Halifax headmaster Dyche believed that "the girl would work much harder than the boy", and at Ducie Avenue in Manchester, the head acknowledged that the "presence of the girls was a distinct help to him in maintaining discipline".

The progress of the girls at St George School, Bristol, was well documented through the log book, though Mr Pickles did not list or categorise his pupils according to sex and does not seem to have thought of them as different entities. Perhaps the presence of his sister on the teaching staff influenced his enlightened approach. At one time he was very much concerned that two of the girls' classes were "not at all up to my standard of excellence", and when he thought that in the higher grade part of the school some "intelligent girls are languishing", he allocated himself and three school of science teachers to teach them intensively for a week, thereby bringing about "splendid progress". Maybe he felt he could not afford to have girls under-achieving in terms of grant earning, but undoubtedly they were stimulated by his high expectations; one wonders if the typical middle class girls' school or parent would have been impressed or horrified. The Science Inspector's Report for 1896 included the comment that "the Girls' section is a distinct success and is even superior to the Boys' section", and the following year, the girls' course "was proving eminently successful", including their work in practical physics. In 1894 five out of the ten available Elton scholarships were won by girls in open public competition in Bristol, and ten years later St George School girls won five out of the six on offer, and also had the top-placed candidate in Bristol in the Oxford Senior Local Examinations. There is no reason to think that the girls at this higher grade school were untypical of others like them, and indeed the most striking thing about their catalogue of successes was that only the visiting Inspectors thought it so unusual as to merit special mention and appreciation.

Since a fair proportion of successful higher grade school girls became teachers, not infrequently in their own or other higher grade schools, it is no surprise to find equally high standards among women teachers. In fact, given the overall pattern of occupational recruitment at the turn of the century, it is not an overstatement to say that female higher grade school teachers were probably the cream of their generation in terms of intellect, personality and career commitment. Although no co-educational higher grade school had a woman head, all had some female teachers, and not necessarily with the more junior forms or teaching 'feminine' subjects. Most had at least a notional girls' school or section under a senior assistant mistress with acknowledged status, some of whom were obviously formidable characters. Miss Beard, in charge of the girls' part of the People's College in Nottingham, was quite capable of standing up to her own headmaster and the Education Committee, in front of which she generally "acted for herself". In 1901 she sharply (and

1 Bryce Commission Vol VI pp 374,384; The School Government Chronicle 3 Jan 1903.
2 St George School, Log Book 26 Nov 1894, 17 Apr & 2 Oct 1896, 28 Jul 1897, 25 Jun 1900, 13 Jan & 1 Sept 1905. 245
probably unwisely) informed the visiting HMIs trying to turn her school into a smaller higher elementary school, that "she always did Higher Grade work, was still doing it, and intended to continue to do it". She was perhaps fortified by her 'school' having received a remarkable accolade four years earlier from Morant, "congratulating her upon its excellent curriculum, and stating that the school appears to be superior to any similar one in the South of England". F.H. Spencer recalled a colleague at the Nottingham High Pavement School who was "very able" and "so efficient at the job of filling pupils with information" that she was indispensable to the school. And various heads recorded warm tributes to their female colleagues; at St George, for instance, Miss Greenwood, who left to become a university lecturer, was described as "a severe loss to the school... Not only has she always exercised a wonderful influence for good over the girls' department, but her abilities are of an unusually high order, and her skill in teaching unsurpassed". At the same school, Mr Pickles noted that in the organisation of extra-curricular events like the school concert, "the lady teachers and children worked like Trojans. Strange antipathy in the work, on the part of several men on the staff", and he was very appreciative of the women teachers' plan to help prepare warm meals for the children at lunchtime.

A number of higher grade schools experimented with co-educational classes, sometimes forced on them by having awkwardly unequal numbers to staff and accommodate. The heads were generally pleased with the results. At St George, it was recorded that the mixed second year class was working "for the mutual advantage of each. With care the mixed system will work better than the separate one", one noted advantage being that "the boys are restrained from boisterous conduct by the presence of girls". Mr Pickles developed a few reservations over the years, thinking at one time that "the girls become too 'laddish' in their general behaviour", and worrying on another occasion that the sexes were mixing too freely out of school hours - "some boys lose their heads and 'sweethearting' results". But there was never any question of the girls not studying basically the same curriculum as the boys or not aiming at the same standards. Indeed, it seems likely that in relative terms, more girls studied science and mathematics on an equal footing with boys - and not infrequently outshone them in competitive examinations and awards - than at any time before or since.

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1 People's College, Log Book 26 Sept & 13 Nov 1901, 18 Oct 1903; Nottingham School Board, Minutes 12 Nov 1897 - Morant was then employed in the Education Department Library. Trained at Homerton College, Miss Beard had previously been headmistress of a large mixed elementary school in Coventry, where she was described as "an assiduous and painstaking governess", by B. Poole, Coventry: its History & Antiquities (1870) p 288. She resigned in 1904, apparently in disgust at the Board of Education's treatment of her school (PRO Ed.20/116).


3 St George School, Log Book 26 Aug & 18 Dec 1895, 26 Jan 1904.

Higher Grade School Education for Employment

It remains to test the theory that around the turn of the century most women worked for money for a substantial part of their lives, against what evidence there is from the higher grade schools. Did their girls mostly go into paid employment, and did the investment they had made in a longer and more advanced education pay off in terms of the jobs they got? It was generally thought at the time that the girls in higher grade schools were drawn from a slightly higher socio-economic class than the boys, partly because there were insufficient grammar school places for girls, and partly because poor parents were more likely to educate a son than a daughter if faced with the choice. It was therefore assumed by middle class investigators that proportionately less of them needed to enter employment on leaving school, or that their employment tended to be of a home-based, part-time and low- or un-waged nature.

An authoritative verdict on whether they were correct is hampered by patchy records, which, when they do exist, were sometimes put together only a few days after the end of the school year and before external examination results were known. Two further complications are that the daughters of shopkeepers or craftsmen may well have been 'at home' working for their fathers, and that it was quite common for girls to spend some time at home, maybe while younger brothers and sisters were small, before seeking employment later. The more painstaking headmasters noted changes of this kind, as well as girls who took up a different career or training some time after leaving school; nursing, for example, could not be entered until the late teens, and nursing training not until the age of 21 or 22. It does not, therefore, seem unreasonable to regard as misleading a small survey of leavers from the High Pavement School in Nottingham in May 1894, which showed that 11 out of 29 girls became 'mother's helps', or parts of the evidence of the Bryce Assistant Commissioners, who were conducting their visits hastily and over the summer holidays when the schools were closed. In particular, Miss Kennedy in the West Riding of Yorkshire seems to have come away with a very vague idea about the higher grade schools, which casts doubt on the 62% of leavers from an unnamed Yorkshire higher grade school who went into 'domestic life', or the 49% of Sheffield Central Higher Grade School girls who were 'wanted at home'.

More credence can be placed on the details contained in the admissions registers kept by municipal secondary schools, which, in their first few years, were still essentially higher grade schools. St George School in Bristol, it may be remembered, did not significantly change its character until

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1 J. Burnett, ed., Useful Toil (1976), includes extracts from the memoirs of several women who were unable to take up secondary school places they had won; as one said, it "was a matter of pride of achievement. One realised there was no money to spend on books or uniform" (p 221).
2 High Pavement School, Log Book 5 Jun 1894.
3 Bryce Commission Vol VII p 287.
1907. Before then, it retained its unusually low weekly fee, and continued to draw its pupils primarily from its own elementary section (about two-thirds of the intake) and neighbouring schools (about one-fifth), with nearly all of the remainder coming from other Bristol elementary schools. Of 140 girls who were admitted to the upper (secondary) part of the school between 1902 and 1906, a remarkably high proportion (over two-thirds) held or were awarded scholarships of some sort, indicating that despite the low fee, extraordinary methods had to be found to enable them to continue their schooling. No less than 54 of them went into teaching, 13 of whom were known to have progressed to a training college or university¹. 25 became typists, 21 became clerks or took ‘business posts’, 1 moved to Oxford Secondary School, and 19 took up a variety of jobs (5 dressmakers or milliners, 6 shop assistants, 5 Telephone Office employees, 2 factory workers and 1 librarian). Only 20 moved on to occupations which could be described as ‘domestic’ – mostly housekeeping, though whether their own or somebody else’s house is not made clear, and 1 ‘lady’s companion’. Of those 20, 1 died soon after and 3 were known to have taken paid employment later².

The real acid test - whether those girls would have gone into those occupations without their higher grade education - cannot, of course, be applied, but it does seem that no less than 110 of the 140 went into jobs where their better education could have proved useful. And since it is unlikely that ‘fee-paying girls’ secondary schools could have catered for more than the occasional exceptional pupil from a poorer home and a public elementary school, it has to be concluded that the higher grade school was offering a unique opportunity to such girls. St George School was in an unusually poor area, where the incentives to do well at school were great, but its achievements in the field of girls’ education were not unusual. Fairfield Road, located in a petit bourgeois area and forced to raise its fee to £3 a year when it became a secondary school, at first still took the majority of its entrants from its own and nearby elementary schools. A small but significant number lived at a considerable distance from the school (such as Avonmouth, Bedminster and Frampton Cotterell) and a few had previously attended private or endowed schools. Of 63 girls admitted up to 1906, 27 went into teaching, 10 became clerks or trained for the Post Office, a further 10 moved on to a typing or commercial school, presumably to get the training which Fairfield did not provide, 5 took other jobs and 4 went to other schools or the university. 3 were described as ‘invalids’ and only 4 were

¹ Former pupil and student-teacher Mary Creech recalled that according to local custom in Bristol, the Grammar School produced lawyers, the Cathedral School clergymen, Colston’s School doctors, and St George School teachers and technicians.

² St George School, Admission Registers. A standard admission register was introduced into all maintained schools in 1908–9, so they were drawn up retrospectively for entrants before then. Hence, ‘successful’ pupils and scholarship holders are proportionately over-represented, though presumably pupils who had left earlier were even more likely to have gone into employment.
recorded as being 'at home'. Similarly, most of the entrants to George Dixon Girls' School in Birmingham, before it moved to its new 'secondary school' premises in 1906, became teachers or clerks; only 2 were 'at home'.

These figures give a remarkably consistent pattern of the career prospects of girls who had had the benefit of a higher grade education. Ordinary elementary schools were not required to keep similar records, and so precise comparison is impossible, but there is no doubt that a high proportion of higher grade school leavers took up what were then the best careers open to women. The early twentieth century was an important time for the advancement of women into professional and semi-professional careers, and the education system as a whole was not quite sure how to respond. The higher grade/science schools/pupil teacher network of institutions, in liaison with university and technical colleges, were certainly doing as much as any part of the system to meet the new needs of those girls with ability and ambition but little money, who would not have been able to consider those careers but for their achievements in the public education system. A circular put out by the NUT identified the "pioneer work in the education of girls" as one of the higher grade schools' main achievements, explaining that girls "receive a first class preparation for earning a living by instruction in commercial subjects, but they are also fitted for household duties". The very important role which the higher grade schools played in the education of girls accords with the picture already presented of how seriously the girls took their school work, and of how well they responded to the near-equal treatment they received. Looking back from a time when the under-achievement of girls in certain areas of the curriculum seems to be an insoluble problem, the higher grade schools stand out as being a long way ahead of their time in that respect. Just how far ahead they were of the prevalent middle class attitude to girls' education, on which the new secondary school system was based, will be examined in the next section.

After 1902 - Girls in Secondary Schools

In this final section, an evaluation will be made of the provision for girls in the shaping of the secondary school system after 1902, against the background of information about women's lifestyles and educational traditions. At the opening of the Chapter, some of the more favourable interpretations of the Board of Education's early work for girls' secondary education were cited. The first - the enhanced status of women in the administration - can be dealt with quite briefly,

1 Admission Registers of Fairfield Road School & George Dixon Girls' School.
2 Draft of NUT Circular (?1897) in collection of miscellaneous minutes, etc., in the archives of the NUT.
and the second - the growth in the quantity of secondary school places for girls - at a little more length. The most interesting questions concern the nature and quality of the secondary schooling which the state chose to assist: was it in fact an improvement on what had gone before? - and if there were flaws in it, can they be excused as unavoidable compromises given the ideological climate surrounding women's role in society?

Women Administrators, and the Growth of Girls' Schools

It was demonstrably true that Morant enhanced the status of women in the higher levels of educational administration. He increased the number of women inspectors, appointed the first women chief inspector (the Hon Maud Lawrence), and introduced women into the Consultative Committee and the medical team. He was known to be in favour of women on the governing bodies of girls' schools, and was prepared to listen to the advice and suggestions of selected women, like Beatrice Webb and Margaret Macmillan, who both held him in high regard. All these were welcome changes, but there are some important reservations to note. For instance, they were not innovatory - women had made their appearance in the higher levels of the educational world under the auspices of the Bryce Commission, and other departments, such as the factory inspectorate, were ahead of education in the recruitment of women.

More importantly, women working for the Board of Education did not hold equal status and influence, their responsibilities being confined to girls', mixed and infants' schools and domestic subjects and girls' physical education. This created what has been called a "completely illogical cross-section", which the Technical Chief Inspector found unworkable but which Morant refused to admit. It became the pretext for the latter's devastating and unjust attack on the former, the vehemence of which was "a confession of his own failure to make satisfactory arrangements for fitting women into the educational administration". And while full school inspection teams to girls' and mixed schools usually included one or two women, their effectiveness was largely dependent on the way they were utilised by their male superiors. As Sir John Gorst later wrote: "Women have a position in the administration of national education which is merely advisory. Their advice is often neglected or ignored. They cannot give orders and directions. Power is jealously kept in the hands of men". It should not be forgotten either, that the transfer of powers from school boards to education committees represented a step back for women, placing them, according to Gorst, in a "hopeless and insignificant minority".

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2 Holcombe, op.cit. pp 169-70.
3 J.E. Gorst, Education and Race-Regeneration (1913) p 15.
4 Ibid p 57. Opposition to the exclusion of women from elections was expressed by a huge Hyde Park demonstration which was addressed by speakers on 12 platforms in 1903. The School Government Chronicle 16 May 1903.
The second point, that after 1902 there was an impressive expansion in secondary schooling for girls, also contains some truth. The figures show that the number of grant-aided secondary school places for girls grew from 29,283 in 1904 to 86,288 in 1910, which was an increase of 126% compared with a 41% increase in boys' places. A major contribution came from the new local authorities, which by 1910 were responsible for 142 out of 302 girls' schools (47%) and 135 out of 205 mixed schools (66%); the comparable boys' figure was only 75 out of 355 (21%). However, the figures mean little on their own. The apparently rapid growth was from a dismal starting point, with relatively few girls' schools seeking recognition in the first two years. So the Board of Education relaxed the rules and there were two or three years of very rapid 'growth', but then the rate of increase slowed down considerably, parity with boys' secondary school places not being achieved for another quarter of a century'. Furthermore, the relaxation of standards by the Board which permitted more schools of the middle class, part-time type to get onto the grant list, rendered a dubious service to women's education, the implications of which will be explored later in this section.

Much of the 'increase' in girls' secondary school places was apparently in the shape of new schools provided by the local education authorities. They had to step into the breach caused by inadequate numbers of endowed and proprietary girls' schools, very often because there were no suitable girls' schools in which to place pupil teachers once the special centres came under pressure from the Board of Education. Thus, the gain in secondary school accommodation has to be balanced against the loss of girls' places which accompanied the closure of pupil teacher centres. And the wider picture of secondary school provision of all varieties, independent as well as aided, must be considered. The fact that no statistics were kept of the total number of secondary schools makes precision impossible, but undoubtedly many more boys' than girls' schools - and all of the most prestigious ones - were in a position to maintain their independence of the Board of Education. Girls who did not attend grant-aided secondary schools but wanted anything like a serious education, therefore had a very limited choice, and so it seems certain that the aided secondary schools were relatively more attractive to girls than to boys. In other words, it is altogether too simplistic to assume that because there was a healthy increase in the number of grant-aided girls' secondary schools, there were many more girls receiving secondary education. There were probably some more, but the increase could easily have been larger had the new system absorbed more of the attitudes and values of the school board/higher grade school/pupil teacher centre tradition in girls' education. As has been seen elsewhere, the local education authorities did continue some of those attitudes and values, and it may well be that as far as girls were concerned, the most positive virtue of the post-1902 changes was the style of secondary schooling rather than the number of places which resulted from the substantial local authority provision of secondary schools.

1 Board of Education, Statistics (Various years).
2 See also the concluding section of Chapter 7.
The Quality of Girls' Secondary Schools

The third important interpretation of events around the turn of the century was that the secondary education available to girls was of a higher quality than what preceded it, and in particular an improvement on the narrow vocationalism of the pupil teacher centres. This is a complex question, drawing in such issues as staffing, the academic as well as the ‘hidden’ curriculum, the role of examinations and domestic training, and general aims and expectations. The third and fourth sections of this Chapter identified two clear traditions in girls' secondary schooling, the high school with its roots firmly in the middle class, and the higher grade school with its egalitarian approach to both class and gender. Given the very different functions and prestige of the two models, it was inevitable that issues other than the purely educational would be influential in deciding the future shape of state-aided secondary education for girls.

It hardly needs saying that it was the middle class/high school model which won the support of Morant’s Board of Education. Indeed, it would be truer to say that it positively captivated this particular audience, which had been brought up and educated in a sexually segregated world, and in virtual ignorance of adolescent girls or female institutions of any kind. Headmistresses were treated almost with reverence by the Board’s representatives, and visitations to schools must have been a genuinely novel experience for them. They seem to have been quite bowled over by the atmosphere of ladylike restraint and demure obedience, and effectively suspended all critical judgment, instead altering their rules and regulations to fit in with existing practice in the schools.

This approach did not clash quite as badly with the girls' side of the higher grade school tradition as the public school model did with the boys'. The cultural expectations and restraints directed by society at all women dictated styles of living, behaviour and dress, which produced at least outward similarities between social classes. It is noticeable how often Inspectors commented favourably on the girls' part of a mixed higher grade school which they otherwise criticised heavily, or singled out for praise the senior mistress and her assistants, while the male teachers were inadequate and in need of replacement. Reference has already been made to the Board's desire to promote the girls' sections of mixed schools in Nottingham and Leeds, and at Birmingham's George Dixon School, the Inspector commended the "quiet and pleasant" teaching and the "excellent feeling" in the girls' 'school', on the same visit that he found the boys' department so wanting that the question was not whether it was a good secondary school but whether it could be a secondary school at all.

1 75 years later, John Rae assessed his fellow public school headmasters as a group who "are peculiarly susceptible to feminine charms" (in this case, Shirley Williams), in The Public School Revolution (1981) p 57.
2 PRO Ed.35/2554.
Questions of Social Class

There were, nevertheless, some profound differences between the high school and higher grade school models of education for girls. At a fundamental level the Board reflected a body of opinion which had fixed ideas about whom children, particularly daughters, should mix with, and which worried greatly about them coming into contact with the wrong kind of children of the same sex, let alone the opposite sex. Anxiety levels were highest among urban middle class parents, though some of the women Assistants to the Bryce Commission were amazed at how old-fashioned and 'caste-ridden' a lot of parents were in smaller cities and country towns. Mrs Armitage returned from Devon convinced that the only hope for girls' secondary education there was "some missionary agency to teach the elements of Christianity to the so-called educated classes". Theirs was the kind of attitude which sustained a multitude of small, all-female private schools, and she lamented the "evil which this kind of idle education, with its unblushing assertion of caste exclusiveness, must have on the minds of the pupils". But while that alternative form of schooling existed and continued to attract parents, institutions with a more serious academic purpose or a more progressive approach had to be careful. Hence, girls' schools were advised to avoid locations near factories, hotels, theatres, restaurants, public houses, offices or warehouses, or anywhere "where large numbers of youths may be about at the dinner hour". And they tended to be very solicitous about their pupils' health and social welfare, and to emphasise decorous behaviour, restrained dress and, as we have seen, the supreme importance of home and family in their lives.

They were also very careful about the mixing of social classes which resulted from the admission of scholarship girls from elementary schools. Some of the Bryce Assistant Commissioners had made special enquiries into this question, finding that such girls were well up to standard academically, if sometimes a little mechanical and drilled, but did need time to settle socially into their new schools. There was some support for intermediate or middle schools to help newcomers to adjust to

1 Gathorne-Hardy, op.cit. pp 126-7, amusingly depicted this kind of attitude: "The upper classes inherited qualities just as their horses inherited fine fetlocks ... you could almost catch lower classness like a disease".

2 Bryce Commission Vol VI pp 87,95. Mrs Armitage thought it "ludicrous that while the law insists on trained teachers and ample breathing-space for the children of the working class, it should be legal for any ignorant person to open a school for the children of the middle class, and to asphyxiate them in small, ill-ventilated rooms".

3 Burstall, English High Schools p 77.

4 The extraordinary sexual innocence typical in girls’ boarding schools is vividly described in various recollections in Graham Greene, ed., The Old School (1934). Sherborne girls, for example, were told to "run about like boys, and then you won't think of them", and Roman Catholic schools had some very strange customs!
the different social environment, and a strong belief that their assimilation could only be managed - and rendered acceptable to fee-paying parents - if very small numbers were involved. Sara Burstall developed this point in 1907, when she warned of "a certain risk to an ordinary girls' high school in receiving all at once a large number of scholars from public elementary schools", though she did concede that "to have a limited number ... is a real advantage. These girls have a spirit of earnestness and hard work which is of the greatest value to the tone of a form". Visiting HMIs were usually interested to observe how a school was coping with this perceived problem, and impressed when girls from poorer homes were being successfully moulded to the school's image. Thus, it may be recalled, commiserations were extended to Colston's Girls' School in Bristol (which in 1905 recorded just 13 artisans' daughters among its 337 pupils) because the "large influx of scholars from the Elementary Schools puts some strain upon the middle of the School". But thanks to the headmistress's "special care and watchfulness", the school was exercising "a refining influence" on these unfamiliar creatures, whom the HMIs observed assimilating to their surroundings with astonishing rapidity. Even more strongly than in boys' schools, the process was seen as a difficulty for the school rather than the pupil, and it was the latter who had to make all the adjustments.

The Pupil Teacher Question

Most of the traditional high schools made their first acquaintance with elementary school girls in the guise of pupil teachers. The "complete transformation of the method of recruitment" to the teaching profession effected between 1902 and 1914 has been well documented elsewhere, but it is appropriate to add a few comments concerning its impact on girls and women, who constituted three-quarters of the total workforce. The transformation has generally been applauded as one of Morant's main achievements, for the introduction of a broader, more prolonged education for intending teachers alongside pupils not planning to be teachers, seems wholly admirable. But there is, of course, no way of knowing whether the new system actually produced better teachers - a number of contemporaries were convinced that it did not - nor is there much evidence of what pupil teacher centres were really like. Even in the case of a large, thriving institution like Bristol's, little more is known about it than that it had a new building, varied facilities, experienced 'elementary' teachers and considerable local support.

1 Burstall, English High Schools p 33.
2 PRO Ed.35/844.

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It is simply impossible to know whether young teachers were better served there than by being spread around several, very varied institutions of secondary education, some of which were less than welcoming and segregated them into separate classes and playgrounds. And, as mentioned earlier, even in the municipal secondary schools, intending teachers were often isolated, because they could well be the only senior pupils—the sixth form was the pupil/student teacher class. Certainly, the output from those schools to the teaching profession was formidable, reflecting the fact that teaching was nearly always the best job available and the only one which gave women access to professional status.

But despite the attractions of the job, the new requirement of an extended secondary education and the consequent postponement of earning functioned as a considerable deterrent, even when scholarships and bursaries were available. It produced an "alarming decrease" in recruits, which forced authorities to employ increasing numbers of "supplementary" (unqualified) teachers. Morant seems to have expected that his changes would immediately enhance the status of elementary school teaching, and encourage many more middle class girls to overcome their conventional reluctance to enter that part of the profession. He was looking for "a fresh source of supply" from the existing secondary schools, but made clear that they would not have to alter their style and traditions to supply the new service. The 1904 Regulations for Pupil Teachers came out in favour of single-sex institutions, against too much science teaching, and agreed that "the tradition and habit of social differentiation would make it difficult (at all events for some time to come) to draft Pupil Teachers to any large extent into many schools of the old grammar school type."

In the event, it took at least a generation to attract middle class girls in any numbers into elementary teaching, during which the main effort of the older girls' schools was directed towards improving the training of secondary school teachers, which they saw as the natural preserve of their pupils. In that respect they were ahead of the boys' secondary schools,

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1. The N.U.T. strongly condemned this practice of segregation, which it found to exist in 75 out of 85 schools surveyed in 1907.
2. It could also be argued that for families who were obliged to regard education as a practical investment rather than a cultural experience, the new system forced choices of a vocational nature on even younger children (i.e. at 11 or 12, when deciding whether to go to secondary school), which was the exact opposite of the change the Board professed to want. For older teacher-trainees enrolling at colleges and universities, grants were explicitly conditional on the signing of a 'pledge' promising to teach after qualifying, as explained by H. Patrick, 'From Cross to DATE: the universities and teacher education over the past century' in *Oxford Review of Education* Vol 12 No 3 (1986) pp 245.
but there was nevertheless a strong strand of opinion which favoured headmistresses and governors having considerable discretion in the selection of staff, so that they could seek out those qualities other than degrees or diplomas, which "cannot be so easily formulated or tested, but which are ... far more vital". This kind of attitude, that "the teacher is heaven-sent", infuriated Miss Bremner, who complained bitterly that "so much nonsense continues to be talked on the subject, usually by men and women who ... think more of a good bat or a good degree than of the necessary training". The transference of the education of all intending teachers from the pupil teacher system into the heart of the very schools which had to accommodate these divergent views on teacher-training, therefore created a mechanism for producing teachers which for a number of years was at least as hybrid as its predecessor. And the mechanism was located in a milieu which largely protected the values held dear by middle class schools - genteel manners, a limited curriculum, and minimal contact with the opposite sex.

The Co-education Question

Much of the knowledge about workable alternatives to those values resided in the higher grade school tradition, which had unique experience of what happened when children of different sexes, ages and backgrounds mixed together at school. The first of these interests us in the next few paragraphs. The higher grade schools were not immune to contemporary social and sexual mores, but, often initially for pragmatic reasons, they had given co-education a try. Apart from a handful of endowed schools in rural areas which had remained or become co-educational in order to try to survive, they were the only institutions of secondary education which had taken this daring step. And they found that there were no major problems and a number of benefits, as various witnesses told the Bryce Commission - "highly satisfactory; the physical and moral results are good" or "the mixture of the sexes in schools ... answers exceedingly well".

Some of the new local education authorities were happier about it than others, and so the pattern of municipal secondary school development is a varied one, but it does not seem that segregating the sexes was, in itself, a high priority or the cause of much controversy for local authorities. Most endowed schools, on the other hand, were single-sex and since they had first claim on Board of Education recognition and a free

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1 Burstall, English High Schools p 57. She also thought it "important to ascertain at what college or university an applicant has studied, and at what school she was educated; these are often much more important than the actual degree".

2 Bremner, op.cit. p 175.

3 Bryce Commission Vol VIII pp 24,128. The first witness was Miss Woods, Principal of the Maria Grey Training College, and the second the Rev Sharpe, Senior Chief Inspector of Schools.
choice about whether they sought it or made any moves to liaise with the publicly provided part of the system, the local authorities had to fit in with them. If it turned out that there was a shortage of girls' secondary places, as there often was, the authorities launched new girls' schools; for example, 9 of London's first 11 'provided' secondary schools were for girls, 4 out of 5 in Cambridgeshire, and 9 out of 14 in Kent. If, however, there was a general shortage of secondary school places in an area, most local authorities do not seem to have had any qualms about establishing either completely co-educational schools, or semi-separate girls' and boys' parts of the same institution, sharing the name, buildings, specialist facilities and sometimes the staff.

The Board of Education did not much care for either of these developments, which conflicted with the traditional middle class perception of secondary schooling. Various of its representatives expressed unease at the idea of adolescent girls and boys mixing at school, and showed an almost obsessive interest in the 'offices' or lavatories, cloakrooms and places for the girls to hang their hats. The Board insisted on improvements to the building which Yardley School planned to use for only a year, because there was no separate cloakroom for girls and the access to the offices was in full view of the boys' playground. The People's College in Nottingham had to construct a new and unwanted corridor around the laboratory to provide a separate girls' entrance, and the Inspectors subsequently stated that "it is not at all desirable that boys and girls of 14 and 15 years of age should be taught together", citing as evidence their conviction that "such an arrangement as this in a private school would quickly smash it up". Backed up by the Board of Education's extreme reluctance to act "against the advice of our own inspectors", they preferred to see the People's College close down than for its boys and girls to continue sharing certain rooms and equipment. And further north Dr Forsyth waged a protracted, and ultimately unsuccessful, battle on behalf of co-education at his Leeds Central School. In his belief that the Board of Education's favoured division into single-sex schools was "uneducational", he had the full support of the Leeds Education Committee, which even impressed the Board with its "deliberate and reasoned conviction". But they had eventually to witness the carving up of the school into the Leeds Central Boys' High School and the Thoresby High School for Girls.

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1. Though an interesting exception appears to have been Sir John Gorst, who later wrote that single-sex education was "an evil of the present day", which gave rise to "coarse ribaldry", "active ruffianism" and "unmannerly rudeness" towards women among the products of an all-male education (op.cit. p 23).

2. PRO Ed.33/2584. Once the girls' lavatories had been suitably screened, co-education seems not to have been one of the (many) causes of complaint about this school, though the headmaster's inexperience with girl pupils was commented upon.


As the Board of Education saw it, the 'best' examples of the secondary school model from which they were working were all single-sex, and so new additions were more likely to acquire status and attract the right kind of parents if they were of that type. It became a normal - and constraining - part of secondary school design for new buildings to be "rigidly symmetrical", with separate entrances and sex-specific facilities at opposite ends and 'common' rooms in the middle with access from either side. And a firm attachment to single-sex schooling, which still has its devotees, was thereby built into the new secondary/grammar school system. Although it is difficult to disentangle cause and effect, it seems that in general co-educational grammar schools always ranked lower in terms of prestige than single-sex ones in the same area - and significantly, nearly all secondary modern schools were co-educational.

Questions of Curriculum

One of the main reasons for favouring separate schools was that it made possible the different style of education which was assumed by most middle class educationists to be desirable for girls. The most important aspect of this was curriculum, which was tied up with the simple practical problem of fitting a full range of subjects into a very short working week. In most girls' schools, science was the chief specialism to be sacrificed, and it was absolutely taken for granted at the Board of Education that girls' secondary schools would be of the 'Division B', more literary type. It seems to have been completely in accord with the views expressed by Sara Burstall - that mathematics were "useless" and had "a hardening effect on the nature of women", and that science should consist of studying the density of milk, the temperature of frying fat and the composition of soap and soda. And it clung to the conviction that a scientifically-biased curriculum was a "blind alley" for girls, in spite of the Bryce reports that higher grade school girls were obviously enthusiastic about the opportunities afforded by the Science and Art Department, which was, according to one contemporary, "generally guiltless of the stupidity of making unnecessary sex distinctions".

