

## THE EDUCATIONAL MUDDLE AND THE WAY OUT.

### The Muddle.

"AN excellent system of public education is one of the best forms of national investment. In commercial and industrial efficiency, in a higher level of civic duty, and above all, in the wider diffusion of moral culture and religious feeling, the nation is amply repaid for what it spends." These complacent platitudes were enunciated by the Education Department in its Report for 1897. And at intervals a cynical Minister of Education horrifies the House of Commons with disclosures of facts which are generally safely buried in Blue Books which no one reads. At one moment we glibly quote the millions we spend on education, the next we abuse the School Board Rate. It would almost seem as if we tolerated rather than fostered education. Certainly if some evil genius had inspired us to do our worst to hamper and restrict instruction it could not have done better than create the existing system of administration. A true ideal of education would take into account the needs of the nation as a whole, and while duly estimating the requirements of each separate section would preserve a proper balance between competing claims on public funds, not setting off over-development in one direction against starvation in another. It would not conceive of elementary, secondary, and technological education as so many water-tight compartments to be kept rigidly isolated from each other, but as standing in an organic relation to one another, so that a student could begin at the bottom of the ladder and travel to the top without at any time coming to a stage where there was an abrupt severance from the one preceding. At the centre of administration it would assemble the best of educational experience and knowledge, to provide an adequate guidance for the subordinate parts of the machinery, while to ensure a due regard for local needs it would create local authorities reflecting the same comprehensiveness and unity. In this way it would combine efficiency with economy, and any other kind of economy is false and wasteful.

The average man, though dimly aware that he does not get value for his money, is apt to suspect exaggeration in the criticisms of educationalists. He is inclined especially in after-dinner speeches, to thank God with patriotic fervor that we are not a logical nation in our institutions, but that we muddle along in a businesslike fashion solving difficulties as they arise. Consoling as such reflections may be to the insular mind they yet form a poor off-set to the daily experience of inefficiency and incompetency which contact with other nations brings to our knowledge. It would indeed be hard to parody the chaos of authorities, the welter of systems, under which our national education is administered.

### The Central Authorities.

There are no fewer than six government departments intermeddling with different branches of education. The Education Department deals with primary education, but touches secondary education in its relations to the training colleges, higher grade elementary schools, and evening continuation schools. The Charity Commissioners deal with endowed schools under the Charitable Trusts Acts, which give them a general administrative jurisdiction over accounts, etc., and the Endowed Schools Acts which enable them to frame schemes for the governance of the schools. Under the former Acts they act as a judicial body, a kind of extension of the Court of Chancery, and are independent of all other Departments; under the latter, their functions are largely legislative, and they must submit their schemes to the Education Department. Eton and Winchester are wholly exempt from their control. Charterhouse, Harrow, Rugby, Shrewsbury, Westminster, and all schools whose endowments date from within fifty years before 1869, come under the Charitable Trusts Acts only. So, too, do endowed schools supported by voluntary contributions, and endowed elementary schools with an income from endowments below £100 a year, or which received a grant from the Education Department in 1869. "Out of this two-fold origin and constitution has come the usual crop of anomalies and difficulties" (Report of the Royal Commission on Secondary Education, page 88). The Science and Art Department extends not only over the United Kingdom, but also to British colonies and dependencies. Originally founded for the instruction of adults in the industrial arts, it is now the chief authority for secondary and technical education, while it also aids drawing in elementary schools. Besides science and art in the stricter sense, its curricula, in various places, include such subjects as banking, book-keeping, vocal and instrumental music, commerce, political economy, veterinary science, and seamanship. But its functions are limited by the regulation that the parents of its students must not have an income above £500 a year. The Board of agriculture gives grants to colleges for higher instruction in agriculture; the Local Government Board is responsible for poor law schools, and the Home Office for industrial schools and reformatories.

### The Local Authorities.

Elementary Education in England and Wales is managed locally by 2,511 school boards, and, in districts where there are no boards, 790 school attendance committees. The total population under School Boards is 19,979,924, and under attendance committees, 9,022,601. Besides school boards, boards of managers for schools of the National Society and the Church of England, for Wesleyan, Roman Catholic, British, and Jewish schools also share in the disorganization. At least two of these different bodies do, and all of them may, co-exist in the same district. Poor law schools are under the boards of guardians. Truant and industrial schools under the school boards, and industrial and reformatory schools under the municipal authorities, and so, too, are day industrial schools.

