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OURSELVES

WITH this issue FORUM appears in a new dress. For a journal concerned with new trends, it is not perhaps inappropriate that we should heed the advice of typographical experts at the Leicester College of Art to achieve a more readable layout. We are grateful for the help we have received in this matter, and should welcome the reactions of our readers — favourable or critical — to the change.

Another improvement is no less important, and we are even more sure of its welcome. We are glad to announce a reduction in price. Our established circulation enables us to move deliberately against the general trend of rising prices and costs. For those taking out new subscriptions, or renewing old subscriptions, from the date of publication of this issue, the price will be 7s. 6d. per annum, post free, instead of 8s. 6d. Similarly the price of an individual number, from September, will be 2s. 6d. instead of 3s.

Today, after only two years' existence, FORUM is read all over the world — from Curzon Street to China, from the Isle of Man to India, from the Netherlands to Nigeria and New Zealand. We have a particularly strong foothold in Australia. In Britain FORUM circulates in all types of school, as well as in many training colleges and universities.

This initial success encourages us to ask our readers to help to extend our influence still further. If you believe that our contribution to new ideas and new trends in education is worth while, please make the journal known to others. In particular, will you make it your good turn for the term to get one new subscriber? The order form is on page 103.

The Crowther report raises many important questions, which demand much more exhaustive study than we can give here. We propose, in future numbers, to deal with the most urgent of these in turn.

The first will be EXAMINATIONS. In our next issue Mr. A. E. Howard, headmaster of Forest Hill Comprehensive School, London, will consider this subject in the light of both the Crowther report and the forthcoming report from the Secondary School Examinations Council.

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Although the Crowther Report received a general welcome on its publication last November, voices have been raised questioning not only the value of its analysis but also some of its recommendations. It may be as well at the start, therefore, to make clear that in our view the Crowther Report is a document of outstanding importance for the future of education in this country; that the Government's refusal to implement its main recommendation is a tragedy, but that if this decision can be reversed, major changes can be brought about in the educational scene in line not only with the social and technological needs of the time, but also with the pressing needs of those composing the age-group concerned—the 15's to 18's.

In the first place, the Crowther Report—unlike so many contemporary educational discussions—has perspective. It looks to the future, assesses its requirements, and in this light judges the effectiveness of present-day education and determines its proposals and their priorities. What is the main conclusion? It is that the scientific revolution now under way not only requires high level scientists and technologists, but makes it absolutely necessary to raise the *general* level of education: 'it is not only at the top but almost to the bottom of the pyramid that the scientific revolution of our times needs to be reflected in a longer educational process'. All must comprehend the impact of modern technology if a dangerous division in society is to be avoided: all should have a 'modicum of mechanical common sense'; and, with the rapid technological changes now taking place, all need to be prepared for change in their jobs—adaptability becomes more important than the acquisition of specific skills, and this is a function of education.

The main need, therefore, is for an all-round improvement in the level of education. But the urgent need for a far greater number of highly educated men and women is also made abundantly clear: 'We shall have to mobilise far more of our human potentialities,' says Crowther, 'if there are to be not only enough pure scientists and technologists, but the whole army of technicians and craftsmen that will be needed for industry and agriculture.' It is in the light of such considerations

as these that the Crowther Report assesses the present and the needs of the future.

The council is outspoken about the present state of English education. There is a real danger of our 'lagging behind the times'. Not only is there a grave waste of talent due to too early leaving by 'our brightest children', but the figure of only 12% of the age group in full-time education at 17, and of 6% at 20, is 'not nearly good enough'. 'The education that is provided for the great mass of the children is inadequate both in its quality and in its duration.' These are hard words; we believe they are justified. Apart from the raising of the school leaving age, the main proposal, which seems to have been overlooked in much of the discussion recently, is that no less than 50% of young people between the age of 15 and 18 should be in full-time education by 1980. To achieve this would be tantamount to an educational revolution.

Chairman's achievement

An important feature of the Report is the way in which the council has taken to heart the lessons to be learnt from the new trends in education which have taken shape in the last few years, and which FORUM exists to chronicle and discuss—in particular the lessons from extended courses in modern schools and from comprehensive schools. Both these developments have in the past met with the sharpest opposition. G.C.E. courses in modern schools were first undertaken by some pioneering schools several years ago in direct opposition to official policy as set down by the Ministry of Education in a whole series of pamphlets—and, of course, in opposition to that notorious document, the Norwood Report. To have effectively reconciled the widely differing standpoints of several members of his council on these and other matters is certainly one of Sir Geoffrey Crowther's greatest achievements.

That these developments were strongly opposed a few years ago is, however, by the way; the fact is that the council has learned some (but not all) of these lessons—that it piles up a great deal of evidence stressing the educability of the average child, and that in many ways it lends support to new and positive tendencies in English education.

Thus, figures are given showing the extraordinarily rapid growth of G.C.E. candidates from secondary modern schools—from 4,068 in 1953 to 16,787 in 1958—an ever-increasing *proportion*, incidentally, of the increasing numbers staying on voluntarily beyond 15. The point is made that a 'substantial proportion' of these candidates are drawn from the 'B' streams 'and a few even from lower down'.

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Comprehensive schools, Crowther adds, 'have a similar experience'. All this goes to show that 'good educational facilities, once provided, are not left unused', and that at present many boys and girls are 'deprived of educational facilities which they would use well and which they are legally entitled to receive'. In general, the conclusion is that pupils of 'average ability' can achieve 'far more than we used to think possible' in an academic course—'given the chance and desire'.

Dealing with the need for a five-year course in the modern school, the council makes an extremely valid point when it states that this need has been made apparent 'by a growing realisation of what the ordinary boy and girl can achieve, a knowledge that was previously obscured by the fact that he nearly always left school before his potentialities had become apparent'. Where the staffs of modern schools have developed such courses, as a result of their flexibility of mind, inventiveness and imagination, 'schools are beginning to look like the first blue-prints of what secondary education for all should be'.

Staying at school

The Report also pays tribute to the comprehensive schools (and the two-tier variant) for their part in this development. 'The whole experience of comprehensive schools,' says Crowther, 'shows a much greater willingness to stay on than had ever been expected by those who argued from the experience of the working of the tripartite system as it was a few years ago.' We know, apart from the evidence given in this Report, that 65% to 80% stay to 16 in London's comprehensive schools; 40% to 50% in the two-tier schools of Leicestershire. Elsewhere in this number, Mr. McBeath deals with this specific issue—at his school (Mount Grace in Middlesex) some 77% are already voluntarily staying beyond 15. This experience is paralleled elsewhere; in some modern schools in Birmingham as many as 60% are staying on—and these figures are still rising.

These are still isolated pockets in a great desert of modern schools which offer no such opportunity. But it is good to see this success not only receiving official recognition, but also being used as a moral for the future development of the educational system as a whole. An exciting prospect arises from the evidence that parents who have themselves had schooling beyond the compulsory age want their own children, in turn, to benefit: 40% of them ask for schooling up to 18. So when 'second generation' grammar school pupils come in, between 1965 and

1975, there should be an even steeper rise than at present in the proportion staying on.

Part of the value of the Report in this respect is that its attention is not confined to the schools, but reaches out into the whole system of further education—and here again the relevant lessons are drawn. The Report proves beyond question, with massive facts, that there are great sources of talent still untapped or under-developed among those who go early to work. Two out of every five of our ablest boys (the top 10%) leave school not later than 16; two out of three in the next group (10% to 30% on an ability scale) leave at 15. In the top ability group, the percentage of manual workers' sons who leave at 15 is twice as high as the average; and two out of three never get so far as attempting a sixth form course.

Wasted ability

But the matter goes further than this. In the field of further education, as the Report justifiably points out, the door is not closed and a second chance is given (if often under very difficult conditions) to anyone 'who has the persistence to continue and the ability to succeed'. Here there sit together, at the same desks, ex-secondary modern and ex-grammar school pupils; and the former are often more successful than the latter. 'There are many boys and girls coming up through other streams [than the grammar school] who, by the time they have reached the age with which we are concerned, can fully hold their own in intelligence with the Sixth Former'. And, they add, 'in spite of the so-called "creaming" from grammar schools, there are still many who eventually come to the front in spite of a truncated education in schools which were often not equipped to provide the basic scientific education they need'. That much ability is being wasted is supported on the results of non-verbal intelligence tests—one investigation reported that '40% of National Certificate students and even as many as 12% of the craft students showed themselves to be the equal in intelligence of the university students'.

The Report draws the inevitable conclusion: that we cannot afford to allow so much talent to go unutilised—especially in view of the tremendous efforts being made by other countries to develop their human resources; the object of policy must be 'to keep all doors open as long as possible'. 'Any system of selection, however accurate a classification at the time it was made, becomes to some extent inaccurate with the passage of time' and, Crowther adds, the longer the period the greater the fallibility. 'With human beings, no selection can be regarded as final.'

As the Report rightly says, this is one of the principal reasons why in some areas comprehensive and bilateral schools are being introduced. The 'two-sided system', the council states, 'is unlikely to survive in the form it existed five or six years ago, or to be replaced by a tripartite system of the kind that used to be suggested'. As more and more people come to believe that it is wrong to label children for all time at 11, 'the attempt to give mutually exclusive labels to schools will have to be abandoned. All over the country changes are being made that profoundly modify the previous pattern of education'—in particular, different variants of the comprehensive school are being established, all of which aim to reduce the waste of talent which arises from the overlap in ability. The Report includes an interesting table which shows the present existence of 61 comprehensive and 45 bilateral schools, and another table showing local authority plans almost to double the number of these schools by 1965, when they would contain over 11% of all secondary pupils in the country.

* * *

Having said all this, we must draw attention to certain limitations in the educational outlook of the Report. We said at the start that the Crowther council has taken to heart the lessons to be learnt from the new trends in education. This statement must be qualified. While accepting these new trends as far as they go, the council does not seem to understand that this is a dynamic process—that in fact the degree of 'educability' of the 'average child' has not been determined once and for all by what has been achieved by certain pioneer schools to date.

Modern school examinations

This acts as a distinct limitation on their outlook—one that is important since the whole future of education in this country is under discussion. For instance, it is strongly stated that probably less than 50% of modern school children should receive a systematic education leading to some form of external examination: even to think of such an examination for the other 50% would be an 'absurdity'; the majority of secondary modern pupils, therefore, should receive an education 'developed on quite different lines'.

Now all are aware of the dangers of external examinations as at present set and conducted. There is, in particular, a good case for local examinations which are internal, permitting different syllabuses in different schools, but externally assessed. But this does not mean that a sharp differentiation should be made between two major groupings of

children. If the experience of the last five or six years (and it is little more than this) has shown that 25% to 30% of modern school children should be given a more systematic education than was envisaged in the post-war period, why should the experience of the next 10 or 20 years not show that this should apply to very many more of the modern school population? All who have experience of this movement in the last few years have commented on the effect of such an approach on the pupils as a whole, and on the snowballing character of the movement once set under way. As the council quite rightly point out, we just do not know about the potentialities of the large majority of the pupils in the schools, and we will only begin to know about this as a result of experience—of actually attempting systematically to educate the *average* child. It may be true *at the moment* that the 'richest vein of untapped human resources' lies in what Crowther calls 'the second quartile'; but the future may well show, *once the opportunity is given*, that the third and fourth quartiles can yield equally rich returns.

Outmoded theories

This limitation on the thinking of the Crowther council is closely linked to their acceptance—if in a modified form—of the outmoded and unscientific hypothesis, popularised by the Norwood committee, concerning different 'types of mind'. The old educational dichotomy—between those who learn best through 'abstractions' and those who learn through 'practical activity'—is made the basis of a plea that there should be two routes of higher secondary education—the 'practical' and the 'academic'.

Modern learning theory provides no basis for such a distinction. All children without exception need the support of practical experience in the formation of abstractions, and an education which ignores this is simply a bad education. Again, no professional psychologist has ever supported the theory of different 'types of mind' outlined in the Norwood Report; this, on the contrary, came under the most rigorous attack from psychologists in general. It is a pity, therefore, that this idea is put forward in this way.

However, when all is said and done, the Crowther council invests the idea of a 'practical' education with a great deal more significance than was the case in the past, since it is genuinely concerned with the intellectual development of young people through practical activity. A crucial question it asks is 'how the programme of practical work can be designed so that the intellectual stimulus and the theoretical knowledge arise out of it—and how the practical work and the intellectual value deriving from it may

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best be assessed?' If a new educational approach linking practice with theory can be achieved, a crucial step forward will have been taken in educational method—one that will certainly pay big dividends in human development.

Such an approach, the Report claims, is best suited to the one-third of pupils in non-selective schools whom the council wishes to see remaining in full-time education to 18. One could hazard a guess that it would also provide the best approach for those in the selective schools as well. To develop these techniques requires a great extension of educational research—especially in the neglected field of human learning theory. From the hit or miss empiricism of present methods we need to move towards a science of education.

* * *

This is an issue which may be argued in the future. Before going on to discuss particular recommendations, however, there is one important point that should be made. The Report argues strongly that the many recommendations cannot be carried out unless they are adopted as a 'coherent, properly phased development programme, extending by timed and calculated steps a long way into the future'. In other words, there must be an effective long-term plan covering the educational system as a whole. This, we believe, is essential; that it has been made clear is particularly to be welcomed.

Minister's rejection

All the greater, therefore, is the disappointment at the debate in the House of Commons towards the end of March and the Minister's speech. Although accepting the main strategy of the Report in a general way, not only did Sir David not even refer to the need for such a plan, but, equally important, he announced the Government's refusal to implement the main recommendation: that a date should be fixed now for the raising of the school leaving age at some point between 1966 and 1968.