2 For example, R. Davis in The Grammar School (1967) alleged that co-education was only ever an administrative convenience, by which two schools were "lumped together for half the cost"; and B. Wilson, ed., Education, Equality and Society (1975) p 32, thought that "co-education may itself be another way in which human relationships are coarsened".
3 In 1966, only 2 out of 179 direct grant schools were co-educational. E. Allsopp & D. Orme, Direct Grant Grammar Schools (1966) pp 2,5.
4 Burstall, English High Schools pp 110,132.
5 Brenner, op.cit. p 103. In a clear contrast of attitudes, the Board of Education's Code for higher elementary schools ruled that "a common curriculum for both boys and girls will not as a rule be approved".

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The Board did pay lip-service to the desirability of girls having some familiarity with science. Girls' schools were supposed to have facilities for practical science, but a good many probably resembled Clapham County School for Girls, which notionally taught physics and chemistry throughout the school, in a room equipped with one gas point, one sink and water tap, and some methylated spirit lamps. The school's historian noted that "quite a lot was achieved, but the modest equipment necessarily restricted the range of experimental work"1. HMIs were always very impressed by schools which had apparently solved the 'science for girls' problem, by teaching them nature study leading on to botany, or by turning cookery and housewifery into 'domestic science'. St George School in Bristol was told in 1905 that its 3rd and 4th year girls who had been seen measuring electricity in the physics laboratory, would be better employed doing hygiene or domestic science, and at its first general inspection, Waverley Road School earned praise for its "special care" to the "divergent needs of boys and girls", with the girls' botany course selected "for specially favourable comment"2.

The schools themselves had mixed feelings about turning domestic subjects into 'science', and there was quite a lively debate amongst the high school headmistresses, who had traditionally left domestic training to parents. Some were said to "strongly object" to this waste of school time, and one critic thought "it is absurd to confound a domestic art with a theoretical and practical science, for it can only to a very limited degree replace mental training"3. Others were gradually persuaded to develop courses, especially for less academically inclined older girls, for whom "there is nothing very definite to do, and they are not intended to earn their own living". Thus, Manchester High School's 'technical' course comprised 14 periods per week (half the total) of cookery, laundry, hygiene, domestic science, dressmaking, housewifery and household mending, and some London schools followed Clapham High School's lead in offering a certificated 'brides-to-be' course4.

Such developments possibly did meet a need among some better-off secondary school girls, who had no other purpose than to prepare for home life, but they were more of an intrusion into municipal secondary schools. There, in the early years at least, the quality of teaching in domestic subjects was quite often unfavourably commented upon by the female members of inspection teams. In fact the HMIs became thoroughly ambivalent about the desirable content and level of domestic subjects, on the one hand urging a more scientific approach to elevate the standards of education for middle class girls, and on the other falling back on their old affection for the simple, plain work that was held to be suitable for the lower classes. At Waverley Road, cookery followed a good syllabus which made it "utilitarian as well as educational", whereas at St George School, the "fancy needlework seen struck the

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1 E. Freeth, Clapham County School (1959) p 12.
2 PRO Ed.35/860 & 35/2579.
3 Zimmern, op.cit. p 207.
4 Burstall, English High Schools pp 198-9; Dyhouse, op.cit. p 164.
Inspector as being of questionable taste"; plain sewing was "not sufficiently encouraged" and the making of simple garments, along with mending, patching and darning, were not only essential skills, but had "a moral and educational side also". Needlework, proclaimed the Board of Education in 1909, appeals "directly to the natural instincts of girls ... it should be looked upon as a matter of shame that any girl should reach woman's estate without a practical knowledge of what use she can make with her needle".

The Board did its utmost to accommodate unscientific girls' schools which wished to be recognised under the Secondary School Regulations. The first and most famous set, in 1904, announced its intention to pay "due regard to the differences inherent in the nature of the two sexes, to the different aims towards which their school life should be adjusted, and to the effect on character of the exercise of the various faculties during the critical years of life", and offered a less rigorous hours-per-week requirement for science and mathematics in schools which met for less than 22 hours per week. A number of girls' schools objected - like Winchester High School which fitted 1 hour's 'science' into its 16-hour week - and so the next year, schools which did not have regular afternoon classes, could reduce the subject-hours as they wished, provided the instruction that was given was good. The Board justified this to itself as a "purely educational" decision which may allow more schools to qualify for recognition and grant: to the outside world, it explained that "it is clear that the claims on a girl's time out of school hours are larger and more varied than they are on a boy, whilst the dangers of over-pressure are at that age much greater". By 1906, science and mathematics could be given altogether from the age of 15, in exchange for courses in housewifery, and the next year it was indicated that simply being a girls' school would be accepted as a good enough reason for not doing Latin, otherwise regarded as the most important distinguishing feature of a secondary school curriculum.

The Question of Inequality

The low priority given to science and mathematics in the secondary schooling of girls was the most glaring deficiency in what today would be regarded as an all-round education. But after making due allowance for the different attitude to science in general at the start of the century, arguably the greatest significance of that deficiency was that it symbolised a limiting, less serious approach to girls' education.

[3] This paragraph is drawn from Board of Education, Regulations for Secondary Schools (various years), and PRO Ed.12/119.
[4] It was assumed that girls' schools did not normally do Greek.
education. This interpretation is reinforced by the flexibility over Latin noted above, and the enthusiasm for girls doing practical subjects which according to the Board, merited only a low status in boys' schools. It was an approach which said that girls should not be stretched too much, or submitted to the rigours of examinations, or encouraged to look beyond the joys of domestic life towards a career or intellectual stimulation for its own sake. It is curious how obsessed the upper and middle classes were with the physical and emotional frailty of their females, particularly when they took it for granted that their domestic servants were capable of long hours of heavy hard work, and their main worry about working class factory girls was their robust energy and irrepressible sexuality.

But obsessed they certainly were, and various 'experts' continued to confirm their anxieties. The Chief Woman Medical Adviser to the Board of Education told a university audience in 1908 that "as regards mental work, great care should be taken to avoid any undue strain. Lessons requiring much concentration and therefore using up a great deal of brain energy, Mathematics, for instance, should not be pushed", and a well-known woman gynaecologist warned in 1911 of the "failure in function" which was often associated with "the 'neuter' type of girl [who] tends to resemble that of a half-grown lad, she is flat-chested, with a badly developed bust, and her hips are narrow". The voices of more enlightened authorities like Dr Elizabeth Garrett Anderson struggled to be heard, and official reports continued to favour lots of not taxing domestic subjects and the postponement of examinations (1913), and to urge that due attention be paid to the "periodic disturbances to which girls and women are constitutionally subject [which] condemn many of them to a recurring if temporary diminution of general mental efficiency" (1923).

In fact, the most valuable asset that secondary school girls had was that they did not seem to know that they were supposed to be so delicate. Despite the narrowing constraints of curricular requirements and social pressures, they seized their new opportunities with relish. In that respect, the early part of the century was a significant time for the

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1 Duffin, op.cit. pp 29-31, discussed the polarisation in medical attitudes towards women of different social classes - middle class women did little and were "pure but sick", while working class women, suffering "a life of back-breaking toil .... were able-bodied but contaminated and sickening". Dyhouse, op.cit. pp 106-14, described the efforts of upper class Anglican women to recruit factory girls to Snowdrop Bands or the Girl Guides in a "mission to 'purify' womanhood ... and exalt femininity".

2 Quoted in Dyhouse, op.cit. pp 130,134.

3 Kamm, op.cit. pp 237-8.

4 Board of Education, Report ... on the Differentiation of the Curriculum for Boys and Girls (1923). This report explained that "girls' blood was lower in specific gravity, carrying less haemoglobin than did boys' blood after puberty".
advancement of women. The regret is that it was not more significant - that the Board of Education felt the need to keep intervening, always in the direction of curtailment and inequality. It thereby built into the system a devotion to domestic rituals which persisted through to the notorious sections of the Newsom Report (1963) and beyond, as well as a sustained, and so far unsolved, under-achievement by girls in major areas of the curriculum.

It would, of course, be foolish to suggest that had the higher grade school style of girls' education not been subordinated to the middle class/high school tradition, the story of women's struggle for equality would have been completely different. A whole host of constraints militated against them, and the complexity of the issue of the disadvantaging of women makes it impossible to pinpoint what the higher grade schools contributed, or could have contributed, to the advancement of women. But undoubtedly their general approach to girl pupils strikes a later generation as more sensible and 'modern', and demands a revision of the familiar interpretations outlined at the opening of this chapter. Neither the simple verdict that the early twentieth century was a time of great progress for women's education, nor the more considered view that, given Victorian conventions about gender, women educationists had to compromise in order to achieve as much as they did, takes account of the higher grade school tradition of girls' education.

The reluctance of the senior policy-makers in education at the beginning of the century to promote or even permit that tradition says at least as much about their stereotyped perception of society as it does about their educational principles. Their insistence on a limited domestically-based role for women was out of touch with the reality of their own times, and bequeathed to the girls part of the secondary education system a number of enduring problems. It need not have been so. In discarding yet another of the special features and areas of expertise of the higher grade school tradition, the central authority stayed comfortably in harmony with the weight of upper and middle class opinion, but demonstrated again that it lacked both the humility to learn from alternative approaches outside its experience, and the imagination to look forward rather than back.

1 The Newsom Report (1963) said, for example, "our girls should be educated in terms of their main function - which is to make for themselves, their children and their husbands a secure and suitable home and to be mothers". Earlier influential reports like Hadow and Norwood had included similar sentiments.

2 For example, "it was only by continuing to glorify the Victorian domestic ideal ... that any educational progress could be made". (Delamont, op.cit. p 194). One has to disagree with her statement that "when the educational pioneers began it was inconceivable that mass secondary education would take less than a century to establish, or that all middle-class girls would soon be at school".

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CHAPTER 7

THE RESOLUTION OF TENSIONS IN ENGLISH PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Resolution of Tensions in Technical Education
The Resolution of Tensions in Secondary Education
The Resolution of Tensions in Elementary Education
The Resolution of Tensions in Educational Administration
The Scale of England's New Educational Model
Chapter 7

THE RESOLUTION OF TENSIONS IN ENGLISH PUBLIC EDUCATION

The Introduction to this thesis depicted the last decade of the nineteenth century as a period of gathering tensions in several parts of the educational world in England. Technical and scientific education had during the 1870s witnessed its greatest ever boom, the success of which was provoking increasingly anxious reactions at high levels. Partly as a result of that, the older institutions of secondary education were feeling so threatened that they were actively campaigning for their survival. Publicly-provided elementary education, on the other hand, had become a powerful force with, by the 1890s, second-generation users of the system realising how much it could offer them and making ever greater demands of it. And underlying these developments, the idiosyncrasies of English educational administration were increasingly exposed, highlighting in the process the conflicts in attitudes between the 'metropolitan' elite who traditionally expected to provide education for the rest of the population, and those who were intimately involved at provincial level in the 'new' educational movements.

If, as was suggested, the higher grade schools were a focus for all these tensions, their existence - and demise - can tell us a great deal about how the late nineteenth century tensions were resolved. The analysis which has occupied the preceding chapters has illustrated the potential of the higher grade school as a powerful alternative model to the English grammar school. Only passing references have yet been made to the wider implications of this, but they have sufficed to indicate that the higher grade school movement should not be shelved merely as a historical oddity, a failed and obsolete example of one generation's attempt to solve its own particular problems. For the basic tensions in English education, though modified in form over the years, have proved to be remarkably persistent. The problems of giving scientific and industrial activity real status in English society, or of finding a style of schooling appropriate for all adolescents while also satisfying the desire for 'excellence', or of balancing power between the various levels of administration, are still high on the educational agenda.

Although this study did not start with any didactic intention, the progress which the higher grade schools made in the direction of new approaches to all these problems is too valuable to be ignored. And the reaction of the 'establishment' elite to the discoveries the higher grade school movement had made, provides an opportunity to analyse the underlying cultural and social climate at the beginning of this century, and to identify vestiges of it which are still powerful influences on English values. Chapter 5 analysed at a factual level the lines along which the new state-aided secondary schools were obliged or encouraged to develop,
without exploring some of the more abstract implications. This chapter will attempt to answer in some depth an apparently simple question - faced with new and conflicting pressures, how did the English education system respond as it entered the twentieth century?

The Resolution of Tensions in Technical Education

By the beginning of the twentieth century, the study of science and technical subjects had belatedly gained a foothold in England's educational system. Its strength resided almost exclusively in the publicly-provided part of the system, where, from tentative beginnings, it had mustered the resources to construct a complete vertical network of institutions. From the public elementary schools, where science "showed a remarkable increase in popularity", being "more real, more practical, and less bookish"², to the civic universities, which were doing "incalculable service to the cause of Science in offering stimulating teaching and opportunities of research"³, a new style of education could now be pursued by any child of ability and determination. Propagandists who looked admiringly at the education systems of Germany or France, or even Scotland, at last felt that English education was starting to look more appropriate for a modern, democratic, industrial nation.

However, the fact that scientific education had had to find its place outside the prestige mainstream of Victorian education, only added to the stock of prejudices against it in some quarters. The vast majority of Oxbridge dons, politicians, churchmen, HMIs and Board of Education officials of the 1890s had themselves been taught so little science that it was perhaps comforting for them to believe that expertise in it should continue to rest largely with people not of their background or social milieu - nonconformists, foreigners, Scotsmen, artisans, school boards, technical and elementary school teachers, and their colleagues in the Science and Art Department⁴. In their own public schools, the science or modern "side" was never accorded much prestige (or money), and

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¹ As before, the terms 'technical' and 'scientific' are used to mean roughly the same thing at this time.
³ (Thompson) Committee to Enquire into the Position of Natural Science in the Educational System of Great Britain (1918) p 6.
⁴ Only 1 of the 9 Statesmen of Science profiled by J.G. Crowther (1965) had a traditional English education, and he (the Duke of Devonshire) was a wealthy, aristocratic amateur, of the type which prompted W.J. Reader to write: "Science and technology might provide an agreeable means of spending money, hardly of earning it ... The view of science as a fit hobby for well-bred amateurs, but nothing more, persisted long in England". Professional Men (1966) pp 6-7.
there was a general denial among the headmasters that "anything a could replace the classics as the best training for a first-class mind, or that anyone with a first-class mind could fail to be good at classical studies". It is not an overstatement to say, as Bamford did, that "we can dismiss the contribution of public schools to Victorian science as a whole", nor, as the Thompson Report complained of a later generation, that "there has in the Public Schools as a whole been no general recognition of the principle that Science should form an essential part of secondary education".

Moreover, the manner in which scientific education had developed in publicly-provided institutions was perceived to be antipathetic to the principles of 'true' education. It has recently been said that "the advancement of science in Victorian England was largely assisted by the introduction of science into the examination system. To 'establish' science it was necessary to embrace the examination octopus as well". Science and written examinations were seen as sharing qualities of neutrality and objectivity, and the factual content of science subjects appeared to make them readily examinable, though experimental work was more of a problem. Even leading scientists had become concerned that scientific knowledge and the wider understandings to which it should lead, might be perverted by an over-emphasis on written examinations, and this helped to fuel the professed dislike of specialisation among non-scientists.

Specialisation ran counter to all the notions about humanitarian culture, the gentlemanly ideal, and the study of ancient civilisations in order to develop aesthetic and moral values, to which upper and middle class Victorian education had become so attached. True education was not supposed to convey useful information and facts; if it did, it was merely instruction, of use only to the lower classes and available through part-time, low-status institutions. It was possible to 'specialise' only in science, technical and commercial subjects; a heavy bias towards classical or literary studies was not specialisation, but education. According to that kind of understanding of the purpose of education, endowed schools which had admitted the Science and Art Department or the Technical Instruction Committee inside their walls were seen as being driven only by financial desperation. And the large numbers of premature leavers from many endowed schools were failures or a nuisance, rather than children with particular educational requirements, including the need to be reasonably well prepared for early employment. The distaste for specialisation expressed by the Board of Education in fact meant the banishment from secondary schools of all the 'specialisations' - scientific, vocational, commercial, technical - of most use to the majority of children.

1 Reader, op.cit. p 108. For the extremely tentative entry of natural sciences into the public schools and Oxbridge, see the contributions of R. Macleod and W.H. Brock to Macleod, ed., Days of Judgment (1962).
2 T.W. Bamford, Rise of the Public Schools (1967) pp 98,221; Thompson Committee p 11.
Instead, the Board of Education took as its theme for secondary schools—and it has been a remarkably enduring one—the provision of ‘general’ education. General education was, and is, a very general term which means nothing without knowing the intellectual and ideological context. As used by the Board at the beginning of this century, it meant education which had relatively little to do with the imparting of knowledge, particularly of the real world—scientific, economic or political—and even less interest in the passing on of skills other than certain cerebral ones. It was modelled on the system which was believed to have perfected the production of the empire’s future rulers, without telling them much about the world they were to rule, or, as one critic has suggested, a system which “did not see education as a preparation for the world, but as an inoculation against it”.

Just as the Bryce Report had done, the Board’s 1904 Regulations said that literary, scientific and technical education were all important, yet made it clear that only the first could develop “higher powers of thought and expression” and “appreciation of what is best in the thought and art of the world... which forms the basis of all human culture”.

General education did not lend itself to objective testing by external bodies, which both confirmed the growing prejudice against written examinations and led to what seems to a later generation to have been a fairly casual approach to levels of attainment. The attitude was encouraged that success by a few pupils in a particular area of knowledge at the highest level was evidence of a ‘good’ school. The fact that many other pupils failed to reach that level, or even turned their backs on the education offered long before it was time to try, was seen as an indictment of them rather than the school, its teachers or the style of education. The average early-century grammar school was, in one sense, a highly academic institution in that it eschewed the useful or practical; in the sense that ‘academic’ has more recently come to mean when applied to schools, it was conspicuously uninterested in measuring or rewarding the achievements of most of its pupils. Ironically, its ‘academic standards’ probably received their biggest boost from the unwelcome intrusion of free place pupils, whose selection, since it was not supposed to be a competition to find the most academically gifted, tied the Board of Education in knots for many years. From their achievements, the grammar schools learned the inestimable value of a good ‘academic’ (i.e. external examinations) record to gain prestige and parental support, particularly in competition with private schools.

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2. The Board of Education’s Report for 1923-4 said: “It is the common experience both that they stay longer at school than other pupils and that they form a larger proportion of the able pupils”.
4. In “ruthless and single-minded” fashion, the public schools carried out a similar “academic revolution” in the 1970s in order to maintain parental support—it was not an educational philosophy, “but it worked”. J. Rae, The Public School Revolution (1981) pp 155-62.
But at the time, the rejection of meritocratic mechanisms represented a fundamental change from the ideology of the higher grade school. In the new system, educational institutions would define themselves by the best that they could achieve, in varying degrees subordinating everything and everybody else to the pursuit of a version of excellence which could be achieved by only a minority. At the beginning of the century, schools which appeared to lack that pinnacle around which to organise themselves, clearly needed to be taken in hand and made to aspire to the definition of excellence which had been standardised and accepted among those who regarded themselves as well-educated.

Higher grade schools had no such yardstick against which to measure and define all their activities, and nor did they want one. They scarcely even yet knew what their 'best' was, and the fact that a few pupils got to university was maybe a source of pride and pleasure, but had no bearing on the way the rest of the school population was taught, or the goals held out to it. By default, the schools had been given a huge space to fill in the educational market, but it was less a case of offering a particular type of education to whomever opted for it, than of accepting a particular range of children (and a wide one at that), and attempting to give each one of them something worthwhile. The ability to care as much about the average or slower child as the high achiever seems to have been a marked attribute of higher grade school heads and teachers1, and it is surely a significant indicator of their attitudes to children that they often had reservations about the twentieth century changes which made their schools more academically and socially prestigious. Their remarkable record in successfully accommodating a wide variety of pupils, with all the attendant teaching and organisational skills, was certainly one of the schools' most noteworthy achievements, and one of the greater losses in the new system. The Times's advice that grammar schools should "adopt the wholesome tradition that every boy in the school, dull or intelligent, is entitled to an equal share of attention"2 was not heeded, and after 1902, pupils were made to fit the education, rather than education fitting the pupils.

1 There is abundant evidence of this. To cite just a few examples, the higher grade school headmasters believed one of their most important traditions was "the feeling that the dull boys must be as carefully taught as the clever boys" (The Schoolmaster 11 Nov. 1899); the headmaster of Cambridge Higher Grade School, in the face of pressure to become more 'academic' after 1902, was adamant that his school was primarily for "the average boy ... it is not intended to be a preparatory school for the University" (Cambridgeshire High School for Boys, History of the School 1900-1950 (1950) p 15); and George Creech spoke much more favourably of the early headmaster at Bristol's St George School, Freddy Pickles, than of his successor, who created a sixth form but "was only interested in qualifications".

2 The Times 22 Sept 1897. HMI Theodosius' willingness to sacrifice the majority of Bristol children to ensure high grammar school achievement by a few may be recalled from Chapter 4.
The pinnacle of excellence for the new secondary school was still assumed to be classical, or at least literary, scholarship. Rothblatt has argued that at the highest level the classical scholars of Oxford and Cambridge successfully assimilated to their own discipline what might otherwise have been the challenge of the new 'scientific' or 'research' ethos which swept through Western European intellectual life at the end of the nineteenth century'. This legitimated the central place of the classical/literary curriculum in secondary education which, as was seen in Chapter 5, was assiduously promoted in all aided schools. 'Division A' secondary schools were clearly regarded as abnormal, to be phased out as soon as decently possible; they had, it was later explained, only been for the sake of continuity. In 1905 the Board guaranteed their future isolation by stating that "it is not the intention of the Board to sanction the adoption of this special course in any fresh school".

Indeed, the friendly reception accorded in 1904 to a delegation from the Incorporated Association of Headmasters suggests that some of the Board's senior officials would very much liked to have swung the balance even further the other way. The delegates drew attention to the impossibility of complying with the Board's Regulations when three languages (Latin, Greek, French or German), each requiring six hours a week, were taught, and asked that the requirement for either English or science should be reduced. An even better solution, they suggested, would be that schools like theirs, which could "satisfy certain tests of a higher liberal education", should be given "comparative freedom" to design their own curriculum. In drawing up the next year's Regulations, the Board of Education toyed with the idea of giving even more support to such schools, by offering a special grant for advanced courses in language and literature comparable with the higher science grant. Morant was keen to "fight the main issue of better grants for the non-science curriculum", and Mackail believed that such a grant was necessary to "redress a certain preference" given by the existing grant system to "a particular class of school giving a rather highly specialised kind of instruction in physical science". Having argued that science teaching had had attached to it "the elaborate apparatus characteristic of the modern machinery of life ... in some schools very considerably in excess of what is either necessary or profitable", he suggested that literary schools needed the money just as much, in order to run school libraries. The Treasury did not believe that, and was anxious that it would be too easy to qualify for special literary grants without having expensive buildings or apparatus, but was prepared to swallow its objections provided the total cost remained within certain limits.²

¹ S. Rothblatt, Tradition and Change in English Liberal Education (1976) pp 164-73 - "Instead of being demoted by the ethic of new knowledge, classical learning at the universities took advantage of its enormous existing base of financial support and flourished". The chief casualty was classical (and all other) literature, ejected in favour of philology and 'scientific' textual analysis.

² PRO Ed.12/119.
With attitudes like that emanating from the highest Board officials, it is clear that the minutiae of all the Board's rules and recommendations were relatively unimportant in shaping the curriculum of the new secondary system. They were applied selectively and flexibly, other school characteristics being allowed to outweigh them, and the gradual slackening of Regulations which began to occur almost as soon as they were introduced, was certainly not designed to encourage the former higher grade schools to maintain their specialism. In fact, it is extremely questionable whether the curricula of most older secondary schools changed at all. Those that had built science facilities to qualify for grants generally continued to teach science subjects, not least because they were popular with the pupils, but the schools were not encouraged to develop further in that direction, and by 1918 the Thompson Committee was deeply unhappy about the weakness of science in the English school system. Opening with the comment that "not for the first time our educational conscience has been stung by the thought that we are as a nation neglecting science", the Report proposed a comprehensive set of measures in an attempt to ensure that the current wartime enthusiasm for science did not lapse in peacetime.

One of Thompson's special concerns was the "dearth" of science and technical teachers, and he called for urgent remedies, including more financial support for students, better salaries for teachers and "a considerable raising of status". It is ironic that the Science and Art Department had faced and overcome the same problem some fifty years earlier; indeed, the creation from nothing of a body of qualified science teachers was one of the greater achievements of that Department. While the pupil teacher system operated in close relationship with the elementary and higher grade schools, at least a reasonable degree of competency in science among most new teachers had been guaranteed. And the early work of the civic universities, both in scientific research and in training teachers, enabled a fruitful liaison between the two activities, of which Thompson felt: "that so much was done under such conditions only intensifies our regret that so much was lost". By moving all intending teachers into schools where science was not particularly highly regarded, and in the case of girls, was an optional subject, the Board of Education profoundly affected the supply of science teachers.

Even allowing for changes in attitudes over the years, it is hard to accept the interpretation that the curriculum recommended by the early-century Board of Education was wisely balanced, the essence of a 'general' education. It was, of course, a happy convenience for the Board that the schools it most wished to get rid of were also those which were identified with the subjects it least valued. The classics, which were already so well ensconced in the more expensive echelons of the education system, were force-fed to schoolchildren who had no obvious use for them, while the areas of knowledge in which their schools were developing

1 Thompson Committee pp 5-6.
2 F. Foden, 'The Technology Examinations of the City and Guilds' in Macleod, op.cit. p 68.
3 Thompson Committee p 6.
excellence were disdained and downgraded. The Board's determination to drive anything too useful or vocational out of the secondary schools reflected a particular approach to learning which was already under threat, and which represented a serious mismatch with the needs of the larger part of the population. In the Board of Education as structured and staffed by Morant, there was nobody at the higher levels trumpeting the calls of science and technical education. The evidence is overwhelming for the verdict that at no point in the education system did science and technical subjects even hold their ground under Morant's Board of Education; far less were they extended or encouraged in the nation's new secondary schools.

The Resolution of Tensions in Secondary Education

The growth of a style of secondary education which valued science and technical subjects was contemporaneous with a period of increasing difficulties for the endowed schools. As indicated in the Introduction, the work of reform which followed the Schools Inquiry Commission had produced a proportion of successful schools1, and rather more which were still struggling. It is not surprising that the latter should have seen the flourishing higher grade schools as unfair competitors in the battle for pupils, not because they had a better curriculum or a higher standard of teaching, but because they were rate- and grant-aided and cheaper to the parents. There is no clear evidence that this was in fact the case. A.F. Laurie was convinced that higher grade school parents in Yorkshire did not want what the more traditional schools were offering, and struggling endowed schools were not confined to areas where there were higher grade school rivals. In Southport, for example, the Boys' Grammar and Girls' High Schools were in difficulties, while the Modern School founded in 1892 — fee-paying but emphasising English, mathematics and modern languages "for business and professional life" — thrived2.

But if they were apparently unable to devise a viable style of schooling which was self-supporting, the endowed schools were more successful at conducting the campaign for their own survival. That was done quite consciously during the 1890s under the auspices of the Incorporated Association of Head Masters, led by the Rev Keeling of Bradford Grammar School and

1 Though this is, of course, a relative term. Even for Manchester Grammar School, one of the most 'successful' of the new breed of urban endowed schools, it has been said that "the 1902 Act marks the point at which the School can be said to emerge from its vicissitudes". J.A. Graham & B.A. Phythian, The Manchester Grammar School (1965) p 82.

Dr Scott of Parmiter’s School in London. According to two of his opponents, that organisation was “the real villain of the piece”, which “for several years have been moving heaven and earth to limit and cripple the Board Schools of science”. The collusion which the IAHM sought with the more secure public schools alerted the latter to the problems of their lesser colleagues, and encouraged them to extend a protective wing towards schools with which they had previously had little contact or sympathy. From there it was possible to present a powerful case for remedial action to politicians and Whitehall officials, who were, as Beatrice Webb pointed out, of the “same social class ... they had easy access to them in unofficial and informal ways”.

With their shared experience of what secondary education should aspire to resemble, the officials of Morant’s Board of Education did not have to scrutinise alternatives or engage in lengthy discussions in order to construct their model of secondary school excellence. Morant has generally been credited with having a clear vision of the type of secondary school he wished to see, but his juniors never put forward any contradictory or alternative suggestions. As documents circulated around the Board of Education offices, they did not attract fresh insights or differing understandings, but endorsements, extra justifications, useful precedents and suggested strategies. As these accumulated, and the more contentious issues and troublesome local authorities were sorted out, the prototype twentieth century grammar school emerged. One of the main assets of the prototype was that it did not require too many significant changes in most endowed schools, especially when rulings were introduced in a spirit of compromise.

1 Bradford Grammar School had violently resisted the Endowed Schools Commissioners’ attempts to broaden its curriculum, but by the 1890s was feeling increasingly threatened by England’s leading ‘higher grade’ school board; and at Parmiter’s School the large scale provision of Technical Education Board scholarships "brought into the open the antagonism of the grammar school headmasters". Gordon, op. cit. pp 50,148.

2 Bradford Trades Council, cited in E. Wilson, The Development of Secondary Education in Bradford from 1895 to 1928 (Leeds M.Ed. thesis, 1968) p 78. The Bradford connection in all this was significant; with two leading and nationally-known headmasters on opposing sides, "verbal missiles continued to fly" in the city, and the local newspaper became the "forum for a national discussion" of education. (Ibid pp 80,83).

3 The words of Richard Lishman, head of Belle Vue Higher Grade School in Bradford, quoted in J.C. Jackson, Belle Vue Boys’ School (1976) p 20. To Lishman, the higher grade schools "meant more than a vested interest ... [they] produced only good results, and when they were abolished in 1903 he felt it was a criminal act and it dealt him a powerful blow, one with which he could never come to terms". (p 27).

4 A. Tropp, The School Teachers (1957) pp 173-9, attached considerable importance to these ‘behind the scenes’ activities.
What is more puzzling is the determination of the Board to make that the prototype for every secondary school it aided, regardless of local wishes to the contrary. Morant’s natural liking for order and detail, reinforced by the Fabian equation of ‘efficiency’ with systemisation, would seem to be the guiding force behind this drive towards the standardisation of England’s secondary schools. Several writers have since made that the prototype for every secondary school it aided, guiding force behind this drive towards the standardisation of different educative background. To them — as to a number of educational historians since — higher grade schooling looked messy and rootless, floundering around in a sea of makeshift curricula, inappropriate examinations, under-qualified teachers and premature leavers. Considering their widely asserted pupils, the higher grade schools must have been extraordinarily efficient and orderly places, but they did not look it. They would have to change if they wanted to become secondary schools — or indeed any other kind of maintained institution, for the Board was almost as keen to systematise higher elementary schools, pupil teacher training, evening classes and even ordinary elementary schools. Private institutions could, of course, be as varied and unsystematic as they liked, provided they could support themselves, and the difference between the two sectors was thus emphasised in what has proved to be a surprisingly enduring fashion. There is still considerable support for the view that whatever its faults, the private sector of education is essential because that is where innovation and experimentation flourish, free from the rigid, stultifying uniformity of the state system.

Morant’s approach certainly encouraged the idea that, in order to guarantee standards and ensure value for taxpayers’ money, maintained schools need to be told how to conduct themselves according to a set of rules imposed from above.

1. J. Leese, *Personalities and Power in English Education* (1950) p 230, actually uses that phrase; other examples were quoted towards the end of Chapter 1.

2. There had been a strong expectation, confirmed by Bryce, that the public secondary school system would consist of higher grade and endowed schools operating under similar conditions of funding and management.