Under the Technical Instruction Acts, 1889 and 1891, county councils, and the councils of county boroughs, boroughs, and urban



sanitary districts are authorities for technical and secondary education, and may levy a rate of 1d. in the £ for these purposes. While the boroughs spend most of their local taxation grants on "technical" education, many of the county councils spend a large proportion on purely "secondary" education, and twenty of the counties spend no money at all on secondary education. Many pay their money over to the school boards, to be spent on purely secondary subjects, on science teaching, or on scholarships; some do so unconditionally. Other secondary education authorities are: school boards with higher grade schools, which, at least in the upper classes, are not elementary, and do not share in the grants of the Education Department, and evening continuation schools which equally are not elementary, but as a rule commercial; the managers of voluntary elementary schools; the governing bodies of endowed schools; local committees under the Science and Art Department; and the managing committees of proprietary schools and institutes of a semi-public character, such as polytechnics. "Each of these unconnected local agencies must, or may, have relations with one, two, or perhaps three central authorities, which are similarly independent of each other. It is not surprising that, under such conditions, ability, energy, and a cordial desire for co-operation, have not always availed to prevent waste of power, or one-sided developments of educational forces" (Report of the Royal Commission on Secondary Education, page 65).

The universities and university colleges are managed by their own governing bodies, and, as a rule, are not related to one another in any way, or to any government department, except in so far as the Education Department associates day training colleges with such colleges, or the Board of Agriculture makes grants for teaching of agriculture. It need only be added that instruction in the supremely important art of teaching is left to private denominational institutions.

### The Result.

In elementary education, thanks to the Acts of 1870 and 1891, there is less confusion than elsewhere, but there are other evils as great. An open field is afforded for the conflict of ecclesiastical hatreds, and the possibilities of education are measured not by the highest ideals or even the needs of the localities, but by the maximum which can be extracted from "voluntary" subscribers. Parsimony and prejudice combined work such havoc that, as Sir John Gorst\* said, "Such glimpses as we get of rural education are extremely discouraging." In the towns the evil is as a rule not so great, but the "drum ecclesiastic" is beat vigorously at every election and a subdued tapping is kept up between whites. Dear, too, to certain grades of the lower middle class is the higher social status of the voluntary school. And yet we assume that the instruction of our children is controlled by educational theories.

The sphere of secondary and technical education shows confusion in full bloom. After summarizing our educational history, the Report of the Royal Commission on Secondary Education points the following moral (pages 17-18):—"But there is one feature in this growing concern of the State with education which must not be

\* Speech on introducing Education Bill, 1896.

here overlooked. The growth has not been either continuous or coherent ; *i.e.*, it does not represent a series of logical or even connected sequences. Each one of these agencies whose origin has been described was called into being, not merely independently of the others, but with little or no regard to their existence. Each has remained in its working isolated and unconnected with the rest. The problems which secondary education presents have been approached from different sides, at different times, and with different views and aims. The Charity Commissioners have had little to do with the Education Department, and still less with the Science and Art Department. Even the borough councils have, to a large extent, acted independently of the school boards, and have in some instances made their technical instruction grants with too little regard to the parallel grants which were being made by the Science and Art Department. Endowments which, because applied to elementary education, were exempted from the operation of the Endowed Schools Acts, have been left still exempt ; though the public provision of elementary education in 1870 and the grant of universal free elementary education in 1891, have wholly altered their position. The university colleges, though their growth is one of the most striking and hopeful features of the last thirty years, remain without any regular organic relation either to elementary or to secondary education, either to school boards or to county councils. This isolation and this independence, if they may seem to witness to the rich variety of our educational life, and to the active spirit which pervades it, will nevertheless prepare the observer to expect the usual results of dispersed and unconnected forces, needless competition between the different agencies, and a frequent overlapping of effort, with much consequent waste of money, of time, and of labor."

Overlapping occasionally takes the form of an overlapping of schools of the same type and grade in the same district, and more often of the premature attraction to a higher institution of pupils who should be in a lower school—a charge brought against the colleges at Liverpool, Leeds and Birmingham. Most frequently the higher grade elementary schools—whose work is admirable—are charged with retaining pupils who are ripe for schools of a higher type. But in this instance it must be remembered that often they fill a gap caused by the want of those other schools, and supply a demand for secondary education from those social strata which cannot afford to pay high fees. Not only do public institutions providing education in science and art or of a purely "secondary" nature enter into competition with private schools, but, if we take London as an example, we find two great bodies, the school board and the county council, competing against each other ; for the school board in its day science schools, its art classes, and its evening continuation schools provides instruction of a similar nature to that supplied by polytechnics and other institutes subsidised by the Technical Education Board. There is no co-operation between these bodies, and a final touch to the confusion has been added by the decision of the auditor (which is being appealed against) that school board has no legal authority for its expenditure on instruction in science and art. The muddle is aggravated by the varying action of the government departments.