In rejecting this proposal, the Minister showed no awareness of the carefully argued case made for these dates, particularly in the relation to the 'trough' or 'valley' in the total load which secondary schools will have to bear, and which occurs at this time. It will, in fact, be *more* difficult to raise the age in the 70's than in the late 60's—in terms of the immediate number of teachers required for the operation. Hence the extreme danger that the present postponement may lead to further postponements later, so that the final achievement of this reform—on the statute book already for 16 years—may

recede once more into the distance. That the National Union of Teachers should not support the adoption of a definite timetable is a further disappointment.

Discussion on this proposal during the last few months has shown that, while most people accept the need for further full-time education, there is concern about keeping a minority of 'tough' boys and girls in a school environment. But the more children are referred to as 'sullen louts' and 'brazen hussies' the less perspective is there for educational advance. The point, surely, is to create the conditions in which the more difficult and backward children *can* be educated; and the experience of certain modern and comprehensive schools has already shown that this problem is by no means intractable. Further, the council was fully aware of this problem, and the Report makes clear that transfer at 15 to colleges of further education, or other exceptional measures, would still be possible to meet exceptional cases.

A new organisation ?

The Report does not, perhaps, sufficiently consider the case for a much more general provision of full-time education over 15 in separate colleges, though it does recommend experiment in the development of such institutions, and says: 'we think it should be accepted as one of the major tasks before English education to construct a new system of education for the years between 15 or 16 and 18'. Such provision might help to solve a problem noticed but too lightly dismissed by Crowther: the greater occurrence of delinquency in the last year at school than in the first year at work.

The Report is particularly valuable when dealing with the 'neglected educational territory' of part-time education from 15 to 18. Seven out of eight young people aged 16 to 18 are already earning their living, and such part-time education as exists is very largely vocational. It pays employers to give a third of the boys day-release; but only 8% of the girls, because most of them will soon leave on or after marriage, receive this benefit. 'The country,' says Crowther, 'has hardly made a beginning with the continuing education of girls after they leave school.'

'Night classes' for young people are severely criticised: more than one a week is too great a strain. The council is also deeply concerned about the high wastage among those who begin technical courses. 'Only one student in 11 succeeds in climbing the National Certificate ladder from bottom to top, and only one in 30 does so in the time for which the course was designed . . . Some students,

of course, do not aim at, and could not reach, anything beyond the Ordinary National Certificate. Even so, only one in four who start at the bottom reach this stage, and only one in nine in the standard time.'

Better conditions of study are needed—and that means, first, more time (i.e., more day time); second, closer integration with the schooling which has preceded further education; and third, better teaching. There are four part-time teachers to one full-time. About three-quarters of the annual intake of 2,400 full-time teachers to further education are without training. There is only one full-time woman teacher to every seven men.

By comparison with the jungle of technical and part-time education, sixth form problems are straightforward. The outstanding fact is that the number of sixth form pupils is increasing faster than the provision of university places. Eleven per cent of all 17-year-olds are now at school. The result is fiercer competition, an excessive striving for scholarships and high marks in advance level papers, and narrower, more intensive learning of prescribed syllabuses.

Study in depth

The Report comes down strongly in favour of the English system of specialisation or 'study in depth', although it criticises the use of so-called minority time. This standpoint has aroused a good deal of controversy: indeed, we ourselves have a split editorial personality on this issue! Some back the Crowther line, as an indication of sound English preference for the master craftsman over the jack of all trades. While favouring a minimal common core they regard with suspicion any general plan which might prescribe, for example, that all must study English and mathematics. They insist that the school or college must offer a wide range of optional courses, any of which may be studied intensively if desired; and argue that the programme of studies of each pupil is best decided according to individual need, by consultation between pupil, parent and teacher.

Others (for example, Mr. A. D. C. Peterson in his report *Arts and Science Sides in the Sixth Form*) hold that sixth formers are by no means so 'special subject-minded' as Crowther would have us believe. Rather are they in chains to the requirements of university entrance. Our high degree of early specialisation is peculiar to this country: can it really be that it is all the rest who are out of step?

There will, however, be general agreement that a solution to this thorny problem can only be arrived

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at by joint consultation between university and school teachers. Unfortunately, no effective body yet exists which can tackle the matter.

Many wise things about sixth form education are said, and said exquisitely, by the chief writer of the Report, Mr. D. G. O. Ayerst. He describes the golden quality of some sixth form learning and teaching which, at its best and free from the pressures which have recently come upon it, is among the most precious features of English education. 'Intellectual discipleship' is the most essential feature of the sixth form; and it can only be achieved by teachers of real quality.

* * *

Teachers! The word brings us back to the main Crowther recommendation that the age of compulsory education should be raised to 16 in one of the years 1966, 1967, and 1968.

There are today three main targets: (1) reduction in class sizes, (a) to fit the present regulation—a maximum of 40 in a primary class, a staffing ratio of 1:16 (class maximum 30) in a secondary school, and then (b) to a maximum of 30 in primary classes; (2) raising the leaving age to 16; (3)—a lukewarm favourite with the Government now, it seems—county colleges.

The Minister has rejected the Crowther timetable, which assumed a vigorous recruiting campaign and a great expansion of training colleges and departments. The council stressed the psychological importance of setting a definite date for raising the leaving age and straining every nerve to reach the target by that date. The Minister has declined the challenge, and will not contemplate raising the leaving age before 1970.

Can the teachers be trained ?

The training and supply of teachers are, then, the crucial subjects on which this issue turns. The Crowther council believes that, with effective planning, the teachers can be found. But recently a new objection has been put forward by the influential secretary of the Association of Education Committees, Dr. W. P. Alexander.

Dr. Alexander argues that it will not be possible to begin the major reforms (1(b), 2, and 3 above) until 1972—not because there will be insufficient student teachers of good quality forthcoming, not from any lack of buildings or equipment, but solely because, in his view, we could not recruit tutors of sufficient quality to maintain existing standards of teacher training.

We do not believe that there is any sound evidence to justify Dr. Alexander's pessimism. A similarly

great effort at expansion of universities and training colleges, along with the raising of the school leaving age to 15, was successfully undertaken under far more difficult conditions, and in a much shorter space of time, during the late 'forties. Who would now have had it otherwise?

The history of education in this country during the past 200 years gives no encouragement to those who are obsessed with the notion that there is a limited pool of ability beyond which nothing can be done. It is a record of expansion accompanied by rising standards. As the evidence garnered in the Crowther Report shows, we have as yet no good reason for setting a ceiling to man's development and achievements.

Improvement will not, of course, come without effort. We suggest two ways in which good tutors may be obtained. First, they should be offered university status and university salaries. Nothing less than a university education will be good enough for the teaching profession in a prosperous future Britain. Why not start the process of integration now? It will probably take twenty years to complete. That is all the more reason for wasting no time in beginning the process.

Second, many good, keen teachers in schools could make a valuable contribution to the practical side of teacher training. It is important that close links should be maintained between teacher and tutor, between school and college, if theory and practice are to illumine each other. A modest experiment on these lines in Leicester has proved encouraging. Its general extension could make possible a substantial increase in student numbers, without vastly enlarging full-time staff. And nothing could raise the teacher's status in the community more than that the profession should, in equal partnership with the universities, the local authorities and the Ministry, take a fully responsible part in the training of new recruits.

* * *

The Crowther Report shows the way to substantial reforms in the 1960's, not the 1970's. We believe that it is still possible to achieve this objective. To do so requires a major campaign to raise the whole status of education, and above all to recruit the necessary teachers. The logic of events may yet force the Government to change its mind—to work out the long-term plan as proposed in the Report, and to implement it by stages. We can under no circumstances allow this opportunity to go by default. Instead, we must ensure that Sir Geoffrey Crowther, as a good economist, has not wasted his time.

THE EDITORS

These Juniors go Exploring in History

S. H. ZOEFTIG

*Mr. Zoefitg was formerly head of Woodmansterne primary school, London.
He is now senior education lecturer at Avery Hill training college.*

An unstreamed class of boys and girls, about ten years of age, were completing the study of the growth of communication between people from the earliest times to the present day. The title and objects of the study had been decided upon four or five weeks earlier and the children were now busy getting things in order for their exhibition and talks. They were extremely busy on it. This exhibition would be seen by other classes of the school and these classes would listen to talks on the subject by the children who had been working on it. Around the walls of the classroom were displayed selections of written material, illustrations and time charts so that the development of the subject was apparent at a glance. There was a great deal of movement and quiet discussion going on. Time was short, for the completion date had been set. Criticisms and suggestions were freely exchanged between the children and the teacher.

What had initiated this particular enquiry? Looking back it is rather difficult to ascertain the exact moment of starting and to give a definite reason why.

How it started

The teacher and class had been discussing writing—italic writing, its advantages and disadvantages and whether it was worthwhile trying it as a class or whether it would be better if some of the class volunteered to have a go first. Many aspects of writing and printing were discussed. Quill pens, Roman capitals, the Rosetti Stone, the writing and illumination of books, the invention of printing and modern methods of communication were some of the things mentioned. The subject was so extensive that certain topics were chosen which seemed to be of greatest interest and which gave a fair picture of the development. With the help of the teacher, focal points were decided upon: cave drawings and early man; Babylon and Egypt, to Greece and Rome; medieval times and the writing of books by hand; printing and its development up to present day; telephone and radio, post office and the tape recorder. Groups were formed quite freely and the particular part of the study to be considered by each group decided upon. There was no controversy

or friction concerning the grouping or the choice of subject, for the children had been working in this way since their infant days, and they knew that as soon as they got involved in their search for more knowledge of their subject, other things didn't really matter.

Searching for knowledge

Each group then went off to organise its own investigation and individual duties were undertaken. All joined in the search for books from the school library, the public libraries, the home; and extracts were found in encyclopaedias and text books. The help and advice of the teacher was sought when difficulties arose and the teacher was always suggesting means of getting hold of information.

Each boy or girl made a personal folder to contain the work each had in hand. Each group had a group folder to which all contributed something appertaining to the whole picture. On the wall space allocated to each group went selections from the group folder. Each boy or girl contributed something separately, or in conjunction with others. At the end, the work on the wall was made into a portfolio which became a summary of the whole study.

The time in school is not enough, and never is enough for the children. The study goes into the home and takes up the time of both parents and children. The enthusiasm of the children often infects the parents, and they also have found a pleasure in learning in a way they never knew at school.

Purposeful visits were made by children, with parents or on their own and in their own time, to museums and places of interest. They brought back pictures, illustrations and experiences which were added to their folders, some of which found their way eventually to the wall scheme. During the time spent on the investigation, the children had read many books, made or drawn many things and written much; and had seen how and where in time their period fitted in compared with other groups.

At the age of eight years these children may have found out about significant personalities who lived some time in the past. These people may have been explorers, scientists, soldiers or sailors, mathematicians, social reformers or kings and queens. They could have belonged to any nation. They all significantly influenced the way we live today. The children learnt and found out about the life of those times.

On the other hand they have studied the growth of some of the social services of which they had day to day experience. The ambulance was a starting point for health and medical development, hospitals and nursing, the fire engine for the story of fire, the mail van for postal communications, the teacher for education, and so on. History was all around them.

Much of the learning in the early years depends on the teacher. More stories and descriptions, more guidance and encouragement are necessary than with older children. The search for and provision of suitable books is a real problem here.

Yet for these young children a workable pattern was evident. The children wrote in their own words and in their own self-made books the things they had found out. Co-operative work was encouraged. The group folders and wall scheme were started. Interest was shorter at this age but again, the teacher, with his finger on the pulse of his class, knew when the time had come for the work to be wound up.

Deeper study

As the children grew so they went deeper into their subjects, reading, writing, listening, illustrating and making things with increasing power and skill. They were developing an attitude towards history as something live and interesting, satisfying their needs to explore and find out and to originate things. At the same time they were accumulating a store of information more significant and lasting because they had been so actively involved.

In their last years in school they would have dealt with a more specialised study such as a survey of the period 1688-1815. In this instance groups worked on The French Revolution, Dress, Transport and Social Life, The American War of Independence, Scientific Inventions, The Kings and Queens and Poets and Writers with a most interesting time chart evolved by some of the children. The same kind of unified presentation was achieved at the end.

It happens once a year that not only are all the classes working this way, they are all working on the same theme in history, geography, natural

science, or some other subject. Some time before Whitsun, at a staff meeting, the teachers discuss suitable projects bearing in mind the work of previous years, and arrange broad outlines for each class. The most recent one had a geographical basis and was called 'Farming'—but for history it could be 'Houses in History' or 'London, Past and Present' or one of a host of others.

London's history

When London was decided upon the usual staff meeting considered the difficulties. One teacher, an experienced lady, interested in nature study and the arts generally, couldn't fix on anything. Later it was with much pleasure that the history of the parks and open spaces was chosen, with the help of her 8-9 year old class. It satisfied her own interest in nature and related well with the age of her class. Excursions to the parks, the drawing of maps and sketches, the historical background and events connected with the parks, and the nature study involved provided rich experiences for all the children.

Other classes dealt with the plague and the fire of London, the development of London—through maps and descriptions—from Norman times to the present day, London river, famous Londoners, and buildings and monuments including the story of the Tower of London.

Towards end of term the work was brought to a finish in each classroom. Then each class made a contribution towards the presentation of the work in the school hall. Thus, in one place is seen the growth in ability and power of learning in a project with a historical bias. Parents can see it, and they are provided with an understanding of the abilities of children in writing and practical work at different ages. Children of all ages give talks and explain to other children, and adults, points about their work.

The class which studied the parks of London provided, in music, mime and movement, a demonstration of games and diversions both past and present. This same class on another occasion presented as part of their study, the industrial revolution in the same way. Always dramatic work and even broadcast items of past events have their place in the final celebration of the completion of the project.