3. As the propaganda of the Independent Schools Information Service constantly states in more or less extreme terms.
We know already from Chapter 5 the ways in which the Board of Education's earliest attempts at imposing rules affected the practical, everyday organisation of higher grade schools. But clearly they were expressions of a deeper philosophical understanding of the purpose of education, which has left its imprint to this day. The desire to make secondary schools self-contained units providing for all their own needs (but nobody else's), established fundamental principles of selectivity and elitism in England's maintained secondary school system. For whilst ideally one may applaud the early Board of Education for trying to make schools as spacious and stylish as possible, it has been proved at various times since that school buildings are remarkably elastic in their capacity when the need arises. The difference then was that the Board perceived no such need. It had no interest in continuing the higher grade school tradition of packing in as many children as were willing and suited to be there, nor would it allow the building or conversion of extra, less crowded schools to increase the overall secondary accommodation. Throughout the early part of the century, the Board, as well as senior politicians, were surprised and alarmed at what seemed to be the infinite growth of secondary education¹, and got very annoyed with local educationists who were misguided enough to want to extend opportunities to more children. Presumably, the class of pupil for whom the Board thought secondary education appropriate, was perfectly able to afford to buy it elsewhere and so was not being deprived by restrictions on the supply of aided school places.

As was seen in Chapter 5, it often seemed that the most important physical feature of a secondary school was its playing field, and the monumental importance the Board attached to organised games deserves some further comment. The local authorities were not averse in principle to the acquisition of playing fields for all their schools, but it was hardly their top priority. The necessity of finding for each secondary school around six acres of suitable empty ground in an urban setting was a real problem, especially when much of it would, by urban standards, be seriously underused. It more or less forced authorities to look to the outskirts of cities for sites, thereby adding to the tendency for schools to be no longer "an intimate part of the fabric of local life"; instead, they were "surrounded by a cordon sanitaire of playing fields which effectively insulated them from their immediate community"².

And the reasons for having playing fields was a subtle manifestation of social class differences. The school boards, mindful of the poor physical condition of many of their pupils, had done pioneering work in the development of physical education, using a basic programme of Swedish drill, perhaps with some swimming, gymnastics and occasional

¹ Balfour's remark that he did not realise that the 1902 Act would lead to more bureaucracy and more expense is well-known; and Tropp, op.cit. p 193, said that "it is now almost certainly true that Morant did not conceive the tremendous expansion in numbers of secondary schools during the inter-war period".

² J.F. Mann, Education (1979) p 163.
games in a nearby park. Its replacement by certain outdoor team games was primarily because it was believed they imbued valuable qualities of character - determination, loyalty, competitiveness tempered by a sense of fair play, team spirit - which amounted to the importation of a version of 'muscular Christianity' into the state education system. Sir John Borst thought it was hard for underfed children to enjoy the sort of physical training the governing classes "highly approved" for them, and team games, with their heavy demands on space, equipment and levels of expertise, have never been the best way of promoting fitness and habits of exercise in schoolchildren. But the distinctive cultural connotations associated with the games favoured by the middle and upper classes were assumed to be important enough to be keenly nurtured, so that they retain vestiges of their gentleman-amateur origins to this day.

All of these characteristics of the early century secondary school - its physical appearance, the corporate life, the organised games - add up to a powerful version of what in modern times would be called the hidden curriculum. There is scarcely a single aspect of it which would have been a normal part of working class life; indeed, some of it would not necessarily have been familiar to members of the commercial middle class. Stemming from a genuine conviction that in the public schools Britain had perfected the training of its leaders, and thereby arrived at the true purpose of education, there was a ready-made blueprint for the extension of state interest into the realm of secondary education. It made two results inevitable - that access would be carefully controlled; and that those who were allowed in, would be coaxed into the mould. Even if it was not deliberately intended to make the working class entrant feel unsure and ill at ease - "a sense of being in somebody else's house" as Mark

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1. The dynamic pioneer of Swedish drill for the London School Board became thoroughly impatient with middle class schools for resisting her methods simply because they were popular in public elementary schools, according to F. Atkinson, 'Fitness, Feminism and Schooling' in S. Delamont & L. Duffin, eds., The Nineteenth-Century Woman (1979) pp 75-9. Board school drill (often ridiculed in quaint old photographs) looks remarkably like the exercise routines which have recently become so popular.

2. J.E. Borst, The Children of the Nation (1906) Ch XII.

3. Rugby union illustrates some of the sillier vestiges in its present-day attitude towards amateurism. Rugby league came into being because southern rugby union clubs refused to compensate the more working class teams from the north for loss of an afternoon's wages. In soccer, once the Old Etonians were beaten in the 1883 F.A. Cup Final by a team from Blackburn, "the public schools withdrew from the competition, to devote their energies towards building up the amateur tradition of the privileged. Professional football was left to develop as a spectator sport for the urban masses". H.E. Meller, Leisure and the Changing City (1976) p 234. This general subject would seem to merit further research at a time when traditional team games are declining in schools, but personal interest in fitness is rising.
Grossek described it - the fact that it did so was certainly no drawback. There is evidence that scholarship children struggled to settle into grammar schools, and the schools made few concessions to them. The same ethos which in the nineteenth century had forced poor children out of their local endowed schools and segregated foundationers from fee-payers in the public schools, and which in 1907 produced widespread resistance to the free place regulations, guaranteed that a major part of the learning which working class children undertook at secondary schools was the absorption of middle class mores, rather than the cultivation of their brains.

The campaign for survival mounted by the endowed schools in the 1890s had therefore produced enormous rewards. The new system of secondary education was built around them, and in Morant’s hands, there was no place for variety. Schools which favoured the public school style of education were given every assistance, while others were encouraged to abandon the features which had been bringing them closer to the local authority model. As intended, status very quickly attached to them, and their rescue was complete. The conditions were not very taxing; they entered the state system virtually on their own terms. As well as sympathetic treatment of deficiencies in buildings, facilities, curriculum and teaching skills, they were allowed to retain much of their independence from public control, and exercise sole rights of selection of their pupils. And, most precious, with the clearing away of any possible rivals, they were given a monopolistic position, which meant that they did not have to change much, or even be very good at what they did. As all municipal secondary schools knew only too well, the Board made much of the importance of ensuring ‘quality’ and ‘the right standard’ in the new secondary school system, but it was never precisely defined. Being a ‘good’ school was an almost intangible quality, to do with other things - a literary emphasis in the curriculum, a headmaster with a public school/Oxbridge background, the possibility, however rarely it materialised, of procuring an Oxbridge scholarship, and above all, the right atmosphere, tone and ethos. In effect, the question posed by the NUT in 1900 - “can the small Grammar Schools be really benefited by choking off competition and surrounding them with a ring fence?” - was answered with an emphatic “yes”.

1 M. Grossek, First Movement (1937) p 164.
2 From oral reminiscences and retrospective accounts, like those of Mark Grossek and of S.J. Curtis, who won a scholarship to an endowed school in 1904, where both staff and pupils “constantly reminded” him that “they regarded scholarship pupils as belonging to an inferior category”. Education in Britain since 1900 (1952) p 62.
3 See Gordon, op.cit. Chapters 3, 6 & 8. He quoted the complaint of the headmaster of Bromsgrove Grammar School in 1889 that recent foundation scholars “have everything to learn in diction, manners and many of the qualifications of gentlemen” (p 197).
4 Sidney Webb’s concern in 1905 was “gradually to acquire sufficient control” over the non-provided secondary schools “to raise their standard to the required level”. N. & J. Mackenzie, The Diary of Beatrice Webb Vol II (1983) p 339.
The early-century Board of Education thereby formulated what became arguably the most uniformly recognisable and widely understood of any educational institution, the twentieth century grammar school. As favoured schools which were not completely closed to less financially favoured children, the grammar schools attracted passionate devotees and were often imbued with almost fabulous virtues¹. They became the pivot of our whole education system, so perfect that they did not need criticism or improvement, even from official reports supposedly reviewing the whole spectrum². As an educational model, the grammar school has certainly exercised a powerful hold (and continues to do so in some quarters), which has been only partially loosened by the recognition of how severely parallel institutions suffer in its shadow, and of how impossible it is to categorise 11-year-old school-children. The ethos and style of education which the grammar school was able to develop by virtue of its special circumstances infused our whole secondary school system. They became widely accepted as the highest goals for all secondary schools, which are still implicitly applied as a measure against schools operating in very different circumstances. Having been given from the outset a privileged and monopolistic position from which it would have been very difficult to fail, the grammar school succeeded handsomely, accumulating prestige and making it impossible for any alternative style of secondary education to resurface in a viable form.

The Resolution of Tensions in Elementary Education

At several points during the preceding chapters, reference has been made to the achievements of the larger school boards as instigators of educational reform far beyond the fairly limited obligations imposed on them by the 1870 Act. They had of their own volition taken on a range of additional responsibilities, most of which were by 1900 taken for granted as lying within the competence of public education authorities, with the result that elementary education had


² (Hadow) Report of the Consultative Committee on The Education of the Adolescent (1927) p 48, claimed that secondary (i.e. grammar) schools were "not within our purview ... we think it important that care should be taken ... to avoid any action which might undermine their efficiency or expose them to undesirable competition"; and Ellen Wilkinson, herself the product of a Manchester higher grade/central school, explained in 1947 that grammar schools "long history and the standards they have already achieved help to give them a sense of direction, and there is comparatively little that need be said about them in this pamphlet". Ministry of Education, The New Secondary Education (1947) p 25.
been enormously extended in scope in not much more than a
generation. Since it is unlikely that the school boards were
foisting unwelcome developments on their constituents, one has
to assume that the majority of the urban population favoured
the enlargement of public education provision, and the means
by which it was being delivered to them. The rapid growth of
the higher grade movement and the way in which it was
spreading all over the country, proved that there was
considerable enthusiasm for the new opportunities. The fact
that not everyone was as yet inclined or able to take
advantage of them does not invalidate the general thesis that
there was, for the first time, real potential for change
through the public education system.

No-one in England could have been unaware by 1900 of the great
progress in 'elementary' education which had been made during
the previous thirty years. Through the 1870s, 1880s and
1890s, the Education Department had become increasingly
receptive to local initiatives for reform, and people like
Mundella, Acland and Kekewich had demonstrated the benefits to
be derived from working in partnership with teachers and
administrators within the public service. And it was as
obvious to many contemporaries as it is to us with the benefit of
hindsight, that the ways in which the public education
service was developing were both logical and desirable. The
care of handicapped and hungry children, the preparation of
intending teachers, the raising of the elementary school
leaving age - these were all worthwhile goals. So too was the
 provision of an integral summit for the system; it could not
just be sealed off as a self-contained entity fulfilling its
own limited needs, bringing on its most successful children to
a certain point but no further. Having looked at how the
problems in technical and secondary education were resolved,
the simple question to be considered here is - what happened
to the ideals which had brought about the expansion of the
public education system, particularly in an upward direction?

The question has, of course, been partly answered already.
Elementary education was bound to be profoundly affected by
the adoption of a standardised model of secondary schooling
which was drawn from another part of the educational world.
As far as the public elementary system was concerned, the
chosen model had three crucially important characteristics: it
was firmly class-based; it was disjointed from the public
elementary system; and it was distanced from working class
traditions in education. In this section, each of those three
characteristics will be explored for their impact on the
elementary education offered to the vast majority of people.

A number of historians have sought to deny, or at least
understate, the class-based nature of England's new education
system. It "placed advanced instruction within the reach of
the major part of the people of England", said one, and
produced "an adequate supply of schools which, though
wonderfully varied, appear to meet all needs", according to
another1. Admittedly, judgments about what sort of children

1 J.W. Adamson, English Education 1789-1902 (1930) p 471;
R.L. Archer, Secondary Education in the Nineteenth
Century (1921) p 323.
had access to the new secondary school system are beset with difficulties. Statistics like those contained in the Board of Education’s own publications appear to give authoritative proof that, although secondary schools were dominated by the middle class, about 20% of their pupils came from working class homes. Recalling the figures known about the late 1890s, 20% was clearly an improvement on the 9% of working class children admitted to endowed secondary schools, but represented a dramatic worsening of access compared with the higher grade schools which were 40% working class. Lower middle class parents - white collar workers and shopkeepers - remained at a remarkably constant 45-50% in both types of school before 1902, and in many aided secondary schools after that date. But professional families, which constituted 1% of the total population and were almost negligible amongst higher grade parents, comprised nearly 20% of those recorded at post-1902 secondary schools.¹

All such conclusions have to be queried by the haphazard manner in which the Board of Education gathered its information, but a different approach in fact gives a worse picture. Taking into account all schools of the public or grammar school type, it has been estimated that just 1% of children born before 1910 to unskilled and semi-skilled fathers received a secondary education, along with only 7% of those with fathers in jobs listed as manual, or non-manual other than professional or managerial.² So, given that the higher one moves up the occupational scale, the more certain it was that children would be receiving a secondary education in more expensive schools of which the Board’s statistics took no note, it becomes extremely likely that access to secondary education was in fact narrowed after 1902. Lower middle class parents just about maintained their presence in the secondary school world, but below them, for the 75% of the population categorised as manual workers, opportunities were seriously reduced by the abolition of higher grade schools and pupil teacher centres.

Intimately tied up with the class-based nature of the new secondary school system was its deliberately engineered separation from the public elementary system, the second of the characteristics outlined above. Chapters 4 and 5 mentioned numerous practical ways in which the Board of Education sought to distance the one from the other, and alluded to the emotional intensity with which some HMIs sought to execute this aspect of Board policy. That it was discriminatory on the basis of social class alone seems beyond dispute. For while the Board had no objection to preparatory departments in ‘proper’ secondary schools, it strongly condemned a similar close relationship between elementary departments and the higher classes in local authority schools.

¹ Compiled from Board of Education, Statistics (various years), and HM Inspection Reports in the PRO files. See also Appendix 3.
² A.H. Halsey, J. Sheehan & J. Vaizey, 'Schools' in Halsey, ed., Trends in British Society since 1900 (1972) Table 6.21. The figure for professional/managerial families was 37%, giving an average for all children of 12%; there was no difference between boys and girls.
Both would seem to have been fulfilling the same function—the supply and smooth transition of a solid core of pupils onto the next stage—but the second was as consistently deplored as the first was wholly desirable and to be encouraged. Trevelyan confirmed in 1911 that it was the policy of the Board to encourage preparatory schools in connection with existing secondary schools, at which time no less than 699 out of 862 aided secondary schools had pupils under 10 years of age, amounting to 6.5% of the total secondary school population. In the competition for secondary school places, preparatory departments obviously gave an unfair advantage to children who could afford to use them, but they remained in favour at the Board even when scholarship winners were being turned away from secondary schools for lack of room.

This was one clear indication of the inadequacy of the free place system in bridging the gap between the public elementary and secondary school systems. As well as being unfair in principle and susceptible to non-educational pressures, it relied on methods of selection which were then an infant science. The Board's idea that free places should be awarded on the basis of a qualifying, rather than a competitive, examination was merely evidence of how badly out of touch it was. While local education authorities grappled with the problem of selecting its free place pupils, the Board seemed to be more interested in pushing secondary school fees up and reducing the 25% free place requirement in schools of which it approved. It was thereby reflecting a powerful middle class view of which the Bryce Commission had heard much, that parents ought to pay fees for secondary education, and if they could not, they were self-evidently not of the right type to participate in it. Fees were presented almost as a moral issue—though they were also a very convenient way of safeguarding the social exclusivity of secondary schools—and free places were thus a form of state benevolence to a 'deserving' minority from amongst those who could not pay.

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1. PRO Ed.12/139. P.H.J.H. Gosden & P.R. Sharp in The Development of an Education Service (1978) pp 85-7, detailed the 1920s controversy surrounding preparatory departments in the West Riding, where, under pressure from Labour councillors, the Education Committee battled to force grammar schools to reduce their under-10s to make room for more children who had won secondary school places on merit.

2. K. Lindsay, Social Progress and Educational Waste (1926) investigated the wide variety—and almost universal—injustice—of selection processes in a number of areas; and Gordon, op.cit. Chapters 6 & 7, has described the faltering efforts to refine methods of selection.

3. The 1911-12 Report said: "the 'free-place' regulations were not framed with the intention of instituting a scholarship system for the intellectual elite of the elementary schools". They instantly became exactly that, and it can only be inferred that the Board expected qualities other than intellectual ones to qualify children for secondary school places.

4. The two were related, the campaign for free places coming as a reaction to the Board's planned increase in fees.
The ending of automatic access to any further education for public elementary schoolchildren constituted an absolutely fundamental ideological change in England’s education system. It had been an intrinsic feature of the higher grade school system, whose headmasters could not believe there was any way of constructing a national system of secondary education other than on the basis of the national system of elementary education. But the Board of Education's priorities lay elsewhere, and it is not unreasonable to condemn it for its conscious rejection of that principle in favour of an elitist model. The idea of discarding children who wish to continue their education is not an attractive one today; the thought of doing so on the basis of social class rather than aptitude, less so. But even judged by the standards of its own time—and certainly by the optimistic perceptions which had evolved in the public elementary system—the Board's deliberate construction of barriers between ordinary elementary and secondary education was unnecessary and retrogressive. The 11,134 children who in 1920 qualified for free places but had nowhere to go, show just how badly the Board had misread the general mood in relation to secondary education.

The third characteristic of the new secondary system—its distancing from working class traditions in education—is of interest in relation to a recent area of research which indicates that those traditions were much more clearly defined than was once thought. It suggests that what has sometimes been represented as working class apathy and/or antipathy to education stems from a profound misunderstanding of the role of education in working class culture. Evidence has now been uncovered of a striking and consistent appetite for education among the working classes long before it was provided for them, ranging from a strong strand of autodidactism to the patronage of numerous small, cheap private 'schools'. These were fundamentally different from the more structured mass schools of the publicly-provided service, in that they "did not seek to separate learning activity from other spheres of daily life". The emphasis was on the speedy acquisition of basic skills (which did not include religion), usually from a familiar local figure who, with minimal resources, became adept at 'child-centred' techniques to cope with children.

1 To them the higher grade schools were "the resultant apex of the broad-based pyramid of the Elementary Education Act—the only schools that continued the work of the elementary schools", as reported in The Schoolmaster 14 Jan 1893.

2 As described by J.F.C. Harrison, The Common People (1984) pp 286, 292-3, working-class autodidactism embraced at one end of the scale, much higher pre-1870 rates of literacy than used to be assumed, and at the other, individuals who devoured classical literature, built up nature collections or wrote poetry.

3 P. Gardner, The Lost Elementary Schools of Victorian England (1984) p 96. The rest of this paragraph is based on his fascinating study of working-class private schools in Bristol. He cites a number of highly critical (middle class) reports on schools of this type, which nevertheless had to acknowledge their extraordinary efficiency in teaching children to read.
attending at various times of the day and for differing lengths of time. And since small fees were paid, the customers could ensure that the ‘school’ functioned according to their requirements. To outsiders interested in raising the ‘moral tone’ of the working classes, this kind of school looked very disorderly and unstructured, and propaganda made much of the unsuitable premises, the unqualified teachers and the absence of religious instruction.

Once their ‘schools’ had been put out of business1, communities had to adjust to a new style of schooling – on a mass scale, with professionally-qualified and publicly-employed teachers in formal buildings, and new pressures on the pupils to attend regularly and punctually and submit themselves to examinations. The rise of the higher grade school movement strongly suggests that they were successfully making that adjustment. At a time of changing employment patterns, the well-resourced higher grade schools offered far more scope for occupational and social mobility than the ‘dame schools’ could ever have done. There were thus growing expectations of the publicly-provided education service, based on a simple adaptation of the older, wholly realistic attitude to education – it was a ‘good thing’, but it must also produce useful results2. In a number of respects, the school boards and their schools represented a compromise on the issues previously intrinsic to working class schooling, rather than being wholly antagonistic to it. Schools were not in neighbours’ homes, but they were nearby and maintained open access3; teachers were of similar social backgrounds and any working class child could theoretically join their ranks; the education on offer enabled pupils to work hard and gain quick, tangible results; and the school boards were directly answerable to public opinion.

The Board of Education’s separation of secondary from elementary education had major implications for these expectations. The transformation of higher grade schools into municipal secondary schools gave them a fresh identity, which was quite consciously engineered and which implicitly denigrated the special characteristics of the earlier model. Parents and children who had previously regarded the higher grade school as their own, felt alienated and distanced from the typical secondary school. The new pattern of secondary schooling made almost no concessions to working class traditions in education. The schools were further removed from pupils’ normal lives, often geographically and always in ethos; the teachers were from different social and educational backgrounds and it became increasingly difficult for working-class children to enter the profession; and the education

1 By a condition of the 1876 Act concerning certificates for employment from ‘efficient’ schools; they had held their own in competition with board schools.

2 In Over the Bridge (1955), Richard Church noted in his schoolteacher mother a typical submergence of her own cultural tastes, but she "talked frequently of careers" and the "advantage of a good education" (p 144).

3 John Braine said of his board school days, it was "an extension of home; fear did not exist there", in B. Inglis, John Bull’s Schooldays (1961) p 22.
offered was leisurely both in terms of the aspects of knowledge it favoured and the length of time it took. This meant that tangible rewards came only after several years and the whole process required advance planning of a kind which poorer families were simply not in a position to make. And far from being responsive to working-class interests, the schools tended to be antagonistic, and the bodies which controlled them far removed from any susceptibility to working class pressure.

If it was the case that the Board of Education's new model of secondary schooling - class-based and distanced from both the public elementary system and the traditions it embodied - excluded the vast majority of ordinary children, what happened to them? They are a rather shadowy entity. There are glimpses of parents who were finding it difficult to finance their children's continuing education, and a very consistent view of the limited means of such families on the part of headmasters. Some were prepared to fight and make sacrifices all the more to gain entrance to the new secondary school system, but they were moving onto increasingly unfamiliar territory and risking becoming virtual isolates within their own communities. Quite apart from material considerations, it must have been a huge psychological decision for most working class families to take. It is not in the least surprising that many of them turned their backs on secondary education, not even bothering to sit the examinations for scholarships and free places. This premature rejection of the style of secondary schooling on offer was a nationwide phenomenon, which by the 1920s and 1930s had become so disturbingly persistent as to merit top-level investigation. It stands as a remarkable indictment of the work of the early Board of Education in formulating a 'national' system of education.

It was also typical of the general working class response to the changed education service now available to them - a quiet withdrawal from the arena of secondary education. It might be expected that there would have been widespread protests at the loss of opportunities caused by the abolition of the higher grade schools and pupil teacher centres. No doubt the prominence of educational issues in municipal and parliamentary by-elections, the recurring criticisms from the labour movement, and parental campaigns at some individual

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1 Most school log books noted a few scholarship children leaving each year because of poverty. In Nottingham, "many objections to the payment have been raised" when fees went up at Mundella School, and the head of the People's College listed as one of the school's great strengths its appeal to parents who could afford £1 per annum in fees, but not the £4 per term charged by the city's High School.

2 See the examples cited at the end of Chapter 5; and in the West Riding in the 1930s there was "still a significant number of children who, although recommended to sit for examination, failed to obtain their parents' consent to do so". Gosden & Sharp, op.cit. p 88. Lindsay, op.cit. proved that among children who did sit the examinations, more children rejected the places they had won than accepted them, even in 'favourable' areas.
schools, were expressions of opposition. But on the whole, people made remarkably little fuss. Over a period of thirty years, they had come to believe that free elementary education was their right, but anything more than that had been too patchy and too short-lived to have become an expectation or an element in their lives of which they felt they had been robbed. In that respect, the timing of the school board/higher grade school abolitionists had been impeccable.

So the vast majority of children, deterred or barred from entering secondary schools, spent their whole school career in ordinary elementary schools. This meant until the age of 14 in most cases, since in the very same year (1900) that the abolition of higher grade opportunities got under way, school boards were permitted to raise the school leaving age. The 'elementary' schools thus had very many older pupils on their hands, with rather less obvious purpose to offer them. The early part of the century has been acclaimed as "the dawn of a new era" for elementary education1, in which the liberalisation that followed the end of payment by results, and new educational theories, particularly with regard to infant schooling, played a part. But most important to such enthusiasts were Morant's widely admired 1904 Regulations. His introduction, described by one senior Inspector as "remarkable for its fineness of conception and its dignity of expression"2, stressed the importance of inculcating habits of industry, self-control, truthfulness and loyalty into children, and encouraged practical and physical activities as well as intellectual and character-forming ones. Nineteenth century attitudes to the education of the lower classes were thus interwoven into the apparently lofty ideals held out to twentieth century elementary schools, which, it has been suggested, were "essentially designed to ensure discipline and to act as agents of social control"3.

It is unclear whether the elementary school curriculum was widened in the early part of the century. Most commentators assume that it was, but many ordinary schools - mostly urban, but not just ones with higher grade departments attached - had managed to widen the scope and raise the levels of their work long before Morant came on the scene4. Once he had, with his firm commitment to the differentiation, and therefore containment, of each part of the educational system, the Board of Education became more interested in restricting elementary education than expanding it. From the Board's own files, it can be proved that science was deliberately curtailed in elementary schools. In September 1900, before the Cockerton case was finally settled, the Board's architect was instructed

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2 Birchenough, op.cit. p 330.
4 One of their motivations was to make for a smooth transition into higher grade departments, whose staff and facilities they sometimes shared. The suggestion of K. Evans in The Development and Structure of the English Educational System (1975) p 275, that elementary schools "certainly benefited from the downward influences of the higher grade movement" makes sense.
that "we are now carefully avoiding the recommendation of loans for premises intended for a School of Science". Suspicion that Nottingham was attempting to smuggle through laboratory extensions under a different label — that "the whole arrangement is illusory" — led to an internal inquiry about "whether the Board of Education intend to keep down the level of instruction in Science in Public Elementary Schools"; yes, came the answer, "it is intended to exclude this higher science teaching from the curriculum of the ordinary Public Elementary School". It seems too that the Board was not at all happy about modern languages in elementary schools, and Walter Southgate, a talented artist, never had an art lesson at his elementary school.

One new function which elementary schools did have to embrace was the preparation of their pupils for whatever secondary school places were available. Despite the fact that many of them did not even want to try, and the vast majority would not succeed, the various examining mechanisms used to identify the chosen few instantly became a highly competitive business, instead of a means of establishing suitability. Indeed, it is hard to imagine that anyone was so naive as to expect it to do otherwise. It should be remembered that this kind of selective examination was a real novelty for elementary schools, and inevitably it had a disruptive effect. In many there was a concentration of effort, including the best teachers, on children of 10-11 years of age, which one 'successful' pupil recalled as being "rigidly purposeful". A recent history of selection for secondary education catalogues at some length the increasing concern among teachers and educational administrators about the harmful effects which the preparation for the scholarship examination had on elementary schools. It was alleged to have "devastating effects" on elementary schools, cramping the curriculum, encouraging streaming, cramming and mechanical testing, and giving children a lifelong distaste for learning. In time, the whole of elementary education became permeated by the demands of secondary education, and as Simon has suggested, it was essentially a process of 'selection by elimination', masquerading as the more acceptable and positive-sounding 'selection by ability'. The skills and energies of top educationists were thus directed for much of this century at divining the perfect method of selection, rather than working to expand and variegate post-elementary education so that selection was much less significant.

1 PRO Ed. 20/114.

2 It was another symptom of the distance between elementary and secondary schooling that a different test was believed necessary to establish 'suitability', rather than accepting the elementary schools' own measure of success, the Standards, as the higher grade schools did.

3 John Braine recalling Thackley Board School, Bradford, in Inglis, op. cit. p 23.

4 Gordon, op. cit. Chapters 6 & 8. These allegations came from the more progressive members of the 1920 Committee on Scholarships and Free Places, who emphatically dissented from the majority report in favour of testing all but subnormal 11-year-olds.

In the absence of that kind of expansion, for the vast majority of children - 399 out of every 400 Walter Southgate estimated at his school, 9 out of 10 nationwide - schooling lost any overt goal. Some schools and local authorities did their best to encourage effort and a sense of purpose by organising internal school competitions, awarding certificates, prizes and gold medals, and stressing the importance of obtaining a good character reference. Walter Southgate was pleased to have accumulated quite a collection of these awards, though he was ashamed of the "pinchpenny piece of cardboard" which the London County Council gave to school leavers and critical of the "parsimonious" and "reactionary" decision to abolish these incentives soon after\(^1\). But for many, many children, it was just a question of carrying on with Standards work until they could leave.

Various writers who escaped to secondary schools have recalled their dread at sharing the fate of their contemporaries - some of whom had won scholarships which they did not take up - in spending their entire school lives in the same school\(^2\). And it emerges clearly from oral research that to many youngsters in the early part of this century, school was at best an irrelevance, and at worst a sworn enemy to be evaded or resisted\(^3\). But many of them also recollect that a wholly 'elementary' education was nevertheless considered preferable to the new style of secondary schooling, which not only contained a number of insuperable practical barriers, but also forcefully conveyed the message that that kind of education was not for the likes of them.

This problem area was recognised by a number of local authorities, who in 1911 sent representatives to Scotland to investigate the provision for older pupils there. They were very impressed with what they saw, and urged the Board of Education to give grants for more varied advanced courses, but the answer was no. So thousands of children were left in the depressing situation described by the West Riding Education Committee in 1908: "In many schools all pupils in the top two or three Standards had to be taught simultaneously by the same teacher. This led to wasteful repetition of work for the older scholars and gave them the impression that they had already learnt all that school could offer them and were just marking time\(^4\). At one 'elementary' school all the older pupils were put in three classrooms where "no more serious attempts were made to educate them" for their last three years, and as late as the 1940s, Brian Simon came across an 'unreorganised' elementary school which still worked children through the Standards to the age of 14, by "a system of mass instruction with strictly limited objectives ... often by rote learning and offering little or nothing outside it"\(^5\).

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\(^1\) W. Southgate, *That's the way it was* (1982) pp 21,53-4.
\(^2\) Contributors to Inglis, *op.cit.*
\(^3\) The rapidity with which 'school strikes' spread amongst the country's elementary pupils before the First World War is also significant.
\(^5\) George Scott in Inglis, *op.cit.* p 129; Simon, *op.cit.* pp 228-31. The Bristolian who could remember almost nothing of his last uninspiring 18 months at school may be recalled from Chapter 4.
Even if this dismal picture of the educational prospects offered by elementary schooling was not universal, it nevertheless amounts to a very half-hearted national investment in several younger generations. Whatever was achieved in the creation of a secondary education system, other parts of the educational world were obliged to pay a heavy price to ensure the safe progress of the favoured one. Given the advantages with which he endowed the secondary schools, Morant’s anxiety seems excessive, but, as Eaglesham suggested, Morant had long believed that too much of the national effort was devoted to elementary education. He concluded that in attacking it with “headlong vigour”, Morant “helped to contain, to repel, and in some respects to destroy the upward striving of the elementary schools, ... elementary education was put into a strait-jacket”. This is a long way from the ideals which accompanied the late nineteenth century expansion of the elementary system, and it has to be said that it was backward rather than forward in direction. It cannot be disputed that the early Board of Education constricted the elementary schools, cut them off from the new secondary schools while stamping out the higher grade schools, and also, by putting so little energy into the higher elementary schools, effectively offered no alternative. The only doubt is whether or not it realised quite what it was doing; in other words, whether it seriously misjudged the demand for education from the lower middle and working classes, or whether it consciously ruled against the satisfaction of that demand and attempted to turn back the clock.