“From the Education Department every encouragement is given to the school board; from the Science and Art Department very much the reverse. In Chelsea a higher grade school will be established, no fees charged. In Greenwich a science school cannot be established by the board, but by a committee, and this committee must charge fees. Parents in Greenwich, entitled to free education for children below fifteen, will have to pay for chemistry; but parents in Chelsea will not have to pay for history and geography. If one department took charge of all education given in public elementary schools no such anomaly could arise.”\* This confusion is not confined to London. “We have at Manchester the Grammar school under its Charity Commission scheme, the organized science schools under the school board, the technical schools under the corporation, and the Owen’s College, all at certain points rivalling rather than supplementing each other, while the science grants encourage and increase the confusion rather than repress and reduce it” (Secondary Education Commission Report, page 102). Lastly, the local authorities are hampered by doubts as to whether they have powers under the Technical Instruction Acts to found a general secondary school and as to the kind of schools at which scholarships are tenable.

### The Remedy.

#### I.—AT THE CENTRE.

For confusion, isolation, and want of co-operation, the remedy is unity. The need for concentration of authority has been fully acknowledged, and since the passing of the Education Act, 1899, we shall have a Minister of Education combining into one department the Education Department, the Science and Art Department, and the Charity Commissioners (as regards endowed schools). So far so good; but the mere congregation of these offices under one roof is no cure for disorganization. To take an example, quoting from a correspondent of the *Times* (9th October, 1899):—“The Science and Art Department at present has relations with the following very diverse educational institutions amongst others: (i) higher grade elementary schools; (ii) some secondary day schools of a ‘modern’ kind; (iii) evening classes in various subjects; (iv) polytechnics and technical institutions; but it has not to do with classical schools, nor with modern schools sufficiently rich to do without its grants, nor with private schools, nor in general with proprietary schools (if they yield more than five per cent. profit), nor in any considerable degree with girls’ schools. If, therefore, the duties of this Department are merely to be transferred to the new Board of Education, but are not to be reorganized or redistributed, it will be a mere matter of chance as to which department will have charge of any particular school; e.g., Bradford Grammar School receives payment for its science and art teaching from the Science and Art Department, but the Birmingham Grammar or High School does not receive such grants. Hence these two schools, though of the same character and doing the same work, would be under different departments. The schools of the London City Companies (e.g., Grocers’, Mercers’, Merchant Taylors’,) receive as a rule no grants from the Science and Art Department, and, therefore, though their

\* Lord Reay: Annual Address to the London School Board, October 5th, 1899.



teaching includes science, they would be placed outside the science and art category, and classed as 'secondary proper' in a different category, and under a different department and different inspectors from other schools doing similar work. Girls' schools similarly will be placed in the secondary department only until some curriculum is invented for which grants may be given them under Science and Art regulations, and they apparently cease to be secondary schools under the secondary department and come automatically under the Science and Art Department."

The new board must organize education not on the basis of the subjects taught, but according to the demands of different classes of the community, and it must grade its schools on the scheme of instruction of the whole school. Roughly, the school population may be divided into those who will begin to work about the age of fifteen or earlier, those who will stay at school till eighteen or nineteen, and those who will proceed to higher instruction at a university or technological college. Each of these classes requires an education of a different nature from the others, arranged from the beginning with a view to the life purposes of the children. We therefore require a triple division of functions into primary, secondary, and technological corresponding to these classes. Under the primary department might be grouped also higher grade schools and evening schools, whose work was based on the training in the elementary schools. The secondary department would deal with those who stayed till eighteen or nineteen years of age, whether the instruction was classical, commercial or scientific. The technological section would include the application of art to industry, the technology of manufacture and agriculture, and might also extend to the universities such supervision as might be deemed necessary.

The Board of Education should have, subject to the authority of Parliament, powers of inspection, criticism, and audit of all education of every kind and grade, which is maintained or aided out of monies provided by Parliament, or from endowments or trust funds derived from persons deceased; and the board should therefore take cognizance, not only of such primary and secondary education as it controls, but also of universities and university colleges, non-local schools, and other endowed educational institutions, army and navy schools, training colleges, poor law schools, and industrial and reformatory schools and school-ships.

