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THE DEVELOPMENT AND ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE INSPECTORATE  
OF THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND OF THE BOARD  
OF EDUCATION 1860 - 1920

THESIS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
MASTER OF EDUCATION

SUBMITTED BY T. HARWOOD

OCTOBER 1969

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PREFACE

The development of the Inspectorate of the Committee of the Council and the Board of Education from 1860 to 1920 is the story of the creation of a highly professional body with its own traditions and organisation, but the form it took was determined by its primary function of seeing that government funds were properly expended to fulfil the educational policies of the time. It must be considered, therefore, in the light of the major changes in national policy which occurred during the period and for that purpose it is convenient to divide this study according to those changes. In the second place, as the responsibilities of the inspectors varied considerably inside the field of education it has been thought desirable to confine this examination to the major and uniform responsibility which was theirs, namely the development of elementary schools.

SECTION 1 THE INSPECTORATE IN 1860

In 1839, the Whig government, anxious to ensure that the £30,000 it had voted for Education would be properly applied, decided that in future no grant would be paid unless it carried the right of inspection, and on September 24th the recently appointed Committee of the Privy Council for Education put forward the minute:

"Inspectors authorised by Her Majesty in Council will be appointed from time to time to visit schools to be henceforth aided by public money: the Inspectors will not interfere with the religious instruction or discipline or management of the school, it being their object to collect facts and information and to report the result of their inspection to the Committee of the Council."<sup>(1)</sup>

In December of the same year Reverend William Allen and Mr. Tremenheere became the first to bear the dignified title of 'Her Majesty's Inspector of Schools'.

Appointments were by nomination and qualifications unspecified, except for a vague understanding that candidates should usually have some university distinction<sup>(2)</sup> but by the so-called Concordat of 1840 it was agreed that Church of England schools should only be inspected

(1) For full text see Marvin "Reports on Elementary Schools by Matthew Arnold", Appendix B, Page 278.

(2) "Gentlemen appointed have either obtained high distinction at the Universities or have afforded other equivalent proof of their fitness to administer the type of education described in the Minutes of the Council 1854-5, pages 1-105"

(Report on the Civil Service 1855, p.53 Evidence of Mr. R. Lingens)

by clergymen, and Roman Catholic and Non-conformist schools by laymen acceptable to the denomination concerned. The early inspectors were men of high scholarship and Kay Shuttleworth, the guiding spirit of the movement towards state education, encouraged them to express their opinions freely, and disseminated educational ideas by circulating their reports to grant-aided schools. In the first twenty years their contribution to national education was impressive; they led the attack against the monitorial system; they initiated great improvements in school organisation and management; they helped teachers to achieve a better salary, a higher social position and improved academic standards; they exposed inefficiency and sought to give children a happier, longer and more profitable time at school.

Their duties multiplied so that by 1860 not only did they visit 10,403 departments in Day schools, <sup>(1)</sup> but they were also responsible for Training Colleges, Pupil Teachers, Night Schools, Admiralty, Poor Law, Ragged and Industrial Schools, <sup>(2)</sup> and grants paid on their reports included those for teachers' salaries, books and scientific apparatus, drawing, satisfactory instruction and attendance (Capitation), as well as building and enlargement of premises. <sup>(3)</sup> The amount voted by Parliament for education was now £700,000 and the number of inspectors had risen to 36 with 24 assistants, <sup>(4)</sup> who were young men of the same

(1) Report of the Committee of Council for Education (hereafter referred to as 'Report'), 1860-1, p. X.

(2) *ibid.* Appendix 2, p. 269.

(3) *ibid.* Appendix 5, p. 520.

(4) *ibid.* p. XI.

social and academic background and who could expect to become full inspectors as vacancies occurred.

The country was divided into 36 districts on the basis of geography and denomination and the manner in which the manifold duties were carried out was described to the Newcastle Commission as follows:

"It is calculated that an inspector may visit five schools a week during 35 weeks in a year. Each inspector receives a list of the schools of his district liable to inspection on account of annual grants already received, of application for future grants or of building grants from the Government ..... he forms his district into six sub-divisions to each of which two consecutive months are assigned (new applications and buildings being inspected as opportunity serves)<sup>(1)</sup> ..... The inspector gives a week's notice of the day on which he will visit any school, enclosing with the notice a form to be filled up by the managers containing detailed information upon the income and expenditure of the school, the teachers, the attendance and subjects taught, the books and apparatus in use ..... This form also contains blank forms of the certificates to be issued by the clergymen and managers or schoolmaster as to the pupil teachers or candidates for apprenticeship, and as to assistant teachers.<sup>(2)</sup> Besides this form a schedule is directed to schools in which the capitation grant is claimed, to be

(1) Newcastle Commission's Report, Vol. 1, p. 223.