I have attempted to show how children work individually, in groups, as a class and, occasionally, as a school, in such a subject as history. History is really concerned with all aspects of learning at this age. The past permeates the present and often geography, science, and other things become inevitably involved and join together in the study.

(continued on page 114)

Report from Bristol and the West of England

H. KNOWLSON

Dr. Knowlson is Staff Tutor at the University of Bristol Institute of Education. He spent some years in the Education Department of the Sudan. After a period of teaching in England, he joined the staff of an emergency training college before taking up his present post in 1949. Of the three counties covered by this report, he has worked in two and now lives in the third.

Previous articles in this survey of secondary education today have covered South Wales, the West Midlands and Yorkshire; the present report deals with the City and County of Bristol, Gloucestershire (with the county borough of Gloucester and the excepted district of Cheltenham), Wiltshire (with the excepted district of Swindon), and the county of Somerset (with the county borough of Bath). It is, in fact, the area served by the University of Bristol Institute of Education and within it must be some of the pleasantest country in England. To the north and east of Bristol rises the sharp edge of the Cotswolds, whilst to the west of the Severn Estuary is the Forest of Dean. Bath, surrounded by its hills lies on the Avon, upstream from Bristol, whilst Somerset, with its low-lying peat moors, the Mendips and the Quantock hills, lies to the south, meeting Devon on Exmoor. Wiltshire has a rich archaeological past and a well-farmed present, with Salisbury as its most attractive and interesting centre—a city, but not a county borough.

Bath

The historic and beautiful city of Bath has a rich provision of educational opportunity. In addition to its three training colleges and technical college, its two direct-grant and two maintained grammar schools, secondary technical school, and secondary modern schools, it has a considerable number of independent and private schools.

Boys and girls attending the city's primary schools take a selection examination and parents are asked to state a preference for grammar, technical or modern schools for their children. The secondary technical school draws about two-thirds of its pupils from the city and the remaining third from Somerset and Wiltshire. One of the modern schools is a particularly interesting one and is known as the secondary art school; pupils wishing to enter this school sit a special examination which forms part of the selection procedure. There is at present an all-age school for Roman Catholics, but the older children will soon go to a new secondary modern school.

The city has recently been zoned and normally children now attend the modern school serving their own district. All the modern schools provide commercial courses for girls, and for the boys there are special courses related to such subjects as horticulture, printing and motor engineering; these form part of the general education of the children and are not specifically vocational.

As all the secondary modern schools now prepare candidates for the G.C.E. at 'O' level, parents do not feel that all is lost if their child goes to a modern school.

Selection in the city is probably as fair as this process can possibly be; this is helped by the fact that the area is small and the administration can easily communicate with heads, and heads with one another. There is no formal selection procedure at the age of 13; a child who seems to the head and staff of a school to have been wrongly placed can easily be transferred to another school where he is on probation until the change is confirmed or the original selection upheld.

Bristol

The city and county of Bristol, with a population of nearly half a million, is an important educational centre in the west of England. In addition to its university, it has three training colleges and a number of famous schools, including Clifton College. The development plan for the city schools left open the question of whether the tripartite system of secondary education should be retained or be replaced by a system of comprehensive schools. Careful long-term planning, however, reserved a number of important and suitable sites for new secondary schools.

In addition to the independent and the direct-grant schools, there are seven maintained and aided grammar schools, a secondary technical school, a secondary commercial school, ten schools described as 'county secondary schools with grammar and modern streams', and a large number of secondary modern schools.

Not all pupils sit the selection examination, but those chosen to have an education of the grammar school kind have a wide choice of schools. It is perhaps natural that many of those who do very well indeed are to be found in the direct-grant schools or in the other grammar schools.

The schools 'with grammar and modern streams' form an interesting development in the direction of comprehensive education. Indeed they are sometimes described both from within and without, as 'comprehensive schools'. By others they are described as 'bilateral schools', whilst in the cautious words of the Education Committee's list, most of them appear as 'mixed schools'. Presumably 'mixed' refers to the fact that most are co-educational, but it would be true to say that their appearance has had a mixed reception both from educationalists and politicians. They have grown up during a period of socialist rule in the city, a rule which now exists on a very small majority indeed. It seems equally unlikely that the mixed schools will be 'unscrambled' or that all secondary education will become comprehensive; Bristol, therefore, seems likely to have both tripartite and comprehensive secondary education for some years to come.

The 'mixed' schools opened with younger pupils only and the pioneer ones have only just reached the stage of having a first year sixth form. Each may draw its 'selected' pupils from different parts of the city, whilst serving as a neighbourhood school for its 'unselected' pupils. Some are intended to be 6 form entry schools and others 9 form entry. Time will tell whether these schools will be able to reach real grammar school standards of scholarship and perhaps it is unfair to expect this whilst so many able children go to independent, direct-grant and other grammar schools in the city. In addition to presenting their abler pupils for G.C.E., the new-type secondary schools present candidates for the U.E.I. examination, as do the secondary modern schools. In one of the new schools in particular, interesting ideas of breaking a large school into workable units are being tried out—a division into a lower school for children of 11 to 13 and an upper school consisting of six houses.

Gloucester

The city of Gloucester is richly endowed—some say too richly endowed—with grammar school places. There are four grammar schools, two for boys and two for girls, and two secondary technical schools; the percentage of 'selected' children is very high indeed. The secondary modern schools have little chance to develop extended courses and a scheme exists whereby modern school pupils spend part time at the technical college or art school.

Gloucestershire

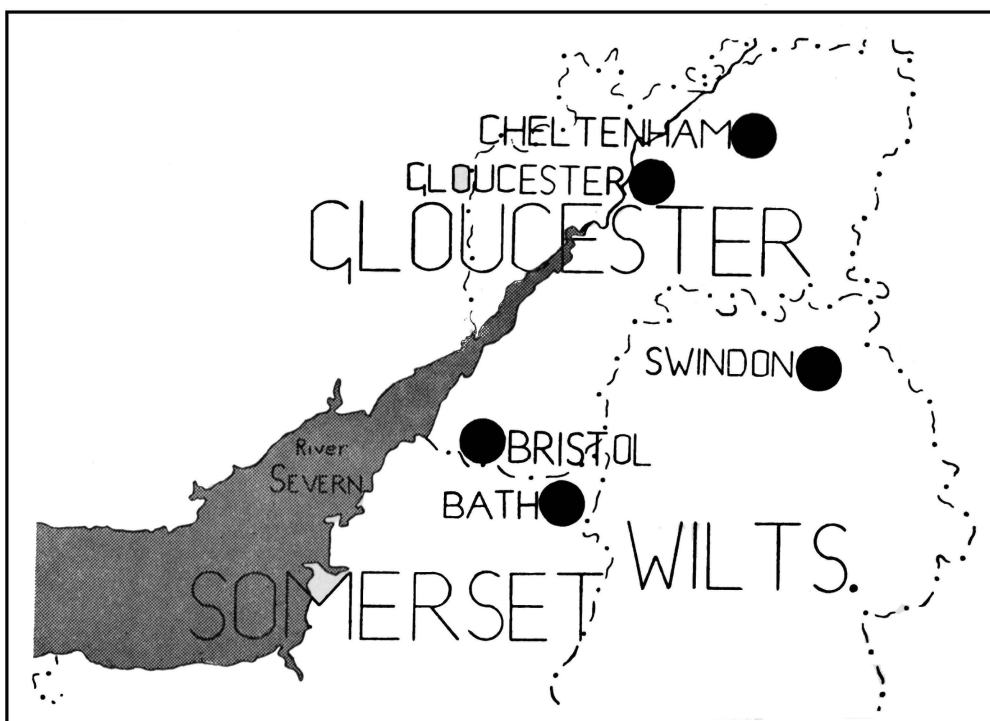
Gloucestershire operates a tripartite scheme, though it has two bilateral schools, both in small country towns. One thinks of the county as being a predominantly rural one and so it is, but in the north, around Cheltenham and Gloucester, and in the south forming a crescent round the northern boundaries of Bristol, are industrial areas, particularly related to the manufacture of aircraft. In these industrial areas the word 'technical' is either magic or 'naughty'. Parents and councillors view with satisfaction the opening of the new secondary technical schools and technical colleges, but heads of secondary modern schools see their abler pupils disappear with apprehension and the opportunities of developing advanced courses in their schools diminishing.

At Tetbury, in the Cotswolds, and at Newent in the Forest of Dean there are interesting bilateral schools. In each of these country towns a small grammar school existed and each was converted into a grammar/modern school. The alternative might have been the closing of the grammar schools, scattering their pupils to neighbouring schools and using the buildings as a modern school, or of having two small schools existing side by side in the same town. Opinions differ about the success of this scheme; some claim that, whilst the selection examination is still taken in the neighbourhood, anxiety about it has diminished as parents see that there is possibility of transfer from one stream to another in the same school. In any case, similar schools are likely to be opened in other parts of the county; the next bilateral school is to be opened, in spite of a good deal of local opposition, at Chipping Campden, absorbing the present secondary modern school at Moreton-in-Marsh.

Cheltenham, an excepted district of Gloucestershire, has a tripartite system with two single-sex grammar schools, a mixed secondary technical school and seven secondary modern schools. In the town are two Church of England training colleges and well-known public schools.

Somerset

In Somerset one has the impression that the county officials are carrying out with loyalty and determination, the decision of the elected representatives to adhere to the tripartite scheme. Reorganisation is almost complete and nearly all Somerset children are able to proceed to one of the three types of secondary school. As in other areas, the maintained secondary technical schools are heavily outnumbered by the grammar and the modern schools in the county.



Selection of pupils for grammar and modern schools takes into account the confidential assessments of heads of primary schools as well as the written tests and interviews. It is claimed that the procedure is not competitive and that grammar school places are found for all children for whom this kind of school is considered most suitable. The fact that a child's chance of being given a grammar school place wherever he may live in the county means, however, that some children have either very long and tedious daily journeys or are billeted, sometimes at considerable distances from their homes. These situations, which are tending to disappear as new grammar schools are opened, have caused considerable disquiet amongst parents in the county. A child attending a grammar school must have conditions which enable him to gain full value from the educational opportunities which a grammar school provides.

Many fine new generously equipped secondary modern schools have been opened in recent years, but the Committee complain that their hopes and plans have been restricted by Ministry action. Attempts are made to convince parents that allocation of grammar places is not competitive, that 'the scholarship' is an obsolete expression, and that children admitted to modern schools need not arrive with a sense of failure. The effectiveness of this propaganda is difficult to assess. The head of a

secondary modern school who said, 'Parents only want to see me when they think there is some chance of their child leaving my school', was no doubt exaggerating, but there was probably some truth behind it. 'Creaming', as it is still called, of the modern schools takes place in the direction of the grammar schools and the secondary technical schools. Some of those who disappear to grammar schools do very well there.

Of the three secondary technical schools, two provide courses related to building and engineering, whilst the third is a very remarkable and interesting school with an emphasis on agriculture. In some cases long journeys or billeting are again involved, and many people in the county wonder if transfer is in the best interests of the children who move and of the morale of the modern school which they leave.

More than half the modern schools in the county are now entering pupils for G.C.E.; in 1959 one candidate passed in no less than eight subjects.

Wiltshire

In the county of Wiltshire, the tripartite system of secondary education is in operation with, here again, the emphasis on grammar and modern, rather than on technical schools. In fact, there are only two secondary technical schools in the county:

both of these are in Trowbridge, the administrative centre, one having commercial courses and the other being concerned with building.

Whilst it is said that any Wiltshire child who is suited to a grammar school education is given a place in such a school, the number of available places differ, partly for historical reasons, in different parts of the county. A child living in one area has, therefore, a better chance of a place than a child in another. This is almost inevitably a problem in a somewhat thinly-populated rural county; as has been mentioned, Somerset avoids it by billeting schemes. Wiltshire, however, allows the anomalies to exist. There is much to be said for and against these two ways of dealing with the situation.

A secondary modern school in one part of the county may, therefore, have much more intelligent children than a school in another area. The modern schools may lose children to the grammar schools or the technical schools at the age of 13, but a rather more serious problem which faces them is a development in the colleges of further education. Some years ago, when many modern schools were not in a position to offer extended courses, often on account of lack of buildings and other amenities, the further education colleges were permitted to offer such courses, leading to G.C.E. ordinary level. This was regarded as a temporary measure to continue until such time as conditions in the modern schools could be improved. Clearly this arrangement, if continued permanently, would seriously hinder the full development of schools. The stature of a secondary modern school and its ability to contribute to the growth of all its pupils is helped so enormously by the provision of extended courses, even if these can only be offered or taken advantage of, by a relatively few older pupils.

An interesting scheme in Wiltshire, a predominantly agricultural county, concerns the subject of rural studies. At a number of selected modern schools in the county, special facilities are being provided and special courses arranged for those who may wish to make their career on the land. Rural studies can make a great contribution to education in any school, but the special courses at selected schools will help pupils to prepare for entry to the county farm institute.

Swindon, an excepted district of Wiltshire, is just building a third grammar school; it has a number of secondary modern schools, some in fine new buildings.

In this part of England there has been little tendency to depart from the tripartite system of secondary education, except in Bristol, where the development of the new schools 'with grammar and modern streams' is being watched with interest.



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Bi-Polarity in the Secondary Modern School

CYRIL RAPSTOFF

In his admirable 'Report from the West Midlands' (FORUM, Vol. I, No. 3), Mr. B. F. Hobby revealed that in the County Borough of Birmingham 78% of the 11-year-olds attended modern schools, one-third of which provide extended courses including courses leading to the ordinary level of the G.C.E.

Mr. Hobby stated, 'This wide and rapid development of extended courses is perhaps the salient feature in the present phase of secondary organisation in Birmingham'.

In view of the inevitable fallibility of selection methods at 10+, the provision of these courses at secondary modern schools must be regarded as a service for those border-liners who, by some misfortune, were placed on the wrong side of the line.