## II.—THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

For the local muddle, as for the central, the remedy is the same—concentration of authority. The supervision of education for a county or a borough involves much the same problems as for the nation. The general principles which have been laid down by the central experts have to be applied to local needs and circumstances: the organic unity of all education must be preserved. If the educational ladder from the elementary school to the university is to be kept open to all, it must be under the control of one body. If primary and secondary schools are to be worked, as they must be, on essentially different educational schemes, it follows that a pupil cannot pass straight from an elementary school to a grammar school and profit fully by the higher instruction he will receive there; he must receive a preliminary training at some intermediate form of

school. At present, the means adopted to facilitate passage from the elementary to the secondary school is by scholarships ; but this method tends to induce teachers to concentrate their best efforts on their most promising pupils, to the detriment of the rest of the school. It is obvious that a proper connection between primary and secondary education can only be established by a body which has control over both. Mr. Yoxall, M.P., admirably summed up the advantages of having the same administrative authority for primary and secondary education in a Memorandum to the Secondary Education Commission (Evidence, vol. v., page 33) as follows :—

- “(i) Economy of management, by avoiding—  
 Multiplication of officials ;  
 Duplication of functions ;  
 Overlapping of authorities ;  
 Over-supply of schools ;  
 Undue competition between authorities and schools.
- (ii) Administrative efficiency, by securing—  
 Systematized and continuous oversight ;  
 Accurate knowledge of inter-dependent requirements ;  
 Organic connection of curricula in primary and secondary schools ;  
 Definition of scope of various kinds of secondary schools ;  
 Systematic adjustment of schemes of scholarships and exhibitions ;  
 Organic relation between primary, secondary, and higher instruction.
- (iii) Discouragement of unnecessary social prejudices arising from—  
 Separation in administration ;  
 Non-educational distinctions between schools ;  
 Want of unity in the teaching profession as a whole.”

And, he added : “ There is hardly any price, in the way of administrative readjustments or legislative reconstruction, too high to pay for reforms so desirable in the public interest as these.” The same views were put forward by the National Union of Teachers, the Association of School Boards, and by experts like Sir P. Cumin, Sir J. Fitch, and the Rev. Mr. Sharpe. It is plain, too, that it was only because the Secondary Education Commissioners felt themselves precluded from touching primary education that they refrained from advancing a similar proposal. We may, therefore, conclude that there is a consensus of opinion in favor of the union of both the primary and secondary grades of education, whether in literary, scientific, commercial, or technological subjects, under one and the same local authority.

#### An “ ad hoc ” Body.

In organizing the administration of any public service there are two conflicting theories. According to one, the best form of local government is that which concentrates in a single elected body, for each locality, all the public business entrusted to that locality ; and which provides for the administration of the various public services by separate committees. According to the other, by electing a separate body, *ad hoc* for each public service, the men who are



specially qualified, or specially interested, would be attracted to serve thereon, to the great advantage of administration. In a modified form, the latter theory forms the basis of the present system of administration. Although there is a considerable amount of overlapping, local services are roughly grouped into municipal, poor law, and educational, and the complete separation of these groups, to eliminate overlapping, is the maximum of change proposed by some.

It must not be forgotten that our present system of local government has owed much in its growth to the accident of there being no elective bodies in the counties till 1888. When the boards of guardians were created in 1834, town government was unreformed, and county government was in the hands of the justices who had grossly failed at poor law work. A timid Whig ministry, averse to large constructive schemes, could do no other than create an *ad hoc* body. Similarly, in 1870, Mr. Forster found himself faced by the necessity of taking rural education out of the hands of the squire and parson, and he had to create a body to be the recipient of the new functions. There is nothing specially sacrosanct, therefore, about our existing institutions. And it is significant that, immediately after the creation of county councils, the Technical Education Act of 1889 entrusted them with considerable educational powers.

The opposition aroused by the proposal of the Government in 1896 to amalgamate the municipal and educational authorities shows that there would be no little difficulty in achieving such a revolution as the union of all local authorities into one body; but, on examination, it will be seen that the present system involves grave disadvantages and does not fulfil the expectations of the theorists. The hesitation to carry the *ad hoc* theory to its logical conclusion shows an inherent doubt in its validity. Mr. Chaplin's proposal to create a special authority for poor law children met with universal condemnation, and during the debates on the London Government Bill, 1899, the suggestion that Boards of Guardians should be abolished and their duties handed over to municipal authorities, met with general acceptance, especially from experts like Canon Barnett. It would be a rash thing to say that the present system attracts to each service the men specially qualified for it. Doubtless, the first London School Board was a marvellous collection of educational experts; but it is the only case on record. The members of school boards, boards of guardians, and town councils in any large town, are drawn from the same classes of the community, and are possessed of much the same qualifications.

The existence of town and county councils, with their varied functions, is evidence that separate bodies for separate services are superfluous. There is at least as much difference between main drains and lunatic asylums, between street sweeping and technical education, between prevention of infectious disease and a municipal water supply as there is between "purely municipal," poor law, and educational functions—problems no less difficult, duties no less important, are involved in the varied work of a single municipality as in the three separate services.