The Resolution of Tensions in Educational Administration

Much of the reformist talk of the 1890s was of the urgent need for the better organisation and administration of education, especially at the secondary level. Even the most fervent school board supporters conceded the necessity of rationalising the situation by which several bodies had an interest in secondary education but none had overall responsibility. In all the discussions the desirability of local authority involvement in education was scarcely challenged, but, as became clear after 1902, that could mean different things to different people. For while the Act

1 There was a brighter side to the story, thanks to the efforts of progressive teachers and “the rise of humane and more liberal Authorities”, according to Bolton King, Warwickshire’s first director of education, in Schools of To-Day (1929) p 7.

2 E.J.R. Eaglesham, The Foundations of Twentieth-Century Education in England (1967) pp 51-2, and ‘The Centenary of Robert Morant’ in BJES Vol XII No 1 (Nov 1963) p 5. This view has been echoed by S. Maclure who said that after 1902 the elementary curriculum was “in retreat and a new and artificial rigidity introduced at just that point when it appeared the elementary school might have been about to develop extended education on an open-ended basis”. One Hundred Years of London Education (1970) p50.
clearly defined a new set of administrative bodies, it was
imprecise about their powers and duties. Not unnaturally, the
newly created bodies assumed that it was vague because it did
not need to be otherwise, and the gusto with which many of
them set about the job they thought they had been given, shows
that they fully expected to play a decisive role in shaping
the educational provision of their own areas. But the central
authority was concerned above all to use the Act to salvage
the voluntary and endowed schools, which had never been
subject to local authority control - or very kindly regarded
at that level. Their rescue could best be achieved by direct
intervention from the centre, and the local authorities would
be needed only as agents to carry out the instructions. The
balance of power in the central/local relationship was
therefore crucial to the manner in which the Act was
implemented, and in establishing where the balance should lie,
the underlying tensions between the 'metropolitan' and the
'provincial' outlooks referred to in the Introduction came
explosively to the surface.

In a number of ways, the sheer size and diversity of the new
local authorities represented the biggest challenge to the
Board of Education's direction of a uniform national strategy.
By and large, as had been the case in the school board days,
the urban authorities were dynamic and self-confident, and
prepared to confront the Board of Education if necessary,
while the rural counties were more cautious, both about the
spending of public money and about how to proceed in general.
But what is interesting from these researches is that various
kinds of local authorities found themselves in dispute with
the Board of Education over educational policy; dissatisfaction
was not confined to a few notably radical or assertive cities.
The new structure was expected to produce local authorities
more compliant than the school boards to central policy, and
there seems to have been an expectation at the Board of
Education that the education committees would not mind very
much about how their secondary schools developed, but would be
passively grateful when the HMIs told them how it should be
done.

It seems that early on the local education authorities were
genuinely surprised both at the sort of changes the Board was
looking to achieve, and at how little say they had in
implementing them in their own areas. Whatever the Act had or

1 The Act is commonly held to have produced a much more
logical administrative structure, but by taking education
into the heart of local government and politics in a way
that the 'ad hoc' school boards had never been, (as well
as complications like the Part II/Part III authorities),
the new system was bound to display considerable
variations in different parts of the country. Since it
would be impossible to investigate the differing styles
and changing politics of over 300 local authorities, some
generalisations are unavoidable.

2 The question of rural education - especially the problems
associated with providing secondary education in thinly-
populated areas - is an interesting and under-researched
one, to which further reference will be made towards the
close of this Chapter.
had not said, the local authorities believed they were intended to be a key part of the new administrative machinery for education, and in taking a positive line on policy, did not see themselves either as usurping powers which did not belong to them or behaving in a deliberately defiant manner. The more radical or left-wing elements of some of the later school boards were normally missing from the education committees, and the new bodies were less directly answerable to public opinion. But they did have an awareness of and commitment to the interests of local people, including those of a lower socio-economic class than the Board of Education thought were likely to be involved in secondary education. And they tended to be much better informed than the Board or its Inspectors about alternative models of secondary schooling, learned from the higher grade school experience. Most of all, they liked neither being told how to run the schools they maintained, nor the Board’s idea that they should abdicate control of them to governing bodies comprised of the sort of people who knew instinctively what a proper secondary school was like.

While it was felt in many areas that relations between the education committe and the schools were never quite as intimate as in the school board days, links were nevertheless strong, and sometimes, when a particular local councillor became identified with a particular school over a long period, very strong. The Board of Education always disliked this kind of collaboration and mutual support; it seems to have assumed that the close links between the school boards and their higher grade schools were an aberration assigned to the past by the abolition of both. And when the key local authority figure was one of the new breed of directors of education, the Board — and especially Morant — reacted even more strongly. The twentieth century’s widespread adoption of full-time salaried officials in charge of important areas of local administration was a development which he cannot failed to have understood, but which he resisted at every opportunity.

The adversarial nature of the relations between Morant and the men who are often regarded as the founding-fathers of education in their various areas, is extremely revealing both of his attitudes and of the general tensions between the centre and the localities.

The Association of Directors and Secretaries for Education (ADSE)3 evolved smoothly out of the Conference of School Board Clerks, which had by 1902 become a coherent and important body. It was accustomed to meeting quarterly in London,

1 The radical Graham Wallas, passionate defender of the London School Board, found it hard to adjust to the new requirements after 1903 - "he will not budge from his principle of 'starving out' the secondary schools under separate management. He will not agree to run both systems side by side", said Beatrice Webb who knew him well. Mackenzies, op.cit. p 339.

2 A cynic might suggest that it was his personal knowledge of how powerful an efficient administrator could be that made Morant so determined to keep at arm’s length his local equivalents!

3 These paragraphs about ADSE are drawn from PRO Ed.10/3.

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printing its minutes and resolutions, and forwarding them to the Board for discussion at a regular conference. But when the secretary of ADSE followed this procedure in late 1903, he received from Morant a reply that was bristling with hostility: "I am afraid I do not understand from your letter of December 11th what it is you desire from me in the nature of a reply. You ask no questions in your letter, and merely send, apparently, a printed copy of the minutes". Morant in fact drafted a response to the resolutions, but told Sir William Anson that "I propose to hold back the reply - at all events until we are pressed to make it". Anson said he fully agreed with Morant's sentiments - "I am against replying to this Association at all ... I am not prepared to discuss questions of policy with these gentlemen. Our business is with the Local Authorities whose servants they are".

Morant obviously felt the need to make a point of principle and establish his relationship with the secretaries (he never called them directors) on a different footing from his predecessor. He did so in a way which gives an extraordinary insight into the way he chose to operate. In late 1904, he refused to meet ADSE in the customary annual conference, which the Association thought "by far the most satisfactory way of thrashing out matters", nor would he meet an official deputation. However, he would talk to one or two of the "best" (Morant's word) individuals, provided the discussion was confined to the technical trivia of local educational administration, such as dates of school terms, and the official numbers and addresses of schools. But he did not simply write and tell them that. Instead, he used his friendship with Henry Hobhouse, the chairman of the County Councils' Association, to work a calculated subterfuge, designed to give the appearance of consultation with the directors where none in fact existed. Having confided to Hobhouse that "some of those secretaries are much too apt to 'run' their Authorities", and that "it has undoubtedly occasioned much chagrin to many of the more conceited Secretaries, and they profess great umbrage at being no longer received in conference as before by the Board", he outlined his plan. He would write to Hobhouse asking him to suggest a method by which the Board could best receive advice on technical administrative matters; Hobhouse would suggest that he approach the executive committee of ADSE; Morant would then write to ADSE. This elaborate charade was duly enacted, and a few ADSE representatives had their meeting about term dates and school addresses.

It is not easy to appreciate why Morant did all this. It seems a typical piece of civil service red tapism, but Morant was in other circumstances more than happy to circumvent the customary formalities - not least in his use of private contacts like Hobhouse. In personal interviews, he is known to have browbeaten the most senior politicians in the land, so he can hardly have been fearful of meeting a delegation from ADSE. And yet, as one of the busiest men in England at that time, he preferred to spend time constructing this unnecessary plot - reading the incoming correspondence, briefing his colleagues, and drafting carefully worded replies. He seems rather to have enjoyed the sparring and manoeuvring involved, but it is surprising how anxious he was not to meet the key people in local education. He could hardly refuse all
contact, but did as much as he could to minimise their importance and influence, both as individuals and as a group. It is further evidence of the lengths to which Morant went to exclude alternative educational viewpoints from the Board of Education.

It might have been expected that the local directors of education would have been amongst Morant's most useful allies and confidants. But the lack of common ground between two sets of officials notionally sharing a responsibility and trying to achieve the same goal is striking. The constructive reforms which ADSE proposed over the years were hardly revolutionary — uniform salary scales for teachers, more generous grants for pupil teacher training, a year's notice of major changes to the Regulations. But there were also a number of resolutions directed at overcoming the barriers which the Board of Education placed between the local authorities and the schools they were supposed to be administering. Hence, ADSE wanted the main (Part II) education authorities to be kept informed of dealings between the Board and the minor (Part III) authorities, and for notification of correspondence between the Board and the managers of individual schools. That, Morant flatly refused to do, reserving to the Board the right to recognise and aid a school whatever the local education authority's views, and his attitude to ADSE was never anything but extremely distant. Replies were deliberately delayed, the Association asked to repeat the main points of perfectly explicit letters, and the Board's real reasons disguised under "very carefully worded" explanations.

The work of the local education authorities was seriously compromised by the Board's insistence on its right to communicate directly with the managers or governors of endowed and independent schools. ADSE asked late in 1903 that all grants and correspondence from the Board of Education should be routed through the local education authorities, but was told that information could be obtained from the schools, and that the Board would supply only as much "as the Schools are willing to give". Following protests and a meeting between the Association and Morant, the ruling was made more explicit. In future, the Board will "deal directly with the Managers of Schools without requiring the correspondence and Forms to pass through the County Office". This "rescinded the rule which made acting in unison with the County or County Borough Authority a condition precedent to the eligibility of a new School to receive Government Grants"; instead, the Board "will consult the Local Education Authority before finally recognising a School, but reserves the right to recognise and aid a School", regardless of the wishes of the local authority. This really was a nonsense of a policy, and the antagonistic atmosphere which surrounded it was to linger for many years after Morant's departure. It has been suggested that "the memories of local authorities and officers of their struggles to establish their identity while Morant was at the

\footnote{Kekewich said that the deliberate delaying of replies had long been a favoured ploy of the department, to discourage future 'urgent' letters. The Education Department and After (1920) p 21.}
Board is a factor which goes a long way to explain the intensity of their opposition" to subsequent proposals from the Board.

Examinations of disputes between the central and local authorities repeatedly reveal one of Morant's less statesmanlike qualities, his habit of personalising opposition. He was always reluctant to accept that the opinions expressed by a director of education were almost certainly shared by the relevant education committee, and possibly by local popular support as well. Not surprisingly, individuals who had the most decided opinions on the secondary education in their areas, and who put up the sternest resistance to the Board, came in for the harshest treatment. Some of the more unfriendly exchanges with Bristol have already been mentioned and the long-running disputes with Bradford and Leeds have been documented elsewhere. Reference to the two lesser known examples of Worcestershire and Nottingham which follow, illustrate some of the common points of contention and suggest strongly that they were more than just an unlucky personality clash.

As a predominantly rural county, Worcestershire might well have been expected to display the cautious conservatism and respect for central direction which would have made life easy for the Board of Education. In fact, the appointment as director of education of Dr Rawson, formerly of the Technical Institute in Huddersfield, heralded the start of a belated struggle to make up the deficit of secondary school places in suburbs around the fringes of Birmingham and the Black Country for which the county was responsible. Worcestershire speedily became characterised by the Board as an authority "in which delay seems to alternate with rushing things through at the eleventh hour", and where "want of preparation and of attention to details... made efficiency impossible". Its major fault was that "nothing was left to local initiative" (presumably the same local initiative which had so far failed to provide the much-needed schools), and the Board made much of "how disastrous were the effects of the extreme centralisation at Worcestershire". No doubt one of the more disastrous effects was that too much control remained in the hands of Dr Rawson, with whom "the chief responsibility for the unsatisfactory state seems to lie", according to the Board. It liked neither his educational aims nor his methods - or perhaps it was more the case that it disliked his aims and therefore found fault with his methods. Dr Rawson's chief sin was his failure to "realise the nature and object of a Secondary School", because he "assumes that every child has a right to such an education, at the expense of other people,


3 This paragraph is drawn from PRO Ed.35/2584.
with little regard to his fitness to profit by it". The last phrase sounds like an overstatement, but as other authorities and directors found, the desire significantly to extend opportunities was not acceptable at the Board of Education.

Mr Abel, secretary for education in Nottingham, was even more villified than Dr Rawson, and for not dissimilar reasons. As indicated in earlier chapters, the Board of Education had real problems with Nottingham Education Committee, and once the expansionist-or more accurately, conservationist-thrust of the city's secondary school policy became clear, Morant's tactics became aggressively unco-operative1. He called for personal reports from the local HMIs, informed Bruce at the secondary section that "I am not seeing Mr Abel today", and then held off seeing an urgent Nottingham deputation for two months. When it was eventually allowed into the Board of Education, in May 1904, the internal summary of the discussion was annotated by Morant, "this is a queer reason-and shows the rotten basis of the whole affair". He reported to Anson that Nottingham's argument was "absurd", its reasons "sentimental and hollow", and its plans "a malversation of public funds". Mr Abel persevered. He wrote repeatedly and in uncompromising terms, turned up at the House of Commons to talk directly to Anson, and, accompanied by the deputy Mayor of Nottingham, arrived to see Bruce "without notice"-all to no avail. Following further specially commissioned reports from a personal friend of Morant's about what Nottingham was doing, Morant delivered his most stinging condemnation to date: "I have long known Mr Abel, Clerk of the Nottingham School Board [this was more than two years after the School Board ceased to exist], to be a person whose dealings are tortuous. He has to be very carefully watched and his proposals closely investigated... Mr Abel is very fond of presenting the Board of Education with a fait accompli and then saying it must be recognised to prevent hardship or injustice to the children... We cannot be too careful in probing Mr Abel's presentation of things".

Morant's low opinion of these individuals was not just a question of personalities; it is evidence of the scant respect he showed for genuine local initiative, and of the autocratic manner in which the new secondary school system was delivered to different parts of the country. He showed no concern for Nottingham Education Committee's problems with its angry parents, and was thoroughly annoyed to find that Dr Rawson enjoyed "very good relations" with the Worcestershire committee. The evidence that exists of the peremptory way in which Morant was inclined to treat his equals and betters2 suggests that mere provincial educational administrators who dared to cross him must have required unlimited resilience. Life cannot have been easy for the men in the middle, the secretaries and directors, who were operating under conflicting pressures from their education committees and from

1 This paragraph is drawn from PRO Ed.20/114 & 20/116.
2 To Sir John Craig's comment about 'beasts beset his every step', can be added Eaglesham’s assessment that Morant "was too prone to treat opposition as something personal and unreasonable, something he must hammer into submission". 'The Centenary of Sir Robert Morant' p 10.
the Board of Education. Many of them - like Brockington in Leicestershire, Bolton King in Warwickshire, Balfour in Staffordshire, Graham in Leeds, and Spurley Hey in Rotherham, Newcastle and Manchester - became distinguished and revered figures at local level, and they must have felt more than frustrated by the arrogant and unfriendly treatment they received from the Board of Education. So often they had to bow to unwanted Board rulings, while maintaining a show of competence and control at home. As the first holders of the now-familiar post, they had to design their own functions and responsibilities to a considerable extent, often in what turned out to be an extremely hostile climate. It produced among them a sense of camaraderie which prompted them to rally round any of their number in dispute with the Board, and thereby served to intensify the differences between the centre and the provinces.

The remarkable range of those differences is suggestive of a deep-rooted divergence of opinion, deriving from a conflicting perception of the role and purpose of secondary schooling. The numerous examples cited in previous chapters included several where the local authority had nothing obvious to gain in terms of money or prestige from taking the stance that it did. The Board of Education was excessively cautious in its policy, apparently unable - or unwilling - to grasp that schools could grow from relatively humble beginnings. The local authorities were much keener to try things out, in the belief that the new secondary schools, and the demand for them, would develop just as rapidly as had happened with the higher grade schools. Worcestershire, for example, did not want to wait several years for purpose-built, fully-equipped and staffed secondary schools, but its willingness to improvise was seen only as an inclination "to throw the blame for the delay in properly equipping the Schools" on the Board, and to "make a grievance of the Board's refusal to recognise" the embryonic secondary schools. And Nottingham, no matter how many promises it gave to discontinue the third municipal secondary school if it was not a success, was unable to penetrate the Board's conviction that two such schools were all that the city needed. They were just two of the many authorities which had to learn a lot of unexpected lessons about handling a Board of Education which seemed to be more intent on placing obstacles in their path than supplying cooperation and encouragement.

The Board's irritation with its local partners certainly flavoured the 1906 Report, which castigated the local authorities for a whole catalogue of faults, including "many errors, many false starts, much wasted labour and misapplication of machinery". It characterised the fruits of their work over the preceding very difficult 3-4 years as "too often little less than disastrous .... as soon as we pass beyond the sphere of Elementary Education proper ... we plunge into chaos". It also criticised their hesitancy in establishing new secondary schools, which it attributed to their "great reluctance" to incur higher rates. To those

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1 E.g., the battles over fees at Fairfield, the elementary department at Merrywood, and co-education at Leeds.
Essentially the local authorities were assigned a role in the
wings while the Board of Education and the endowed schools
occupied centre-stage; they would be called upon only to
support the main protagonists and possibly step in if they
faltered. It underlines the value to Morant of having
constructed a piece of legislation which was imprecise and
permissive, and which gave the local authorities no clear
rights in the field of secondary education. He had created a
void in which to operate, and did not intend to share it with
the local authorities; their role was to rubber-stamp the
changes effected by the Board working in concert with the
nation's endowed schools. The metropolitan model of secondary
education was imposed nationwide, and the directors of
education had to wait until Morant had gone from the Board of
Education in 1911 before friendly relations were re-
established. However, the victory of the centre was not
total, and it was gained at the cost of stimulating the
provinces (or at least parts of them) into a new confidence
both in their ability to control their own educational affairs
and in the rectitude of so doing². It has rightly been said
that "the existence of strong and alert local authorities ...
contributed materially in raising the general level of
national education"³. It is equally true that the advances
they have made in extending and improving state-provided
education have sometimes been in spite of the Board of
Education, achieved in a combattorial or hostile climate, and
inevitably influenced by compromises with centrally-imposed
constraints and metropolitan ideals.

1 H.C. Dent, Century of Growth in English Education (1970)
p 60.

² Birchenough, op.cit. p 194. He saw as "a grave source of
weakness" in the 1902 Act the fact that "no adequate
means of coercion existed"; the progressive and active
authorities would surely have disagreed! From the
Board's annual lists of aided secondary schools, a number
of counties appear to have done little.

³ W.H.G. Armytage in Four Hundred Years of English
Education (1964) p 204, thought Morant's departure from
the Board "showed how strong local authorities were
becoming, especially when led by imaginative and
resourceful officers ... From being virtually agents of
the board they became partners".

⁴ Birchenough, op.cit. p 160.
The Scale of England's New Educational Model

This Chapter has so far concentrated on evaluating how the leading contentious issues in the field of publicly-provided education were resolved as England entered the twentieth century. Having expressed a number of serious reservations about the quality of the system which was shaped at that time, the question of quantity remains to be considered. Superficially, the statistics of secondary school growth after 1902 make impressive reading. Halevy was certainly taken with the figures he quoted - "With what zeal ... the statute was applied! ... It was a social revolution of the first magnitude" - and Ensor deduced that "the board under Morant made great exertions to increase and improve the facilities for secondary and technical education throughout the country". More recently, Rogers wrote of the "torrent of secondary education which it undammed", Davis concluded that "progress was rapid", Hewitson wrote of a "vast expansion in the secondary field", Dent referred to growth of "spectacular rapidity", and Mann said that by 1910 there were 960 new secondary schools. The list could be continued almost indefinitely, since no-one seems to have probed the Board's figures and attempted to match them with actual institutions. Knowing from the earlier chapters of this study that in every area investigated, there was either no growth or a reduction in publicly-aided secondary school provision, a more thorough analysis of the overall statistics is clearly worthwhile.

Two years have been taken as samples for analysis - 1907, when 'free place' schools were about to come onto the official list for the first time; and 1911, by which time the new secondary school system as shaped by Robert Morant had had nearly a decade to settle down and he himself lost control of it. Secondary schools recognised for 1907 totalled 674, compared with 576 two years earlier and 341 two years before that. Those 674 comprised 168 provided and maintained by the local authority, another 31 in which the local authority had some say, 377 endowed schools, 35 belonging to the Girls' Public Day School Trust, 47 run by the Roman Catholics, and 18 by other bodies such as the Wesleyans or Masons. A fair proportion of the endowed schools were in receipt of Science and Art Department grants before 1902, and all the others which have been investigated were already in existence, so it can be assumed that none of the 377 endowed schools, or the 31 which opted to link up with local authorities, was a new foundation. The same is true of the Girls' Public Day School Trust schools, and the Roman Catholic ones seem mostly to have

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3 It is based primarily on a comparison between the Board's Statistics for various years and the list of higher grade schools and allied institutions contained in Appendices 1 and 2 of this thesis, together with cross-references from a wide variety of sources.
grown out of or been added to existing small schools, so that
the Catholics could educate their own intending teachers when
the shift was made from pupil teacher centres to secondary
schools.

The 168 schools provided by local authorities are therefore of
the most interest as possible new schools, and as evidence of
the growth of the secondary education system. 66 of them
can be positively identified as continuations of higher grade
or central schools. A further 78 were located in places where
a local authority (a school board or occasionally a technical
instruction committee) was already involved in providing post-
elementary education before 1902, sometimes on quite a small
scale, but more often as substantial institutions attached to
technical colleges or in pupil teacher centres. A significant
number (38) of those 78 were apparently 'new' schools for
girls, but in fact were in towns where girls had previously
attended co-educational establishments, about which the HMIs
were rarely happy. So, for instance, Leeds Central Higher
Grade School became Leeds Central High School for Boys and
Thoresby High School for Girls, and in Battersea, the
Polytechnic School and the pupil teachers' school together
produced Clapham County School for Girls and Henry Thornton
School for Boys.

In other places an older boys' endowed school earned Board
recognition, and so the local authority in the area
concentrated on rearranging its provision to meet the deficit
of girls secondary places, particularly for scholarship
holders and pupil teachers. Several of London's 'new' girls'
schools came into being in this way; for example, Fulham
Secondary School for Girls was the only recognised secondary
school in an area in which the school board had previously
catered for 275 pupil teachers and 281 higher board school
children to at least Science and Art Department examination
standard; and Peckham Secondary School for Girls was the only
provided school alongside three endowed schools in
Camberwell, where before 1902 there was a pupil teacher
school for over 300 and five board schools entering nearly 600
day pupils for Science and Art examinations. Admittedly,
London is the hardest place about which to make firm
judgments, but it seems likely that areas such as those just
mentioned had no more provision for post-elementary education
after 1902 than before, and may well have had less. The known
policy of the LCC of locating its secondary schools only in
middle-class areas, and the consequent acceptance by pupils of
the need to travel long distances, strengthen this
interpretation, as does the extremely low success rate (under
1%) in the scholarship examination among elementary
schoolchildren in the poorer London boroughs. It is
difficult, too, to see how the 1902 Act benefited the children
of, for example, Clay Cross in Derbyshire (over 100 Science
and Art examination candidates in 1901 - no secondary school
after 1902), or Burton-on-Trent in Staffordshire (350 Science
and Art candidates, mostly in the higher grade school, in 1901
- two endowed grammar schools recognised after 1902).

1 1902 is used for the sake of consistency; London did not
in fact get its Act until 1903.

2 F. Campbell, Eleven-Plus and All That (1956) pp 13, 43, 87.
Overall, then, 144 of the 168 'provided' schools, and 650 of the total of 674 state-aided schools in 1907, existed in some form before the legislation of 1902. A mere 24 (8 for girls, 2 for boys and 14 co-educational) have no traceable antecedents through official sources, though close perusal of the relevant local archives might well reveal some. In other words, this 'landmark' of an Act had generated, at most, just 24 secondary schools in four years. Unquestionably, higher grade schools were multiplying at a faster rate than that by the late 1890s, and so it is not unreasonable to suggest that the early administration of the 1902 Act brought about a reduction in secondary school accommodation rather than a growth.

Furthermore, it cannot be assumed that the 198 schools added to the grant list in the next four years (1907-11) were all new foundations. 28 of them were endowed schools which decided to come into the system, and 43 others were older foundations which opted to hand over control or share responsibility with the local authority, and thereby become 'municipalised' in the Board's language. So again, the new LEA-provided schools - a total of 115 added between 1907 and 1911 - are of the most interest in this investigation of the growth of secondary education provision. Just over half of them were in places where some form of publicly-provided post-elementary education was available before the 1902 Act; most of the new Cornish schools, for example, were in towns where daytime Science and Art Department classes had earlier existed in public institutes or schools of science and art. Only 54 schools (22 for girls, 4 for boys and 28 co-educational) out of the apparent increase of 198 between 1907 and 1911 can be categorised as new schools resulting from the Act, and again, further local research would be more likely to diminish than increase that number.

If this analysis of the statistics is correct, what did the 1902 Act do to stimulate the growth of secondary education? Firstly, it did make it possible for county areas where secondary school provision was haphazard, to get organised, simply because they now had the administrative machinery to do so. Worcestershire's early enthusiasm has already been mentioned; other predominantly rural counties were a little slower, but by 1911 Cornwall County Council was responsible for 12 out of the 17 recognised secondary schools in the county, Cumberland for 7 out of 12, and Hampshire for 9 out of 24. They must be balanced by counties in which the education authority was apparently doing very little. Westmoreland continued to rely wholly on endowed schools (5 in 1907, 8 in 1911), the local authority bearing none of the responsibility - or cost - of secondary school provision, and Oxfordshire had no fully maintained school among its 6 aided secondary schools, the cheapest of which charged fees of £6/15/0 per annum. Herefordshire, which had no recognised secondary schools in 1907, had provided just 1 by 1911 to add to the 2 endowed schools being aided by then, Hertfordshire was maintaining 1 out of a county total of 14, Dorset 1 out of 11, Buckinghamshire 1 out of 7, Somerset 2 out of 17, Lincolnshire 3 out of 22, and Northamptonshire, with the worst per capita provision in England, 2 out of 6. It seems, then, that while some counties seized the new opportunities with enthusiasm, others were content to move very slowly, relying on endowed
Until the advent of modern motor transport it was always problematic, but England was very slow to evolve a solution. Both Scotland and Wales, with rather worse geographical conditions, had found ways of placing post-elementary education within the reach of nearly all children, regarding it as one of the fundamental principles on which their education systems were based. Scotland had its long-established parish schools, where, having developed a system of support for isolated teachers and rejected the 1861 Revised Code, any child could learn Latin, higher mathematics and science and gain direct access to the universities; and Wales had taken the vital decision in 1889 to create a large number (95 by 1902) of small ‘intermediate’ day schools rather than a few big boarding schools. But in England it was not until the 1930s that the Board of Education “finally abandoned the principle that the main object of country schools was to prepare children for agricultural work and life in the countryside”. One finds in village schools in the early part of this century considerable attention being paid to the school garden and subjects bearing on rural skills and crafts. The take-up of free places won at secondary schools was particularly poor in rural areas, and attempts to provide a more advanced ‘elementary’ education for older pupils at selected schools were frustrated by the reluctance to travel the necessary distances, which could be considerable.

There are grounds for suggesting, therefore, that the Board actually set back such progress as had been made in rural post-elementary education, by outlawing the merging of elementary/secondary/pupil teacher functions which was the only realistic way of operating in small rural schools. And gone too was the examination system of the Science and Art Department, which, as one perceptive contemporary pointed out, deserved great praise for raising educational standards in rural areas, being the only way by which “work in the remotest village may be recognised”. In its place, remembering that

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1 As well as these rural counties, London’s record of secondary school provision was a surprisingly modest one (11 out of 78 in 1907 and 17 out of 86 in 1911), the County Council taking advantage of the generous supply of endowed and other independently-provided schools in the capital. In contrast, neighbouring Middlesex was one of the most active authorities, increasing its provision from 3 out of 14 in 1907 to 13 (with 8 others partly municipalised) out of 26 in 1911, while Surrey and Kent were responsible for about half the secondary schools in their respective counties by the latter date.

2 D.I. Allsbrook in Schools for the Shires (1986) has found evidence of a “coherent reform movement” in rural counties in the mid-19th century, but it seems that the practical outcome (in terms of viable institutions) was rather less enduring than the conservative, voluntaryist principles on which it was based.

3 Gordon, op.cit. pp 176, 200.

4 C.S. Bremner, Education of Girls and Women (1897) p 103.
endowed schools were excused from having much or any contact with the local authority, was a system of secondary education which was effectively run by the Board of Education through individual governing bodies. The county and central authorities thus share much of the responsibility for the poor provision of aided secondary school places in rural areas, which, amongst other things, helped to produce the worst ever deficiency in recruits to teaching, the former because they were "disinclined to incur the expense of opening new secondary schools", and the latter because of its "inertia and economy in dealing with problems of teacher supply".

Secondly, the 1902 Act did give education committees potentially more power than the most dynamic school boards had ever had. As before, the bigger urban authorities tended to be the most active, and the somewhat unexpected continuity of approach from school board to education committee meant that the interests of local elementary schoolchildren were safeguarded to a certain extent. The preceding chapters have shown that the Board under Morant did its utmost to minimise the direct involvement of local authorities in secondary education, forcibly preventing them from expanding their own provision and from exercising any influence over other institutions. But local commitment to developing secondary education was an irresistible force. Some early victories were gained despite the Board’s opposition, notably the recognition of most higher grade schools as secondary schools, and expansion was bound to come in time. Not surprisingly, most of the innovations in post-elementary education - central schools, junior technical schools, free secondary schooling - came from the larger urban authorities, where the educational need expressed from below did not seem to match anything provided from above. The 1902 Act did nothing to create that more progressive climate and the early administration of it was positively antagonistic; the most that can be said is that when operated under more favourable circumstances, the Act had removed some of the obstacles which had held back the school boards from pursuing that kind of approach.

Thirdly, the 1902 Act did encourage some bad secondary schools to get better and to get bigger. The Board of Education directed much of its energy towards restructuring and raising the standards in former higher grade schools, although, as has been suggested, they were already highly efficient and purposeful places with plenty of experience to solve whatever problems they had. The endowed schools, while rarely subjected to such rigorous improvement campaigns, could not remain unaffected. Most importantly, their new-found financial security enabled them to extend their curriculum, facilities and staffing, and to accommodate more children. There is some truth in the suggestion that the growth in the size of aided secondary schools was a more significant feature than the growth in the number of schools, but three qualifications need to be made. Firstly, the average

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school size actually dropped in the first decade of the century, to 150 pupils in 1911, but then rose rapidly during the First World War when demand was growing but major new building was impossible. It was 250 in 1919 and climbed more steadily to around 300 in the 1930s, and it was only then that the proportion of secondary school pupils per 1,000 population crept up to 10% from the 7% of the pre-War period\(^1\). It is therefore debatable how much effect the 1902 Act had on the total size of the secondary school population, and rather likely that in different hands, many schools could have grown more rapidly.