For such children and others whose latent interest and ability have not yet become patent, the G.C.E. is an important label which they are not denied. Such a course may extend these pupils, revealing to them (as to others) an ability of which they were unsure or even unaware.

10 + failures

The examination does represent a tangible aim, a boon in a type of school where academic aimlessness may be a danger. It may also help to raise the standard of work done in at least part of the school. It must be remembered, however, that the secondary modern school population is the 78% for whom the 10+ represents a blow. Unquestionably the blow sometimes appears unfelt and at others it may be the stimulus for a desirable reaction, but for a large number of children it is crushing and depressing to a degree which no one has ascertained. In an examination-conscious society, and what more examination-conscious corner of it than the school itself, it is inevitable that some of the real significance of 10+ failure communicates itself to the children.

It is to this stratum that many schools are introducing the G.C.E. which becomes the paramount criterion of their work. The G.C.E. forms are the Olympus to which many will vainly strive but few will reach. The climb towards it may leave many weary broken travellers on its slopes, and while their view is limited to the conquest of its formidable crest, the view of greener pastures below will be lost, perhaps, for ever.

Some time ago I was fortunate to hear a conver-

sation among three intelligent children who, by coincidence, came from various secondary modern schools. They each insisted that their school was recognised as the best in Birmingham. They were obviously proud of their schools. But for me the interesting fact was that the discussion almost petered out when they all revealed possession of the trump card, 'Our school has a G.C.E. stream!'

The new criterion ?

This experience suggests that among secondary modern children where G.C.E. work is done, it may become the criterion of a good school and *ipso-facto* a good scholar. This is a far cry from the sanity of education according to age, aptitude and ability.

It would be interesting to hear from teachers in these schools of the various attitudes of teachers and children to non-participation in G.C.E. work, and of heads to allocation of staff talent through the streams. Comparison of the facilities and support given to remedial and inspirational work in retarded forms, and facilities and support for G.C.E. forms might be revealing.

In his article 'Widening "modern" horizons', which appears in Brian Simon's symposium *New Trends in English Education*, N. W. Carter reassures us on many of these crucial questions. He says there, 'Unity of purpose and achievement can be maintained by ensuring that as many masters as possible have a direct interest in the 'grammar' course. Conversely, it means that the whole staff are engaged in teaching in other streams. The 'E' stream (seriously retarded) departmental head has periods with the fifth form in G.C.E. Art, for example. The master in charge of the fifth takes classes in the 'D' stream. The staff as a whole is a corporate unit and *each member is aware of his colleague's problems*'.

Even here, the stress is on the 'grammar' with no acknowledgment of the fact that a secondary modern school may equally well be judged on the skilled attention and interest it devotes to the lowest 20%, and what educational literacy the potential anti-social element in society possesses.

And the price

If 'academic aspirations' in the modern school are going to shriek to the dull or backward the word 'Failure', we shall be paying in the streets, cafés, remand homes, borstal institutions and the prisons a far too heavy price for the G.C.E. label. The only solution (and I believe it possible while labels are so important in education) is a careful balance between these two potentially opposing poles in the modern secondary school.

(continued on page 111)

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Discussion

Row over the Rowe Line

The hatchets are out! The reviewers of A. W. Rowe's *The Education of the Average Child* and his admirers are fiercely engaged in educational combat, with no personalities barred. The author darts in with a bitter blow.

I feel that Mr. Rowe himself can clarify the issues. Answer to the following questions would partly help, and give opportunity for subjective and first-hand criticism not supplied in the book.

1. Mr. Rowe's obviously highly successful experiment took place in a school of medium size in a rural community. Does he think that it would be equally suitable and successful in a large school—say, 700+—in an old-established urban or industrial community?

2. Did Mr. Rowe experience many staff changes at Holmer Green, and how far did staff changes affect the efficiency or continuity of job-card methods?

3. Did Mr. Rowe find that the study in depth of certain topics, inherent to the job-card method, prevented a desirable wider acquaintance with the subject as a whole? In this context I am thinking particularly of geography, history and general science: I wonder also about the limiting factor culturally, in experience and in exercise of the critical faculty in this method when it is applied to music or literature.

4. Did the job-card method prove markedly less successful in any particular subject, or subjects?

5. What was the average number of children per class—i.e. those in the same age-group recognisable as a teaching or register unit?

The Education of the Average Child is thought-provoking; few will dissent from the principles Mr. Rowe proclaims, or their practice in part. Few secondary modern schools will not use this method to some degree. It is the use of the job-card method as the central feature for all studies which raises great doubt.

H. E. HOPPER,
Headmaster, Wilby Carr Secondary School,
Doncaster.

Is 'English' English?

An examination tests the examiner also. It is sometimes a pity his result is not published: he may fail. He has to decide what all the examinees ought to know, which should not be very different from what most of them do know. Where a subject is not as cut and dried as Latin—for example, English—some examiners do not, in fact, seem to know what most of the examinees know and cannot, therefore, know what they all ought to know. 'What constitutes good written English today?' is a question to which the English Language examiner should be continually finding new answers. It seems incredible there should be even one who believes part of the answer is 'A nice taste in clause analysis'. How

he arrives at this answer, without a published credo, we can only deduce from his examination paper. It would be useful to teachers to know which gods he worships. Instead, the Secretary of the Joint Matriculation Board recently published an account of fifty years' virtual monopoly and reported a greatly increased turnover.

The articles on teaching English in FORUM (Vol. I, No. 3) only reinforced my feeling that English is approached better in junior schools than in secondary schools. There is no comparison between them in study of problems involved and of methods of solving them. Vocabulary provides a typical contrast. No one, I think, has done for the English of secondary schools anything comparable to the work of Schonell. His work seems an ideal combination: he has studied the children's abilities, produced readers in the light of his results, produced texts with a genuine connection with what he knows children know. By contrast, I recall forms taking English Language papers and trying to give synonyms of words they never used in the first place. I have noticed, too, that when teachers who do not themselves teach English amuse themselves by trying to 'do the English Language paper', there are usually some questions on words which some of them either cannot answer or believe have no answer. These are graduates.

Lucky Dip

No doubt many children have the ability to finish at the top of any English test, whatever form it takes. They have to be educated also and it is a pity when preparing for an examination and education fail to coincide. For others of less than outstanding ability the examination becomes a lucky dip. A child may have considerable dexterity in expressing himself in fields where his interests lie but if they do not coincide with the examiner's interests his vocabulary may be judged inadequate. Often questions on words turn on equating Anglo-Saxon and Latin derived words. This gives an advantage to those who have studied Latin. Why is it thought necessary that a child who can use 'bad-tempered' should know 'irascible'? Who uses 'irate' now for 'angry', except to be funny in a heavy Dickensian way? Once you might avoid hanging by knowing Latin and more recently such knowledge was the mark of a gentleman. Does any examiner subscribe to this mythology?

Examiners decry the use of slang. Hazlitt decried it: his examples are now accepted as good English. Since we have no Academy, which dictionary do examiners use? Do they allow room in examination scripts for new words to breed? Here setting sentences for correction betrays the examiner. Why should we correct 'I never did it'? Before they are taught to repress themselves, children use it discriminately, knowing it meets a different situation to 'I didn't do it'.

We are moving in the right direction, too slowly. Syllabus B of the Joint Matriculation Board is usually a sensible test of English ability. It is ostensibly specially suited to children whose education has a scientific or technical bias. It uses their vocabulary and situations. This effort of adaptation brings it generally nearer to

the requirements of all examinees. Basic English is systematic: its value in teaching foreigners might help in teaching those to whom clear self-expression is a foreign language. It is, however, a collection of used specimens. Christ's preaching would have been intelligible but poetically un compelling in the language of the Basic English translation.

It would be convenient to assume that English has not materially altered since 1926, when Fowler published *Modern English Usage*; in fact, the burden is on English teachers and on examiners to keep up to date. If reference books were prescribed for English Language examinations, we should at least be sure what the examiner thought about Fowler. One book which should then be prescribed would be W. E. Flood's *The Problem of Vocabulary in the Popularisation of Science*, whose origin suggests that Institutes of Education should regularly add to the total of human knowledge in such fields. Those connected with teaching English should be more interested in the addenda than in the dictionary.

S. Cook,

Senior English Master,
Firth Park Grammar School, Sheffield.

Science Books for Juniors

I was extremely interested in the review of junior science books which appeared in the last issue of FORUM, since I had a similar one published in another journal at about the same time (*Teaching Science*, Spring 1960).

Whilst your reviewer's opinion of some of the books available coincides with my own, I cannot accept his findings that 'Publishers have made an excellent response to the needs and demands of teachers and children . . . for books on elementary science', if he means by this British publishers.

Both his review and my own gives pride of place to American written and produced books, and of the 10 books or sets of books reviewed in FORUM, 50% are of foreign origin.

Since the contents of these books are not edited in any way for our schools, I find the situation rather alarming. Yet the fact remains that American books are better written than ours, better bound than ours and, being in colour, much more attractive for youngsters.

British publishers are failing, in my opinion, to produce junior science books to compete with the American sets, four of which are at present available here.

They have their answers, of course, most of which I find entirely unconvincing. One point they do make, however, which reflects upon heads of schools and others who buy books for school use. Nothing sells easier, the publishers say, than 40 cheap text books, conveniently arranged in four parts, one for each primary school year.

Perhaps the antiquated attitude on the part of the purchasers of school books deserves and fosters the second-rate material we get.

G. PRICE, B.SC. (ECON.),
Assistant Master,
Newington Green Junior Mixed School.

What can we Learn from Russia?

The unitary nature of the Soviet school is one aspect in which it differs sharply from the British school. The Soviet child attends one school from the age of seven until the age of 15 in all but the most remote rural areas.

The educational process is continuous. There is no change of building and no break, the same headmaster welcomes the seven-year-old when he enters and bids him farewell when he leaves at the end of his schooling.

It is only after the age of compulsory schooling that the paths of the pupils diverge; under the new education law the pupil may leave to go to work (if he wishes, continuing his general education in night and shift school); or proceed to a new type of secondary school which gives general education combined with technical training in one of the branches of industry or agriculture; or proceed to a technicum which gives professional education in the lower professional grades. It is important to note that all three paths may open the way to higher education in university or institute.

The Soviet school is unitary in another way. It is the same school for all children. It is impossible to buy a superior education in a superior school for children of certain social classes. A great deal has been written about the growth of new upper classes in the Soviet Union. But it is not the mere possession of wealth that creates social classes, in any case there is no evidence to show that the better off citizens are able to buy a superior education for their children.

The method of enrolment into Soviet schools is quite simple. All the children of school age in the area of the city served by a particular school, go to that school. The only exceptions are the physically and mentally handicapped who are taught in special schools.

Common syllabus

Not only do all children go to the same school, they all follow the same syllabus, right through the school. Nothing more astonishes the British visitor or arouses such doubts in his mind than this aspect of Soviet schooling. The Soviet hostility to mental and aptitude tests is well-known; it dates from the famous decree of 1936, and I found that this hostility has in no way abated.

I think I may summarise their position thus. Soviet educationists do not deny differences in ability between children but submit that in most cases its explanation is to be sought in the whole social and psychological milieu of the children. They further deny that such differences as do exist are uniform throughout the range of school subjects. Some children find some subjects difficult, and they hold that in most cases, children's difficulties can be removed by extra help, encouragement, the discovery of new ways of arousing interest, new methods of presentation and so on. They deny that tests can measure innate differences of ability in children and the validity of subsequent classification based on the results of these tests.

When pressed they will admit that the instruction in Soviet schools is directed towards the average child, but

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Emphasis on science

The other feature of the Soviet school which arouses misgiving in the minds of orthodox western educationists is the emphasis on science and on practical activity. But the truth surely is that the Soviets have simply corrected the imbalance which is so prevalent in British education, and given to science the place in the education of every child which its importance in the modern world warrants.

Similarly, in the Soviet view, an education cannot be regarded as complete which ignores the means by which society lives, and no pupil can be well-educated who does not know something of the economic life of the country, and has not had some practical experience in factory or farm. The official title of the new educational law passed last year by the Supreme Soviet includes the phrase, 'the strengthening of the bonds linking school with life', and this is interpreted as the union of instruction in school with productive labour. Hence the ubiquity of well-equipped workshops. 'Work' has become a school subject in the Soviet Union for all pupils, handwork in the first four classes, practical activities in school workshops and experimental agricultural plots in classes 5-9, and industrial or agricultural enterprises in classes 9-11.

But with all this the curriculum is not narrowly vocational, nor is the Soviet senior pupil highly specialised. In his final year his course is remarkable for its breadth. He devotes one-third of his time to technical studies; in the remaining two-thirds, he studies history, geography, his own language, and literature, science, a foreign language, and the Constitution.

Such then are some of the features of the Soviet comprehensive, undifferentiated, unselective school. How far all these things are successful in practice I did not see enough to judge. I know I saw some poorish formal lessons, and some very good ones, magnificently equipped laboratories, and small, uninspiring gymnasiums. But by and large the system must work, for after all it is the graduates of the ordinary school who have hit the moon.

HARRY MILNE,
*Special Assistant at Leith Academy,
Edinburgh.*

(Mr. Milne recently visited the Soviet Union—ED.)

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The Middle Years : 14 to 16

A SYMPOSIUM

(1) THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL

H. DAVIES

*Mr. Davies has been headmaster of High Pavement School, Nottingham, since 1947.
He was previously headmaster of Northallerton Grammar School.
He has broadcast from time to time on educational topics.*

The most important change in the grammar school since the 1944 Act has been the passage into the school of a large proportion of first generation grammar school pupils. Many of these come from homes where there is little understanding of the implications of membership of such a school, though there is a widespread and touching faith in its value. Some boys bring very low cultural, personal or social standards with them. Some parents do not read books: many know nothing of real music, the visual arts and intelligent conversation. It will be clear to all how much a boy from such a background will need from school, in his progress to the university. The contribution of the school far transcends the academic sphere and has to give what used to be provided by a cultured home, the life of a church and an established set of moral standards.