(2) *ibid.* Vol. 1, p. 224.

filled up with the names and ages of the scholars on whose account it is claimed, together with their attendance and fees paid. This must be completed by the managers before the inspector's visit."<sup>(1)</sup>

We are also told that on his visit the inspector directed his attention to every part of the school, "examining the children, the pupil teachers and the principal teachers as well as the state of the school and the character of the instruction given."<sup>(2)</sup> He also examined the registers, the state of the premises, the apparatus and the organisation. The form recorded in a tabular shape the position of the teacher in relation to his certificate and the inspector's recommendation as to the payment of the augmentation grant upon it, as well as his report on the proficiency of the pupil teachers and his opinion of the principal teacher's ability to instruct them.

As for the children, the inspector had to make a report of an examination of each class of the Boys', Girls' and Infants' schools in every subject of instruction. If the capitation grant was claimed he was required separately to examine the children from nine to eleven and those over eleven and record their proficiency in certain special branches of instruction.

Finally, he was to make a recommendation as to the payment of the grant based on all these particulars which would guide the Education Department in determining their annual aid."<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Newcastle Commission's Report, Vol. 1, p. 224.

(2) *ibid.* Vol. 1, p. 227.

(3) *ibid.* Vol. 1, pps. 227-8.



This mass of detailed instruction would seem to imply that the annual inspection was a dull labour to the inspector and a source of dread to both teachers and pupils, but such was the quality of the inspectors and the liberal spirit in which they could apply the regulations, that the annual reports give the impression of lively co-operation in the task of improving the schools. (1) The practical working out of this system is perhaps best described by Matthew Arnold who, in his General Report of 1863 when describing the pre-1862 type of inspection, was able to write:

"The inspector took a school class by class. He seldom heard each child in a class read but he called out a certain number to read picked at random as specimens of the rest and when this was done he questioned the class with freedom and in his own way on the subjects of their instruction. As you got near to the top of a good school, these subjects became more numerous; they embraced English grammar, Geography and History, for each of which the inspector's reports contained a special entry and the examination then acquired much variety and interest. The whole life and power of a class, the fitness of its composition, its handling by the teacher, were well tested; the inspector became well acquainted with them and a powerful means of correcting, improving and stimulating them was thus given. In the hands of an able inspector like Dr. Temple for instance - this means was an instrument of great force and value." (2)

(1) See contribution of Bowstead Morris, F. Temple and J.D. Morell to Reports 1859-60, 1860-1 and 1861-2.

(2) Report 1863-4, p. 187. Temple was later Archbishop of Canterbury.

Then he goes on to say:

"The whole school felt that the prime aim and object of the inspector's visit was, after ensuring the fulfilment of certain sanitary and disciplinary conditions, to test and quicken the intellectual life of the school - the scholars and teacher co-operated therefore, with the inspector in doing their best to reach it; they were anxious for his judgement on their highest progress - anxious to profit from this judgement after he was gone."<sup>(1)</sup>

But this happy picture was not accepted by the Royal Commission on Popular Education as a true representation of the facts as it understood them in 1861. They admitted the undoubted superiority of inspected schools, they accepted the stimulating effect of inspection and the claim that a considerable improvement had taken place in the schools,<sup>(2)</sup> but they were equally certain that in practice it showed certain serious defects.

In the first place because of the organisation of the inspectorate and the independence and lack of contact of its members, standards could, and did, vary a great deal between one inspector and another, and the Commissioners quote with obvious agreement the evidence of Matthew Arnold, "The character of school inspection is at present such as to render difficult the adoption of a uniform principle in reporting by all the inspectors."<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Report 1863-4, p. 188.

(2) Newcastle Commission's Report, Vol. 1, p. 229.

(3) *ibid.*

Moreover, it was felt that inspectors tended to be too lenient with schools because they did not wish to take the extreme step of refusing the grant. Having no intermediate course they tended to justify the retention of the grant by over-emphasising any favourable aspect of the school and depreciating any unfavourable one.

Even more unsatisfactory from the point of view of the Commissioners was the type of inspection used. They held that inspectors spent too little time with individual scholars and that they paid too much attention to the attainments of the minority in the first or top class. This they argued, produced two harmful results. Firstly, teachers used methods which were spectacular rather than efficient, dwelling "on matters of memory rather than of reasoning and on details rather than on general principles or general results,"<sup>(1)</sup> and secondly they neglected the teaching of the rudiments to the younger pupils in order to concentrate upon more advanced subjects with the older.