A second qualification is that a fair number of endowed schools had been very small indeed, too small to offer a full spread of subjects or to divide their very wide age-range of children into appropriate classes. Sara Burstall explained at some length that from her experience of girls' high schools, 300 was the minimum size for efficiency, to produce 10 classes of 30 pupils each between the ages of 9 and 18\(^2\). That was much larger than most endowed schools - in 1911 there were 49 recognised secondary schools with less than 50 children - and it may reasonably be deduced that rather than giving secondary education to more children, such schools were offering education of a secondary nature for the first time. And thirdly, in marked contrast, most higher grade schools were forced to reduce drastically their nominal capacity on becoming municipal secondary schools, mainly as a device to exclude elementary children and generate the desired spaciousness of a secondary school. After a while, their numbers crept up again, but can hardly be regarded as a growth in size since they were still smaller than the schools had once been\(^3\). It seems then, that the biggest effect which the 1902 Act had on the total size of secondary school provision was, by the injection of grants and scholarship pupils, to prevent the extinction of a number of struggling endowed schools, so that they were able to increase in size at a later date\(^4\).

A further interesting aspect of this statistical investigation concerns the assumption which is usually twinned with the

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1. Bristol's figure was 4%, and in London it has been estimated that in 1901 and 1911, 1 child in 20 between the ages of 10 and 15 was getting "a fairly satisfactory secondary education". Campbell, op.cit. p 10.
2. S. Burstall, English High Schools for Girls (1907) p 36.
3. Bradford's Belle Vue School, for instance, dropped from 616 in 1904 to 207 in 1905/6, before climbing back up to 456 in 1907/8, during which time building alterations consisted only of the addition of a gymnasium and a library. Jackson, op.cit. p 22. It is appreciated that higher grade figures would not all have been children of secondary age, but then neither were those of endowed secondary schools; in 1911, 25% of all 'secondary' school pupils were under 12, making the small schools even smaller as far as secondary tuition was concerned.
4. Campbell, op.cit. pp 101-2, reckoned that in London, for the first half of this century "the overwhelming majority of grammar schools" could not have existed without state-aided pupils.
Faced with a specialist purpose, such as the Berlitz School of Languages, the Bristol Telegraph Training School and the Swedish Institute for Physical Education and Massage. But in the realm of girls private schooling, which was the most likely to be offering something resembling secondary education, there seems to have been a significant change. Of the 30 schools which survived the 12-year period, information is lacking for 3 of them, 12 were recorded simply as girls' schools in both years and 3 continued as mixed preparatory schools. But on the assumption that schools were functioning only at the junior level if they took both boys and girls or

1 Obviously further research is needed to substantiate fully this unexpected finding.
2 As indicated above, the absence of any form of registration for private schools makes this kind of survey hazardous. But there is no reason to suppose that Kelly’s Directory was any more or less reliable in 1914 than in 1902, and until census enumerators' books can be checked in 30 years' time, greater certainty about the extent of private schooling is impossible.
if boys were taught by a woman, the other 12 changed their status from girls' schools to preparatory ones. Furthermore, 40 out of the 80 that disappeared were girls' schools, to be replaced by just 17 new ones, with a greater concentration than previously around wealthy Clifton, where social exclusiveness was probably still highly valued.

This evidence therefore indicates that there was a continuing demand for preparatory schools, presumably feeding the public schools, but an overall decline in the number of private schools, caused largely by a major shift in girls' education. There were 35 fewer girls' private schools in 1914 than in 1902, and the only sensible explanation is that the class of girls which had previously patronised them - and possibly some of the teachers too - were to be found occupying places in the aided secondary schools. Everything that was discovered about the changes urged upon Bristol's three municipal schools by the HMIs - the fees, the school uniform, the banishment from the premises of elementary school children, the attention to 'tone' and 'corporate spirit' - confirms the impression that their priority was to make the schools more attractive to wealthier families than to poorer ones. And there are signs that they were succeeding, particularly at Fairfield Road where a small but significant number of entrants after 1907 were coming from professional or semi-professional homes (accountants, bankers, a veterinary surgeon, the cricket coach at Clifton College, the sub-sacristan at Bristol Cathedral) or had previously attended private schools, or left to take further private tuition (in violin or art) or be 'at home'.

What can be concluded about the main effects of the 1902 Act on the scale of secondary school provision? The only early beneficiaries were the children in a handful of county towns and city suburbs where county councils speedily provided secondary schools, and the fairly small proportion in larger towns and cities who gained access to schools previously closed to them. It could well be argued that the second of these would have happened anyway, and quite likely on a more generous scale, if the endowed schools which could not pay their own way had been brought onto the same footing as the higher grade schools. To achieve the first might have required some central direction, such as reconstituting or better co-ordinating the school board system; this could have been coupled with greater statutory responsibilities so that reluctant authorities would have been obliged to do more, and with a more imaginative policy towards secondary education in rural areas.

One therefore arrives at the conclusion that as far as those areas were concerned, the reorganisation of 1902 and after could have been very much more fruitful than it was, and that many urban areas would have been better off without any legislation at all. This was certainly true for many of the towns which did not quite qualify for county borough (Part II)

1 Some of these schools in Clifton and neighbouring Redland extended into next-door houses, and acquired names like Badminton House, Mortimer House and Hampton House School.
status, and whose hopes of developing education beyond the elementary were definitely handicapped by the legislation. They had to wait either for the benevolent intervention of the county authority, or for themselves to grow big enough to qualify as authorities for secondary education. It seems too that the real growth in secondary school provision nationwide was delayed until the time of the First World War - and was then almost immediately engulfed in over two decades of financial stringency. That expansion owed almost nothing to the 1902 Act or the Board of Education under Morant; rather, its very promising progress in the 1890s was retarded by at least twenty years. It was inevitable that progress would resume, but it did so in a changed climate. The sanctification of an elitist model of secondary education, coupled with the devaluing of technical and elementary school alternatives and of local autonomy, produced a whole generation's worth of expectations, and left little room for the flair and experimentation that had characterized the pre-1902 development of the public education service.

Darlington, for example, a Part III authority until 1915, could offer only a daytime course at the technical college for 14-year-old leavers (1907) and a higher elementary school (1911), although the local boys' grammar school charged fees of £11 per annum and refused to liaise with the local authority and the public elementary school system. M.M. Cullen, Education in Darlington (1900-1974) (1974) pp 8-9,14.
CONCLUSION

A LOST OPPORTUNITY

The Broad Debate Recalled
The Challenge of the New
The Triumph of the Old
Conclusion - A Lost Opportunity
CONCLUSION - A LOST OPPORTUNITY

The Broad Debate Recalled

It remains in conclusion to stand back a little and place the higher grade school phenomenon in the broad context of English attitudes to intellectual and cultural priorities, industrialisation and questions of social class. The phenomenon will be considered within the general framework of the debate outlined at the beginning of this thesis - that liberal-romantic attitudes in English culture have been remarkably persistent, despite their inappropriateness for modern economic, social, political and military conditions. Of particular relevance to the higher grade school movement, to which it has not previously been applied, is the theory that for most of its modern history, England has accommodated a strong alternative cultural tradition. This, while not eschewing moral values or ancient learning, consciously attuned itself to the realities of life, finding popularity above all with people who, because of social or religious disadvantage, could significantly enhance the quality of their lives through the acquisition of knowledge. In the educational context, it has been commonly identified with the dissenting academies of the eighteenth century and sometimes with certain twentieth century institutions, but rarely with anything in between. This conclusion will argue that the higher grade school movement represented a successful re-emergence of England's alternative cultural/educational tradition in the latter part of the nineteenth century, and that its demise was a clear example of the remarkable strength of the dominant liberal-romantic tradition.

The study originated in a curiosity about Britain's equivocal attitudes to science and technology as a possible explanation of continuing poor economic performance, and particularly in relation to education. At a time when preparation for 'the technological society' is a major government interest, as it was too in the 1960s, the media are still full of reports of, for example, the low status of engineers, the shortage of

1 Not the easiest of labels to apply, 'liberal-romantic' is here used to depict the cultural tradition whose development was traced by S. Rothblatt in Tradition and Change in English Liberal Education (1976). He identified its chief components by the late nineteenth century as: an exclusive devotion to literary studies, especially the classical texts; a consequent disdain for science; a persistent anti-intellectualism and dislike of expertise; a sense of high moral purpose, leading to an emphasis on the importance of character-formation, and to a belief in class superiority and elitism; and, embracing all these, a growing attachment to stability and conformity.
It is impossible, too, to ignore the formidable weight of criticism directed at the performance of England's elite at critical moments in our history. Various writers have expounded upon the naive ineptitude of the nation's rulers when faced with the harsh reality of economic decline, imperial disintegration and foreign aggression, and bemoan the fact that the upper echelons of the education system have done so little to prepare them for the reality of modern life. In 1940, Worsley was in no doubt that their "terrible failure in moral purpose" together with "defective intelligence, defective imagination and a defective understanding of the world we live in, have landed us in our present mess".

Gilmour believed that Britain "has paid a heavy price to have the sons of its entrepreneurs educated alongside the traditional elite", and Wilkinson argued that a concept of leadership which adopts a "very high degree of educational elitism" and respects "the guardian more than the innovator" is an anachronism in a modern democracy and "tends to serve government and society badly in an advanced industrial society marked by rapid technical change". To Barnett, the romantic idealism transmitted to generations of governing-class Britons "averted its gaze from the muddy topics of the contemporary world and real human nature, and neglected science in favour of the moral "precepts, the chivalric code and the ideal humanity enshrined in religion and the classics".

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3. T.H. Huxley, 'A Liberal Education; and Where to Find it' (1868) in his collected essays, Science & Education (1905 edition) p 94.
Education has always been identified as the best means of modernising such attitudes. Towards the end of the nineteenth century education at all levels was in a state of tension, with some of its older-established parts struggling to maintain a role, and some of its newer additions succeeding so conspicuously that they clearly needed to be reassessed. The competing values embodied in those tensions presented real alternatives - perhaps more than at any time since - which could have guided Britain's cultural tradition in a different direction. The manner in which the old and the new were brought into juxtaposition could have been enormously fruitful, the foundation of a genuinely fresh approach to the purpose, content, style and availability of education.

The Challenge of the New

'Specialised' Education in the English Higher Grade Schools

Despite the seemingly unassailable supremacy of the liberal-romantic tradition in English culture, it is possible to find a recurring and important preference for alternative priorities in education. Deriving from a different view of the world, this alternative cultural strand has concentrated on other areas of knowledge and styles of learning than those revered in the liberal-romantic tradition. It achieved its greatest sophistication among urban nonconformists, especially the Unitarians, in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It was a key factor in their drive to attain the high culture that was a necessary concomitant to the elite status which their economic importance and philanthropic instincts merited, but which was denied to them by the traditional English value system. The broad, forward-looking scientific culture which they devised performed important social functions, in strengthening a sense of community and providing opportunities for social mobility; as one writer has expressed it, "a fertile scientific culture was generated among marginal men as a means of social legitimisation".

Translated into educational terms, this alternative cultural tradition, while stressing the need for relevance to the actual circumstances of living, was never purely utilitarian or vocational, but what Fred Clarke called "nothing less than a re-interpretation of the content of culture". He identified

1 I. Inkster, 'Aspects of the history of science and science culture in Britain, 1780-1850 and beyond' pp 17-9, 43; and M. Neve, 'Science in a commercial city: Bristol 1820-60' p 179; both in Inkster & J. Morrell, Metropolis and Culture (1983). Inkster thought that general neglect of this lively scientific culture "has without doubt led to both a false belief in the ascientific nature of the industrial revolution and to the thesis that Britain's lag in formalized scientific and technical training after 1870 was simply a continuation of a 100-year trend".

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links between the dissenting academies of the past and the technical high schools of his own time (in which he mistakenly saw great possibilities), which offered the opportunity for adapting "the concept of culture to real life", something the grammar schools had signally failed to do. Tracing the dissenting academies back to the seventeenth century wave of modernism in education, he saw them as prime examples of 'specialised' or 'realistic' education, in contrast to the classical-aristocratic "education for culture". For much of the eighteenth century, they offered the "best liberal education obtainable at the time", defined by one admirer as "libertarian ... rational, scientific, humane and democratic". But then the dissenting academies "forgot the breadth of view with which they had started" and declined, though their spirit lived on in certain private academies of the nineteenth century, to which parents in search of a 'realistic' education increasingly lent their support.

By the end of that century, 'specialised education' had found a new home, in the network of publicly-provided institutions which had developed since 1870, of which the higher grade schools were the key element. Birmingham's knowledgeable Rev McCarthy defined higher grade education in 1900 as a "specialized advanced education combined with a wider intellectual training", and Michael Sadler perceived in it "the germs of a wider and more liberal conception of secondary education than this country had yet recognized". The higher grade schools were unmistakably of that same tradition of useful and cultural education which Clarke believed to be essential to England's survival in the modern world. His admirable characterisation of the dissenting academies can almost exactly be applied to the higher grade schools: "A vigorous and sustained effort to think out a 'modern' curriculum and apply it in practice. While not departing from the dominant idea of education for culture, and while remaining thoroughly English in temper, they cut loose from the prevailing tradition of classical training, and aristocratic accomplishments, looked at their own actual world with open eyes, and worked out a curriculum which would prepare for effective living in such a world. In it, as it developed, classics and the customary linguistic studies had no great place; instead, we find English, history and modern languages with a good deal of mathematics and science."

1 F. Clarke, Education and Social Change (1940) pp 17,20.
2 Worsley, op.cit. p 121. Unlike Clarke, he predicted that the technical high schools of the 1930s were "doomed to failure" by the class and status divisions in British society, which would be vigorously defended by the privileged (p 243).
3 I. Parker, Dissenting Academies in England (1914) p 122.
4 It was significant that, based on their experience of British Society schools, dissenters brought higher expectations to the public provision of elementary education than did Anglicans, to whom social control was still a major consideration.
6 S.J Curtis, Education in Britain Since 1900 (1952) p 33.
7 Clarke, op.cit. p 16.
Like the dissenters though for different reasons, the patrons of higher grade schools were excluded from the country's leading educational institutions. Relatively free of cumbersome traditions, they devised a style of education suited to their needs, "not by copying the grammar schools and educating themselves as 'arrivistes', aspire imitators from afar of the governing-class tradition", but by offering a real alternative. That the higher grade school movement became important in barely a quarter of a century of operating in fairly unfavourable circumstances is evidence of just how vigorous and effective its version of education was. Nothing can be identified within the movement which would have ended or even weakened it. It was exceptionally well tuned to the wishes of a large part of the population, and with ever-developing links upwards into teacher-training, technical colleges and provincial universities, showed every sign of becoming a complete system of education, containing a genuine reinterpretation of the content of culture. It should have been an invaluable source of ideas at the very moment when England was deciding for the first time what kind of secondary school system it wanted, and which cultural tradition(s) it thereby wished to promote.

There are clear indications that an awareness of the significance of this 'reinterpretation' was developing among the participants in the alternative system. At first, they saw themselves as merely filling a gap in the educational provision which no-one else wanted to occupy, and, puzzled by the hostility which this seemed to arouse in some quarters, argued that "there is practically no antagonism between our schools and the grammar schools ... We are working an entirely different stratum". But increasingly, phrases like 'this renascence of learning' and 'educating the whole powers of man' began to be used to validate their work. The higher grade schools were described as "firstly places of education, and secondly utilitarian", introducing children to "literary culture ... their own glorious inheritance of English literature", as well as giving them "much-needed training in modern living languages" and preparing them for "the practical needs of after life". Sir George Kekewich seems to have grasped the significance of what had been happening when he wrote that in ordinary secondary schools the study of Latin and Greek "was generally time wasted ... it is the new knowledge, not the old knowledge, that is all-important in commercial and industrial competition". And the higher grade school heads became irritated by the IAHM's apparent determination to "make everything conform to the antiquated monastic Grammar Schools which are altogether behind the

1 Ibid p 15.
2 This paragraph is based on speeches made to conferences of the Association of Headmasters of Higher Grade Schools as reported in The Schoolmaster. The N.U.T. Conference at Easter 1903 was told that nearly 70 higher grade schools "in vigorous, working condition will be handed over as going concerns, and no Mr Cockerton can step in now to prevent the extension of their work and usefulness" (School Government Chronicle 18 Apr 1903).
3 G.W. Kekewich, The Education Department and After (1920) pp 194-7.
times", especially as in a number of schools which had been happy to accept Science and Art Department money, suddenly "all this belief in a broad, general, and liberal education vanishes". Their supreme but misplaced confidence that the higher grade school style of education would survive in any reorganisation that was to come, was therefore based on a conviction that it was not only modern but broad and liberal, in contrast to the old-fashioned, narrow grammar schools.

'Specialised' Education in Other Countries

It is important to note that the emergence of a demand for 'specialised' or 'realistic' education was a characteristic of all industrialised countries. Some illuminating comparisons can be drawn between the responses to it of England's ruling elite and those of other countries, which show that the failure to accommodate alternative styles of secondary education within the national system was a peculiarly English phenomenon. In most other western European countries classical-liberal education had its influential adherents, but in none were they able to impose their values on the whole system. Ringer has shown how successfully European education, with the exception of England, adapted itself to modern conditions. From the early industrial days when "traditional secondary education stood in antithetical relationship to the economy", Germany had by the late nineteenth century developed a style of secondary education which "was really rather progressive for its time", and at the same time in France, a practically-oriented secondary curriculum was flourishing while the "classical stream entered a period of stagnation and decline". In both countries, the main beneficiaries were from the lower socio-economic classes. In the United States, meanwhile, the period between 1890 and 1914 saw a dramatic increase in the number of public high schools, the virtual abandonment of both fee-paying and selection, and transformations in the curriculum, notably a successful "blurring of the sharp lines that used to separate academic and vocational education".

England could also have learned much from its two nearest neighbours. Many of the same educational tensions were apparent in Wales and Scotland as in England, but both those countries managed to retain distinctive educational patterns, despite pressures to move closer to the English model. In Wales, the reforms which followed the Aberdare Committee and the Intermediate Education Act of 1889 had engendered "tremendous enthusiasm" among the Welsh people, and initiated "45 glorious years of real achievement" in secondary and university education. The sixteen joint education committees

1 F.K. Ringer, Education and Society in Modern Europe (1979) pp 16,74,139. He concluded that England was unique in its "generalization of the grammar school model beyond the limits of academic secondary education on the Continent" (p 232).
2 K. Lindsay, Social Progress and Educational Waste (1926) p 27.
responsible for creating the new intermediate schools looked "rather to the continent than to England for their model", and "were determined that the new schools should not follow the old grammar school traditions". They hoped to bring secondary education to the door of every cottage, and cater, if possible, for every type of child, academic or otherwise. Mundella, who had overseen this remarkable achievement during his tenure of office in Whitehall, hoped that the Welsh example would act as a "leavening" for the "larger and more inert mass of Englishmen. I always desired to see Wales become a model for our national system". After 1902, it is true, Welsh education became subject to the regulations and inspection of the English Board of Education, but it preserved some independence through the creation in 1907 of a separate Welsh Department, whose early Chief Inspector fought hard to retain the scientific-vocational character and the generous access of Welsh secondary schooling, and to resist the values of the English grammar school which he regarded as an "entirely inappropriate model" for Wales.

Scotland, to which English higher grade school supporters often looked with envious eyes, had even longer established educational traditions of its own, which lent themselves to modernisation more readily than England's. By the end of the nineteenth century it had already introduced such advances as inspection of secondary schools, a leaving certificate, special training for ordinary teachers, and county secondary education committees which received lump capitation grants. Scotland's share of the money which in England was used to make elementary education free. At the turn of the century, many of the same tensions over curriculum and access were in evidence, but the campaign which favoured the English model and wished to make Scottish secondary schools "organizationally and socially distinct, and based on a classical culture" foundered against the solid belief that secondary education should be "available for all who desire to take advantage of it, modern in its outlook, and flexible in its social function". With refreshing insight, Scottish teachers argued through their journal that "the principle of merit was specious... when the rich started with so many advantages", and that "any subject could impart culture if it was properly taught". Even the Scottish Education Department, which was moving towards the creation of a distinctive secondary school system at roughly the same time that the Board of Education was shaping England's, "was prepared to deal heavy blows to the classics in order to insist on a proper teaching of science", and to give the

This paragraph is based on L.W. Evans, Studies in Welsh Education (1974), and G.E. Jones, Controls and Conflicts in Welsh Secondary Education 1889-1944 (1982). The latter takes a more nationalistic line, arguing that after its dazzling start, Welsh secondary education was subjected to "inexorable anglicisation". Wales' Chief Inspector was O.M. Edwards, who, from humble nonconformist origins had enjoyed a "glittering educational career", and who became "a maverick" at the Board of Education where his convictions ran counter to those of both the Welsh and English Permanent Secretaries, A.T. Davies and Robert Morant.
higher grade schools a proper place regulated by a progressive
national certificate scheme. Scotland's continuing
acknowledgement of the importance of 'specialised' education
meant that Lyon Playfair's earlier claim that "every Scotchman
knows it to be his own fault if he is not educated" remained
largely true; the same could certainly not be said of every
Englishman after 1902.

The Triumph of the Old

The Strength of Liberal-Romantic Values

If in other industrialised countries the upholders of the
ancient classical style of education were obliged to come to
terms with 'specialised' education, why was England different?
The answer lies in the unusually strong identification of
classical education with a leadership ethos which was
enormously powerful. By the end of the nineteenth century, a
complete system of socialisation had been constructed to
ensure a regular supply of recruits to the governing classes,
which, to borrow two words usually applied to a later period
of history, was not only totalitarian but monolithic. In
other words, it required the full submergence of participants
in its values and customs, and was both intolerant of
alternative ways of qualifying 'experts' and indifferent to
the frustrated needs of the excluded majority. The education
of the English elite had thus become by the later nineteenth
century a classic illustration of two related wisdoms:
"Educational institutions are administered by bureaucracies
which develop an interest in the status quo. The holders of
academic degrees do not like to see their certificates
devalued"; and "Any educational theory that has 'leadership'
as its object should be automatically suspect ... Any
leadership theory ... must end as an institution for
preserving the status quo".

So the enormous strength of the English liberal-romantic
cultural tradition became inextricably bound up with overtly
elitist attitudes to social class. Liberal humanistic
education had become so closely identified with the
gentlemanly ideal in Victorian England that it was impossible

1 This paragraph is drawn from R.L. Anderson, Education and
Opportunity in Victorian Scotland (1983); N. Wade, Post-
Primary Education in the Primary Schools of Scotland
(1939); and J. Strong, A History of Secondary Education
in Scotland (1909). Playfair's comment is quoted in D.A.
Reeder, Educating our Masters (1980) p 145; he also jibed
that while the Scottish universities taught a man how to
make a thousand a year, the English universities merely
taught him how to spend it - quoted in W.J. Reader,
Professional Men (1966) p 133.
2 Ringer, op.cit. p 9.
3 Worsley, op.cit. p 264.
for anyone who admired the latter to contemplate major changes in the former. Gentlemansness, it has been suggested, was "a moral and not just a social category": it had become a "sub-Christian culture..... a second religion, one less demanding than Christianity". In a changing world, it was seen as a major responsibility of an 'educated' gentleman to preserve civilised values in order to combat the evils of industrialism and materialism. Only non-utilitarian studies could sufficiently free the mind to stand apart from the turbulence of the modern world, and it came to be assumed that "the person who assumed the leadership in an industrial and democratic society had to be prepared to take a stand against the wishes of the majority." This was the meaning of the phrase 'a man of character' . The fundamental anti-industrialism which the liberal-romantic ideal had always contained was thus assuming a new guise, becoming a positive virtue with a moral justification based on an agreed perception of the best interests of a civilised nation. And it has persisted well into this century; the Hadow Report, for example, said that "industrialism has its grave effects on national life... it may, unless it is corrected, infect the minds of men with the genius of its own life. Education can correct industrialism".

The Victorian version of the liberal-romantic tradition, having decided that industrialism had no place within it, then readily lent itself to looking back rather than forward, and to emphasising the seeming antiquity and unchanging continuity of the values it espoused. Educational institutions would play a key part in promoting this interpretation, and the temptation "to concentrate on the successes rather than the apparent failures of history, success being measured usually by sheer survival" has been with us ever since. Because many schools and Oxbridge colleges were endowed centuries ago, and are still in existence, there is a tendency to exaggerate the unwavering strength of the educational tradition they embody. This preoccupation with the past has, it is suggested, "lowered the temperature of society", and in so doing, "drained prestige from innovation to preservation, from novelty to antiquity, and from change to continuity". Certainly, school histories generally underplay periods when the masters were incompetent or absentee, the curriculum

1 Gilmour, op.cit. p 3.
3 Rothblatt, op.cit. p 135. In typically trenchant style, R.H. Tawney in Equality (1931) p 37, said the gentlemanly ideal had England's leaders "by the throat; they frisk politely into obsolescence on the playing-fields of Eton. It is all very characteristic, and traditional, and picturesque. But it is neither good business nor good manners. It is out of tune with the realities of today".
narrowed to the classics, the pupils down to a handful, and
the governors dead, or as good as; it has in fact been only
since 1902 that grammar schools as a whole have enjoyed the
success and prestige which their admirers tend to present as a
timeless characteristic.

A further characteristic which was enlivened within the
English liberal-romantic tradition towards the end of the
nineteenth century was its attachment to established religion.
A powerful surge of High Church fervour gave the Church of
England a new missionary zeal against the alleged atheism of
school board education. Well-organised and vociferous, it
aimed at nothing less than the "ultimate extension of the
denominational school throughout the whole of England", and
found extremely useful allies among the influential Cecil
family and in Robert Morant4. To the latter, the religious
issue was the ideal way to "get up steam" against the school
boards. It not only ensured Conservative support for their
abolition, but also made it possible to extend into the higher
grade schools a version of the religiosity of the public
schools, with their "strong emphasis on the episcopal nature
of the headmaster and a quasi-religious emphasis in school
assemblies and speech days". All historians of 'popular'
education agree that most parents were indifferent to the
religious and moral instruction their children received at
school, provided neither was too intrusive; they "were
tolerated as necessary evils only to be accepted if the
secular and vocational education accompanying them were
considered worthwhile"5. The establishment elite therefore
effected a reversal of the growing secularisation of public
education, which, like many of their early twentieth century
changes, has proved to have a surprisingly enduring quality.

Democracy in Retreat

As important to the future of education as the liberal-
romantic values outlined above - anti-industrial, backward-
looking and firmly attached to a religious, gentlemanly
interpretation of England's leadership needs - were the anti-
democratic attitudes of leading members of the government.
The contention was advanced towards the end of Chapter 1 that
several of them adhered to an extremely old-fashioned and
elitist Conservative philosophy. Under the governments which
held office between 1895 and 1905, the liberal-romantic
interpretation of culture, always essentially an elitist one,
was married to powerful anti-democratic forces at the highest

4 A. Rogers, 'Churches and Children - A Study in the
Controversy over the 1902 Education Act' in BJES Vol VIII
5 E. Halevy in Imperialism and
the Rise of Labour (1926) pp 183-9 presented a
fascinating picture of the growth of ritualism and anglo-
catholicism - in some very high places - at this time.
6 T. Taylor, 'The Cecils and the Cockerton Case: High
Politics and Low Intentions' in HESB No 37 (Sept 1984) p.
42.
levels of politics and the administration. Their sense of the
ingenuity of their cause was enhanced by the conviction
that the rising new forces in education, coinciding as they
did with extensions in the franchise, the growth of socialism
and a period of turbulent labour relations, were dangerously
out of control. The whole social order - even civilisation
itself - was thought to be under threat, and the guardians of
civilisation, the old boys of the traditional public
school/Oxbridge education, began to feel that only firm action
could avert the disaster.

There was an obvious target, for an important part of
education, in which the preservation of social order and of
civilisation were entrusted, was in the hands of what have
been described as "the most democratic organs of local
administration of the century"1. There are a number of clues
which point to a fairly sophisticated understanding among
ordinary people of the implications of abolishing the
directly-elected school boards. They were definitely seen as
an important organ of democracy, not just as a political
slogan, but in the popular involvement which they made
possible. To cite just a few of many examples, the "intensity
... of working men's attachment to the school boards" in the
London context has been commented upon2, and Mundella believed
that the enormous progress in education before 1902 was
because the school boards "had behind them the driving force
of a compelling and approving democracy"3. The NUT
Conference, in a farewell tribute to the school boards in
April 1903, affirmed its belief that they had "done more in a
shorter time for a larger number of people than any other
authority in the world"4, and looking back on that time some
twenty-five years later, Selby-Bigge believed that it was the
school boards which had "created a local public spirit in
education"5. It is not surprising that a number of cities
recorded hostility to the incorporation of the co-optative
principle into the new local educational administration, and
that there was an unusually strong anti-government vote in
municipal and parliamentary by-elections, culminating in
overwhelming defeat for the Conservatives in the next general
election. That the nation's leaders should have chosen to
curtail what had become accepted as popular rights in the
field of education can only be construed as a wilful disregard
of rising democratic sentiment.

The combination of aristocratic and 'county' Conservatives,
high-church Anglicans and panicking endowed school
headteachers which came into being in the latter part of the

1 J. Lawson & H. Silver, A Social History of Education in
England (1973) p 314. They also said that as the "most
advanced model of democratic control available in British
society", the school boards had unique potential for
generating social change (p 352).
2 By E.J.T. Brennan, ed., Education for National
Efficiency: the Contribution of Sidney and Beatrice Webb
3 Written in 1902 and quoted by Lawson & Silver, op.cit. p
370. This was the nephew of the more famous Mundella.
4 The School Government Chronicle 18 Apr 1903.
Attitudes of this kind were reinforced by the fact that the new style of education was unmistakably an urban phenomenon. As discussed earlier, the metropolitan elite had always felt the greatest unease about England's industrial cities, but it seems they became really alarmed when the higher grade school movement began to spread beyond its original locations in the North and Midlands. From the very end of the 1880s, higher grade schools were taking root in non-industrial cities - Brighton, Bristol, Plymouth, Norwich, and even London, Oxford and Cambridge. This constituted a new challenge, no longer confined to areas which the metropolitan elite customarily regarded as unfamiliar territory; the 'new' education was not just a feature of industrial life but an expression of urban democracy. And as things stood, there was very little the elite could do to control the development; higher grade schools were simply not susceptible to the influence of the liberal-romantic tradition. Financed by the Science and Art Department and managed by local bodies which seemed to show scant regard for metropolitan values, they were setting their own goals and fitting into place as part of a complete and self-contained alternative system of education.

Proof of the divergence in attitudes between the centre and the provinces was furnished by the very determined campaigns put up by a number of local authorities against the metropolitan model of secondary education. Somewhat unexpectedly, a number of them - mostly but not exclusively urban ones - proved to be firmly in the tradition of the school boards, committed above all to that large part of the population unable to pay for the privilege of secondary education. There can be no other possible explanation for them struggling to keep their schools cheaper and less 'prestigious' than the Board of Education wanted them to be. The higher grade schools and associated institutions were providing an important focus of urban aspirations, and not just for the working and lower middle classes to whom they were of most direct benefit. They had been created and

2 T.W. Bamford, Rise of the Public Schools (1967) p 262.
nurtured by school boards composed of members of the urban elite drawn from higher social classes than those who used the schools, who had come to feel a strong protective pride in their work. It became clear very soon after 1902 that, as a vehicle for the exercise of local authority power, the endowed schools were not going to be permitted in any way to replace the higher grade schools. By vesting control in largely co-opted governing bodies answerable to the central authority, the non-local character of their loyalties and traditions was strengthened. All the local enthusiasm and experience which had been built up in the management of the higher grade schools had to be concentrated on the municipal secondary schools, which thus became the setting for the battle between a whole range of deep-seated conflicting attitudes.