Home and school

How then can the school deal with such a situation? The first task is to establish mutual understanding between home and school. From the start it must be made clear that the parents are welcome at school, that it is their school and not only their sons'. In my own experience, a Parent-Staff Association is the best way to encourage parents to come to school, to meet the staff, to join in discussion of common problems. I can speak with warm appreciation of the friendship of many parents which has enabled us to face difficulties in a spirit of tolerance and confidence.

Against this background, it is possible to tackle the second problem, how to get to know the growing boy as an individual person. High Pavement School has for many years relied upon the house system and has built up a tradition in which parent, boy and housemaster expect to work closely together. Where this is working properly, the period 14 to 16 loses many of its difficulties: a real understanding between master and boy can help the latter to face difficulties in his work and awkwardness in his behaviour and can sometimes help the former to anticipate problems before they arise. Where the

school can provide enough time, a house system can be a reality even in a day school.

Perhaps the most important development in curriculum in recent years has been in the direction of flexibility. By the time a pupil has reached 14, his personal interests and preferences and the nature of his own aptitudes will make him wish to choose those subjects for himself. My own school gives him a general choice both between more or less science and more or fewer languages, and particular choices between individual subjects (for example, handicraft or technical drawing, geography or Latin, geography or biology) at different points in his career. In addition, a generous system of 'setting' makes it possible for a boy to move more quickly or more slowly in a given subject: the cleverest boys in mathematics and languages, in fact, are able to start A level work in these subjects while still in their fifth year. In other schools, pupils 'by-pass' O level in certain subjects. The grammar schools are moving as far in the direction of individual timetables as their staffing ratios and their space will allow.

The weaker pupil

In the 14-16 age groups the problem of the weaker pupil has to be faced (weaker in many cases, it should be said, as much through temperamental and personal inadequacies as from lack of intelligence). My own school tries to help by individual knowledge of the pupil, by its range of optional subjects and by a particular course. In this course, a pupil takes a smaller number of subjects which include general science (rather than physics and chemistry separately), an easier language or no language at all, and an opportunity to take less academic subjects like art and handicraft. Only the lack of appropriate facilities stands in the way of experiments with technical subjects in close relationship with mathematics. In such different ways, many grammar schools show their awareness of the special needs of the weaker pupil.

High Pavement School has during the past few

years developed an experimental engineering course in the sixth form, foreshadowed in the fourth and fifth years by the technical drawing option. In this course, boys take A level mathematics, physics and engineering drawing at school, and visit the local technical college for one half-day each week where they undergo courses in applied mechanics and heat engines. The result has been a great increase throughout the school in interest in applied science and a gratifying stimulus to individual boys to improve the standard of their work in theoretical subjects like mathematics and physics.

Perhaps the most revolutionary feature of the grammar school since 1944 has been the sensational increase in the size of sixth forms—most grammar schools today expect at least 40% of their pupils to go into the sixth form: at High Pavement School more than 50% do so and the sixth forms now amount to one-fifth of the entire school. The grammar school has shown the capacity to adapt itself to the new needs of society, for it is imperative that the most intelligent children of the nation shall be trained to the maximum extent. An important feature of this increase has been the emergence of a considerable preponderance of science over arts pupils. In boys' schools the usual proportion is now two-thirds scientists to one-third arts pupils and the scientists feed universities, engineering colleges and sandwich courses in colleges of technology. On

the arts side there is an increasing demand for suitable young people in the commercial, professional and management fields. Most grammar schools are now beginning to organise sixth form courses suitable for those who do not wish to go to universities and many, like my own, welcome entrants from secondary modern schools after O level.

The outside world is not aware that the school has to play a considerable part in persuading parents to allow their children to stay at school until 18, especially since this is a new idea to many of them. Boys of 14 to 16 are usually the most persuasive missionaries if they find school life interesting and stimulating and are already beginning to feel the satisfaction of rapid progress and success in a particular field of study. Many parents have told me that it is their son who insists on staying longer at school. Boys of this age are attracted by a wide variety of activities (including their own choice among games) and by the feeling that they matter in the school (which comes from a liberal atmosphere and the existence of a body like a school council) and by seeing the impressive development of boys already in the sixth form.

It is my conviction that those who regard the grammar school as a static institution, out of touch with life in the middle of the twentieth century, are themselves out of touch with reality.

(2) THE MODERN SCHOOL

MARJORIE COOKE

Miss Cooke is headmistress of Priory Girls' School, Acton, and a member of the Editorial Board of FORUM.

In describing the organisation of the school for the 14-16 year old group, I think I should make clear certain points about the school and the children. The school is a modern secondary school drawing from an almost purely working-class area. The parents are mainly unskilled workers, shopkeepers and minor civil servants. Until 1957, the school was twice creamed, as there was a central selective school in the area, so that about 30% of the age group were creamed off. The very few really academic children we get are very one-sided. They are usually lacking, apparently, in number sense. There are generally one or two children in each year who appear to be genuine late developers, in that by 16 they have caught up all but the best of their contemporaries in the grammar school. Then there are about 50% of the age group who can cope fairly easily with the basic curriculum of the school and do quite good work in one or two subjects.

Another 30% are handicapped, either by parental attitude and their own inclination, or by an apparent inability to work hard. The remaining 10% to 15% are heavily penalised by social and economic positions and by the outlook of the whole adult world around them.

In the first two years at school, the girls are divided into forms roughly on their ability in English and then the whole year is set for mathematics. All the first and second year have the same curriculum except the lowest stream does not learn a foreign language. At the end of the second year, the parents of the second year girls are asked to a meeting and the education and future career of their daughter is discussed. This meeting is followed up by a letter explaining all the possibilities, and the parents are asked to indicate when the girl will be leaving school. On the basis of their choice the girls are then divided into mixed ability groups according to the

date of leaving. We started this system in 1958, when the staff felt that they needed three years after the basic first two years to prepare for G.C.E. We are, however, contemplating changing over to the end of the third year for the choice, as we feel that not only have we reached a better standard in the first two years, but that delaying the choice of staying on until nearer the leaving date will help some girls to make a more definite choice.

Those who stay

I should point out also that our age group fluctuates rather violently from year to year, so that in 1954 we had 168 in the first year, in 1955 we had 138, in 1956 we had 112, and in 1957 we went back to 160. This had meant that each year has to see modifications in organisation and that some years we have had five forms in the fourth year, viz. two G.C.E. forms and three leaving forms, and some years it has been two G.C.E. forms and two leaving forms. Nearly 40% of the age group elect to stay on. A far greater percentage would stay on if they could get parental consent. Those who do stay on come from all the streams in the year group and include both the ambitious girls, who will work doggedly to achieve their ambition, and those young ladies, whom I can't help liking, who have already realised that life outside school is more exacting than life inside school and so put off the evil moment when they will really have to work as long as possible. This means that the third, fourth and fifth year forms are all mixed ability groups, so that in mathematics, which is set throughout a year, there are as many of the leaving group as there are of the G.C.E. group in the first set and also in the bottom set. The only major difference between the curriculum in the fourth year of those staying on and those leaving during the year is that the latter do not have a foreign language and do not do commercial subjects. On the other hand, the girls staying on do not have an opportunity of joining the dressmaking class or going to the baby welfare lessons. The non-commercial G.C.E. girls have biology as a subject in place of general science. The whole fourth year, except for those doing commercial subjects, is mixed for domestic science and the whole year follows the same syllabus in English. This gives some chance for those girls who change their mind at the last moment and join the G.C.E. group. This has regularly happened at Christmas for the last four years.

The form keeps the same form mistress throughout the third, fourth and fifth years. Indeed, from the time the girl is 13 until she either leaves school or goes into the sixth form, she has the same form mistress. As I said, we are altering this next year by making the division at the end of the third year.

Those girls who leave at the statutory age have the opportunity of half a day a week with a trade dressmaker. Staff quotas prevent them all having this half day, but we have found that not all girls want to do this, so that the dressmaking class is composed of real lovers of sewing from the third and fourth year leavers. Those who do not go to this class have an extra craft lesson and an embroidery lesson. The summer leavers are also able to have an extra half day a week at the housecraft centres during their last term. The fourth year girls who are staying on for a fifth year were at first divided into a commercial and non-commercial form. This, however, has led to such antagonism and rivalry that we have had to mix the two groups in the last few years and treat them as one group, even though there are two forms. It means a jig-saw of a timetable but avoids this rivalry. The fourth year commercial girls cannot do domestic science, biology, economics or needlework, as they need 11 periods for their basic skills and commercial knowledge.

Christmas and Easter leavers

At Christmas, we lose about 20% of the year, but this makes little difference to the timetable, as the maths setting continues and so do the groupings for art, needlework, and craft, which alternate with domestic science. We do use some of the time of the English staff who is freed by the Christmas leavers to help in the G.C.E. English group, or lower down in the school, while the speech specialist, who has only had one period each with the Easter and Summer leavers, now has two periods with each form.

A second form leaves at Easter, leaving in the fourth year one form which will leave at the end of the summer term and two forms who will be sitting for their G.C.E. in 15 months' time. During the spring term these girls have been talking about their subjects with their form mistress and their subject mistresses, for at Easter they will drop some subjects because of timetable alternatives. At Easter we have a major change in the fourth year timetable. On the whole the commercial form have chosen their subjects by choosing to do commerce. They must all take English language and literature, commercial subjects, arithmetic and three other subjects. The non-commercial girls must take English language and literature and four or five other subjects, of which at least one, but not more than two, should be chosen from cookery, art or needlework. It means that the majority of these girls are working in seven subjects and a small minority in six subjects. There have to be certain options owing to limitations imposed by small groups and staffing shortage.

Hence, this year full maths has been an alternative to arithmetic and economics, while next year it will alternate with arithmetic and religious knowledge. The allocation of periods remains constant for the next 15 months and is roughly four periods per subject, except for English and full maths which have eight, commercial subjects which have 12, and cookery and languages which have five.

As far as the leaving form is concerned, there is little major alteration in their timetable, except that they become a mixed ability group for mathematics as well as other subjects, and those who do not do dressmaking get an additional half day at housecraft.

The timetable for the G.C.E. forms continues with as little alteration as possible for the next 15 months, for it is such a jig-saw that any alteration is a major operation.

The sixth form is not a large form, but there are always a few girls who have not got all the subjects they require and must retake them. This is difficult if they want to retake them at Christmas and, indeed, there is no set pattern, except that in making the sixth form timetable there has to be some carry over from the fifth year. It is this which makes for the real difficulties in timetabling, difficulties which will confront us all as the school life lengthens, for these are the people who really need six years for a good certificate, but whose social and economic life and pride has demanded five years. Once they are reconciled to taking six years to get a good certificate, then the actual work of timetabling

becomes easier. We have found by experience that they need a change in English literature from the selected literature paper to the General paper. In other subjects such a change is not possible, but in cookery and art those retaking 'O' level can work together with the 'A' levels.

In the sixth form we have of necessity to offer a limited range of subjects. In dressmaking, the sixth former has to work with the third and fourth year leaver. We offer English, cookery, art, history, and economics to 'A' level and physiology at 'O' level at this stage. There is provision for a concentrated one-year commercial course, while all those staying on for a sixth year have to work for the Certificate of Proficiency in arithmetic, if they have not already got it. Naturally, the groups are small, except in English and arithmetic, which all take. Indeed, each member of the form has to have an individual timetable, for we have found that very few of our girls at 16 are capable of using too many periods of individual work. They have a small room which is their own sanctum and which is obviously their greatest treasure and the envy of all the fifth year.

All the organisation I have described is based on the enthusiasm and work of the staff. With a better pupil-teacher ratio we could do much more, but I do not think that the girls could have more time, enthusiasm or care spent on them. Their cup has indeed been filled to the brim by the people who are teaching them.

(3) THE COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOL

I. A. McBEATH

Mr. McBeath is headmaster of Mount Grace Comprehensive School, Potters Bar, Middlesex. He has taught in both grammar and modern schools, and has been head of an evening institute.

Perhaps the most important suggestion put forward in the Crowther Report is that the school-leaving age should be raised to 16.

The reasons given are outside the orbit of this particular essay. Should a leaving age of 16 become law, then many schools will need to give particular attention to the questions posed by such a step. The grammar schools have their solutions; the comprehensive schools already have met the problem in a much wider context. More and more the percentage of pupils staying on at school of their own free will or through the express wish of the parent has risen. At Mount Grace during recent years this figure has steadily increased, and this year over 77% of boys and girls intend to continue their schooling *at least*

until the end of the educational year during which they become 16.

'The whole experience of the comprehensive schools shows a much greater willingness to stay on than had ever been expected by those who argued from the experience of the working of the tripartite system as it was a very few years ago.' (Crowther Report, 99.)

We would in this connection cross swords with the Crowther Report. We much prefer that by precept and example, by providing the opportunities and courses, and by presenting the results which are evident on every hand, the pupils are encouraged to remain at school, rather than compelled. That more and more are remaining at school is seen every-

where, and nowhere more so than in the comprehensive school. If the phenomena is relatively new, the influences behind it—of opportunity, of example, of imitation—are certainly powerful ones, as we have already experienced at Mount Grace.