#### The Sphere of the Expert.

Much is talked of the need for "experts" on local bodies, yet, though it sounds rash, it may be doubted whether a board of



experts would be an unmitigated boon. When a number of men, whether officials or representatives, are confined to one sphere of action the inevitable tendency is towards over-specialization, and when they have to work within limits prescribed by a higher authority there is the danger that they should be overcome by the letter of the law and should neglect the spirit. An excellent example is to be found in the Boards of Guardians, who have made the administration of the Poor Law a hissing and a bye-word throughout the whole land. And yet the duty of caring for the poor, the aged, and the feeble is one which, we might reasonably have expected, would call forth all the best feelings of sympathy. In the School Boards it is somewhat different, but generally only because education is the last thing talked about on very many of these bodies. The squabbles of competing ecclesiastics, the necessity of keeping down the rates, and the labor requirements of the local farmers and tradesmen are too frequently more popular topics than codes and theories of education. Even the London School Board felt itself at liberty, in the sacred cause of education, to evade the provisions of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, which the County Council has to administer. Apart from such instances, we can discover that school boards tend to view the whole subject of education from the standpoint of elementary teaching. This tendency to over-specialization is almost inevitable on the part of officials, but the function of the representative body which employs them is to correct this tendency by taking more comprehensive views of things. If, then, the representative body is also composed of "experts," this safeguard is destroyed. Another assumption is that "experts" will agree on the best course of action to be taken. As far as experience goes, this is not at all the case. To quote the words of the Secondary Education Commissioners, who had experts in abundance before them:—"The experiences of highly specialized experts, who yet differ in office, function, standpoint and aim, can hardly be expected to yield so peaceable a fruit as an identical policy or plan, for if doctors differ in their diagnoses they are not likely to agree in their remedies" (page 85). Experts who cannot agree are not of much use on administrative bodies.

It will then be asked, are to neglect experts altogether? By no means, but they must be kept in their proper places. A business man does not take a lawyer, an architect, an engineer into permanent partnership to help him to conduct his business, but when questions arise which demand their special knowledge he consults them, or if his business is large enough he engages them as subordinates. Every department of the work of a town council requires expert knowledge, but it is to be found in the paid municipal departments carrying on the work. The Asylums Board of the London County Council does not consist of experts in mental diseases; it adopts the wiser plan of putting them in charge of its asylums. The Water Committee of the Birmingham City Council is not composed of builders and engineers; but men of competent skill are set over the construction of the great aqueduct. The business of the local authority is to take broad views, to decide on large issues, to frame policies based on comprehensive consideration of all the needs of its district, and then to employ and control men of special knowledge to execute its decisions. If further expert knowledge is desirable it can be had of



the best quality by paying for it, and if it is thought necessary to go a step farther, experts can be associated with the local authority by some process of co-option or delegation which will still leave the control essentially in the hands of the elected representatives. In discussing the question of experts it is here assumed that men of real experience are meant, not mere doctrinaires—men, say, who know all about the history of education but have never conducted a class. For such as these latter we can assume that there is no place vacant, although the person who poses on public platforms as an expert is too often but a doctrinaire, and one, too, of very limited knowledge.

### The Speciality of Education.

The last refuge of those we are criticizing is that education is a function of so peculiar a character that it cannot be entrusted to any other but a body of persons specially interested and qualified. Even if the premise were correct, the conclusion is not justified. What the Secondary Education Commission say about the schoolmaster is equally true of the person supposed to possess the qualifications of a schoolmaster: "It would be a serious evil if education were allowed to become the business of the schoolmaster alone; the more completely it grows into the concern of the whole people, and is made an integral part of their common life and civil policy, the more will it flourish and the better will it become" (page 111). The further expectation is held out that by creating an *ad hoc* authority for education, able and distinguished men would be induced to become candidates for election. Leaving isolated cases out of account, this expectation is not justified by the results, even in places large enough to offer positions of great dignity and importance. Birmingham, for example, has about 60,000 children under control of its Board, and is the traditional headquarters of educational reform, yet, in the supreme test of the influence of expert knowledge, the employment of properly trained teachers, it is a lamentable failure, only fifty-one per cent. of the staff being certificated teachers.