From the nation's point of view the Commissioners felt that this was quite a mistaken policy for, as the inspectors' own reports showed, less than one third of the pupils ever reached the first class, and there was a great deal of bad instruction in all subjects, especially reading, in all parts of the country. They were convinced that as few pupils would stay beyond the age of 10 or 11, the duty of the schools was to give a better teaching in reading, writing and arithmetic, and see that all scholars benefited from this basic education. They felt

(1) Newcastle Commission's Report, Vol. 1, p. 273.

that this could best be secured if a substantial portion of the grant payable to a school should be obtainable by children who had attended for 140 days during the year and who passed an examination in the three R's with plain needlework for girls. (1)

Although the machinery for financing this policy from local rates could not be introduced, the effect of these proposals was to encourage those who sought a more precise method of evaluating the relation between educational expense and efficiency. This led to the introduction of a new way of administration which transformed the educational system of the country and with it the nature and function of the inspectorate.

(1) Newcastle Commission's Report, Vol. 1, p. 545.

SECTION 2      THE IMPACT OF THE REVISED CODE 1862-70

The recommendations of the Newcastle Commission were promptly accepted by Robert Lowe, the Vice President of the Committee of the Council, and Ralph Lingden, the Secretary of the Education Department, who together produced the Revised Code of 1861, and so inaugurated the system of "Payment by Results". The precise form of these proposals was the outcome of practical considerations rather than any educational theories. A letter from Lowe to Lingden twenty years later makes this quote clear, for he writes:

"You and I viewed the three R's not only primarily as the exact amount of instruction that ought to be given, but as an amount of knowledge which could be ascertained thoroughly by examination and upon which we could safely base the Parliamentary grant. It was more a financial than a literary preference. Had there been any other branch of useful knowledge the possession of which could have been ascertained with equal precision there was nothing to prevent its admission, but there was not." (1)

So the grants for augmenting teachers' salaries and pensions, for paying pupil teachers and helping them at training college, for buying books and apparatus, were to be abolished in favour of allowances based upon performance by each individual in those subjects which could most easily be examined.

(1) Quoted A.P. Martin "Life and Letters of Viscount Sherbrooke", Vol. 11, p. 217.

For the inspectors the implication was obvious and not complimentary. For twenty years they had thought by their skill and experience to further the cause of National Education. In the mind of the Department it could be done more effectively by a purely mechanical process.

At first these considerations did not seriously trouble the majority of those inside or outside Parliament who paid any attention to the matter, for they either accepted the argument from efficiency or kept quiet to avoid prolonging a troublesome matter, but they were forced to notice them by the attacks on the Code by some who had every right to speak in the name of education. The greatest of these was the founder and shaper of the existing system, Sir James Kay Shuttleworth, who in his "Letter to Lord Granville"<sup>(1)</sup> examined the proposals in considerable detail, showed their misconception and foretold that they would result in mechanical instruction and a reduction of real education for both scholars and teachers. He was followed by Matthew Arnold who was prepared to risk his professional career to express his views. We can believe, though we have little direct evidence, that he was expressing sentiments acceptable to many of his inspectorial colleagues.

In March 1862 he contributed an article "The Twice Revised Code" to Fraser's Magazine<sup>(2)</sup> and afterwards published it separately as a

(1) "Four Periods of Public Education", pps. 574-638.

(2) See Connell, "Matthew Arnold", pps. 211-3.

pamphlet, in which he attacked what he called the "rationale" of the proposals. Previously, he argued, the state had been concerned with paying for discipline, for civilisation, for religious and moral training, for a superior education to clever and forward children; now they aimed in Benthamite terms to obtain the greatest possible quantity of reading, writing and arithmetic for the greatest number. "The principles of the new code were 'reduction' and a 'prize scheme'." (1) He maintained that the deficiencies of the schools were the deficiencies of the homes, from which the children came, and the real test was not the amount of reading, writing and arithmetic which the pupils absorbed but how much the children of the labouring classes had been humanised and advanced. (2)

The supporters of the new code refused to accept such arguments as sufficient to make them abandon the principle of "Payment by Results", but they did make concessions. In future one third of the grant should be paid on attendance, children would be grouped by educational standards and not age, and pupil teachers who had already been enlisted would be supported until they had finished their apprenticeship.

So was born the Revised Code of 1862 which, with its essential feature that State aid should depend on the results of the examination of individual pupils, shaped the administration and practice of elementary education for the next three decades. In no section was

(1) See Connell, "Matthew Arnold"; p. 213.

(2) *ibid.*

its effect more apparent than on the inspectorate, but to understand this it is necessary to examine its proposals in much greater detail. (1)

The important terms were:

1. A grant of 4s. 0d per day scholar and 2s. 6d per evening scholar based on average attendance.
2. A grant of 8s. 0d per day scholar who had attended 200 meetings or 5s. 0d for each evening scholar who attended 24 meetings subject to a deduction for failure to satisfy the inspector in reading, writing or arithmetic of one third for each subject.
3. Scholars under any Half Time Act could qualify with 100 attendances.
4. Children under 6 years of age were to earn a grant of 6s. 6d if the inspector certified they were instructed suitably to their age, and in a manner not to interfere with the instruction of older children.
5. The standards which the children were to pass were set out, (2) but it was expressly laid down that no child was to be presented for examination a second time according to the same or lower standard.