But it was always an unequal struggle, for the governing elite had the ultimate weapon. Since the higher grade ‘realistic’ style of education, however flourishing, could never be financially self-supporting, it was ultimately at the mercy of those who controlled state expenditure on education. The seemingly obvious point that the nature of secondary education would be decided by whoever won control of its administration is of great significance. If more power had been left in the hands of the local authorities, either by statutory regulation or by a system of block grants from the centre, the future of the higher grade school movement - and of secondary education in general - would have been very different. It seems that the spending of money on education has never come easily to councils or governments, and at the beginning of the century both were under pressure, the former because of their customary accountability to the ratepayers and the latter because of the constant scrutiny of the Treasury. However, without attempting to analyse balance sheets and financial statistics, one is tempted to think that if Morant had happened to believe in policies which required larger government funding, he would have manipulated the Treasury just as effectively as he did the Chancellor of the Exchequer and other senior politicians. He chose to concentrate on

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1 Extremely unconvincing is the interpretation in Q. Banks, *Parity and Prestige in English Secondary Education* (1955) p.62, that the Board’s attempts to raise standards were "blocked by the local authorities, who had their own plans for the development of secondary education", and who failed to "meet the demand for secondary education".

2 R. Lowe, ‘Robert Morant and the 1904 Regulations for Secondary Schools’ in JEAH Vol.16 No.1 (Jan 1984) presents evidence of the Treasury’s pressure on the Board of Education, particularly in relation to grants to schools specialising in science.

3 Note E.J.R. Eaglesham’s comment concerning "the foremost statesmen of the day ... On educational issues not one of them could match Morant: Balfour, Hicks-Beach [Chancellor of the Exchequer] and Chamberlain had all to bow the knee to his ruthless tenacity in argument", in ‘The Centenary of Sir Robert Morant’ in BJES Vol. XII No.1 (Nov 1963) p. 6. In the same article (pp 10-1) he described Morant’s victory over the Treasury in 1907 as a "policy of beating up the Treasury representative in argument ... with a series of sledgehammer blows".
creating a relatively small number of well-endowed secondary institutions, and constantly complained about the parsimony of local authorities which were in fact trying to spread their resources more widely and more equitably. In any case, the assertion by the wartime President of the Board, Fisher, that if England "really wants a good system of education, this country ... is perfectly rich enough to pay for it"¹, has the ring of truth; to believe otherwise is to accept the rationale not infrequently advanced by privileged groups when explaining why the rest of the population cannot share their advantages.

Conclusion - A Lost Opportunity

It would, of course, be wrong to overestimate the transformation which the higher grade school movement could have effected had it been allowed to continue its development. But it was tailor-made for the lower middle and working classes (without being unsuitable for the better-off), and it seems certain that increasing numbers of them would have been attracted to its possibilities. Clever children like Walter Southgate, or his friend who had to forego a scholarship at the Parminter's Foundation School because his sister was already on a secondary school scholarship, could have learnt a wider variety of subjects, and gained some marketable qualifications. Others, like Mark Grossok, could have taken their education further without tackling a new hostile world, and alienating themselves from their friends and neighbourhoods. Higher grade schools emphasised by their very existence the notion that extending one's education was a normal thing for ordinary children to do. As a result of their abolition, the school life of the majority of children was stunted in scope, in potential and in status, and a very clear message was thereby conveyed about the role that such children were expected to play in society.

There was every likelihood too that a fair proportion of endowed grammar schools would have moved closer to that style of education, especially when public funding became more widely available. Instead, they were 'rescued' from having to adapt and get up to date, and with relatively few changes to their curriculum, teaching style, ethos, clientele or independence, were elevated to a position of unprecedented status and influence. All over the country, schools which in the 1890s had begun to come to terms with science subjects, scholarship pupils and local authority involvement, together with schools which had shown something of "a collective deathwish"² by resisting all those things, suddenly found that in the 1900s they were the backbone of the new system. They were, it is true, given the potential to become more competent by virtue of the terms of their recognition, but given the

² Brennan, op.cit. p 33.
moribund state some of them were in by about 1900, that really
is not saying much. Essentially they were given a firm
helping hand to put the recent bad times behind them, and
return to former, if often imagined, glories. Henceforth they
were to be evaluated primarily by people who were
instinctively sympathetic to their continued existence, and
the problem of persuading customers to come through the doors
was solved by the removal of any competing forms of education.
The more progressive tradition which gave status to 'modern'
subjects and made them available to any member of the school
population, was thereby subordinated to the tradition which
still held the winning of an Oxbridge scholarship, preferably
in classics, to be the ultimate intellectual and cultural
achievement. It was a remarkable transformation and a
remarkable victory for the liberal-romantic tradition.

It has proved to be all the more noteworthy by its durability.
The strength of the grammar school tradition has made it
impossible for a 'specialised' or 'realistic' style of
education to compete. It has resurfaced at various times
during the course of this century - as central schools, junior
technical schools, secondary moderns, polytechnics, and in its
latest guise, as TVEI - but always in an inferior role,
measured against the high status institutions and formally
circumscribed so as not to present any real challenge to them.
The prestige which adheres to the elitist liberal tradition
in education\(^1\), by virtue of its continued access to high
status occupations and consequently the special favours it
receives from the country's most influential people, is
apparently unassailable. Because it has no real rivals, that
tradition is able to assimilate new ideas and approaches which
are advantageous to it, and aspiring parents have no choice
but to accept the conditions as the sole way of satisfying
their ambitions; indeed, anything else is seen as an attempt
to rob them of opportunities. Clarke believed that the great
strength of England's classical educational tradition was that
while claiming to be interested exclusively in 'culture', it
in fact always compromised with 'specialised' education in
order to ensure sufficient competence in its products, the
future elite, to prevent it from becoming anachronistic.
Around the turn of the century, he suggested, the 'cultural'
and the 'specialised' were "re-welded", as the old tradition
"re-assimilated to the needs and conditions of a complex
industrial and imperial society", creating in the process a
new breed of middle class 'experts' (like Robert Morant) to
assist the gentlemen amateurs, having first trained them in
the same cultural tradition\(^2\).

But it is questionable whether the adaptation to modern
conditions was more than superficial; the anxieties and
condemnations quoted at the beginning of this Conclusion
suggest that it was not. It can still be said that England
has never developed "a philosophical attitude" towards
science, and that technological studies have tended to be
"tolerated, but not assimilated" in universities, reaching
their highest standards only in less prestigious

\(^1\) More acceptably labelled 'selective' and 'general' during
the course of this century.

\(^2\) Clarke, op.cit. pp 23-5.
Much the same can be said of studies with a fairly explicit vocational intention. Meanwhile, educationists continue to be perplexed by the number of teenagers who see education as an irrelevance or an enemy, even now that superficially equal opportunities are available to all. Whilst there has been an understandable reluctance to build early vocational choices into compulsory schooling, a system which certificated children late in their school careers and affords status only to the minority who complete the whole extended process, is of dubious value to the majority. The apparent merits of a 'general education' act as a smokescreen for the fact that the state education system has been so styled as to exclude most children from its successful accomplishment.

Morant and his colleagues set that trend by destroying the valid and popular version of general education which existed in the higher grade schools. In ignoring other possibilities and alternative models, they ably helped the social class which they represented to retain both its privileged position and its most important means of self-perpetuation. This also served to deflect any chance of a social and cultural revolution from below through the medium of the education system, and to minimise the contribution of education to the modernisation of attitudes to science and technology. How well they did their work is typified by a short item in a local newspaper in 1986: "The trustees of Oakham School have marked the current Industry Year by establishing an annual industrial and business scholarship. The first holder of the award ... is studying Latin, Greek and business studies at A-level. He hopes to go on to Oxford University".

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1. Ashby, E., "As it was" in Technology and the Universities (1958) pp 30, 66.
APPENDIX 1 - THE EXTENT OF THE HIGHER GRADE MOVEMENT
APPENDIX 2 - THE HIGHER GRADE MOVEMENT AFTER 1902
APPENDIX 3 - OCCUPATIONAL ANALYSIS
APPENDIX 4 - INFORMATION RELATING TO TEACHING STAFFS
APPENDIX 1 — THE EXTENT OF THE HIGHER GRADE MOVEMENT

It had been intended to produce a definitive list of higher grade schools — to identify the 65 mentioned by Bryce in 1895, or the 70 of the NUT in 1900. Early attempts to do this showed that it was not a fruitful exercise because:

1. The schools were part of a larger movement to extend the public provision of post-elementary education nationwide. They were the most important element in it, but local circumstances sometimes favoured the development of the same opportunities under different guises. London, for example, preferred higher grade 'departments' within its elementary schools, plus large pupil teacher centres; Liverpool was similar and also had an unusually large number of Roman Catholic schools; in several cities, day schools attached to technical colleges functioned as part of the general post-elementary provision. To exclude all of those alternatives would not give an accurate overall picture of 'higher grade' opportunities.

2. The higher grade movement had become such a dynamic one during the 1890s that no single date can be taken to identify its extent. Being firmly rooted in the public elementary school system, the demand was deliberately allowed to evolve naturally, and so in a number of cities ordinary elementary schools were earmarked for development but were not yet known as 'higher grade schools'. When the movement came under attack, several areas were on the point of opening long-planned higher grade departments, but were never officially permitted to call them by the name though they were clearly fulfilling that function.

The most accurate list would come from the almost impossible task of looking beyond the names and official statistics of several hundred possible institutions, to ascertain whether each locality thought that it had higher grade education. Failing that, the best guide is to be found in the volumes listing the daytime examination entries of the Science and Art Department, on the assumption that no institution within the higher grade movement could afford not to take the Department's examinations. The records for the years 1898-1900 have been used to produce the following list, which is designed to show the geographical and numerical extent of the higher grade movement. The figures may perhaps be distorted in very minor ways — possibly a small proportion of children in higher grade schools not recorded by the Science and Art Department but taking other examinations; the relatively small number of children sponsored by local authorities in endowed schools; and the possible (but unlikely) presence in technical schools of fee-paying adults.

Excluded are: (1) institutions offering less than 10 candidates for science examinations, which are taken to be too small to be significant; (2) institutions entering candidates only for art examinations, which are presumed to be exclusively art schools; (3) institutions which, as far as can be checked from other sources, were not primarily supported by public funds — endowed, private and proprietary schools. They are not regarded as part of the higher grade movement because they were not new foundations and were not freely accessible to all children regardless of financial means.
Figures in brackets indicate the maximum number of pupils in any one year between 1898 and 1900 entered for Science and Art Department examinations - hence (48,27) means 48 for science and 27 for art.

* indicates organised schools of science.

@ indicates the 73 institutions which are believed to have been perceived as fully-fledged higher grade schools (large and of relatively long establishment) by contemporaries such as the Bryce Commission. As this list shows, they in fact constituted quite a small, if important, part of the wider higher grade movement.

Bedfordshire:

@Luton - Higher Grade Board School (51,50)

Berkshire:

Reading - School of Science and Art (148,62)

Buckinghamshire:

Cambridgeshire:

@Cambridge - Higher Grade Girls' School (79,71)
@.......... - Higher Grade Boys' School (60,-)
Wisbech - School of Science and Technology (31,73)

Cheshire:

Altrincham - British School (56,56)
Birkenhead - Woodlands Board School (158,143)
.......... - Claughton Higher Grade School (69,69)
Cheadle Hulme - Orphan School (96,177)
*Chester - School of Science and Art/Technical Day School (64,40)
Crewe - Municipal School of Art and Technical Institute (10,60)
Holmes Chapel - Agricultural and Horticultural School (43,43)
Hyde - Borough Technical School & Free Library (22,17)
Macclesfield - School of Science and Art (35,36)
Northwich - High School for Girls (14,46)
*Runcorn - Technical Institute (84,7)
Stalybridge - Mechanics' Institute (55,51)
Stockport - Wesleyan Higher Grade School (39,39)
*.......... - School of Science & Art, Technical School (110,25)
*Winsford Verdin - Technical School (52,14)
Cornwall:

Bodmin - Free Library (12,15)
Camborne - School of Science and Art (143,45)
Launceston - Temperance Institute (10,53)
Penzance - Mining School/School of Science and Art (43,23)
Redruth - School of Mines/School of Science and Art (45,15)
Truro - School of Science and Art/Central Technical School (35,16)

Cumberland:

Carlisle - School of Science and Art (66,122)
Maryport - National School, Higher Grade Dept (23,22)
*Workington - Wilson Higher Standard School/Technical Classes (134,20)

Derbyshire:

Chesterfield - Doe Lane Board School (11,-)
Clay Cross - Higher Grade and Technical School (180,80)
*Derby - Higher Grade Board School, Gerard Street (334,29)
...... - Central School of Science and Art, Municipal Technical College (126,142)
...... - St James' Higher Grade Boys' School (82,80)
...... - St James' Higher Grade Girls' School (16,-)
*Heanor - District Technical School (101,-)
Long Eaton - Board School (37,37)
Matlock - Technical Class Rooms (44,46)
*New Mills - Board Schools (70,-)

Devonshire:

Barnstaple - School of Science and Art (37,93)
Bovey Tracey - Higher Grade Board School (42,-)
.......... - Central Classes for Pupil Teachers (-,69)
.......... - School of Science & Art, Municipal Technical Schools (64,78)
Exeter - School of Science and Art, Technical and University Extension College (63,20)
Plymouth - School of Science and Art & Technical School (86,166)
*........ - Higher Grade Board School (182,85)
Stonehouse - Board School (24,264)
Tiverton - School of Science and Art/Technical School (72,80)

Dorsetshire:

Parkstone - Branch School of Science & Art, the Institute (19,21)
Poole - School of Science and Art (23,35)
Sherborne - Technical School (34,27)
Durham:

Darlington - Science, Art and Technical College (21,40)
@ Gateshead - Higher Grade School (323,165)
@ Jarrow-on-Tyne - Higher Grade Board School (221, -)
@ South Shields - Higher Grade Board School (334,51)

Gateshead - Board School, Stanhope Road (53,53)
@ St John’s Higher Grade School (50, -)
@Stockton-on-Tees - Higher Grade Board School (139, -)
@ Sunderland - Bede Higher Grade Board School (264, -)

Hudson Road Board School (157,156)

School of Science and Art (171,90)

Essex:

Buckhurst Hill - Prince’s Rd Boys’ Board School (23,14)
Colchester - Albert School of Science and Art (107,214)
Harwich - Esplanade Board School (57, -)

Leyton - Technical Institute & School of Science and Art
(149,35)
@ Southend -Technical School (138,25)

Stratford - Russell Road Board School (132,180)

Walthamstow - Technical School, School of Science & Art
(148,46)

Pupil Teacher Centre (92,90)

West Ham - Pupil Teacher Centre (142,91)

Gloucestershire:

Bristol - Castle Board School (134, -) [possibly the

Pupil Teachers’ Centre ( -170) ] same students?
@ Higher Grade and Technical School and Pupil

Teacher Centre, St George (199,50)
@ Higher Grade School, Fairfield Road (111,109)

School of Science and Art (14,85)

Cheltenham - Christ Church Higher Grade National School
(31,44)

Gloucester - School of Science & Art, Municipal Schools
(207,266)

Stroud - Board School (13,62)

Hampshire:

Basingstoke - Board School, Fairfields (32,42)
Bournemouth - School of Science & Art & Technical School
(15,47)

School of Science and Art, People’s

Institute (139,146)

Gosport - Technical Institute (40,33)

Newport (Isle of Wight) - National School (158,159)

Petersfield - St Peter’s Road Board School (10,10)
@ Portsmouth - Higher Grade Board School (366,68)

Municipal Technical Institute & Board School
(21,-)
Hampshire (cont):
Southampton - School of Science and Art (200,200)
........... - Technical Board School (77,183)
Winchester - School of Science and Art (17,99)

Herefordshire:

Leominster - Technical Institute, Free Library (14,12)

Hertfordshire:

St Albans - School of Science and Art (66,72)

Huntingdonshire:

Huntingdon - All Saints' Parish Room (30,47)

Kent:

Beckenham - Alexandra Schools (30,21)
Bromley - School of Science and Art (32,32)
Canterbury - School of Science and Art (18,72)
........... - Cookery School (21,-)
Dartford - Ironworks Room (56,-)
Dover - Municipal School of Science and Art (96,182)
Folkestone - School of Science & Art, Technical School (95,80)
*Gravesend - Municipal Technical School (82,39)
Ramsgate - Borough Technical Schools (12,29)

Lancashire:

*Accrington - Municipal Technical School (150,135)
Ashton-under-Lyne - School of Science & Art, Municipal Technical School (27,22)
Atherton - Science School and Art Class (13,13)
*Barrow-in-Furness - Higher Grade School (231,67)
(Blackpool - Pupil Teacher Centre opened by 1st School Board, 1899)
*Blackburn - Higher Grade School, Darwen Street (68,68)
........... - Public Higher Grade School (Boys'), Preston New Road (89,-)
........... - Public Higher Grade School (Girls'), New Park Street (28,29)
........... - Public Higher Grade School (Boys'), Montague Street (48,-)
........... - Municipal Technical School (71,70)
........... - Pupil Teachers' School (110,176)
*Bolton - Central Higher Grade Board School (359,75)
........... - Textile and Engineering School (45,13)
*Burnley - Higher Grade School Board Classes, Mechanics' Institute (117,118)
Chorley - Science, Art and Technical School (10,-)
Colne - Town Hall & Technical Room (10,16)
*Darwen - Higher Grade School (73,6)
Leigh - Technical School (162,171)

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Lancashire (cont):

Liverpool - Board School, Clint Road (56,56)
            - Board School, Stanley Road (14,15)
            - Board School, Steers Street (246,242)
            - Board School, Upper Park Street (62,21)
            - Pupil Teachers' College, Shaw St (260,321)
            - Board School, Pleasant Street (126,161)
            - Board School, Brae Street (231,-)
            - Board School, Daisy Street (26,5)
            - Board School, Beaufort Street (21,21)
            - Board School, Ashfield Street (21,-)
            - Board School, Heyworth Street (45,-)
            - Manual Instruction Centre (38,-)
            - Higher Grade Board School, Arnot St (107,95)
            - Pupil Teachers' College, Mt Pleasant (50,56)
            - Pupil Teachers' College, Clarence St (740,723)
            - St Margaret's Higher Grade School (50,51)
            - Rathbone Board School (59,-)
            - Sefton Park Board School (69,68)
            - Pupil Teacher College, Everton Valley (65,124)
            - Lecture Hall (186,-)
Manchester - Municipal Technical School (197,50)
            - Municipal School of Science & Art, Cavendish Street (113,949)
            - School of Science and Art, Long Milligate (955,974)
            - St Margaret's Higher Grade Schools (119,-)
            - School of Domestic Economy (27,-)
            - Central Higher Grade Board School (419,-)
            - Waterloo Road Board School (50,-)
            - Pupil Teachers' Classes, Stretford Road (320,-)
            - St Matthew's Higher Grade Board School, Ardwick (168,-)
            - Pupil Teachers' Centre, Roby Street (338,-)
            - Board School, Birley Street (96,-)
            - Board School, Ducie Avenue (156,-)
            - Higher Grade Board School, Cheetham (157,-)
            - Nelson - Day Technical School (146,36)
            - Oldham - Waterloo Board School (179,-)
            - School Board Offices (?Pupil Teachers) (150,-)
            - Patricraft - Higher Grade British School (48,148)
            - Pendleton - Higher Grade Board School (70,70)
            - Preston - School of Science and Art, Technical School (70,74)
            - Rochdale - Municipal Technical School (123,-)
            - Central Board School (151,-)
            - Salford - School of Science and Art, Royal Technical Institute (81,76)
            - Grecian Street Board School (89,-)
            - Central Higher Grade School (115,-)
            - Pupil Teacher Centre (244,217)
            - Ulverston - Technical School (49,-)
            - Urmston - Higher Grade School (98,-)
            - Warrington - Pupil Teachers' Centre Classes (120,115)
            - Widnes - Simms Cross Board School (33,60)
            - Higher Grade School (224,-)
            - Wigan - Pupil Teachers' Central Classes, Meres Street (34,238)
            - College of Pupil Teachers, Standishgate (70,74)
Leicestershire:

Leicester—School of Science and Art, Hastings Street (75,486)
..........—School of Science and Art, High Street (45,149)
..........—Board School, Oxford Street (127,81)
..........—Board School, Melbourne Road (64,58)
Loughborough—Ashby Road School (45, -)

Lincolnshire:

Boston—Park Board School (89,35)
Grantham—Technical Institute (54,75)
*Great Grimsby—Wintringham Higher Grade Board School (306, -)
*Lincoln—School of Science and Art (189,295)
Louth—Municipal Technical School (24,22)
Spalding—Christian Association Lecture Hall (96,93)

London:

Battersea—Pupil Teachers’ School, Lavender Hill (189,250)
..........—(Voluntary) Pupil Teacher Centre (111,114)
..........—Surrey Lane Board School (63,62)
..........—Lavender Hill Board School (41,62)
..........—Honeywell Road Board School (51,0)
Bermondsey—Southwark Pupil Teachers’ School (186,186)
..........—Monnow Road Board School (51,31)
..........—Rotherhithe New Road Board School (29,32)
..........—Keeton’s Road Board School (50,38)
Bethnal Green—Mowlem Street Board School (11,11)
..........—Mansford Street Higher Grade Board School (75,67)
Camberwell—Peckham Rd Pupil Teachers’ School (276,304)
..........—Beillenden Road Board School (100,115)
..........—Coills Road Board School (124,42)
..........—Goodrick Road Board School (70,68)
..........—Crawford Street Board School (169,129)
Chelsea—Ashburnham Board School (45,47)
..........—Droop Street Board School (20,16)
..........—Kilburn Lane Board School (72,72)
..........—Beethoven Street Board School (90,93)
Clapham—School of Science and Art (10,64)
..........—Haselrigge Road Board School (84,84)
Clerkenwell—Finsbury Pupil Teachers’ School (156,340)
Finsbury—Hugh Middleton Board School (66,39)
Deptford—Pupil Teachers’ School (281,283)
..........—Monson Road Board School (33,33)
..........—Lewisham, Mantle Road Board School (100,94)
Fulham—Chelsea Pupil Teachers School (268,224)
..........—Sherbrooke Road Board School (162,172)
..........—William Street Higher Standard Board School (100,106)
*Greenwich—Blackheath Road Higher Grade Board School (153,41)
London (cont):

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Coordinates</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Hackney</td>
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<td>Millfields Road Board School</td>
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<td>Hampstead</td>
<td>Fleet Road Board School</td>
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<td>Kensington</td>
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<td>Lambeth</td>
<td>St John's School</td>
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<td>School of Art</td>
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<td>South Lambeth Road Board School</td>
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<td>Hackford Road Board School</td>
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<td>Limehouse</td>
<td>Thomas Street Board School</td>
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<td>Central Higher Grade Technical School</td>
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<td>Penrose Street Board School</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Beresford Street Board School</td>
<td>(102,33)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Plumstead</td>
<td>Woolwich Pupil Teachers' School</td>
<td>(184,206)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Bloomfield Road Higher Grade Board School</td>
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<td>Rotherhithe</td>
<td>Rotherhithe New Road Board School</td>
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<td>St Pancras</td>
<td>Pupil Teachers' School</td>
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<td>Medburn Street Board School</td>
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<td>Burghley Road Board School</td>
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<td>Shoreditch</td>
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<td>Southwark</td>
<td>West Square Higher Grade Board School</td>
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<td>Stepney</td>
<td>East London Technical College, People's Palace</td>
<td>(509,53)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pupil Teachers' School, Trafalgar Sq</td>
<td>(200,250)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Pupil Teachers' School, Essex Street</td>
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<td>Rutland Street Board School</td>
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<td>Portman Place Board School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stoke Newington</td>
<td>Oldfield Road Board School</td>
<td>(129,129)</td>
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Middlesex:

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<tr>
<td>Finchley</td>
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<tr>
<td>Harrow</td>
<td>Greenhill &amp; St Ann's Road Board School</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hornsey</td>
<td>Harringay Board School</td>
<td>(56,3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Isleworth</td>
<td>Upper School, Woodlands Road</td>
<td>(25,-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tottenham</td>
<td>Bruce Grove School</td>
<td>(209,117)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Norfolk:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>School Name</th>
<th>Coordinates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Great Yarmouth</td>
<td>School of Science and Art</td>
<td>(20,121)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King's Lynn</td>
<td>Technical School</td>
<td>(78,16)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norwich</td>
<td>Higher Grade Board School, Duke St</td>
<td>(296,173)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Board School, Angel Road</td>
<td>(86,-)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pupil Teachers' Centre Board School</td>
<td>(119,-)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Northamptonshire:

Northampton - School of Science and Art Technical School (225,116)
Wellingborough - Technical Institute (57,41)
............. - Pupil Teachers' Centre (27,28)

Northumberland:

*Blyth - Higher Grade School (98,–)
Newcastle-on-Tyne - Mechanics' Institute (53,33)
............. - Pupil Teachers' Centre (184,44)

Nottinghamshire:

Newark - School of Science and Art, Mechanics' Institute
+ branch school at Bailey's Rooms (12,60)
Nottingham - School of Science and Art (17,120)
*............. - Higher Grade Board School, Queen's Walk (180,–)
............. - Higher Grade Board School, Clarendon Street (126,–)
*............. - Higher Grade Board School, High Pavement (180,–)
............. - Higher Grade Board School, Huntingdon Street (54,54)
............. - All Saints' Higher Grade School (22,22)
............. - West Bridgford Higher Grade Board School (49,48)
*............. - People's College Higher Grade Boys' Board School, College Street (338,33)
............. - People's College Higher Grade Girls' Board School, Ropewalk (196,196)
*............. - Mundella Higher Grade Board School (221,44)
............. - Account St Pupil Teachers' School (110,–)

Oxfordshire:

*Banbury - Municipal School (66,–)
*Oxford - City Technical School (70,74)
........ - City Science/Higher Grade School (46,35)
*Witney - New Science Buildings (65,0)

Rutland:


Shropshire:

Bridgnorth - Literary Institute (12,41)
Wellington - Constitution Hill National School (36,–)
Somerset:

* Bath - Central Technical Schools (223,203)  
  Shepton Mallett - Technical Building (32,-)  
  Weston-super-Mare - School of Science and Art (43,46)  
  Yeovil - Reckleford Board School (11,13)  
  ........ - Kingston School (59,104)

Staffordshire:

Bilston - Technical School (12,26)  
  Burton-on-Trent - Higher Grade Board School (261,257)  
  Handsworth - School of Science and Art/Technical School (25,26)  
  Hanley - Higher Grade Board School (305,-)  
  Leek - School of Science and Art (40,43)  
  Stafford - School of Science and Art/Technical School (38,95)  
  Tamworth - Board School, Marmion Street (79,-)  
  Walsall - Technical Day School (162,-)  
  West Bromwich - School of Science and Art, The Institute (15,83)  
  Wolverhampton - Higher Grade Board School (235,-)  
  ........... - Pupil Teachers' Centre (155,171)

Suffolk:

Beccles - Federation Board Schools (44,-)  
  Bungay - Board School (22,26)  
  Bury St Edmunds - Guildhall Class Room (13,62)  
  Eye - Council Chambers (10,13)  
  Ipswich - Higher Grade Board School (79,79)  
  Leiston - Works Hall (35,-)  
  Lowestoft - School of Science and Art/Technical School (11,98)

Surrey:

Croydon - Pupil Teachers' Centre, Board School (111,111)  
  Farnham - School of Science and Art (18,55)  
  Godalming - School of Science & Art, Technical Institute (11,38)  
  Richmond - School of Science and Art (19,91)  
  ........ - County School (96,-)  
  Sutton - County School (41,11)  
  Wallington - County School for Girls (12,-)  
  Wimbledon - Technical School for Girls (69,68)

Sussex:

Brighton - School of Science & Art & Technology (69,146)  
  ........ - Municipal School of Science and Technology (163,278)  
  ........ - Higher Grade Board School (516,184)  
  ........ - Church Schools' Pupil Teachers' Centre (21,61)  
  Eastbourne - Municipal School, New Class Rooms (44,51)  
  Hastings - Priory Road Board School (23,110)  
  ........ - Tower Road Board School (10,63)  
  332
Warwickshire:

Aston - Aston Manor Technical School (135,177)
@* - Albert Road Board School (56,59)
@* - Birmingham - 7th Standard School, Waverley Road (236,-)
@* - George Dikon Higher Grade Board School (154,-)
* - Municipal Technical School (237,-)
* - Municipal School of Science & Art (29,840)
Leamington - School of Science and Art, Technical School (14,81)
Rugby - Wood Institute (17,65)

Westmoreland:

Kendal - School of Science and Art (58,6)

Wiltshire:

Bradford-on-Avon - Technical Institute (74,31)
Calne - New Technical School (33,84)
Chippenham - Jubilee Institute & Technical School (89,77)
Devizes - School of Science and Art 11,23)
Malmesbury - Council Chambers (25,25)
Marlborough - Technical Institute Class Room (18,26)
Salisbury - School of Science and Art (66,21)
* - Swindon & North Wiltshire - Technical School (119,15)
Trowbridge - Textile/Secondary School (42,42)
Warminster - Science and Art Classes/Technical School (36,35)
Westbury - Technical School (27,38)
Wilton - Town Hall (16,-)

Worcestershire:

Bromsgrove - School of Science and Art (26,130)
Dudley - School of Science and Art (20,13)
Kidderminster - School of Science and Art (43,139)
Redditch - School of Science and Art (17,10)
* - Worcester - School of Science & Art, Victoria Institute (93,129)

Yorkshire:

Barnsley - Central Higher Grade School (was definitely functioning as such, but does not appear on lists)
@* - Batley - Higher Grade Girls' School (32,33)
@* - Bradford - Board School, Carlton Street (85,85)
* - Junior Teachers' Centre Classes (210,214)
* - Hanson Higher Grade School (241,-)
* - Belle Vue Board School (378,-)
* - Technical College (112,86)
Bingley - Higher Grade School (26,29)
Doncaster - School of Science and Art (22,22)
* - Halifax - Higher Board School, Prescott Street (298,-)
* - Higher Board School & Pupil Teachers' Centre Classes, Oxford Road (30,57)
Yorkshire (cont):

Harrogate - School of Science and Art (12,67)
*Hebden Bridge - Central Board School (63,36)
*Heckmondwike - Higher Board School (188,27)
Holmfirth - Technical Institute (26,-)
*Huddersfield - School of Science and Art/Technical School (257,249)

*........... - College Higher Grade School (346,93)
*Hull - Boulevard Higher Grade Board School (254,173)
*.... - Higher Grade Board School, Craven Street (177,-)
.... - Navigation School (121,-)
.... - Municipal Technical School (173,-)
*.... - Central Higher Grade School, Brunswick Ave (306,-)
*Keighley - Technical Institute (136,-)
........ - Pupil Teachers' Centre (95,138)
*Leeds - Central Higher Grade School (730,-)
.... - School of Science and Art (88,410)
*.... - Southern Higher Grade School (169,-)
Mexborough - Garden Street Board School (28,21)
Middlesbrough-on-Tees - Senior Boys' and Girls' School (119,119)

Pudsey - Mechanics' Institute & Board School (17,17)
Rotherham - St Ann's Board School (30,-)
........ - Wesleyan Day School (60,-)
Scarborough - School of Science and Art (50,60)
........ - St Martin's School (56,-)
Sheffield - School of Science and Art (14,115)
........ - Central Higher Board School (189,-)
........ - Owler Lane Board School (38,-)
........ - Orchard Lane Pupil Teachers' Central Classes (437,391)
........ - Wesley College (62,90)
Shipley - School of Science and Art (123,108)
........ - Technical School (96,97)
*Todmorden - Roomfield Board School (93,-)
........ - Roomfield Pupil Teachers' Centre (26,-)
........ - Waterside Technical/Pupil Teachers' Centre (24,-)

Whitby - Cliff Street Board Schools (15,37)
York - Board School, Park Grove (49,48)
.... - Scarcroft Board School (54,64)
.... - Fishergate Board School (36,35)
.... - Model School, Training College (16,16)
The aim of this Appendix is twofold: (1) to trace what happened to the higher grade schools after 1902; and (2) to identify the extent to which publicly-provided secondary education replaced them after that date. The attention is therefore on schools provided and maintained by local education authorities, rather than on those which were controlled by foundation governors, trusts or religious bodies. As explained in the text of this thesis, schools of the latter type joined the state system more or less on their own terms - in their selection of pupils, rate of fees, amount of liaison with local authorities and with public elementary schools, style of education, etc. - and cannot be seen as a continuation of the higher grade tradition in education.