A wealth of opportunity

The question as to what kind of courses are best suited to the needs of the particular age group, or what subjects should be included, does not arise here because of the possible raising of the school-leaving age. Rather the reverse. More and more children have stayed, or are staying on, because of what is available, as already mentioned. The short answer to this is, in turn, that all subjects normal to secondary education are available, grouped in courses to suit all needs. This is the peculiar nature of the comprehensive system—to provide a greater number and variety of subjects and courses than are to be found in any other type of secondary school, to provide them at all levels, and yet to maintain the individual nature in their application and to preserve the identity of the individual. The mould is that of the individual, not of a pattern of a particular society. The talents of all are recognised, and full allowance made at all levels for their development. The importance of all subjects is recognised and they find their place in the timetable: their choice is an individual matter, a matter of guidance and direction based upon a wealth of educational experience.

As the Crowther Report puts it: 'A further great strength lies in the range of options that a large organisation can offer to 15-year-olds. There is, or ought to be, something for nearly everybody. Find it by 14 and there will be no need to transfer at 16, and, very likely, much less desire to leave then.'

Most stay to 16

The majority of the pupils remain at least until the end of their fifth year, and more and more continue to take advantage of sixth form work, in academic and technical subjects. It is true to say that practically all who stay do so in the hope of taking external exams, be they the General Certificate, the Royal Society of Arts Examinations, Pitmans Certificates, and so forth. Nevertheless there are many who remain at school because they or their parents are more than appreciative of the inherent value of the course itself, as a discipline or as a study; because of the stabilising factor of the school in all its entirety during a period of life when a boy or girl is maturing very quickly indeed; because of the fact that the school reference can state that a balanced course of study was followed within the

child's capacity and to which he applied himself with all the powers at his disposal; not least because he—or she—is happy at school, enjoying all the activities that take place.

Mount Grace provides courses of instruction comparable to those of the secondary grammar school, the secondary modern school and the secondary technical school. The courses will vary from four years to seven or eight years in length. The majority of the courses will lead to examinations of the General Certificate of Education at Ordinary, Advanced and Scholarship levels, or to other appropriate examinations, including external examinations in commercial and technical subjects. The intensive academic work of the grammar or technical courses will cover six to eight years—the normal length is seven—and suitable pupils are expected to undertake the full courses. On the commercial side, a concentrated secretarial course is available in the sixth form. In any case, as the school brochure states, a course of not less than five years, to the end of the school year in which a pupil reaches 16 years of age, *should* be followed.

Organisation

In more detail, boys and girls on entering the school at 11 are placed in the first forms and spend their first two years in the Lower School, where the curriculum includes all the subjects normally taken in secondary education at this stage.

At 13 the pupils enter the Main School—separated geographically in fresh buildings on a different site—and here the third year completes the period during which the potentialities and wishes of the boy or girl, in consultation with parents, help to indicate the subjects to be followed in the Upper School. Each boy or girl is individually interviewed, subjects selected, and parents are given an opportunity to discuss and compare subjects with the staff concerned, as well as with a panel of approximately 30 experts representing all sides of the trades, industry and the professions. All subjects are equally available to both boys and girls, and are so grouped as to provide a planned and balanced curriculum. Such groupings may be summarised under the headings of literature, science, languages, commerce, technical or general, covering altogether 21 subjects and more at 'O' level G.C.E., and two-thirds the number at the advanced stage. In practice, whilst a pupil's timetable is built around a common core of basic subjects, including English and mathematics, along with certain 'opted' or chosen subjects, the timetable tends to be very largely an individual one related closely to the needs, aptitudes and abilities of the boy or girl.

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More closely analysed, the subjects taken at this stage group themselves as follows :

Commercial: Typing, Shorthand, Principles of Accounts, Commerce, Economics, plus one of the following: Geography, History, Art or Music.

General: History, French, Biology or Physics with Chemistry, and two of the following: Art, Geography, Music, or Latin and Religious Knowledge.

Languages: French, German, History, Biology or Physics with Chemistry, Latin or Geography or Art or Music.

Science: Chemistry, Physics, Biology, French, and one of the following: Geography, History, Latin, Art, Music.

Technical-Housecraft: Domestic Science, Needlecraft, Biology or Human Anatomy and Physiology, Geography or History, or Music or Art.

Technical Handicraft: Woodwork, Metalwork, Engineering Drawing, Workshop Practice, Physics with Chemistry, Geography, History or Art or Music.

It should be noted:

- (a) that English language and literature, mathematics, religious knowledge and physical education are common to all groups;
- (b) that all courses are available equally to boys and girls;
- (c) that all boys and girls can be included in the courses, or in a continuation of courses, depending ultimately upon the actual time-tabling.

Again, the individual nature of the organisation should be emphasised. Setting or grouping in some form or other is a feature of all the major subjects, and, as mentioned, no course is regarded as necessarily watertight.

The permutations and ramifications of a timetable, particularly of a school as large as Mount Grace, are almost legion, and within the wide and elastic framework upon which the organisation is built the vast majority of the needs of the individual can be met. The detailed analyses of the more normal groupings, as given above, will also underline the general principle of balanced curricula, of which the 'bias' element forms a part. Finally, for all pupils in all subjects the appropriate external examinations can be taken, be they G.C.E., R.S.A., Pitmans, or others, provided the necessary standards are attained. All talents are recognised, and all the requirements necessary for entry into further education, the professions, trades, skills and occupations, for girls as for boys, are covered.

BI-POLARITY IN THE SECONDARY MODERN SCHOOL

(Continued from page 98)

Mr. J. Duncan, one time Head of Lankhills residential school near Winchester, showed what educational attainments were possible with children of ascertained low intellectual capacity, when taught skilfully and hopefully. (*The Education of the Ordinary Child*—Nelson, 1949.) Rarely are children of such low innate capacity found in our secondary schools in any number, so that given facilities, dedicated skilled staff and, most important, healthy attitudes, great improvements are possible.

In our Mass Media society where the instruments of culture (press, literature, radio, television, cinema) are also the instruments of commerce, the taste and standards at the lower end of the scale are as influential as any others. We cannot ignore this important element of child society as seen in the post-war years, while emulating the grammar schools; 'we must educate our masters'.

Modern ideas and practice

In fact, the secondary modern school may have much to teach the grammar school rather than the converse. It may teach the fruitfulness of enlisting the active participation of the child in his own learning; the educational efficiency of research carried out by the child, even at the most primitive level, as compared with the highest level of learning given by the most respected of texts or the most honoured of Honour graduates; and the educational value of real concepts rather than verbal gymnastics.

Though a considerable part of the grammar school curriculum may become a common study in part of the modern school (and in the absence of comprehensive schools, society demands this), this does not mean that traditional grammar school methods are necessarily best on traditional grammar school curricula.

The successes in G.C.E. work in the secondary modern schools with 'rejected' human material deserve credit. In a society where paper qualifications mean so much, these successes represent salvation of human beings. Can this constructive effort be made compatible with the education of the less scholastically able element in these schools? Can it be made without introducing some of the more inimical influences from the universities?

A *Walsall* scheme, under which all secondary education will eventually be in non-selective schools, has been approved.

The Development of the Idea of 'Ecole Unique' in France

VERNON MALLINSON

Mr. Mallinson is Lecturer in Comparative Education in the University of Reading and Deputy Head of the Department of Education. He has held various teaching appointments and has lectured in America, Canada, and on the Continent of Europe. Publications include a series of school textbooks for teaching French and studies in Comparative Education, the latest of which to appear are An Introduction to the Study of Comparative Education and Power and Politics in Belgian Education.

It was immediately after the 1914-1918 war that the first real and concerted effort was made in France drastically to revise the educational system and to establish a new pattern at the secondary level. The reformers pointed out that secondary education had become a bourgeois monopoly and that in consequence France was being denied the services of many brilliant minds condemned to the wastelands of the elementary system. They argued that there should be full equality of educational opportunity and that to facilitate the achievement of this aim education at all levels should be free. Secondly, the traditional 'dual' system must be replaced by one closer to the American pattern. On the other hand, they were at pains to stress that this new idea of an 'école unique' did not necessarily mean the creation of a common school which all children would attend throughout their entire school career. Still less was it desired that all children should receive the same education irrespective of ability. In bold outline their plan was as follows: (a) a common elementary education given in a common school between the ages of 6 and 12; (b) a lower secondary school providing a common general education from 12 to 15 but with some specialisation; (c) a higher secondary school still providing some general education on a common basis, but with considerably greater specialisation up to the age of 19 or 20.

Gradual reform

These proposals to unify the educational system received considerable attention throughout the country. Numerous articles, both for and against the scheme, appeared in the press and the question was heatedly debated in Parliament. In 1924, a 'Commission de l'Ecole Unique' was appointed by the Minister of Education to examine the question, and in 1925 a Bill was introduced into Parliament providing for such widespread reforms that it was immediately defeated. None the less, the heaven was working and within the traditional pattern certain changes resulted that lasted down to 1945.

In 1925, teachers began to be recruited for the elementary classes of the *lycée* (traditional academic grammar school) on the same basis as for the elementary schools proper, and in 1926 an order was made that *all* elementary education, whether given in the elementary classes of the *lycée* or in the elementary school, must be the same. In 1932, the inspection of these classes in the *lycée* became the prerogative of the elementary inspectorate. Thus, every child between the ages of 6 and 12 was now guaranteed a common education and the provision of some measure of equality of opportunity became a possibility. A second important step came with the 'freeing' of all state-provided secondary education. In 1926, Edouard Herriot cautiously decreed that certain higher elementary schools and technical schools should become attached to neighbouring *lycées*, the pupils coming together under the same teachers for certain common core lessons—French, modern languages, history, geography and science. In 1927 he abolished all fees in all secondary schools, up to and including the *troisième* (pre-certificate year), where this system held, and in 1930 it was decided to abolish all fees in all secondary schools, beginning that year with the *sixième* (first form entry) only.

The stimulus of defeat

The overwhelming defeat of France in 1940 was unfortunately necessary to stir men's minds in the direction of more drastic and thorough reforms, and there resulted the brilliant work of the Langevin Commission which advocated in principle a bold return to the basic plan of the earlier reformers. Langevin wanted: (a) compulsory education for all to the age of 18; (b) a common school for all up to the age of 11; (c) a first cycle of secondary education for all from 11 to 15, the first two years being devoted to close study of a pupil's interests and aptitudes and the last two years to trying out the pupil along the lines of choice suggested to him; (d) a second cycle of secondary education for all from 15

to 18 on a basis of selected specialities, it being recognised that at this stage four-fifths of the pupils must be expected to pass to some form of apprenticeship. A series of appropriate examinations would be taken at 18+, and those who desired a university career would be required to undertake a trial two-year period of pre-university education.

Parents asked to choose

What actually resulted from the recommendations of the Langevin Commission was as follows: Towards the end of a child's elementary education parents were asked for what kind of secondary education they destined their child, and, on the basis of a simple test of command of the three R's, every effort was made to respect the parents' wishes. Children who sought an academic grammar school type of education would attend the *lycée* where, though the emphasis was still on classics and mathematics, possibilities existed for pupils to prepare also for newly created technical and commercial *baccalauréats* (school leaving examinations taken at the ages of 17 to 19). Children seeking a more modern type of education with the emphasis on modern languages and the sciences, would attend a newly created *collège moderne* and where the syllabus (except for classics) would be virtually the same as in the *lycée*. Other children not too fitted to embark on the strenuous academic grind of the *lycée* or *collège moderne* would take four-year courses (11 to 15) in *cours complémentaires* leading to the award of a leaving certificate entitling them to take up immediately some commercial, industrial or minor civil service job, to enter a teacher-training college, to continue their studies at a technical college, or to transfer to a *collège moderne* and so prepare for one or other of the several *baccalauréats* available. This latter option was made possible because the syllabus for the *cours complémentaires* closely paralleled that for the first four years of the *collège moderne*. Finally, children with no real academic bent of any kind would follow pre-apprenticeship classes from 11 to 14, when they might take their primary school leaving certificate. They were, however, encouraged to carry on for a further period in apprenticeship centres, or to pass to technical schools.

It is interesting to record that statistics to date show that 65% of the children for the whole country stay on at school beyond the statutory leaving age of 14, and that in the larger and industrial cities the figure is as high as 80% (and 84% for Paris). It is on a basis of these figures that the latest reform in French education raises the school leaving age from 14 to 16, to become fully operative in 1967 when fully 80% of children for the whole country will be voluntarily staying at school until 16+ anyway.

One further innovation that needs mentioning at this point was the attempt made, on a purely voluntary and experimental basis, of running *classes nouvelles* within the *lycée* itself. This was both an attempt to meet Langevin's requirements that children should be most closely studied during their early years in the *lycée* to discover their real aptitudes and interests, and also to continue an experiment started in 1937 by Jean Zay (then Minister for Education) and never completed because of the war. Some 200 teachers from *lycées* throughout the country originally volunteered in 1945 to train to run *classes nouvelles*, and when the experiment ended in 1952 there were about 800 such classes in operation with a total of some 20,000 pupils. The scheme was extended year by year from the *sixième* up to and including the *troisième*, when serious preparation for the *baccalauréat* had to begin. There was an insistence in these classes on activity methods, on group work, on close correlation of subjects, on relating education to life, on a prominent place being given to music, handicrafts and games, and (of course) on child study. The scheme demanded small classes and many competent teachers. The experiment ended on the plea that the rising birth rate and financial stringency could no longer permit such a luxury, but in point of fact parents were not over enthusiastic about this strange Anglo-Saxon practice of wedding *instruction* and *éducation*, and it was also argued (with some justification) that there would never be enough high quality teachers to allow it to be other than an experiment. None the less, a small number of 'pilot' *lycées* have been allowed to continue and these are continually experimenting with new techniques, helping with the training of teachers, and so indirectly making their influence felt.