Before proceeding to the examination the inspector had to satisfy himself that:

- (a) The school was healthy, properly drained and ventilated with 80 cubic feet of internal space for each child and suitable offices.
- (b) That the principal teacher was certificated and paid, either by private agreement or according to the code of 1860.
- (c) That the girls were taught plain needlework.

(1) See Report 1861-2, pps. XV - XLIV.

(2) Paragraph 48 of the Revised Code of 1862 gave the full details of the work to be tested in each standard.



- (d) That the registers were kept with sufficient accuracy.
  - (e) That there was no prima facie objection of a gross kind (failure in Church of England schools to give adequate religious instruction would be such an objection).
  - (f) That there were at least three managers to receive the grant.
- Otherwise the grant would be withheld altogether.

This grant could also be reduced by 10% to 50% upon the inspector's report for faults of instruction or discipline on the part of the teacher or failure of the managers to remedy defects in the building or apparatus. It was also reduced by £10 if there was not one pupil teacher for each 40 pupils or one assistant for each 80 pupils above the first 50 in average attendance. The total grant had not to exceed the amount received from school fees or subscriptions and in no case to be more than 15s. 0d per child in average attendance.

Each school had to have a diary or log book in which the principal teacher made daily entries and a portfolio to hold all official letters.

In addition to this it was insisted that, in accordance with established practice, the grants were exclusively for promoting the education of children belonging to the classes who supported themselves by manual labour, <sup>(1)</sup> that the aim was to aid voluntary local exertion and that the school must be in connection with some recognised religious denomination, or at least where the Scriptures were read daily from the Authorised Version.

(1) The Department gave detailed advice as how to apply this rule in marginal cases.

These regulations with their demand for detailed examination and comprehensive returns, obviously imposed a large extra burden upon the inspectors, and although some relief was given by transferring responsibility for the inspection of Poor Law and Industrial Schools to the Poor Law Board and the Home Office respectively, it was inevitable that the inspectorial staff should be both increased and redeployed. This was done in 1863.

The first step was to promote the 24 assistant inspectors to full rank and give each of them charge of a district, so that instead of 36 districts there were now 60.

Previously the assistant inspector had been assigned his share of schools by the district inspector, to whom he looked for official advice, but except for the fact that he had not to make an annual report, his responsibilities to inspection and ordinary reporting were the same. Moreover, the two bodies of officers were equal in other respects; they were selected from the same class, appointed by the same formalities and received the same salaries and allowances. As the secretary to the Education Department claimed, "The character of the change therefore has been purely administrative." It secures the obvious advantage of economising time, money and personal fatigue in travelling, over smaller areas; it concentrates responsibilities, it facilitates closer observation."<sup>(1)</sup> Further time (actually 14 days every two years) was left for inspection by the decision that inspectors would only have

(1) Report 1863-4, p. VIII.

to submit reports of their districts in alternate years. The value set on these reports and the fear of the Department that their reduction might be misinterpreted are underlined by the care taken in the minute to point out that the basis of selection was that each part of the country should be fairly portrayed and that every inspector would report over the two year period. (1)

A significant change was the appointment of a new class of Inspectors' Assistants, with the twofold aim of relieving inspectors of many routine duties and saving money by getting them done by lower paid officials. Their inferior status was fully emphasised for they were only to work under the inspector's own superintendence or on his specific written orders and were not in any way to reduce the inspector's responsibility for the full discharge of his duties.

The qualifications laid down were:

- (a) They must have been pupil teachers.
- (b) They must have been trained for two years in a college of the same denomination as the schools they were to examine.
- (c) They must have passed each of their examinations without failure and at the last of them had been placed not below the Second Division.
- (d) They must have received their certificate after the usual probationary service in a school of the same denomination as they were to examine.
- (e) They must not be above 30 years old.

(1) Report 1863-4, p. VIII.

(f) They must be recommended by the inspector under whom they were to examine.

Conditions of employment were:

Their salary was to be £100 rising to £250, plus 1d per child per annum after the first 12,000 examined and marked by themselves with a maximum of £50 (12,000).<sup>(1)</sup>

They should be reimbursed the actual expense of travel on public service but receive no further allowance.

They were not to engage in any other employment, especially private tuition.

Instructions were sent to each District Inspector allowing him to nominate an assistant to serve under him, but intimating that the nominee would have to pass an extremely rigorous examination based on Standard VI of the Code, conducted by the Civil Service Commissioners, and then serve on probation for six months before appointment.