The lists below - drawn primarily from the Board of Education's Statistics (especially the List of Secondary Schools) - also provide startling evidence of the very slow growth in secondary school provision in the period immediately following the Act which has so often been acclaimed as the great stimulus to England's state secondary education system. Since all endowed and privately supported schools existed before 1902, they cannot be taken as evidence of growth, and as will be seen, the vast majority of 'new' council schools had their origins before the Act, either as higher grade schools or as institutions offering similar opportunities - pupil teacher centres, day technical schools, Science and Art Department classes in elementary schools, etc.

This survey ignores those schools listed by the Board of Education as efficient but not aided. This simply meant that they had voluntarily sought (and satisfied) an inspection by the Board, but it seems absurd to count as part of the normal secondary education system, either expensive boarding schools like Harrow (fees £90-125 per annum), Sherborne (£60), Roedean (£81) or St Leonard's (£60), or specifically Quaker or Roman Catholic schools which were also mainly for boarders.

The main part of the Appendix lists, by county, the number of aided secondary schools and the names of those provided and maintained by the LEA, for the years ending 31 July 1907 and 31 July 1911. A much shorter list of higher elementary schools appears at the end.

For those two years, secondary schools totalled:

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<td>339</td>
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<tr>
<td>for girls</td>
<td>212</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>co-educational</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>205</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accommodating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>boys</td>
<td>62,712</td>
<td>89,452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>girls</td>
<td>50,877</td>
<td>74,044</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Of these, 40,895 were under 12; intending teachers totalled an additional 1,715 boys & 5,015 girls.
Secondary Schools

According to responsible body:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(E)</th>
<th>Endowed</th>
<th>1907</th>
<th>1911</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(GPDST) Girls' Public Day School Trust</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(RC) Roman Catholic</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(O) Other</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(M) Partly municipalised</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>75</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(P) Provided &amp; maintained by LEA</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>283</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* = schools which can be matched against an earlier publicly-provided institution of "secondary" education as recorded in Appendix 1; so only those without an * (24 in 1907, 54 in 1911) can be regarded as "new" foundations after the 1902 Act. Even so, it is likely that closer investigation would reveal earlier origins in a number of cases.

The calculations based on the census population figures for each county do not take account of age, but are intended to give an indication of comparative performance in the provision of secondary school places - between counties, and within counties over the designated period of time.

Bedfordshire:

1907: population = 171,240; aided secondary schools = 3 (i.e. 1 school per 57,000 people); comprising 2 E, and 1 P - viz:

*Luton Secondary School

1911: population = 194,046; aided secondary schools = 3, with 747 places (i.e. 1 school per 65,000 people, 1 place per 260); comprising 2 E, and 1 P as in 1907.

Berkshire:

1907: population = 256,509; aided secondary schools = 7 (i.e. 1 school per 37,000 people); comprising 5 E, 1 M, and 1 P - viz:

Newbury Girls' School

1911: population = 279,641; aided secondary schools = 11, with 1,058 places (i.e. 1 school per 25,000 people, 1 place per 261); comprising 5 E, 4 M, and 2 P - viz: that of 1907 +

Windsor Boys' School
Buckinghamshire:

1907: population = 193,764; aided secondary schools = 5 (i.e. 1 school per 39,000 people); comprising 4 E, and 1 P - viz:

Wolverton County Secondary School

1911: population = 218,229; aided secondary schools = 7; with 826 places (i.e. 1 school per 31,000 people; 1 place per 264); comprising 6 E, and 1 P as in 1907.

Cambridgeshire:

1907: population = 190,682; aided secondary schools = 8 (i.e. 1 school per 24,000 people); comprising 4 E, and 4 P - viz:

*Cambridge & County School for Boys
*................................. Girls
Ely High School for Girls
*Wisbech High School for Girls

1911: population = 204,143; aided secondary schools = 9, with 1,265 places (i.e. 1 school per 23,000 people; 1 place per 161); comprising 4 E, and 5 P - viz: those of 1907 +

March High School for Girls

Cheshire:

1907: population = 815,099; aided secondary schools = 25 (i.e. 1 school per 33,000 people); comprising 11 E, 1 GPDST, 1 RC, 2 G, and 10 P - viz:

*Birkenhead Council Girls' Secondary School
*Chester City and County School for Girls
*Crawe Secondary School
*Hyde Secondary School
*Macclesfield High School for Girls
*Northwich High School for Girls
*Runcorn Institute/County Secondary School
*Stockport High School for Girls
*......... Municipal Secondary School
*Wallasey High School for Girls

1911: population = 930,366; aided secondary schools = 28, with 4,356 places (i.e. 1 school per 33,000 people; 1 place per 214); comprising 12 E, 1 GPDST, 1 RC, 1 G, 2 M, and 11 P - viz: those of 1907 +

Altrincham County High School for Girls
Cornwall:

1907: population = 322,334; aided secondary schools = 9 (i.e. 1 school per 36,000 people); comprising 4 E, 1 G, and 4 P - viz:

* Bodmin County Secondary School
* Camborne County School for Girls
* Helston Secondary School
* Truro County School for Girls

1911: population = 328,098; aided secondary schools = 17, with 1,672 places (i.e. 1 school per 19,000 people, 1 place per 196); comprising 3 E, 1 G, 1 M, and 12 P - viz: those of 1907 +

* Callington County School
* Falmouth County High School for Girls
* Liskeard County School
* Newquay County School
* Penzance County School for Boys
* Redruth County Secondary School (Boys)
* St Austell County School

Cumberland:

1907: population = 266,933; aided secondary schools = 7 (i.e. 1 school per 38,000 people); comprising 4 E, 1 GPDST, and 2 P - viz:

* Millom Secondary School
* Workington Secondary School

1911: population = 265,746; aided secondary schools = 12, with 1,229 places (i.e. 1 school per 22,000 people, 1 place per 216); comprising 4 E, 1 GPDST, 2 M, and 5 P - viz: those of 1907 +

* Brampton County Secondary School
* Penrith Girls' Secondary School
* Whitehaven County Secondary School

Derbyshire:

1907: population = 620,319; aided secondary schools = 13 (i.e. 1 school per 48,000 people); comprising 6 E, 1 M, and 6 P - viz:

* Chesterfield High School for Girls
* Derby Municipal Secondary School (Boys)
* .................. (Girls)
* Heanor Secondary & Technical School
* New Mills Secondary School
Derbyshire (cont):

1907: population = 711,368; aided secondary schools = 13, with 2,161 places (i.e. 1 school per 55,000 people, 1 place per 329); comprising 6 E, 1 M, and 6 P - as in 1907.

Devonshire:

1907: population = 661,314; aided secondary schools = 18 (i.e. 1 school per 37,000 people); comprising 14 E, 1 RC, 1 Q, and 2 P - viz:

*Devonport High School for Boys
*Plymouth Secondary School

1911: population = 698,704; aided secondary schools = 24, with 3,424 places (i.e. 1 school per 29,000 people, 1 place per 204); comprising 17 E, 1 RC, and 6 P - viz: 1907 +

*Barnstaple Grammar School for Boys
*......................... for Girls
*Devonport Municipal Secondary School for Girls
Newton Abbot Municipal Secondary School

Dorset:

1907: population = 202,936; aided secondary schools = 9 (i.e. 1 school per 23,000 people); comprising 8 E, and 1 P - viz:

*Poole Secondary School

1911: population = 224,217; aided secondary schools = 11, with 1,105 places (i.e. 1 school per 20,000 people, 1 place per 203); comprising 10 E, and 1 P - viz: that of 1907.

Durham:

1907: population = 1,187,361; aided secondary schools = 20 (i.e. 1 school per 59,000 people); comprising 7 E, 1 GPDST, 4 RC, 1 Q, 1 M, and 6 P - viz:

*Gateshead Secondary Day School
*Jarrow-on-Tyne Secondary School
*South Shields - Westoe Road Secondary School
*Stockton-on-Tees Secondary School
*Sunderland - Bede Collegiate School
*West Hartlepool Secondary Day School

1911: population = 1,369,667; aided secondary schools = 22, with 4,972 places (i.e. 1 school per 62,000 people, 1 place per 276); comprising 4 E, 3 RC, 7 M, and 8 P - viz: those of 1907 +

Bishop Auckland Girls' County School
Chester-le-Street Secondary School
Essex:

1907: population = 1,085,771; aided secondary schools = 21
(i.e. 1 school per 52,000 people); comprising 7 E, 3 RC,
2 O, and 7 P - viz:

- East Ham Technical College/Secondary School
- Ilford County High School
- Leyton County School/Technical Institute
- Loughton High School for Girls
- Southend Secondary/Technical School
- Walthamstow County Day School/Technical Institute
- West Ham Municipal Central School

1911: population = 1,352,628; aided secondary schools = 28,
with 4,853 places (i.e. 1 school per 48,000 people, 1
place per 279); comprising 10 E, 2 RC, 2 M, and 14 P -
viz: those of 1907 (Ilford County High School became a
boys' school) +

- Braintree County High School
- Chelmsford County High School for Girls
- Colchester Secondary School (Girls)
- Harwich County High School
- Ilford County High School for Girls
- Leytonstone - Connaught Road Secondary School
- Romford County High School (Girls)

Gloucestershire:

1907: population = 627,367; aided secondary schools = 25 (i.e.
1 school per 25,000 people); comprising 19 E, 1 RC, 2 O,
and 3 P - viz:

- Bristol - Merrywood Secondary School
- ........ - Secondary School, Fairfield Road
- ........ - Secondary School, St George

1911: population = 645,103; aided secondary schools = 25, with
4,579 places (i.e. 1 school per 26,000 people, 1 place
per 141); comprising 19 E, 1 RC, 2 O, and 3 P: as 1907.

Hampshire:

1907: population = 797,634; aided secondary schools = 20 (i.e.
1 school per 40,000 people); comprising 12 E, 1 G.P.D.S.T.,
1 RC, and 6 P - viz:

- Bournemouth School (Boys)
- Gosport & Alverstoke Secondary School
- Portsmouth Council Secondary School (Boys)
- ............................................... (Girls)
- Sandown County Secondary School
- Winchester County School for Girls

340
Hampshire (cont):

1911: population = 948,554; aided secondary schools = 24, with 4,014 places (i.e. 1 school per 40,000, 1 place per 236); comprising 13 E, 1 GPST, 1 RC, and 9 P - viz: 1907 *

*Basingstoke High School for Girls
*Newport County Secondary School
*Southampton Council Grammar School for Girls

Herefordshire:

1907: population = 114,377; aided secondary schools = 0.

1911: population = 114,642; aided secondary schools = 3, with 227 places (i.e. 1 school per 38,000 people, 1 place per 505); comprising 2 E, and 1 P - viz:

*Leominster Secondary School

Hertfordshire

1907: population = 250,152; aided secondary schools = 12 (i.e. 1 school per 21,000); comprising 11 E, and 1 O.

1911: population = 301,604; aided secondary schools = 14, with 2,697 places (i.e. 1 school per 22,000 people, 1 place per 112); comprising 12 E, 1 O, and 1 P - viz:

Bishop Stortford Girls' Grammar School

Huntingdonshire:

1907: population = 57,902; aided secondary schools = 2 (i.e. 1 school per 29,000 people); comprising 2 E.

1911: population = 59,380; aided secondary schools = 4, with 299 places (i.e. 1 school per 15,000 people, 1 place per 199); comprising 3 E, and 1 P - viz:

Fletton County Secondary School
Kent:

1907: population = 961,139; aided secondary schools = 28 (i.e., 1 school per 34,000 people); comprising 14 E, 3 GPDST, 1 M, and 10 P - viz:
  * Beckenham Secondary School (The Institute)
  * Bromley County School for Girls
  * Dartford County School for Girls
  * Dover County School
  * Erith Secondary School
  * Folkestone County School for Girls
  * Gravesend County Day School
  * Ramsgate County School for Girls
  * Sittingbourne County School for Girls
  * Tonbridge County School for Girls

1911: population = 1,045,591; aided secondary schools = 33, with 4,315 places (i.e., 1 school per 32,000 people, 1 place per 242); comprising 15 E, 2 GPDST, 1 M, and 15 P - viz: those of 1907 (Dover County School became a boys' school) +
  * Ashford County School for Girls
  * Chatham County School for Girls
  * Dover County School for Girls
  * Ramsgate County School for Boys
  * Tunbridge Wells County School for Girls

Lancashire:

1907: population = 4,406,409; aided secondary schools = 63 (i.e., 1 school per 70,000 people); comprising 25 E, 2 GPDST, 11 RC, 7 M, and 18 P - viz:
  * Accrington Secondary School
  * Ashton under Lyne Secondary Day School
  * Barrow in Furness Municipal Secondary School
  * Blackpool Secondary School
  * Bolton Municipal Secondary School
  * Bootle Secondary School for Boys
  * Goole Municipal Secondary Day School
  * Darwen Secondary Day School
  * Haslingden Secondary Day School
  * Manchester Central Municipal Secondary School
  * Nelson Municipal Secondary School
  * Oldham - Waterloo Secondary School
  * Salford Municipal Secondary School for Girls
  * ................................................ Boys
  * Ulverston - Victoria Technical/Grammar School
  * Warrington Secondary School
  * Widnes Secondary Day School
  * Wigan High School for Girls
Lancashire (cont):

1911: population = 4,799,654; aided secondary schools = 88, with 19,733 places (i.e. 1 school per 55,000 people, 1 place per 243); comprising 31 E, 2 GPDST, 15 RC, 10, 7 M, and 32 F - viz: those of 1907 +

+Barrow in Furness Municipal Secondary School for Girls
+Bolton Secondary School for Girls
+Burnley High School for Girls
+Bury Municipal Secondary School
+Chorley Municipal Secondary School
+Lancaster Girls' Grammar School
+Liverpool - Aigburth Vale High School for Girls
+........... - Dulton Secondary School
+........... - Queen Mary High School for Girls
+........... - The Holt Secondary School
+Manchester - Whalley Range High School for Girls
+Preston - Park Secondary School for Girls
+Rochdale Municipal Secondary School
+Southport Girls' Secondary School

Leicestershire:

1907: population = 434,019; aided secondary schools = 11 (i.e. 1 school per 39,000 people); comprising 9 E, and 2 M.

1911: population = 472,739; aided secondary schools = 17, with 2,207 places (i.e. 1 school per 16,000 people, 1 place per 162); comprising 7 E, 9 M, and 2 F - viz:

Coalville County Grammar School of King Edward VII
Melton Mowbray County Grammar School of K.E. VII

Lincolnshire:

1907: population = 498,858; aided secondary schools = 16 (i.e. 1 school per 31,000 people); comprising 14 E, and 2 F - viz:

+Grimsby - Wintringham Secondary Day School
+Lincoln Municipal Technical Day School

1911: population = 562,821; aided secondary schools = 22, with 2,675 places (i.e. 1 school per 26,000 people, 1 place per 210); comprising 19 E, and 3 F - viz: those of 1907 +

+Grantham - Kesteven & Grantham Girls' Secondary School
London:

1907: population = 4,536,267; aided secondary schools = 78
(i.e. 1 school per 58,000 people); comprising 47 E, 11 GPDST, 8 RC, 1 M, and 11 P - viz:

*Bermondsey - Southwark Secondary School for Girls
*Camberwell - Peckham Secondary School (Girls)
*Fulham Secondary School for Girls
*Hackney Secondary School (Girls), Kingland Road
*....... Secondary School (Girls)
*Lambeth - Stockwell Secondary School for Girls
*Lewisham - Manor Mount Secondary School, Forest Hill
*....... - Sydenham Secondary School
*Paddington Technical Institute Day School
*St Pancras - Kentish Town Secondary School for Girls
*Woolwich - Eltham Secondary School (Girls)

1911: population = 4,521,685; aided secondary schools = 86,
with 24,484 places (i.e. 1 school per 53,000 people, 1 place per 185); comprising 42 E, 11 GPDST, 8 RC, 5 W, 3 I, and 17 F - viz: those of 1907 +

*Battersea - Clapham County Secondary School (Girls)
*Chelsea County Secondary School
*Islington - Holloway County Secondary School for Boys
*Lewisham - Brockley County Secondary School (Boys)
*St Pancras - The County Secondary School
*Wandsworth, Putney - The County Secondary School

Middlesex:

1907: population = 792,476; aided secondary schools = 14 (i.e.
1 school per 57,000 people); comprising 7 E, 1 RC, 3 M, and 3 P - viz:

Acton County School (Boys)
*Finchley County School
*Tottenham County School, High Road

1911: population = 1,126,465; aided secondary schools = 26,
with 5,611 places (i.e. 1 school per 43,000 people, 1 place per 201); comprising 3 E, 1 RC, 1 0, 8 M, and 13 P - viz: those of 1907 +

Ashford County Secondary School
Enfield County School for Girls
*Hornsey County Secondary School
....... - Stroud Green High School for Girls
Southall - Norwood County School
Southgate County School
Twickenham County School (Girls)
Unbridge County School
Willesden - Kilburn Grammar School (Boys)
Wood Green County School
Norfolk:

1907: population = 460,120; aided secondary schools = 9 (i.e. 1 school per 51,000 people); comprising 5 E, 1 GPDST, 1 O, 1 M, and 1 P - viz:

*Norwich Municipal Secondary School

1911: population = 479,797; aided secondary schools = 13, with 2,062 places (i.e. 1 school per 37,000 people, 1 place per 233); comprising 9 E, 1 GPDST, 1 M, and 2 P - viz: that of 1907 became a girls' school +

*Norwich - The City of Norwich School (Boys)

Northamptonshire:

1907: population = 333,057; aided secondary schools = 4 (i.e. 1 school per 83,000 people); comprising 3 E, and 1 O.

1911: population = 351,801; aided secondary schools = 6, with 1,007 places (i.e. 1 school per 59,000 people, 1 place per 350); comprising 3 E, 1 O, and 2 P - viz:

*Peterborough Secondary School for Girls
*Wellingborough Grammar School for Girls

Northumberland:

1907: population = 603,498; aided secondary schools = 11 (i.e. 1 school per 55,000 people); comprising 4 E, 1 GPDST, 2 RC, 2 O, 1 M, and 1 P - viz:

Tynemouth Municipal High School

1911: population = 697,335; aided secondary schools = 17, with 3,067 places (i.e. 1 school per 41,000 people, 1 place per 227); comprising 7 E, 1 GPDST, 2 RC, 2 M, and 5 P - viz: that of 1907 +

*Berwick on Tweed High School for Girls
*Hexham Grammar School for Boys
.................. for Girls
*Morpeth High School for Girls
Nottinghamshire:

1907: population = 514,549; aided secondary schools = 9 (i.e. 1 school per 57,000 people); comprising 6 E, 1 GPDST, and 2 P - viz:

*Nottingham - High Pavement Secondary Council School
*........... - Mundella Secondary Council School

1911: population = 604,204; aided secondary schools = 11, with 2,320 places (i.e. 1 school per 55,000 people, 1 place per 260); comprising 7 E, 1 GPDST, and 3 P - viz: those of 1907 +

*Nottingham County Secondary School for Girls

Oxfordshire:

1907: population = 181,120; aided secondary schools = 5 (i.e. 1 school per 36,000 people); comprising 3 E, 1 GPDST, and 1 M.

1911: population = 193,011; aided secondary schools = 6, with 720 places (i.e. 1 school per 32,000 people, 1 place per 260); comprising 4 E, 1 GPDST, 1 M.

Rutland:

1907: population = 19,709; aided secondary schools = 1 (i.e. 1 school per 20,000 people); comprising 1 E.

1911: population = 20,346; aided secondary schools = 1, with 102 places (i.e. 1 school per 20,000 people, 1 place per 200); comprising 1 E.

Shropshire:

1907: population = 239,324; aided secondary schools = 6 (i.e. 1 school per 40,000 people); comprising 4 E, 1 GPDST, 1 M.

1911: population = 245,798; aided secondary schools = 14, with 1,165 places (i.e. 1 school per 18,000 people, 1 place per 211); comprising 5 E, 1 GPDST, 2 M, and 6 P - viz:

Market Drayton County Grammar School for Boys
................. for Girls
Ludlow Girls' Public High School
*Oswestry High School for Girls
*Wellington High School for Girls
Whitchurch High School for Girls

346
Somerset:

1907: population = 515,621; aided secondary schools = 16 (i.e. 1 school per 32,000 people); comprising 13 E, 1 GPDS, and 2 F - viz:

*Bath - City Secondary School
*Yeovil - Kingston County School

1911: population = 540,660; aided secondary schools = 17, with 1,688 places (i.e. 1 school per 32,000 people, 1 place per 290); comprising 14 E, 1 GPDS, and 2 F - as in 1907.

Staffordshire:

1907: population = 1,234,509; aided secondary schools = 21 (i.e. 1 school per 59,000 people); comprising 14 E, 2 RC, 1 M, and 4 P - viz:

*Hanley Municipal Secondary School
*Leek High School
*West Bromwich Municipal Secondary School
*Wolverhampton Higher Grade Secondary School

1911: population = 1,350,159; aided secondary schools = 25, with 4,327 places (i.e. 1 school per 54,000 people, 1 place per 312); comprising 16 E, 2 RC, 1 M, and 6 P - viz: those of 1907 +

*Stafford Girls' High School
*Tamworth Girls' High School

Suffolk:

1907: population = 384,293; aided secondary schools = 9 (i.e. 1 school per 43,000 people); comprising 3 E, 1 GPDS, 3 M, and 2 F - viz:

*Bury St Edmunds - West Suffolk County School
*Lowestoft Municipal Secondary School

1911: population = 408,054; aided secondary schools = 11, with 2,063 places (i.e. 1 school per 37,000 people, 1 place per 198); comprising 1 E, 1 GPDS, 1 O, 5 M, and 3 P - viz: those of 1907 +

Stowmarket Secondary School
Surrey:

1907: population = 653,661; aided secondary schools = 21 (i.e. 1 school per 31,000 people); comprising 8 E, 3 GPDST, 1 RC, 1 O, and 8 F - viz:

*Croydon Secondary School for Boys (Central Polytechnic)
*.............................. Girls (Branch Polytechnic)
*Farnham Grammar School (Girls)
*Guildford County School for Girls
*Richmond County School for Boys
*Richmond County School for Girls
*Sutton County School
*Wallington County School for Girls

1911: population = 845,578; aided secondary schools = 25, with 4,483 places (i.e. 1 school per 34,000 people, 1 place per 189); comprising 5 E, 3 GPDST, 1 RC, 2 O, 3 M, and 11 P - viz: those of 1907 +

Reigate County School for Girls
Warlingham - Whyteleafe County School for Girls
*Wimbledon County School for Girls

Sussex:

1907: population = 605,202; aided secondary schools = 9 (i.e. 1 school per 67,000 people); comprising 5 E, 1 GPDST, and 3 P - viz:

*Brighton Municipal Secondary School
*Eastbourne Municipal Secondary School (Boys)
*................................. (Girls)

1911: population = 666,229; aided secondary schools = 13, with 2,549 places (i.e. 1 school per 51,000 people, 1 place per 241); comprising 5 E, 1 GPDST, 1 O (in the hands of the liquidator), and 6 P - viz: those of 1907 (Brighton Municipal Secondary School became for boys only) +

*Brighton Municipal Secondary School for Girls
*Chichester High School for Girls
*Worthing High School for Girls

Warwickshire:

1907: population = 897,835; aided secondary schools = 16 (i.e. 1 school per 56,000 people); comprising 10 E, 1 RC, and 5 P - viz:

*Birmingham Council Central Secondary School
*............. Council Secondary School, Waverley Road
*............. George Dixon Secondary School
*Leamington Municipal Day School (Boys)
*................................. (Girls)
Warwickshire (cont):

1911: population = 992,777; aided secondary schools = 26, with 5,947 places (i.e. 1 school per 38,000 people, 1 place per 167); comprising 16 E, 2 RC, and 8 P - viz: those of 1907 (George Dixon School became for boys only) +

*Birmingham - George Dixon Secondary School for Girls
*Coventry - Barr's Hill Secondary School (Girls)
*Nuneaton High School for Girls

Westmoreland:

1907: population = 64,303; aided secondary schools = 5 (i.e. 1 school per 13,000 people); comprising 5 E.

1911: population = 63,467; aided secondary schools = 8, with 563 places (i.e. 1 school per 8,000 people, 1 place per 113); comprising 8 E.

Wiltshire:

1907: population = 273,869; aided secondary schools = 13 (i.e. 1 school per 21,000 people); comprising 6 E, 1 Q, and 6 P - viz:

*Devizes Secondary School
*Halmesbury Secondary School
*Swindon and North Wiltshire Technical School
*Trowbridge County Secondary School
*Warminster County Secondary School
*Westbury County Secondary School

1911: population = 289,326; aided secondary schools = 12, with 1,274 places (i.e. 1 school per 24,000 people, 1 place per 227); comprising 6 E, 1 Q, and 5 P - viz: those of 1907 except Westbury County Secondary School.

Worcestershire:

1907: population = 488,338; aided secondary schools = 11 (i.e. 1 school per 44,000 people); comprising 6 E, and 5 P - viz:

*Bromsgrove Secondary School
*Dudley Municipal High School for Girls
*Oldbury Secondary School
*Redditch Secondary School
*Yardley Secondary School

1911: population = 562,409; aided secondary schools = 15, with 2,220 places (i.e. 1 school per 37,000 people, 1 place per 253); comprising 7 E, 1 M, and 7 P - viz: those of 1907 +

*Stourbridge Secondary School for Girls
*Worcester - City of Worcester Secondary School for Girls
Yorkshire:

1907: population = 3,584,791; aided secondary schools = 94
(i.e. 1 school per 38,000 people); comprising 43 E, 2 GPDST, 10 RC, 2 O, 6 M, and 31 P - viz: 
*Banbury High School for Girls
*Bingley Grammar School (Girls)
*Bradford - Belle Vue Secondary School
*.............. - Carlton Street Secondary School (Boys)
*.............. - Orange Road Secondary School
*.............. - Hanson Secondary School
Bridlington High School for Girls
Castleford Secondary School
Doncaster Municipal High School for Girls
*Halifax Council Secondary School (Boys)
........................ - Technical College
*Huddersfield - College Municipal Secondary School
*........................ - Central Secondary School
*........................ - Municipal Secondary School, Craven St
*Leeds Central High School
*.............. - Cockburn Secondary School
*.............. - Thoresby High School (Girls)
*Morley Municipal Secondary School
*Pudsey Secondary School
*Rotherham Municipal High School (Girls)
*Scarborough Municipal Secondary School
*Sheffield Central Secondary School (Boys)
*........................ - Technical College
*Todmorden - Roomfield Secondary School

1911: population = 3,954,844; aided secondary schools = 115, with 21,500 places (i.e. 1 school per 34,000 people, 1 place per 184); comprising 42 E, 1 GPDST, 9 RC, 2 O, 13 M, and 48 P - viz: those of 1907 (Bradford's and Huddersfield's schools became single sex) +

Beverley High School for Girls
*Bradford - Belle Vue Secondary School for Girls
*.............. - Grange Road Secondary School for Girls
*.............. - Hanson Secondary School for Girls
*Bingley Secondary School for Girls
*Clockheaton Secondary School
*Goole Secondary School
*Handsorth - Woodhouse Secondary School
*Knaresborough Rural Secondary School
*Marketborough Secondary School
*Ripon Girls' High School
*Saltburn-by-the-Sea High School for Girls
*Selby Secondary School
*Settle Girls' High School
*Sowerby Bridge & District Secondary School
*Yeadon & Guiseley Secondary School
*York Municipal Secondary School for Girls
Higher Elementary Schools

Recognised for the year ending 31 July 1907:

(D) Old Type 23
(N) New Type (3-year course, less stringent rules)
total accommodation 17,744
on registers 14,213

* indicates schools listed in Appendix 1 as higher grade or similar:  M = Mixed, B = Boys, G = Girls.

Cheshire:

*Altrincham N 240 M
*Birkenhead Boys' D 350 M
*Winsford Verdin Technical N 190 B

Essex:

Walthamstow - "William Morris" N 640 M
West Ham - Russell Road N 190 M
.......... - Water Lane N 305 M

Lancashire:

*Manchester - Ardwick D 420 M
*.......... - Birley Street D 680 M
*.......... - Cheetham D 420 M
*.......... - Ducie Avenue D 725 M
*.......... - Moss Side, St Margaret's M 232 B
*Rochdale - Central D 312 M
*Salford - Grecian Street D 250 B
*.......... - Pendleton D 210 B
Southport - Christchurch N 240 B
*Urmston - Wycliffe Road N 185 M

Lincolnshire:

Lincoln D 290 M

London:

*Bermondsey - Monmow Road Boys' N 240 B
*.......... - .......... Girls' N 160 G
*Bethnal Green - Mansford Street N 240 M
*Chelsea - The Ashburnham N 460 B
*Finbury, - Hugh Middleton Boys' N 460 B
*.......... - .......... Girls' N 460 G
Fulham - Childerley Street D 257 B
*.........., Hammersmith - William St Boys' N 314 B
*.......... - .......... Girls' N 314 G
*Greenwich D 300 B
London (cont):

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APPENDIX 3 - OCCUPATIONAL ANALYSIS

The following lists are an analysis of the occupational information contained in the Admissions Registers of four higher grade/municipal secondary schools, two in Bristol and two in Birmingham. The earliest entries in each are recorded as 1902, though many children were in the schools (or their elementary departments) before then, and as the registers were compiled retrospectively, 'successful' pupils are likely to be proportionately over-represented. All admissions up to and including 1907 have been counted, on the grounds that until that year the schools retained most of the characteristics which made them distinctively higher grade schools. This gives total entries of 231 for St George School, 191 for Fairfield Road, 156 for George Dixon Boys' and 178 for George Dixon Girls'. The risks of working with occupations labelled by one or two words are acknowledged.

Part A lists the occupations recorded for all parents (generally fathers).