The Berthoin plan

Of course, much argument went on during the 14 years or so that this scheme I have outlined was maturing, and ardent supporters of the Langevin proposals campaigned vigorously for a better interpretation of their idea of an *école unique*. In 1948, again in 1950, and once more in 1955, commissions were set up to consider further desirable reforms. Nothing resulted. And then, suddenly, on 6th January, 1959, De Gaulle's Minister for Education, M. Berthoin, took advantage of the special powers accorded to him by the constitution of the Fifth Republic and announced reforms based on the work of the 1955 commission for which he was largely responsible.

Apart from raising the school leaving age to 16+ and for making changes in the administration and

conduct of examinations for the *baccalauréat*, his reform plan is concerned with the structure of the school system at the secondary level and became first effective in September 1959. The examination formerly held at the end of primary school education disappears entirely and children are sent to one or other of the post-primary establishments according to parental choice. For one term the work done is identical in *all* schools. Another five terms are now to be spent in observation classes of the various schools. Teachers in these two-year observation classes must be properly trained and must hold special psychological and pedagogical qualifications. Obviously, they will be largely recruited from amongst those who successfully ran the *classes nouvelles* or who have taken some recent qualification. At the end of the two-year exploratory period, the child will finally be assigned to that branch of specialised education for which he seems best suited, and, as far as possible, in accordance with the parents' wishes. Should parents disagree with the choice made, then the child must sit a public examination designed to test his fitness for the kind of education his parents wish him to have, and the results of that examination are final.

Various courses

The least able pupils will now follow a three-year course of general studies with a strong practical bias and culminating in the possible award at 16+ of a *Diplôme de Fin d'Etudes*. There are four possibilities for specialisation: agriculture for boys; agriculture with housecraft for girls; rural studies; urban studies. The next group will pass to the apprenticeship centres, re-named *collèges d'enseignement technique*. As before, a successful pupil will obtain at 16 or 17 a *Certificat d'Aptitude Professionnel*. More intellectually gifted pupils with a strong interest in technical studies will be directed to technical schools where, after four, five or six years of study, they can obtain differently graded diplomas. The academically-minded pupil will frequent either the *cours complémentaires* (now re-named *collèges d'enseignement général*) where the organisation remains fundamentally as before, or the *lycée*—for the term *collège moderne* is to be allowed to fall into disuse.

Undoubtedly an important step forward has now been made. Langevin wanted four years of 'common' secondary education in observation classes of various kinds, and the earlier reformers three years. A compromise has been achieved with two years from 11 to 13, and as always the parent is held mainly responsible for making the correct choice

even if counselled and guided to make it. No child is disadvantaged in any way except through the possible folly of his parents. For the next several years the scheme will be watched and criticised closely, not only from within France but also by other Continental countries. It should finally be noted that the French again firmly reject the idea of large comprehensive schools, except in so far as their *lycées*, catering for an academic *élite*, at all kinds of levels (technical, commercial, classical and modern sides), now approximate to the general idea.

These Juniors go Exploring in History

(Continued from page 93)

That is as it should be, and it is quite different from a logical approach wherein history is looked upon as a departmental subject remote from anything else. A sequence of knowledge arranged according to an adult, academically organised, plan gives place to a way in which children learn deepest and best.

What we are sure of is that the children are given the means to discover and use their full capabilities. Their major impulses are provided with an outlet. Learning in this way, with a creative end in view, the children thus feel the reality of what they are doing and at once become absorbed. At the outset the children know little about the subject or part of the subject they are to investigate. They explore it, find out about it, sort out their discoveries and build it up with the co-operation of their fellows and their teacher.

In the process they find out more about themselves, their abilities and limitations, and realise that learning history, or any other subject, is an exciting and enjoyable occupation. Furthermore, their attitude towards the subject is positive, and that is probably the most important factor when they reach the secondary school with its more specialist approach.

Carlisle is to examine the possibility of recruiting all grammar school pupils at a later age than 11.

Cardiff plans to reorganise its secondary education on two-tier lines.

Book Reviews

History Teaching Books for the Average Secondary Child

A Survey by PETER SHUTTLEWOOD

Textbooks, exercise books, chalk and talk may survive as history teaching in certain isolated areas of education, but today the average child cannot be attracted by these methods. While the teacher must keep a firm hand upon the general direction of work, there are many opportunities for each child to pursue his own line of individual interest. Within the history room we need maps, pamphlets, original sources, background books, interest readers, small concise explanatory books on specialised topics (heraldry, history of weapons, General Strike, etc.) and an atmosphere of colour and liveliness. The well-written orthodox textbook has a place only as a reference book or as a means of directing the attention of the whole class to one point at one time, or as a homework book. It is difficult to amass a sufficient amount of suitable material—classes are large and money is scarce—but it can be done. Large firms often provide excellent material free, and many publishers now agree that this is the way to arouse interest and a desire to do systematic work. Of course, success will still depend, as always, upon adequate teacher control.

The 'Then and There' Series by Longmans, priced at 2s. 6d. to 3s. each are extremely good value. Titles range from *Ancient Rome* to the *Railway Revolution 1825-45*. The language is demanding yet manageable and the typeface and illustrations are clear. I would like to see an extension of these titles into the modern period. At 3s. 6d. a copy limp (4s. boards) the A. and C. Black 'Makers of History' by Emmeline Garnett are useful. I have found the stories within the four volumes—*The Tudors*, *The Civil War*, *Queen Anne and her Times*, *The Age of Reform*, very well written, full of interesting information and stimulating in class. The same publishers also sell an excellent block of Junior Reference Books at 8s. 6d. and 9s. 6d. *A History of Houses*, *The Story of Aircraft and Travel by Road* are first-class and I see other similar titles are in preparation. I have used them successfully. They are among the most attractive books I use for layout and plentiful good illustration. Even those boys one finds it practically impossible to lead to systematic work are tempted!

Ginn and Company produce the well-known 'History Bookshelves' and 'Museum Bookshelves'.

These are really aimed at primary children but I find them good at secondary level for first and second year children. The 'History Bookshelves' are designed to provide a mass of reference material. The 'Museum Bookshelves' are to be used coincidentally with visits to museums, buildings, historical sites and so on. For the price you would pay for an ordinary set of textbooks you can get hundreds of these at 5s. 3d. a set of six. They are quite tough, well-produced little booklets of about 30 pages and they go down very well. The modern section (Shelf 3) of 'Museum Bookshelves' is not yet published.

Among the more orthodox and more advanced stiff bound books, I like *The Lives of the People* by A. H. Hanson, published by Heinemann. Three volumes at 7s. 7s. 6d. and 8s. 6d. cover Roads and Ships, Homes and Health; Discovery—the World, the Universe, Man's Ancestors; Work and Invention. I have used these books among my third and fourth year boys who have reasonable reading ability. Book 2, for instance, contains a good 44-page summary of building and design through the ages which can be used for reference or as the basis of an individual project. The 'Work' part of Book 3 is the only weakness in the series—but then, I have yet to discover a book which makes economics and government attractive to the average child!

The Oxford University Press books *History Through the Ages*, First and Second Series, I have used at all levels (except remedial classes) in school. I like them as background or reference books. They are clearly written and well illustrated. My own favourite is *The Last 100 Years*, Second Series Book 5, but they are all worth looking at. Prices vary from 5s. to 8s. limp and boards.

Perhaps the best of all the background books is the Methuen's Outline Series. They demand a good reading ability but are very rewarding. I have used *Victoria's Reign*, *The Romans* and *The Crusades*. Other titles are *Prehistoric Britain*, *Early Explorers* and *Napoleon* among 30 others, and they are priced at about 10s. 6d.

If you are interested in linking history with science in your more junior forms, then the Amabel Williams-Ellis 'Seekers and Finders' Books 1-6 (Blackie), priced from 3s. 3d. to 4s. each, are very good. In view of the development of technology, this is clearly the sort of basis we should look for in our early history teaching.

TEXTBOOKS

For College of Preceptors work I use a combination of two sets of textbooks on the lines I mentioned in the first paragraph. One set was first

published in 1936, but for intelligent selection and humanist values has yet to be bettered. It is *A History of English Life* by Amabel Williams-Ellis and F. J. Fisher, published by Methuen. Books I-IV are priced at 6s.-6s. 6d. each. A composite volume at 18s. is available for Staff use. My second set for examination work is *Journey Through History* by S. F. Gunn, published by Edward Arnold. Books I-IV are priced at 8s. 6d. each. My only criticism of this latter set is that children often find it difficult without reference to an atlas to know which is land and which is sea on some of the maps. Otherwise first-rate and thoroughly recommended.

For the slower readers, *Looking at History* by R. J. Unstead (A. & C. Black Ltd.) is good; Books I-IV are priced from 4s. to 5s. 6d. limp to 5s. 6d.-7s. boards. Again a composite volume is available at 21s., and again the set has proved very successful in practice. I might mention here a supplementary set by the same author called *People in History*, slightly cheaper but lively and attractive.

Two other sets which I would advise you to look at are *Britain Past and Present*—a Social History in four volumes by M. W. Thomas, at 7s. 6d. each (Thomas Nelson), extremely well illustrated and laid out, and *Everyday History*, Books I-IV, published by Philip (9s. to 10s. 6d.), which, in spite of a rather old-fashioned look, are good as reference books in the non-examination forms.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

There is one outstanding book for staff and child reference—*An Atlas of Current Affairs* by Andrew Boyd (Methuen) at 6s.

Ideas and Action

Studies in the History of Education 1780-1870
by Brian Simon. Lawrence & Wishart (1960),
375 pp., 37s. 6d.

Those stern propounders of the notion that education and politics should be divorced would certainly derive a great deal of enlightenment from this latest product of Brian Simon's energetic elbow. Others, currently preoccupied with the dynamics of groups in society, will also find some interesting and relevant comment to reinforce their own current speculations and experiments. A third, and growing, group who see in the history of science a useful and unifying thread to guide them through the contemporary labyrinth will certainly read this book with pleasure and in some cases with admiration. The fourth group who approach education under the rich brocade of sociology will be surprised at the simplicity of his approach. All four groups are certainly catered for in this book.

'The pool of mercenary and time serving ethics was first blown over by the fresh country breeze of Mr. T.

Day,' wrote Leigh Hunt in his autobiography. and Leigh Hunt's remark could well apply to most of the active and energetic groups so skillfully exhumed and rehabilitated in this book. Beginning with the Lunar Society, of which Day was a member, Simon shows how it obtained from, and released to, a rapidly expanding society vital ideas and even more vital programmes of action. Priestley, Boulton, Darwin and Keir preached in their various accents the gospel of science. Embodied in their writings, activities and mutual correspondence are the embryo socio-economic criteria for the reorganisation of nineteenth-century English society. Other little scientific groups at Birmingham, Sheffield, Newcastle, Liverpool and Manchester were in their various ways centres of enlightenment, tension and exploration. But it was the Lunar educators through Day, and even more through Thomas Wright Hill, Priestley's friend, which exerted a major influence.

Before the influence waned, that of the great secular millenarian, Robert Owen, was waxing. New Lanark stood as a four square temple of the new gospel. Education was firmly advanced as an instrument of social change. As James Mill and the Utilitarians set the school master loose, the Owenites and Neo-Owenites (with their multiple and attendant deviants) were building co-operative societies, halls of science, chartist halls and lyceums. In this heady and intoxicating era the young liberals grew up. In Leicester, for instance, the very town from which Brian Simon writes, one of the architects of the 1870 Act was early influenced by Thomas Cooper and a chartist society. 'Knowledge Chartistism' as much as Cobdenite liberalism sustained his drive for compulsory schooling.

A massive dialectic of forces worked to produce the settlement of 1870. Employers and workers gathered under their various banners.

The story which begins in Birmingham with the Lunar Society ends in Birmingham with the National Education League. Chamberlain as the heir of a century spoke, not as a screw manufacturer, but with the voice of history. History? Perhaps histology would be a better term for the multiple cellular activity that had been working for this since 1760. The results of this working can still today be seen in the large industrial towns. Board schools may look like bastilles to us, but for those who worked in them in 1870, they were beach-heads on an unknown coast, footholds on a magic mountain, vestibules for a wider life.

W. H. G. ARMYTAGE

FILM AND TELLY (Continued from page 119)

colleges, while courses of the kind referred to in Section V could well find a place among the varied courses which some universities offer for general degrees. If sufficient interest is taken in this report, a full examination of the university aspect might well be undertaken in conjunction with the British Universities Film Council, which would appear to be the appropriate body for this purpose.

I. E. ROBERTS

Comprehensive Critique

Teaching in Comprehensive Schools. I.A.A.M.
Cambridge University Press (1960), 48 pp., 2s. 6d.

'Two voices are there: one is of the See'—and the official attitude of the I.A.A.M. Council to comprehensive schools has long been abundantly clear. In 1954, Council 'deplores the adoption of schemes to build such schools in large numbers before the results of the present experiments can be properly assessed'. In 1959 it 'is opposed to the introduction of schemes of comprehensive secondary education which involve the disintegration of established grammar schools'.

To this, the official voice, has now been added that of I.A.A.M. members who actually teach in comprehensive schools, and who should, therefore, know. The booklet under review is a frank and honest attempt to reconsider some of the problems facing the comprehensives and the men and women who teach or are thinking about teaching in them. 'It is presented as a factual and objective document, which does not attempt to assess the merits or demerits of these schools'. It is the more praiseworthy, and carries all the more conviction for being a restrained and objective expression of the opinions of the people who are doing the job. For the same reason, it will add to the store of ammunition held by those who are not in agreement with the ideals of the comprehensive school, for several facts emerge which cannot but call forth cries of 'We told you so'.

In the first place, the comprehensive school does not and cannot, in the view of these I.A.A.M. members, do away with selection at 11+. 'If selection has not already been made on previous tests, selection must begin now. In any school it is necessary.' 'Certainly, 11+ selection is unavoidable.' 'Children are placed initially in sets based on primary school estimates. After a "shake down" period of about a month they are given, over a period of about two weeks, standardised tests in English and arithmetic, and verbal and non-verbal intelligence tests.'