Special stress was laid on the inferior nature and social status of the appointment. Inspectors were told, "These assistants are intended to be employed in large schools, in large towns and need not to sleep away from home or travel far, ..... They are on no account to be despatched on independent services", and finally they were warned, "It is only by your thoroughly comprehending the limited and subsidiary character of the assistant's duty that you will repel the imputation of setting a young man to judge his elders and often his superiors in the

(1) A similar payment was made to inspectors but their salary range was £200-£600.

art of school keeping. The assistant has no such judgement to deliver; he has only to see certain exercises performed and to mark them one by one for the inspector."<sup>(1)</sup>

In a second letter which recognises the point that assistants could sometimes be more efficiently used if allowed to stay near particular groups of schools, they were allowed a lodging allowance not exceeding 12s. 6d per week and district inspectors were reminded, "It continues to be the intention of their Lordships that assistants should be employed in schools not more distant from their place of abode than will allow them to start from it in the morning and return to it at the end of the day", - for this, "is a point which is very important to continue to insist on, in order to avoid obvious difficulties in his relation with yourself and the managers whose schools he visits."<sup>(2)</sup>

These precise definitions of qualifications and social limitations are in marked contrast to the almost haphazard selection of men with the 'right' social and academic background, providing they had the requisite influence, for the rank of full inspector. Their knowledge of elementary schools might be negligible, their age even below that of their assistants, but their right to sit in judgement and act as the social and intellectual superior of the most able schoolmaster was unquestioned. No clearer evidence of the reality of Disraeli's 'two nations' exists. Perhaps it was necessary in mid-Victorian times that

(1) Report 1863-4, p. X.

(2) *ibid.* p. XI.

inspectors should be able to talk on equal terms to managers and the Department. Perhaps the discipline of academic study and freedom from routine knowledge did allow them to take that broad view which their type of education is held to produce? It may even be true that their social prestige enabled them to give services to education which men of lesser clay could not, but this precise definition on caste lines was a serious handicap to the development of the Inspectorate. Inspectors were not partners with the schools in educating equal citizens. They were at the best 'Benevolent Despots', prepared at any moment to resume their privileges of 'Divine Right', if their subjects thought to act above their station. It was a conception natural to Victorians of all classes; the evil was that by its definite expression in the ranks of the Education Department it placed a taint of inferiority on any inspectors who had risen through the State schools and for at least 60 years prevented many of the best of the elementary school products from making that vital contribution to national education for which their training and experience fitted them.

Returning, however, to the position in 1862, we are faced with the question as to the effect that the New Code and instructions should have on the work of the inspectors.

In the opinion of the Education Department officials they should make little difference for in 1862 we find an official instruction which was several times repeated during the next few years.

"The grant to be made to each school depends as it has ever done, upon the school's whole character and work. The grant is offered for

attendance in a school with which the inspector is satisfied. If he is wholly dissatisfied no grant is made. You will judge every school by the same standard you have hitherto used as regards its religious, moral and intellectual merits. The examination under Article 48 (3 R's) does not supersede this judgement but presupposes it. That article does not prescribe that if thus much is done a grant shall be paid, but unless thus much is done no grant will be paid. It does not exclude the inspection of each school by a highly educated public officer, but it fortifies this general test by individual examination." (1)

But this apparent freedom was circumscribed. The reasons for the inspector's dissatisfaction had to be confirmed and they were warned that their power of reducing grants had only to be exercised in serious cases.

Moreover, their professional freedom of action was threatened by the Education Department. Previously, it had been the custom of inspectors to meet annually to discuss not only educational theory but the conduct of the office and write essays on subjects outside their scope as inspectors, but the Department in January 1861 issued the minute "Inspectors must confine themselves to the state of the schools under their inspection and to practical suggestions for their improvement." (2)

It seems possible that the Department would have applied greater pressure to suppress criticism of the Revised Code had the question of

(1) Instructions to H.M.I. in September 1862. See Marvin op. cit. Appendix L., p. 369

(2) Minute 31st January 1861  
Quoted E.L. Edmunds. The School Inspector p. 181

interference with inspectors' Reports not been raised in Parliament.

The debates in the House of Commons are of particular relevance for they raised fundamental questions as to the functions and responsibilities of the Inspectorate.

The matter was first broached in June 1863<sup>(1)</sup> by W.E. Forster. (Matthew Arnold's brother-in-law and well briefed even when not in the Education Department) who asked under what conditions Lowe intended to allow H.M.I.'s reports to be published for the information of the House. He complained that an unpublished minute had required that "if a Report contained anything of which the Vice President disapproved it was to be sent back to the author for revision; and if after that it still contained matter that was objected to, it was not to be published."<sup>(2)</sup> He alleged that the reports of Mr. Watkins and two other inspectors had been suppressed and went on to assert.