What is special about education in this country is that it is thought necessary to give religious instruction in elementary schools as part of a national system. The result is that elementary education is the prey of warring creeds. With a rare prescience, the Commission on Popular Education, presided over by the Duke of Newcastle, in 1861, while recommending the election in every borough with more than 40,000 inhabitants of a school board of six persons, added the condition that not more than two should be ministers of religion. It is impossible to keep religion out of the elections, and the moment the banners of theology are raised all other questions sink into insignificance. No denomination is less guilty than another in this respect. What concerns us is not to apportion blame, but to take account of the magnitude of the evil. The greatest obstruction to popular education has been that it has been regarded as ancillary to religion. Questions of curricula, staffing, etc., are neglected, and when Mr. Acland attempted to get the worst of the "voluntary" schools put in a sanitary condition he was howled at as an enemy of the Christian religion. To extend sectarian bigotry to the control of secondary and university education would be a national disaster; in respect of the universities we



have already bought our experience. So long as religion retains its power of exciting the passions to the pitch of frenzy, we cannot have it coming into competition at election times with subjects of pure education which rouse little enthusiasm in the average elector. This consideration alone is conclusive against an *ad hoc* body for educational purposes.

### The Plague of Elections.

Even if theoretical arguments against the system of separate authorities for separate services were less complete than they are, the practical drawbacks attaching to many elections are such as to bring the representative system into discredit. "The electorate is already over-burdened with elections, and is growing restive under their combined annoyance and expense. In rural areas parish, district, and county councils, members of parliament, and, occasionally, school boards; in urban areas, vestries, boards of guardians, councillors, school boards, and members of Parliament, make up, especially when taken along with their different electoral areas and modes of election, a rather anxious burden for both electors and candidates. . . . It is certain that the increase in the number of elections tends to beget carelessness in the electors, who begin to feel that what comes so often requires little thought when it does come. Then the law of parsimony, the need for doing with the least expenditure of energy and resource what has to be done so often, tends to throw all these varied elections into the hands of single organizations, which are inevitably the organizations of the great political parties, and so it directly results in turning a question, which ought to be, in its essence, non-political, into a distinctly political question" (Secondary Education Commission Report, page 121). Many know to their cost that the intrusion of imperial politics into local affairs is a sad reality. Even at the present moment there may be found on the walls in many quarters of London the weather-worn remains of posters referring to the last vestry elections, with the legend "Vote for the Unionist Candidates" at their head. Everyone who has had to deal with elections will confess that he has had to face two great difficulties—the difficulty of securing a sufficient number of suitable candidates, and the difficulty of getting the voters to the poll. But these lessen as the sphere of the body to be elected is wider. The elections for boards of guardians are mostly farcical, and in school board elections it is almost impossible to get half of the electorate to come forward even when religious or personal issues are involved. On the other hand, even in apathetic London, seventy-five per cent. of the voters can be got to take part in the election of a body with such varied activities as the County Council. Reduce the number of local elections to one and the difficulties of getting good candidates and of arousing the electorate will disappear.

### One Municipal Body.

We therefore conclude in principle in favor of the concentration of existing local authorities into one elected body for each locality to deal with all the public business of that locality. As regards education that would mean the councils of counties and county boroughs. Even those who are in favor of an *ad hoc* body agree that the parish

is too small an area for School Board purposes, and that the counties and large boroughs must be taken as the units. The same recommendation was made by the Secondary Education Commission in respect of secondary education, and as they said, "it is impossible to deny to the county and county borough councils the character of being already, in a sense, educational authorities" (page 123). This is indeed another conclusive argument against basing the unity of education on the School Board. The county and borough councils have been in possession of the field of secondary and technical education for ten years, they have rating powers, they have spent an enormous sum of public money—they cannot be ousted from their position. Sir John Gorst said, at Bradford, 12<sup>th</sup> June, 1899, "There was no local body which more nearly approach being an independent local parliament than the town council of a great borough. These town and county councils had men serving upon them who were as fitted for local administration as any body of men in the country." Clothed with the additional functions of poor-law and education they would offer—even more than they do now—positions of sufficient dignity and importance to attract men of great ability. Frequently is the town council the training ground for a parliamentary career, but not often does that occur with the school board or the board of guardians.

With such bodies we would get finally clear of religious quarrels. A theological disputant may catch the public attention during a school board contest, but he is not at all likely to be mistaken for an expert on main drains or electric lighting. Knowing that school boards are strictly controlled by the Education Department people do not get up enough enthusiasm to keep out the theologians, but it would be very different with town councils. There are no sectarian rows at the meeting of the London Technical Education Board, even when renowned theologians are present. The only drawback would be that women are eligible for boards of guardians and school boards but not for town councils. This is an argument for reforming the town councils, not for maintaining in existence useless or inefficient authorities.