'If the inevitable selection has to be based on tests given after a child comes to his comprehensive school, some weeks must pass before normal work can begin in appropriate units. So some districts prepare for the beginning of the school year of a comprehensive school by giving tests in the primary school . . . Cotswold tests and Moray House tests are used in some areas. In the Isle of Man those who will be 11 on the first of September begin their tests in the preceding February with a verbal reasoning test from Moray House, marked in the Education Office.' This, we are assured, is 'not an 11+ examination, but still 11+ selection'. The distinction, it must be admitted, is a subtle one. *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose?*

But at least, as this book points out, there exists in the comprehensive school a facility of transfer unequalled elsewhere, and initial mistakes in selection can be rapidly put right with a minimum of upset to school or individual. This is not to say that problems do not still exist, and they are duly noted by the practising teachers.

'In any school an overlarge class is an obstacle to promotion. In some comprehensive schools the policy is to fill top streams to the maximum.' And there is within the school, as there is between secondary modern and secondary grammar schools, the 'language barrier'. 'It is biggest when it is proposed to move a boy from a stream that does no foreign language to a stream that does one. It is still big when the foreign language in the lower stream is treated less seriously and thoroughly or when the stage reached is markedly below that of the higher form.'

There are other obstacles, too, in the way of transfer: 'Sometimes the different approaches to mathematics make it difficult for a boy in a middle stream to join a higher stream with its more formal approach.' The same applies to English, and to science. And, whilst upward transfer has a success warmly spoken of, 'transfer to a lower group (demotion is an unpopular description) presents difficulties which not even the best-run comprehensive school can completely cure . . . One member goes so far as to say that down-grading is "psychologically as bad as failing the 11+".'

Is there, perhaps, more true 'mixing', more equality, more democracy, in the comprehensive school? The I.A.A.M. members do not find it so. 'Those teachers with experience in both grammar and comprehensive schools doubt if there is more mixing in the latter.' 'It is also pointed out that any mixing is of children whose homes are fairly near, whereas the wider catchment area of a grammar school leads to a mixing of children whose homes may be ten miles apart, in completely different communities.'

To the all-important question, 'Are standards of work maintained?', the booklet's authors can give only 'a cautious "Yes", as far as can be seen, on what evidence there is', and we are left on the last page with a list of the comprehensive school's problems and disadvantages. ('How to prevent a school from becoming like a vast factory in which the individual child and the individual teacher feel lost and insignificant, how to get the child into the right group and how to transfer the child from the wrong group, how to cater at the same time for the brilliant child and the unfortunately retarded child—these are among the problems.') This is unlikely, one feels, to help to relieve another major problem which many comprehensive schools are facing, namely that of recruiting staff.

G. RICHARDSON

Mathematical Experiment

Concept Formation and Personality by Z. P. Dienes,
Leicester University Press (1959), 18s.

This research monograph describes a bold attempt to relate the analytical and constructive components of children's thinking to the non-intellectual dynamic aspects of their personality. It is important to enquire what bearing a pupil's personality has upon his thinking. As Professor Meredith says in his short foreword to the monograph, a child 'sitting down to a lesson in arithmetic or algebra does not cease to be a personality'.

BOOKS RECEIVED

(Mention in this column does not preclude a future review)

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--------|
| <i>Education for Industry</i> | | | |
| W. B. Sutich | Industries and Commerce | | |
| <i>Electricity and Magnetism</i> | | | |
| P. Parker | Heinemann | 13/6 | |
| <i>Teaching in Comprehensive Schools</i> | I.A.A.M. | Cambridge University Press | 2/6 |
| <i>Handbook of English Practice II</i> | | | |
| S. H. Burton | Hutchinson | 5/- | |
| <i>Residence and Technical Education</i> | D. Silberston | Max Parrish | 16/- |
| <i>Regularized English</i> | A. Wijk | Almqvist and Wiksell | |
| <i>Athene, Vol. 9, No. 3</i> | Society for Education through Art | | 3/- |
| <i>The Film Teacher's Handbook 1959-60</i> | Society for Education in Film and Television | | 3/6 |
| <i>The Health Services of Ireland</i> | | | |
| B. Hensley | Institute of Public Administration | | 15/- |
| <i>Notes for Interview Boards</i> | | | |
| T. J. Barrington | Institute of Public Administration | | 2/6 |
| <i>The World Since 1945</i> | H. Spaull | Barrie and Rockliff | 10/6 |
| <i>A Tale that is Told</i> | A. B. Allen | Barrie and Rockliff | 21/- |
| <i>The Electrical System of the Motor Car</i> | P. R. Heaton | Barrie and Rockliff | 6/- |
| <i>Further Adventures of the Family from One End Street</i> | E. Garnett | Heinemann | |
| <i>English Five</i> | R. O'Malley and D. Thompson | Heinemann | 7/6 |
| <i>Trigonometry at Ordinary Level</i> | L. H. Clarke | Heinemann | 8/6 |
| <i>They Steal for Love</i> | A. Weaver | Max Parrish | 12/6 |
| <i>Arts and Science Slides in the Sixth Form</i> | | Oxford Univ. Department of Education | 2/6 |
| <i>Young Writers, Young Readers</i> | | | |
| Ed. B. Ford | Hutchinson | | 15/- |
| <i>Educational Library for Teachers and Students</i> | | Lewisham Library Service | |
| <i>The Superannuation of University Teachers</i> | | H.M.S.O. | 3/6 |
| <i>Portfolio Science Course</i> | | | |
| E. J. Henshaw | Hutchinson | Year I 5/6 Year II 6/6 Year III 7/- Year IV 9/- Teachers Book 6/- | |
| <i>The Midnight Sea</i> | I. Cameron | Hutchinson | 5/6 |
| <i>Sea Morning</i> | R. Farre | Hutchinson | 5/6 |
| <i>The Red Badge of Courage</i> | | | |
| S. Crane | Hutchinson | | 5/- |
| <i>A Daughter of the Samurai</i> | | | |
| E. Sugimoto | Hutchinson | | 5/6 |
| <i>The Diary of Anne Frank</i> | | Hutchinson | 6/- |
| <i>Doctor Syn</i> | R. Thorndike | Hutchinson | 5/- |
| <i>Selected Poems of George Herbert</i> | | | |
| Ed. D. Brown | Hutchinson | | 6/- |
| <i>Tales of Peace and War</i> | | | |
| Ed. R. Musman | Hutchinson | | 4/6 |
| <i>A New French Grammar for G.C.E. Candidates</i> | | | |
| Morie & Jammes | Hutchinson | | 7/9 |
| <i>Growing Up in English Secondary Schools</i> | Samuel Everett | Univ. of Pittsburgh Press | \$2.50 |
| <i>The Education of Childhood</i> | | | |
| Alexander M. Ross | Harrap | | 10/6 |
| <i>Comprehensive School</i> | | | |
| H. R. Chetwynd | Routledge & Kegan Paul | | 18/- |
| <i>A Bibliographical Guide to the Educational System</i> | | | |
| George Baron | Athlone Press | | 2/6 |
| <i>The Future of Adult Education</i> | | | |
| Mabel Tylecote | Fabian Society | | 3/- |
| <i>The Windmill Book of One-Act Plays</i> | Ed. E. R. Wood | Heinemann | 6/- |
| <i>Faith for Modern Man</i> | | | |
| A. N. Gilkes | Faber and Faber | | 12/6 |

The thinking material used by Dr. Dienes is mathematical and it is perhaps a pity that he has not provided a sub-title such as, say, *A Study in the Dynamics of Mathematical Thinking*, since the absence of such a title may lead to the work being missed by mathematics teachers.

The boldness of Dr. Dienes' attack becomes evident when we read the names of the people whose theories he attempts to reconcile. They include Piaget, Lewin and Eysenck. Dr. Dienes brings together their basic ideas of stages of intellectual growth, the topology of intellectual organisation and dimensions of personality under a more general dimension of an 'open-closed continuum'. What does this 'continuum' refer to? The construction of insights into mathematical problems—the successful thinker closes or completes half formed insights. Dr. Dienes' own view of a mathematical concept is, therefore, a dynamic one in that it is a configuration constructed by the thinker. His brief outline of Piaget's stages and the frequent link of Piaget's thinking with the idea of the Gestalt provokes one to observe that the ordinary reader of Piaget might find it difficult to recognise the three stages set out on pages 6 and 7 and to remind Dr. Dienes how critical Piaget is of Gestalt psychology in his book *The Psychology of Intelligence*.

Dr. Dienes attempts by experiment to investigate the dynamics of concept formation and to relate the capacity to form concepts with certain aspects of personality. His method is to assess the intelligence of his 10-year-old subjects by Terman Merrill and Raven's Progressive Matrices and to obtain a picture of their personality by means of Raven's controlled projection technique. On the other side he tests their mathematical thinking by two ingenious experiments; one is aimed at discovering how the child forms the concepts of element and group, of identical and different elements and of transformation of one identity into another. This is done with material—the 'dance' game—which must appeal to young subjects. In the second test of thinking he investigates the child's concepts of the value of 'place' in a dyadic number system. Lastly, he places the children on the 'open-closed continuum' by means of teachers' ratings scales of the children on their speed of forming insights, the effect a successful discovery of an insight has upon later performance and the number of insights a child is observed to be capable of.

Dr. Dienes uses multiple correlation, combining his intellectual results, including those from the concept tests, by weighted summation and doing similarly for the various personality measures. The results showed that boys' intellectual activity is more closely associated with the personality scores, but that the girls' thinking is more constructive, whilst the boys' is more analytical.

In all, this monograph is rewarding, but not too easy for the beginner to read. It is highly condensed. Also, as might be expected in such a bold attempt to reconcile apparently quite different theories, the experimental results are made to carry a heavy burden of speculation. For the advanced reader, however, the monograph is a real stimulation.

E. A. PEEL

Brainwashing the Aristocracy

JOHN VAIZEY, 'The Public Schools' in Hugh Thomas (ed.), *The Establishment*, Anthony Blond (1959), 21s.

Mr. Vaizey's contribution to this collection of essays in social criticism, though showing signs of having been written in some haste, is nonetheless a lively and forceful piece of work.

The main objection which he presents to the public school system, as it at present operates, is that it gives rise to a deep—and dangerous—division within the national culture. The products of the public schools, Mr. Vaizey argues, have been trained to lead—and quite consciously so—by their teachers; further, in the course of their training, they have been inculcated with the norms and values of the privileged social stratum from which they are mostly drawn, the same norms and values which, as members of the establishment, they will serve to perpetuate.

Of the efficacy of this training there can, Mr. Vaizey claims, be little doubt; between the ages of eight and 13 the future Establishment figure is removed from the wider society and placed in an institution which, far from being a microcosm as is often suggested, constitutes a very special 'world' indeed; there one code only, that of the social élite, is recognised and the school indoctrinates its members 'as ruthlessly as any cell in Peking'; thus, by the time his education is completed, the public school boy is thoroughly brainwashed, accepting without question, and regarding as inevitably superior, the norms, values and indeed the entire culture which has been imposed upon him. And yet, Mr. Vaizey emphasises, because of the very nature of his education he is utterly ignorant of the way of life of the vast majority of his fellow countrymen.

The argument is not against élite schools in principle, as is shown by Mr. Vaizey's ingenious proposals for the future of the public schools. His case is, rather, that such institutions should not be insulated from the world about them, that their pupils should be socially heterogeneous and that there should be complete freedom for the latter to choose their own standards, to develop their own pattern of living.

The weaknesses of the essay are the inevitable ones in impressionistic writing of this kind: the lack of precise concepts and the number of inadequately substantiated generalisations. When, however, the practitioners of the sociology of education eventually find the courage to investigate systematically the functions of the public schools in regard to the power structure of contemporary Britain, they will do well to go to Mr. Vaizey for some ideas on how to begin.

JOHN H. GOLDTHORPE

Using Film and Telly

Film and Television in Education for Teaching:
A report of a Joint Working Party for the Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education and the British Film Institute.
Distributed by the British Film Institute. 2s. 6d.

For the past 30 years or so, educationists and others have concerned themselves with the impact of film on the community and, more recently, television has joined film in their discussions. At one time, interest appeared to be divided between the results of seeing films and those of attending the cinema, but the recent large-scale desertion of the temple of the cinema for the home-shrine of television has concentrated interest on film content and on the many aspects of its impact on viewers.

The most prominent organisation in the field has been, of course, the British Film Institute, which was set up in 1933 and which has been joined, in recent years, by the Society for Education in Film and Television. Since 1958 a working party, consisting of representatives of the Association of Teachers in Colleges and Departments of Education and of the British Film Institute has been meeting, and its views are presented in *Film and Television in Education for Teaching*. On the whole the report presents a clear appreciation of the situation and makes some valuable suggestions.

One omission (which is perhaps not unconnected with the membership of the working party) is any adequate reference to the part which universities might play in the work envisaged, both in teaching and research. The experiments in film teaching mentioned in the first paragraph of this report have not been confined to training
(continued on page 116)

SONNET FOR A SCHOOLMISTRESS

Each day she takes the snotty bus to school,
Crammed with kids. Each evening she cleans
It out, sweeps up the aitches, mops the swill
Of syntax underneath the seats, then drains
The sums, washes away each mis-spelt word
From fingered windows, wipes the number-plate,
Reads the service-book, recites the highway-code,
Crosses herself, and drives into the night.

Asleep, she takes her chariot of fire,
Chauffeured by cherubs, escorted by stars;
Moons rise for her along the Milky Way;
The constellations curtsy; purity
Of sounds from vast and silent skies she hears;
Gowned with goddesses, she rides the clear air.

JULIAN ENNIS.



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