"The Reports were worth nothing unless they contained a full and complete expression of the opinions and experience of the inspectors for the information of the House" and he held that, "they ought to be published in that form."<sup>(3)</sup>

In his reply Lowe agreed that the matter was one of considerable importance for it raised the question,

"whether in the Education Department there shall or there shall not

(1) Hansard, Vol. CLXXI, 3rd series, p. 718.

(2) *ibid.*, p. 719.

(3) *ibid.*, p. 720.



be that discipline which exists and is found necessary in every other Department of the State?"<sup>(1)</sup> and it was for the Council by whom the Reports were received to decide whether or not they should be put before Parliament. He accepted responsibility for the minute, but claimed that was not new but derived from the instructions of his predecessors. Inspectors "who are gentlemen of great intelligence - are not to surrender their opinions" - but should maintain silence if they cannot agree with the heads of their Department<sup>(2)</sup> and went on to declare,

"I hold that it is the clear duty of every Department to prevent the writers of reports from entering into controversy as to matters decided upon by the chiefs of the Office - in other words as to the policy of the Department ..... no public Department ..... can be expected to carry on its operations with success, if it is obliged to print controversies maintained against itself by the very persons whom it employs to carry out the objects entrusted to its charge."

Lowe was supported by Adderley (his predecessor at the Department of Education) who described how he had withdrawn his scheme of limiting reports by providing five headings and argued that while "a specific question could be raised the general proposition was unassailable."<sup>(3)</sup>

The debate became more heated when Lord Robert Cecil stated that "there appeared to be a natural antipathy between the Vice President and Inspector"<sup>(4)</sup> and claimed that the inspector had as much right to report to

(1) Hansard, Vol. CIXXI, 3rd series, p. 720.

(2) *ibid.*, p. 721-2.

(3) *ibid* p. 724

(4) *ibid* p. 729

the Department as a Consul had to the Foreign Office. In spite of Lowe's well founded contradictions, Cecil claimed that inspectors' opinions had never been suppressed before, and went on to attack the Vice President as 'an eccentric theorist' at variance with the facts reported by the inspectors who were practical men. He went on to state that because the inspectors were men of education and high standing and were paid high salaries they were inconveniently independent, and alleged that the Assistant Inspectors,

"men who had been pupil teachers, who were to be paid only £100 per year and who were to be entrusted with the power of sitting in judgement upon the managers of schools in the country<sup>(1)</sup> ..... would be more humble slaves to the Vice President than the Inspectors."<sup>(2)</sup>

The controversy was renewed in April 1864 when Lord Robert Cecil moved the Resolution,

"That in the opinion of this House the mutilation of the reports of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools and the exclusion from them of statements and opinions adverse to the educational views entertained by the Committee of Council, while matter favourable to them is admitted, are violations of the understanding under which the appointment of the Inspectors was originally sanctioned by Parliament and tend entirely to destroy the value of their reports."<sup>(3)</sup>

(1) Hansard, Vol. CLXXI, 3rd series, p. 730.

(2) *ibid.*, p. 731.

(3) Hansard, Vol. CLXXIV, 3rd series, p. 898.

He claimed that when the inspectors were first appointed in 1840 they were told that it was intended that their reports should be laid before Parliament, and what Lowe did was to exclude all matters of opinion hostile to himself. (1)

He was supported by Mr. Walter, the member for Berkshire, who quickly showed that his real grievance was that the Department would not support the retention of unqualified teachers, and claimed that the report of an inspector who spoke well of a school under an unqualified teacher had been suppressed.

Lowe had little difficulty in showing that the responsibilities of the Education Department in 1840 were very different from those in 1864 and therefore the function of inspection had changed and that which Cecil had called a minute was in fact a letter. He pointed out that inspectors were their own censors and while they could not write anything they liked in a Blue Book for which the Department was responsible, they were perfectly free to do so in the Reviews which were much more widely read. He accused Cecil of regarding inspectors' reports as only being of value if they provided criticism of their superiors and arguments for reducing the Education grants. He pointed out that he had received all of the reports for the year and had not had to send any back. Finally he declared,

"I can assure him (Cecil) that the Inspectors ..... a very valuable

(1) Hansard, Vol. CIXXIV, 3rd series, p. 899.

body of men, who have undertaken, no doubt, duties which press very heavily on some of them ..... are doing good service and the system is worked with a smoothness and success which surprise us."<sup>(1)</sup>

The motion was carried partly because of Lowe's rather dictatorial manner which antagonised the House of Commons and partly because some of his opponents were circulating copies of marked reports in the House thereby suggesting he was not telling the truth.

Six days later Lowe, in spite of Palmerston's protests, insisted on resigning. He indicated that the markings had in fact been put in by a clerk to call attention to certain paragraphs, and that he had "never in any instance struck out any passage from an Inspector's Report"<sup>(2)</sup> but he felt it was a matter of his personal honour.