Part B records the destinations of all school leavers - to jobs, further education or, in a few cases, home life.

Part C is a classification of occupations into four socio-economic groups:
   I Professional etc.
   II Intermediate (Managerial, Clerical, Dealing etc.)
   III Skilled Workers
   IV Unskilled Workers

The classification was compiled specifically for this research, to take account of the source of the information, and local employment and residential patterns. Various occupational classifications, including the 1951 Registrar-General's, were consulted and adjusted where necessary. For example, engineers appear in Group III rather than in the highest professional category, to reflect the early-century status and nature of the job. This follows the advice offered by W.J. Reader in Professional Men (1966), that even the most distinguished engineers were, at best, on the very doubtful fringe of the professional classes, and adds to it the knowledge that both Bristol and Birmingham had a tradition of varied, small-scale industrial activity which was likely to influence the nature of the engineering required. And small shopkeepers are placed alongside skilled workers since their status was broadly the same (in terms of earnings, career prospects, job security and home addresses). As argued by G. Crossick, The Lower Middle Class in Britain 1870-1914 (1977), both groups were as untypically working class as they were "marginal" to the established middle class, and they shared a degree of highly localised status and an appetite for upward mobility, in the face of permanent uncertainty about their future prospects in the market economy.

Part D summarises the total numbers and percentages of parents and of school leavers whose occupations place them in each socio-economic group.
<table>
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<th>Occupation</th>
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<th>B.D. Boys</th>
<th>B.D. Girls</th>
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<td>plasterer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>plumber</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>police constable</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>police - senior officer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>politician</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>printer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>publican etc.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>purser on pleasure steamer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>quarryman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>railway locomotive driver</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>railway porter/signalman</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>relieving officer</td>
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</tr>
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<td>rule maker</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sanitary inspector/engineer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>scale maker</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>screw, nut, bolt turner/maker</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>secretary</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shopkeeper</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>silversmith/smith</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>soda drier</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>solicitor</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

355
Deceased fathers numbered 36 (for the four schools respectively, 17, 14, 4, 1). In 3 of those cases the mothers gave an occupation (all in Birmingham); in the other 33 the fathers' former occupations were recorded. 2 St George pupils whose fathers were deceased were supported by the Guardians.

accountant's, cattle (2), coal, cycle (2), general, hardware, hay/corn, hosiery, jewellery, leather (3), manufacturer's, picture frame, provision (2), saw mills, teatasters, wholesale buyer's.

civil — Birmingham Corporation, commercial, electrical (3), engineering fitter (2), foundry, mechanical (2), unspecified (9), weldless steam tube.

bell foundry, Birmingham Daily Post, cabinet works, factory, farm, gas works, moulders chargehand, screw manufactory (2), silver polisher.

bakery engineers, Birmingham Conservative Club, brewery, bulb and seed dealers, chemical works, colliery, engineering, factory, hosiery, iron works (2), mechanical engineers, packing case manufacturer, Palethorpe's Ltd., printers, shipping yard, soap manufacturer, tailors (2), wallpaper maker, works (2).

awl blade, brick, cabinet, dairy utensils, furniture, hardware, iron foundry, looking glass, stationery.

boots and shoe (3), coal (5), corn (2), fruit, iron, oil, provision, tea (2), timber, wine and spirit.

Jewish Board of Guardians, Queens Hospital, Hospital.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>St. George</th>
<th>Fairfield</th>
<th>G.D. Boys</th>
<th>G.D. Girls</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>accountant</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>armed services</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>art school/designer</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>at home</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>brassfounder</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>builder</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>cafe assistant</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chemist/laboratory assistant</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>civil servant</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>clerk/office/typist</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>40</td>
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<tr>
<td>cookery school</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>diesinker</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>dispenser</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>draper</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>draughtsman</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dressmaker</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dyer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>electrical engineer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
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<tr>
<td>emigrated</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>engineer</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>errand boy</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>estate agents</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>factory apprentice</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>fitter</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fruiterer</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>further tuition/other school</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>geology assistant (University)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>jeweller</td>
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<tr>
<td>librarian</td>
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<tr>
<td>medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>milliner</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>motor boat builder</td>
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<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motor engineer/apprentice</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td>newspaper office</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nurse</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>optician</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pattern maker</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Office</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>shop assistant/salesman</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>tailor</td>
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<tr>
<td>teacher - Pupil Teacher</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>65</td>
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<td>telegraph messenger</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>telephone engineer</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>University*</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>ventilating engineer</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Known</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total: 357
As would be expected, a number of these are listed as 'assistant' or 'apprentice', and boys recorded as, for example, 'architect's office' or 'estate agent's office' have been presumed to be aiming to become architects or estate agents rather than office workers.

George Dixon Boys' School supplied laboratory assistants to Birmingham University, King Edward's High School, King Edward's Camp Hill, King Edward's Five Ways, itself, Cadbury's and Chance and Hunt's.

A number of these, particularly from Fairfield, attended Commercial or Typewriting Schools first.

Listed by occupation, but also attended University or Training College from each school: 20, 9, 2, 15.

### Part C - Socio-economic Groups

#### I Professional etc.

- accountant
- architect
- bank manager
- boot maker - proprietor
- dentist
- doctor/medicine
- farmer (proprietor)
- foreign correspondent
- independent means
- Indian Civil Service
- manufacturer
- police - senior officer
- politician
- solicitor
- veterinary surgeon

#### II Intermediate

- actor
- agent/dealer
- armed forces
- attendance officer
- bank clerk
- bookseller
- canvasser
- civil servant
- clergy
- commercial traveller
- corporation employee
- dispenser
- draper
- draughtsman
- estate agent/surveyor
- foreman/overseer
- inland revenue officer
- insurance agent
- inventor (engineering/patents)
- journalist
- librarian
- manager
- merchant
- musician
- newspaper office
- nonconformist minister
- nurse
- optician
- parish clerk/scripture reader
- police constable
- Post Office
- publican etc.
- purser on pleasure steamer
- relieving officer
- sanitary inspector/engineer
- secretary
- scrivener
- subscriber
- teacher
- theatre manager
- town clerk
III Skilled workers

artist/designer
bacon curer
baker
bicycle maker
blacksmith/farrier
boiler maker
boot maker - employee
boot repairer
brass founder/finisher
brush maker
builder
butcher
carpenter/joiner/undertaker
chemist/laboratory assistant
coach builder/smith
cooper
dairyman
dressmaker
dyer
electro-plater
engineer
engraver
factory apprentice
fishmonger
fitter
framemaker
fruiterer
gardener
gas fitter
glass blower
glazier
goldsmith
grease refiner
grocer
gun-viewer
hairdresser
house painter
jeweller
letter cutter
limekiln tester
machinist
maltster

mason
mathematical instrument maker
mechanic
metal casement maker
milliner
millwright
moulder (rubber)
organ builder
packing case maker
pattern maker
photographer
piano tuner
plasterer
plumber
printer
railway locomotive driver
rule maker
scale maker
screw, nut, bolt turner/maker
shop assistant/salesman
shopkeeper
silver polisher Smith
soda drier
steeplejack
tailor
tanner
telephone operator
toolmaker
tramcar driver
trip curer
turner
upholsterer
venetian blind maker
warehouseman/storekeeper
watchmaker
weigher (docks)
weigher (colliery)
wheelwright
whip thong maker
window maker
wire worker
woodcutter

IV Unskilled workers

caretaker
carrier/cart driver
chocolate maker/cocoa sifter
errand boy
hospital worker
hotel/cafe worker
housekeeper

miner
park ranger
quarryman
railway porter/signalman
stoker
telegraph messenger
vanman
### Part D - Parents and School Leavers by Socio-economic Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>St George</th>
<th>Fairfield</th>
<th>G.D. Boys'</th>
<th>G.D. Girls'</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PARENTS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.2%</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>26.8%</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>54.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>56.7%</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>30.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV*</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11.3%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LEAVERS</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0.4%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>71.9%</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>75.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>14.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV*</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>8.6%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Not known* included in Group IV.

2 A fair proportion of these were entering skilled occupations associated with the new, more technical industries (such as chemists and engineers), in which George Dixon Boys School seems rather to have specialised. They were in the process of upgrading their status, so during the working lives of these school leavers, they probably advanced to Group II, thereby producing a remarkably consistent pattern of 70-75% across the four schools.

3 Of these, 26 were recorded 'at home' and 17 'not known', for which poor record-keeping may have been responsible.

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I am very grateful to Dr. K. Gaskin for her advice and assistance in producing this analysis.
This information is drawn from the Staff Registers of 5 higher grade/municipal secondary schools located in 3 cities and chosen for being variations of the type:

- Fairfield Road, Bristol (co-educational);
- High Pavement, Nottingham (several changes of status; semi-separate girls' department);
- George Dixon Boys', Birmingham (formerly Bridge Street);
- George Dixon Girls', Birmingham (separate from 1906);
- Birmingham Council Central Secondary School (formerly Municipal Technical School; boys only).

Like the pupil admission registers, these seem to have been compiled retrospectively, in about 1908-9, and do not always fully record service in the schools before they became recognised secondary schools. They also vary in the amount of detail recorded.

Fairfield Road School, Bristol

Augustus Smith (headteacher)
- born 1862; appointed 1903; retired 1927;
- educated private school; naval and military elementary school (1874-81); St John's Training College, Battersea; + evening classes at Merchant Venturers' College and Clifton Laboratory, and evening and day (2 sessions) science classes at Bristol University College;
- Government Certificate (1883); Science degree (London, 1899); College of Preceptors;
- taught Marston School, Somerset; Ashton Gate Board School, Bristol; St John's Elementary School, Clifton (headmaster 1888-1903);
- also taught (part-time/evenings) at Clifton Laboratory, Pupil Teacher Classes, Acting Teachers' Classes, Merchant Venturers' College, University Faculty of Engineering.

James Herbert Haynes (second master)
- born 1873; appointed 1898;
- educated Abbott Street Board School, Manchester; Manchester Grammar School (1884-7); Day Training College/Owen's College, Manchester (1893-6);
- 1st Class Certificate (1896); B.Sc. Victoria University, Manchester (1896); F.C.S.;
- taught at Urmston School of Science, Manchester (1896-8);
- also head of Fairfield Road Evening School.

Eleanor Annie Foweraker (senior assistant mistress)
- born 1879; appointed 1908; retired 1941;
- educated Longford Girls' (Private) School, Coatham, Bristol; Colston's Girls' Day School, Bristol (1892-3); Stockwell Training College, London (1898-1901);
- 1st Class Certificate (1901); B.A. London University (1st Division, 1901);
- taught at Bristol Pupil Teacher Centre (1902-8);
- in charge of Latin, needlework and dining arrangements.
Lily Annie White
- born 1872; appointed 1900; died 1925;
- educated Whitshill Elementary School, Stroud; Fishponds Residential Training College, Bristol;
- Certificate (1895);
- taught at Ilminster Girls' School (1894-1900).

Gwendoline Kathleen Shaw
- born 1879; appointed 1906; left 1914;
- educated Stirling High School, Scotland (1894-8);
- Scottish Higher Leaving Certificate (honours);
- taught in Stirling; at Merrywood School, Bristol.

Lucy Naomi Choate
- born 1880; appointed 1906; left 1914;
- educated Bolton High School; Bradford Grammar School; Bristol Day Training/University College (1904-6);
- Certificate (1906);
- taught elementary school, Liverpool;
- emigrated to British Columbia as head of private school.

Jessie Florence Morris
- born 1882; appointed (music) 1907; left to marry 1915;
- educated preparatory school, Redland, Bristol; Clarendon College, Clifton; Dorchester High School;
- taught at Dorchester High School.

George Edmund Stockall
- born 1878; appointed 1902;
- educated British School, Bath; Bath Pupil Teacher Centre; Borough Road Training College;
- Certificate; B.Sc. London University (pass, 1901);
- taught at British School, Bath (pupil teacher); East Ham Board School.

George Senior
- born 1864; appointed 1904; retired 1929;
- educated National School, York; St John's Training College, Battersea; "various" University Colleges for short periods;
- Certificate; B.A. London University (1895);
- taught at Rochdale Higher Grade & Technical School; Dronfield Grammar School, Derbyshire; Holy Trinity Higher Grade School, Nottingham; Nottingham Pupil Teacher Centre (evenings); Aberaeron County Secondary School.

Joseph Randles
- born 1882; appointed 1903; left 1909;
- educated Stockport Technical School; Manchester Pupil Teacher Centre; Owen's College, Manchester;
- Certificate; B.A. Manchester (1903);
- taught at Chorley Secondary School.
Walter Edney Madkins
- born 1875; appointed 1905; retired 1939;
- educated King Richard's Elementary School, Leicester;
  Wyggeston Boys' School, Leicester; Leicester Pupil Teacher Centre; St Mark's Training College, Chelsea; some work at Bristol University College (1902-3);
- Certificate; B.A. London (1900);
- taught at Bristol Pupil Teacher Centre (1901-5).

Edith Pugh
- born 1875; appointed (dressing) 1904; left 1919;
- educated Merchant Venturers' Technical College, Bristol;
  Bristol Municipal Domestic Training School;
- taught at Merrywood School, Bristol;
- left for clerical job in London.

Henry Hiatt
- born 1868; appointed (part-time) 1908; left 1920;
- taught on Army Gymnastics Staff; Merchant Venturers' Technical College (1906-7);
- left to go into business.

Christine Slade
- born 1887; Student in Training 1908-9;
- educated Trowbridge Secondary School; University College, Bristol (Catherine Winkworth Scholarship);
- B.A. London;
- took post in County School, Cornwall.

Emily Mary Ewins
- born 1886; Student in Training 1908-9;
- educated Redland High School, Bristol; South Africa;
  University College, Bristol;
- taught at Redland High School (temporary);
- joined Mission School in China.

High Pavement School, Nottingham

Edward Francis (headteacher)
- born 1845; appointed 1895; died 1918;
- educated Swansea Higher School; Cheltenham Training College (1863-5); Bristol School of Mines (1866-71);
  Royal College of Chemistry (1872-4);
- 1st class Certificate; + other science qualifications;
- taught at Colston's School, Bristol (1866-9); Cheltenham School of Science (1869-85); People's College & Organised Science School, Nottingham (1885-1905).
Frederick Shearsby Watson (principal assistant)
- born 1873; appointed 1898; absent on war service 1916;
- resigned 1918;
- educated New Mills Secondary School (1886-90); Owen's College, Manchester (1894-8);
- B.Sc. Victoria University (2nd Class Hons in chemistry, 1897); M.Sc. Victoria (1905);
- taught at New Mills (pupil teacher, 1890-4); lecturer at New Mills Technical School (evenings, 1894-8).

Albert Edwin Shipley
- born 1866; appointed 1897; died 1926;
- educated Carrington Elementary School; Nottingham Pupil Teacher Centre & University College, Nottingham (1881-5); Borough Road Training College (1878-9);
- taught at Queen's Walk Higher Grade School, Nottingham (1889-96).

Horace Walter Evans
- born 1877; appointed 1901;
- educated Liverpool Day Training College & Liverpool College, Victoria University (1896-9);
- B.Sc. Victoria (1st Class, 1899); B.A. London (1914);
- taught at Queen's Walk School, Nottingham (1899-1900).

George Ernest Harrison
- born 1867; appointed 1907;
- educated private school, Leicester; Mason College, Birmingham; Royal College of Science (1884-6);
- 1st Class Hons Certificate, Mason;
- taught at Blundells School; Royal Naval College; peripatetic chemistry teacher in Nottingham (1900-07).

Alfred J.S. Dent
- born 1870; appointed 1905; left 1908;
- educated Blue Coat School, Nottingham;
- taught at High Pavement Higher Grade School (1895-8); High Pavement Organised Science School (1899-1900); High Pavement Higher Elementary School (1900-5); High Pavement Secondary School (1905-8);
- left to become head of Blue Coat School, Nottingham.

Edward Percy Adam
- born 1873; appointed 1904;
- educated Nottingham High School for Boys (1884-92); Merton College, Oxford (1892-6);

Mary Emma Tinsley (principal assistant mistress)
- born 1872; appointed 1905;
- educated Lenton Church Higher Grade School, Nottingham (1880-8); University College, Nottingham (1891-3);
- taught at People's College Higher Grade School (1893-1901); People's College Higher Elementary School (1901-5).
Elizabeth Gertrude Tinsley
- born 1871; appointed 1905;
- educated & taught as above.

Elizabeth Beatrice Garton
- born 1874; appointed 1905;
- educated People's College Higher Grade School (1882-9);
  Nottingham Pupil Teacher Centre (1889-93); University College, Nottingham (1893-5);
- taught at People's College Higher Grade School (1895-1901); People's College Higher Elementary School (1901-5).

Ada Jane Swann
- born 1874; appointed 1905;
- educated High Pavement Higher Grade School (1881-90);
  Nottingham Pupil Teacher Centre (1889-93); University College, Nottingham (1893-5);
- taught at High Pavement Higher Elementary School (1902-5).

Mary Douglas Macauley
- born 1864; appointed 1884;
- educated Liverpool & Blackburn House School;
- taught under Nottingham School Board as cookery & laundry superintendent.

Charles C. Brodie
- born 1868; appointed 1900; left 1920;
- educated Switzerland;
- taught at Birmingham Athletic Institute (1891-1900); and as peripatetic gym instructor under Nottingham Education Committee;
- left to become Inspector of Elementary school Drill.

Eleanor Mary Barratt
- born 1870; appointed 1901;
- educated private schools; Southport Physical Training College (1891-3);
- taught under Nottingham Education Committee as peripatetic instructress of gym & swimming.

Emma Sinclair Hugh
- born 1861; appointed 1905;
- educated private school, Nottingham; Mansfield Preparatory & Secondary school (no exam qualifications);
- taught at High Pavement Higher Grade School (where father was head) as visiting piano teacher (1901-5).
George Dixon Boys' School, Birmingham

Alfred Henry Angus (headteacher)
- appointed 1906;
- educated Guisborough, Yorkshire (1879-92); University College, Liverpool (1892-5);
- B.Sc. (1895);
- taught at Guisborough (pupil teacher, 1887-92); Leeds Pupil Teacher College (1895-6); Harrogate College (1896-1900); Central Secondary (Municipal Technical) School, Birmingham (1901-6).

Harry Dupont Cleave
- appointed 1906;
- educated National School, Hayle, Cornwall; St Luke's Training College, Exeter (1898-1900);
- taught at Hayle (pupil teacher, 1894-8); Boutcher School, Bermondsey (1900-2); Central Secondary School, Birmingham (1903-4); The Blue Coat School, Birmingham (headmaster, 1904-5).

John William Allred
- appointed 1891;
- educated Wolverton National School; Trinity School, Old Stratford (1867-9); Science and Art Institute (1869-75); Owen's College, Manchester (1875-6); University College, Bristol (1876-8) (no degree);
- taught at Clay Cross (1878-80); private school, Luton (headmaster, 1880-91); Bridge Street Technical School, Birmingham (1891-);
- "The School was changed to an organised Science School. Then the George Dixon Higher Grade School, and now the George Dixon Secondary School".

William Goliightly Bainbridge
- appointed 1905;
- educated British Schools, Yorkshire; Coatham Grammar School, Yorkshire; University of Leeds (1897-1900); University of Paris (1900-1); University of Heidelberg (1901-2);
- B.A. (Victoria University, 1900); Diploma of Degree Superieur (Paris, 1901); Diploma of Proficiency (Heidelberg, 1902); B.Sc. (Victoria University, 1903);
- taught at secondary school, Bradford (1902-5); County School, Crewe (1905-6); Grammar School, Tottenham (1906-7).

Charles Lyell Harrison
- appointed 1902;
- educated King Edward VI Grammar School, Aston (1888-93); Pupil Teacher Central Classes (1895-4); Mason University, Birmingham (1896-8); Birmingham University (1898-1900); evening classes, Municipal Technical School;
- Inter B.Sc. (1st Division) London University;
- taught at Smith Street Boys' School (pupil teacher); Somerville Road Upper School (1894-6, 98-9).
Joseph Kidger
- appointed 1892;
- educated Derby Grammar School (1881-6); Derby Pupil Teacher Centre (1887-9); Westminster Training College (1889-91);
- B.A. (2nd Class) London University (1895).

John Phillips
- appointed 1893;
- educated Board School, Wolverhampton (1882-6); St Mark’s College, Chelsea (1878-8).

Edwin Ernest Rhodes
- appointed 1902;
- educated National School, Lincolnshire (1884-96); St Mark’s College, Chelsea (1899-1902); Ecole Normale d’Angouleme (1901-2);
- taught at National School, Lincolnshire (1896-9).

William Joseph Stokes
- appointed 1900;
- educated King Edward VI High School, Birmingham (1891-5); Westminster Training College (1896-8);
- B.A. London (1921);
- taught at Dixon Road and Dudley Road Schools, Birmingham.

James Thompson
- appointed 1895;
- educated Westminster Pupil Teacher Centre (1877-82); Westminster Training College (1882-4); Royal College of Science (1901-4);
- taught at Board School, King’s Norton, near Birmingham (1884-91).

George Bernard Benton
- appointed (art) 1906;
- educated King Edward VI Grammar School, Birmingham (1882-7); Birmingham School of Art;
- taught at School of Art, Saltley, Birmingham (1894-6); Bromsgrove School (1896-8); Central Secondary School, Birmingham (1898-1907); + other part-time appointments as visiting art master.

Vivian Williams
- appointed (handicrafts) 1905;
- educated National School, Yorkshire (1879-89);
- taught in London, Hull, and for Birmingham Education Committee (1902-5).

Alfred Bradley
- appointed (physical education) 1906;
- educated Bradford (1885-93);
- taught at Bradford evening schools; Birmingham Athletic Institute.
George Dixon Girls’ School, Birmingham

Mary Beatrice Clarke (headteacher)
- appointed 1898;
- educated Edgbaston High School, Birmingham (1876-7);
- private tuition (1877-81); Mason College, Birmingham (1882-4) (no degree);
- taught at elementary schools; Waverley Road School, Birmingham (1892-4); elementary schools (headmistress).

Phoebe Mary Griffiths (second mistress)
- appointed 1899;
- educated St John’s C of E School, Harborne (1883-90);
- B.A. (1913);
- taught in elementary schools.

Florence Annie Waring
- appointed 1905;
- educated King Edward VI School, Summer Hill, Birmingham (1892-6); King Edward VI High School, Birmingham (1896-8); Birmingham Pupil Teacher Centre (1898-9); University College of Wales, Aberystwyth (1900-3);
- B.Sc.;
- taught in elementary school.

Gertrude Ellen Saville
- appointed 1904;
- educated King Edward VI Grammar School, Aston (1884-91); Birmingham Pupil Teacher Centre (1891-4); Birmingham University Day Training College (1894-6) (no degree);
- taught in elementary schools.

Alice Louise Jackson
- appointed 1896;
- educated Collegiate School, Coventry (1883-5); Girls’ British School, Coventry (1885-90); Birmingham University Day Training Centre (1896-8) (no degree);
- taught in elementary schools.

Ruth Griffin
- appointed 1902;
- educated King Edward VI Grammar School, Aston (1890-5); Birmingham Pupil Teacher Centre (1896-8); Birmingham University Day Training Centre (1899-1902) (no degree);
- taught in elementary schools.

Ada Rona Clarke
- appointed 1902;
- educated Birmingham Pupil Teacher Centre (1893-7); Birmingham University Day Training Centre (1898-1900);
- taught in elementary schools.
Ada Bednail
- appointed 1901;
- educated St George’s C of E School, Birmingham; private tuition (1895-90); Birmingham Pupil Teacher Centre (1890-3); Birmingham University Day Training College (1893-5);
- B.A. (1908);
- taught at Dudley Road Girls’ School, Birmingham (1895-1901).

Rose Hannah Baker
- appointed 1905;
- educated King Edward VI Grammar School, Aston (1891-4); Mason College, Birmingham (1894-6); Birmingham University Day Training College (1897-9);
- taught in elementary schools; Albert Road Intermediate (former higher grade) School, Aston (1901-5).

Central (Municipal Technical) School, Birmingham

Lionel Manfred Jones (headteacher)
- born 1869; appointed 1900; retired 1926;
- educated elementary school, Llanelli; University College, Aberystwyth; Royal College of Science;
- B.Sc. London (1st class honours in chemistry, 1891);
- taught at St Dunstan’s College, Catford (1894-1900);
- also lectured at Woolwich Polytechnic (1897-1900).

Llewellyn Caradoc Evans (chief assistant master)
- born 1876; appointed 1904; retired 1936;
- educated elementary school, Barmouth; Liverpool College; Kingswood School; University College of North Wales;
- B.A. London (1st division in Latin, Greek, English);
- taught at Manor House School, Clapham (1900-3); Watford Grammar School (1903-4); also evening classes.

Charles James Vinall Bews
- born 1885; appointed 1907; left 1913;
- educated Walsall Technical Day School; Royal College of Science;
- B.Sc. London (chemistry, 1906);
- taught at Poole Secondary School;
- left to become head of School for Young Employees, Cotteridge, Birmingham.

David Hartley Foster
- born 1880; appointed 1907; left 1924;
- educated Plymouth Public School; Westminster Training College;
- 1st Class Government Certificate; B.Sc. London (1912);
- taught at Severn Street Council School, Birmingham (1901-5); City Road Council School, Birmingham (1905-6); New Mills Secondary School (1906-7).
William Henry Hemer
- born 1882; appointed 1905; left 1910;
- educated Stoke Public School, Devonport; HM Dockyard Technical School, Devonport; Royal College of Science;
- Whitworth Exhibitioner (1903); ARSSc (London, 1905);
- also lectured in engineering for Staffordshire CC;
- left to become lecturer in engineering in Durban.

Percy James Humphreys
- born 1876; appointed 1905; retired 1946;
- educated King Edward VI Five Ways Grammar School, Birmingham (1897-92); Birmingham University (1902-5);
- B.Sc. Birmingham (2nd class, 1907);
- taught as pupil and assistant teacher, Sally Oak, Birmingham (1893-9); higher grade school, Southport, Lancashire (1899-1902); Birmingham University Day Training College (1902-4).

William Jewsbury
- born 1875; appointed 1903; left 1910;
- educated elementary school, Tamworth; St Mark’s Training College, Chelsea;
- B.A. London (1901); M.A. Birmingham (1908);
- taught at Blundell elementary boys’ school, London (1895-8); Alleyn’s (Dulwich) School (1898-9); Jarrow Pupil Teachers’ Centre (1900-3);
- left to become head of Arley Elementary School, Coventry.

Reginald Esk Lovel
- born 1879; appointed 1903; retired 1940;
- educated Ellesmere College;
- Inter Arts London (1908);
- taught at Harrogate College; Kimbolton School; Bowden College.

George Nevill Pingriff
- born 1886; appointed 1907; left 1909;
- educated Wyggeston School, Leicester (1897-1904); Sidney Sussex College, Cambridge (1904-7);
- B.A. Cantab (1st Class in natural sciences, 1907);
- left to teach at Dixie Grammar School, Market Bosworth.

Horace Quinney
- born 1882; appointed 1906; retired 1946;
- educated Birmingham University Day Training Department (1902-5);
- B.Sc. Birmingham (pass degree);
- taught at Cotteridge School, Kings Norton EC (1905).

Ewald Friderick Seckler
- born 1892; appointed 1906; interned 1915;
- educated Realprognasium Ludenschied; Hiltentach College;
- taught in Germany (1893-7); Southampton High School (1897-8); Wilmslow Grammar School (1898-1900); Salway College, Leytonstone (1900-1).

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John Percival Turner
- born 1878; appointed 1904; left 1909;
- educated Queen Mary's Grammar School, Walsall (1888-94);
  King Edward VI High School, Birmingham (1894-8);
  Wadham College, Oxford (1898-1902);
  B.A. Oxon (Lit. Hums.);
- taught at Walsall Technical Day School;
- left to teach history & political economy at Battersea Polytechnic Boys' Secondary School.

Harry Adolphus Fox
- born 1864; appointed 1901; retired 1929;
- educated at Yales Street Elementary School, Aston (1872-3);
  Midland Institute, Birmingham (1879-84);
- City & Guilds in carpentry, manual training, etc.);
- taught at West Bromwich Secondary School (1902-3);
- also Chief Instructor of woodwork at Birmingham Municipal Technical College.

Edward Crump
- born 1877; appointed 1904; retired 1939;
- educated St John's Elementary School, Harborne, Birmingham (1881-9);
  George Dixon (Bridge Street) Higher Grade School, Birmingham (1889-1901);
- City & Guilds; Teacher's Diploma in Manual Training;
- taught manual training in Birmingham elementary schools (1900-4);
- also evening classes at Birmingham Technical School.

George Bernard Benton
- born 1872; appointed 1898; retired 1937;
- educated St Paul's Elementary School, Birmingham (1879-82);
  King Edward VI School, Birmingham (1882-7);
  Birmingham Municipal School of Art (1887-94);
- Art Teacher's Certificate (double medallist);
- taught at Central School of Art, Birmingham (1894-6);
  head of Branch School of Art, Saltley, (1900-7);
- also visiting art master to Bromsgrove School (1896-8),
  Five Ways Grammar School (1900-6), Erdington Branch School of Art, and 7 primary departments.

William Hawkins
- born 1856; appointed 1897; retired 1921;
- educated St John's Elementary School, Birmingham; Midland Institute;
- various Science and Art Department certificates;
- also Chief Instructor (Ironwork) to Birmingham Municipal Technical School.
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   Minutes (1870-1903)
   School Management Committee Minutes (1881-1903)
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Birmingham - George Dixon (Bridge Street) School
   Log Book (1884-1906)
   Admission Registers (boys' school)
   Staff Register (boys' school)
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Birmingham - Municipal Technical Day (Central) School
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- Historical Development of Barton Hill (typescript)
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HESB = History of Education Society Bulletin
HEJ = History of Education Society Journal
JEAH = Journal of Educational Administration and History)

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THE ENGLISH HIGHER GRADE SCHOOLS - A REASSESSMENT

Meriel Vlaeminke

ABSTRACT

The thesis focusses on the English higher grade schools of the later nineteenth century. It originated in a concern about the relevance of educational institutions to Britain's unique decline from world dominance to acute economic difficulties.

The Introduction identifies the turn of the century as a time of gathering tensions in English public education, when the development of a popular and self-contained network of institutions was mounting a real challenge to the established system. The first Chapter surveys the common verdicts about higher grade schools - a focus of those tensions - in existing work; Chapter 2 identifies the characteristics of a 'typical' higher grade school - locally conceived, offering a broad curriculum, and accessible to all social classes.

The next two Chapters are a case study, tracing the optimistic development of higher grade schools in Bristol in the 1890s and then their battle for survival after 1902. Chapter 5 demonstrates that Bristol's experiences were duplicated - in other parts of the country, as a secondary school system of a very different nature - centrally controlled, attached to literary studies, and selective on the basis of cost - was formulated.

Amongst a number of unexpected findings was clear evidence that the egalitarian experience of girls in higher grade schools fits none of the existing interpretations of the history of women's education, a discovery which is explored in Chapter 6. Chapter 7 examines the educational principles which guided the resolution of tensions outlined in the Introduction, and finally the perspective broadens to reassess the higher grade school movement in the wider social, economic and cultural context.

The conclusion reached is that the emergence of the higher grade schools represented an important example of a recurring alternative educational and cultural tradition in England. Their suppression constituted a major victory for traditional values, and a wasted opportunity of great and lasting significance.