There is still one argument to be dealt with. If all local services are to be placed under one local authority, the latter will be overburdened. This cry is raised whenever any new municipalization is undertaken; whether it be gas, water, tramways, or what not that is to be taken over, the opponents are always oppressed by the picture of councillors staggering under a weight of cares. Yet we can see, for instance, Glasgow after having municipalized all its services—gas, water, tramways, electricity, steamboats, art galleries, etc—now calmly going to consider the municipalization of the drink traffic and of the milk supply and the institution of a municipal bank. What is not seen is that each service after it is set going tends to become automatic, and requires only supervision not administration in detail from the representative authority. The great defect of local administration is that an undue amount of detail work is done by committees, work of a similar nature to that which is done by the permanent officials of the imperial civil service. Apart from the increase of expense caused by the triplication of similar departments and supervising officers, with three local authorities each employing a separate staff it is impossible for anyone of them to offer—except



for one or two of the higher posts—a sufficiently good career to attract men of the same capacity as are to be found in the civil service. By amalgamating the authorities it would be possible to create a municipal civil service, efficient enough to be entrusted with powers similar to those possessed by the great departments of the State. A not unfair example of the waste of effort over detail is the following: For the purpose of instructing children in some housewifery classes in London it was found necessary to buy some feeding bottles. A sub-committee of the School Management Committee was appointed to consider the subject. Their recommendation was reported on by the officials, the Chairman of the Committee had to approve or reject, the decision of the Committee had to be taken, and finally a report was made to the Board. Nineteen years of administrative experience have failed to provide a remedy for this kind of thing, and only strong compulsion from the outside, such as a great access of additional duties, will force the local bodies to remodel their system. Meanwhile, contemporaneously with this elaboration of detail, the “experts” of the Board are immersed in the regulation of trifles and important educational matters are neglected for sheer want of time.

#### Constitution of the New Educational Authority.

Under the Technical Instruction Acts the town and county councils have spontaneously developed their own organization for educational purposes. These Acts, said Sir John Gorst,\* “having been passed in great haste, happily abstained from prescribing any particular organization, and the organization of the town and county councils for education purposes had grown up of itself, and had not been prescribed by Parliament. The power was in almost every case exercised by means of a technical instruction committee, which was always, or almost always, of a representative character.” In the West Riding of Yorkshire, for example, this committee consisted of twenty-six members of the county council and five co-opted members, of whom (in 1894) one was the inspector of schools, one had been a member of the Technical Education Commission, and one was the president of the West Riding Chamber of Agriculture. The London Technical Education Board, which has been invested with full executive powers by the County Council, consists of twenty members of the Council and thirteen representatives of other bodies nominally appointed by the Council but really nominated by the London School Board (3), the City and Guilds of London Institute (3), the London Parochial Charities Board (2), the Headmasters' Association (1), the National Union of Teachers (1), and the London Trades Council (1). This system has worked so well that it ought to be continued. The authority for education should, therefore, be the county and county borough councils acting through statutory committees composed of a majority of councillors, and the remainder co-opted members, among whom should be women and representatives of local educational interests.

#### The Abolition of School Boards.

While our ideal is the concentration of all local business in the hands of one local body, it cannot be attained by revolutionary

\* Bradford, 11th June, 1899

means. The first thing to be done is to sweep away the rural school boards, which as a whole are hopelessly inefficient. But with the large boroughs it is different. So long as the electors of Bradford, Leeds, Birmingham or London are satisfied to have a separate board for primary education, there is no reason why their desire should not be gratified, until they should choose the opposite course. Small boroughs and urban districts again are in much the same condition as rural parishes, and for educational purposes they should be merged in the county. There are two distinct classes of boroughs: county boroughs with a population usually exceeding 50,000; and boroughs not above 20,000 in population, which have neither their own police nor the administration of reformatory and industrial schools, the Explosives Act, the Weights and Measures Act, Adulteration Acts, and Diseases of Animals Act. Boroughs of the intermediate class admit of no regular classification. Most of them have their own police, while urban districts, however large, never have.

The school boards of boroughs and urban districts with less than 10,000 population should certainly be merged in the counties boards, and it would be desirable that such boards as those of Oxford, Congleton, Macclesfield, etc., which have no schools, or as Blackburn, Canterbury, Worcester, etc., which have only a very small proportion of the children under their care, should not be retained. A limit of a thousand children—a number often found in one school—might be taken as the minimum permitting the separate existence of a board, which would practically exclude all places with a population below 20,000. Here political considerations might intervene, but taking this figure, all boroughs and urban sanitary districts with populations above 20,000 would be allowed to retain their own school boards. The inducement of spreading their education rate over the county would sooner or later cause them to drop their separate authority. We should then have finally to deal only with the councils of counties (including London) and county boroughs. Meanwhile we would get rid of some 380 boards—520 boroughs with less than 20,000 population having no boards. Should anyone object that this is too great an interference with local self-government, it may be pointed out that only twenty-nine of the places affected have control of their own police, and that newly incorporated towns, however large, are not entrusted with this important function.