In the history of the Inspectorate this debate marked a turning point. The early inspectors had regarded themselves as completely free to express their ideas and criticisms, henceforth although Lowe had been defeated, his concept of departmental discipline gradually predominated. Matthew Arnold, because of his great influence, might continue to criticise the 'Office' with impunity, but ordinary inspectors knew that they must not do so in public.<sup>(3)</sup> Inspectors might continue to regard themselves as high minded inquisitors fearlessly seeking out and reporting the truth, but in practice they knew that their freedom was

(1) Hansard, Vol. CLXXIV, 3rd series, pps. 909-910.

(2) *ibid.*, p. 1208.

(3) See Sneyd Kynnersley, H.M.I. p. 197

limited by ~~the same kind of responsibility to their Chiefs~~ which characterised all effective public departments. This conclusion was underlined by the Report of a Select Committee which was established on February 28th, 1865 under the chairmanship of Sir John Pakington to -- "inquire into the Constitution of the Committee of Council on Education and the system under which the business of the office is conducted and also into the best mode of extending the benefits of Government Inspection and the Parliamentary Grant to schools at present unassisted by the State." The members included Lord Robert Cecil and Mr. Walter who were able to pursue a wide ranging enquiry and ride their favourite hobby horses of bureaucratic control and the high quality of uncertificated teachers, but on the question of Inspector's reports Lowe's policy was fully vindicated. Even those members who had supported the critical motion of April 1864 agreed that "the supervision exercised in objecting to the insertion of irrelevant matter, of more dissertation and of controversial argument is consistent with the powers of the Committee of Council, and has, on the whole, been exercised fairly and without excessive strictness."<sup>(2)</sup>

A suggestion that inspectors should answer specific questions rather than make a general report was rejected, but it was recommended that all instructions to inspectors should be laid before Parliament with the annual Report of the Committee of Council for Education.<sup>(3)</sup>

- (1) Select Committee Report presented 13/3/66. Quoted E.L. Edmonds The School Inspector p. 182
- (2) Ibid p. 183
- (3) Ibid p. 183

The members of the Select Committee were agreed that the value of inspector's reports tended to be lowered if readers knew they could be altered, but they had no doubt as to where final responsibility lay when they said "It appears however to your Committee that whatever may have been the misunderstanding under which the appointment of inspectors was originally sanctioned, Parliament cannot be presumed to be ignorant (since the year 1858 at latest) that the heads of office may have exercised a censorship over the inspectors' reports as to the insertion of argumentative or irrelevant matter; and your Committee are of the opinion that some such power is essential to the effective working of the Department so long as it retains its present constitution and functions." (1)

The implications for the inspectors was clear. They could exercise their power in shaping the educational system of the country only if they remembered that they were civil servants.

However, before proceeding to further discussion on the influence of the Inspectorate as illustrated by the impact of their opinions in helping to secure administrative changes, we need to look at some of the personalities concerned. The inspectors selected are some of those whose worth can be evaluated from sources outside the Reports of the Education Department including men whose were nationally famous as well as others who operated most influentially in the County of Durham. Each has qualities which attract but collectively they display the divergent range of relevant abilities which enriched the profession.

(1) Select Committee Report 13/2/1866 quoted Edmunds op cit pps 182-3

Matthew Arnold

The best known and certainly the best documented of the inspectors, was Matthew Arnold. Son of the famous Headmaster of Rugby he became an inspector in 1851 and did not retire until 1886.

His university training and few months' teaching at his old school were seemingly an inadequate background for one who knew nothing of elementary schools and for whom the chief attraction of the job was that it gave him a secure income on which to marry. Even after eight years we find him writing to his mother, "I have no special interest in the subject of public education ..... I shall for five months get away from the routine work of it, of which I sometimes get very sick." (1) In fact he was never very competent in the technique either of examination or inspection. The easy personal contact with teachers and children which marked the work of some of his colleagues escaped him, and sheer lack of

(1) Letters of Matthew Arnold (ed. Russell) Vol.1. p. 78

interest sometimes made him appear ineffective. Some of his educational ideas are easy to criticise; his zeal for grammar even for the youngest pupils, his recommendation of the Vulgate as a desirable medium of instruction in both Latin and religion, his suggestion of a list of school books drawn up by some central agency. All indicate a lack of close understanding of the needs and potentialities of the elementary schools, as well as that inborn sense of superiority which he sometimes unconsciously adopted.

Having visited Continental schools as Assistant Commissioner for the Newcastle and Schools Enquiry Commissions and later as an official reporter to the Department he was better informed on foreign educational practice than his colleagues, but even here he was accused with some justice of being too ready to accept and advocate Continental educational systems and principles. In his report for 1878 he bases an elaborate discussion on the expense of English elementary education on the basic premise that it is twice as expensive as in France (3 times in London), without any consideration of the relative wealth and wage levels of the two countries. He may have been correct in his assertion that School Boards wasted money on show, but he might have served the cause of education better by providing specific examples of this instead of suggesting that elementary children could be educated for an average of 35/- each per annum and that the balance should be devoted to relieving middle class parents from some of the burden of having to provide the secondary and superior instruction which their children required.