### Boroughs.

Boroughs and urban districts electing to retain their school boards would have these authorities acting as at present, so far as regards education in the standards of the education code, or under the evening continuation code.

Where a school board has in its schools day pupils above the standards, or evening pupils not working under the evening continuation code, it should continue to administer such schools, but should do so subject to any regulations for the co-ordination of such higher grade or other non-primary instruction that may be made by the county council, subject to appeal by the school board to the Board of Education.

In London and the county boroughs, the authority for education of all kinds above the primary grade should be the county council



acting through a statutory committee, composed of a majority of councillors, and the remainder co-opted members, among whom should be women, and representatives nominated by the school board and of any other local educational interest.

### Counties.

In counties other than London and the county boroughs, the county council, acting through a similar statutory committee, should be the authority for education of all grades, as well as all kinds, except in respect of primary education in such boroughs and urban districts exceeding 20,000 in population as have and elect to retain separate school boards.

Where a school board has been dissolved, the parish or urban district council should be the committee of managers for the schools formerly belonging to such board, and should exercise such powers, subject to such regulations and conditions as may from time to time be decided on by the county council.

For the purposes of education other than of primary grade, the county council should divide the county into suitable local districts, and appoint a local committee for each district, with such powers (including the administration of any educational institutions within such district, and the dispensing of any grant), and subject to such regulations as it should think fit. This is done already, for example, in Devon.

Provided that the council of any non-county borough or urban district having a population exceeding 20,000 should have power to apply to be constituted a local district, with or without the addition of adjacent areas, and the county council should then, if the proposed local district is suitable, appoint the council of the non-county borough or urban district, or a committee thereof, with or without additional members, to be the local committee for that district. The council of any non-county borough or urban district, if aggrieved at the way in which any local district or local committee was formed, should be enabled to appeal to the Board of Education on the subject.

The county councils should possess the following powers:—

- (a) To inspect, aid, and supply education of all kinds above the primary grade.
- (b) To grant additional aid to primary schools not belonging to a school board, under the conditions hereinafter specified.
- (c) To undertake such other powers and duties with regard to education as might from time to time be devolved upon them by the Board of Education.
- (d) To expend out of the county rate, in addition to the "Beer and Whiskey Money," a sum not exceeding 3d. in the £ on their educational work. This does not sound much, but with a twopenny rate for secondary education, Dr. Glazebrook told the Secondary Education Commission that Lancashire would be transformed in twenty years.

In addition to the foregoing, the county council should have all the powers of a school board in districts where no school board existed, and should be enabled to levy a special county rate for the

necessary expenditure uniformly over the county other than the boroughs and urban districts where school boards continued.

### Voluntary Schools.

The "voluntary" schools are a financial anomaly. Out of an expenditure of £2 2s. 5d. per scholar, 6s. comes from voluntary subscriptions and 1s. 8d. from fees, books, etc. The rest is met from public funds. One day the taxpayer will get tired of this kind of taxation without representation, but meanwhile, the voluntary schools are perishing from want of funds. There is no reason why children should be starved of knowledge while the taxpayers are hesitating about taking possession of their own property—their own property, for the schools would have been shut up long ago but for grants out of the national exchequer. Here again we can proceed gradually and avoid friction, and so the following proposal is made:—

In order to increase the efficiency and public control over "voluntary" public elementary schools, the county council should be empowered, if it thinks fit, to offer to such schools a grant of a sum not exceeding 5s. per scholar per annum, to be expended on the improvement of the teaching staff, or in such other way for increasing the educational efficiency of the school as the county council may direct, on condition that the owners and managers thereof consent:

- (a) To allow the county council to inspect the schools, frame regulations for their administration, and audit their accounts.
- (b) To make all future appointments and dismissals of teachers subject to the confirmation of the county council.
- (c) To constitute a committee of managers, to be approved by the county council, which shall invariably include two members to be annually nominated by the parish, urban district, borough, or metropolitan borough council, as the case may be; meet at least once in every term, appoint its own chairman and clerk, and have brought before it all school business (including the appointment, suspension, or dismissal of teachers, the school log, and the school accounts); be responsible for the whole management of the school; and transmit copies of its minutes annually to the county council.

Provided that the managers of any "voluntary" school may appeal to the Board of Education in any case of grievance against the county council.

### Conclusion.

These practical suggestions agree in the main with the proposals of the Secondary Education Commission. They are not put in here as a complete scheme but as a draft of the principal clauses of a new Education Act. If they are passed into law they will effect great improvements in our educational machinery, and make way for the full unification of all local services. With education proper we have not here to deal, but only with administrative machinery. Much is required in reform of educational methods and principles, but the place for that is not in this Tract.