Yet he was the great prophet of English elementary education. His practical experience of the work of the schools, allied to his command of language and his popular prestige made him the standard bearer in the fight to preserve the real aims of education against those who demanded in the name of efficiency that only what could be measured was the proper content of state-aided education. His contribution to the argument about specific issues will be discussed elsewhere, but his underlying philosophy, so much more akin to our time than to his own, finds expression in all his writings. In 1867 he wrote:

"More free play for the inspector and more free play in consequence for the teacher is what is wanted"<sup>(1)</sup> and to him this was no demand for official connivance in the lowering of standards for he knew that it could not be fully implemented without increasing the professional competence of both inspectors and teachers.

In the Report from 1854 he had set out what he considered the true function of the inspectorate. "Inspection" he says, "exists for the sake of finding out and reporting the truth and for this above all."<sup>(2)</sup> Inspectors should have time to get to know their schools and all should proceed on the same principles, "one should not conceal defects as an advocate for the schools, while another exposes them as an agent for the Government."<sup>(3)</sup> He saw that as the number of schools increased

(1) Report 1867-8, p. 297.

(2) Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education, 1854-5, p. 622.

(3) *ibid.*

inspectors would be able "to look only to certain broad and ascertainable things; on the one hand the commodiousness of the school buildings, the convenience of the school fittings, the fulfilment of the necessary sanitary conditions; on the other, the competence of the teacher, the efficiency of discipline; the soundness of the elementary ..... instruction."<sup>(1)</sup> Finally having paid tribute to the amount of work, sincerity and devotion shown by the teachers he reminds them that "they themselves will be the greatest gainers by the system of reporting which clearly states what they do and what they fail to do; not one which drowns alike success and failure, the able and the inefficient in a common flood of vague approbation."<sup>(2)</sup>

In his 1867 Report he quotes with obvious approval, Kay Shuttleworth's famous letter of instruction of 1848, the last sentence of which reads, "They (the teachers) ought to receive from the inspectors the impression that they are called upon to cooperate with them and with the Committee of Council on the attainment of great national objects."<sup>(3)</sup>

His aim was that inspectors should be men of such quality, professional competence and integrity that their visits should provide a constant stimulus to the schools, but he also knew that the real progress was dependent upon improving the number and quality of

(1) Minutes of the Committee of Council on Education, 1854-5, p. 622.

(2) *ibid.*, p. 624.

(3) Report 1867-8, p. 292.

teachers. This was why he so bitterly attacked the terms of the 'Revised Code' which threatened their recruitment and training.

"It is just because it is of the first importance for a system of popular education to have and to maintain an abundant and a well trained supply of teachers ..... that the plan of appropriated grants ..... augmentation grants to certificated teachers, stipends to pupil teachers, and gratuities to the principal teacher for instructing them ..... was resorted to."<sup>(1)</sup>

He was convinced of the deterioration in quality and in words, reminiscent of others heard in more recent times he writes,

"At a moment when popular education is at last becoming a question of immediate public interest and when the numbers, spirit and qualifications of our teaching staff will have a great call made upon them ..... our teaching staff is less rigorous in spirit is more slackly recruited and with weaker recruits than it was a few years ago."<sup>(2)</sup>

To those who argued that the limited objective of the elementary schools only required teachers of limited attainment, his Report of 1855 embodies the answer he continued to give for the rest of his life. "It is now sufficiently clear that the teacher to whom you give only a drudge's training will do only a drudge's work and will do it in a drudge's spirit, that in order to ensure good instruction even within narrow limits in a school, you must provide it with a master far

(1) Report 1867-8, p. 293.

(2) *ibid.*, p. 292.

superior to his scholars." (1)

He knew that the character of the teacher was the first essential. Commenting in 1853 on the Wesleyan Training College in Westminster and noting that religious teaching was the main object of their school, and religious character the primary consideration in the selection training and discipline of the students he writes.

'Considering how far more important to the young is the personal influence of the teacher than the things taught, considering too, how narrow is the range of subjects in which it can be expected that the children of the poor can really acquire instruction in schools, it is a matter of no regret that a training college should be established with these aims, even though the pursuit of them should cause it to send forth somewhat less finished scholars, if the same pursuit enables it to send forth more formed and serious men." (2)

But this realisation did not diminish his conviction that the real needs of the schools could be served only by the provision of teachers widely educated according to his own liberal ideas. In his reports of 1863 and 1874 he mentions the encouragement he gives to young masters of his area to take the examinations of London University especially in foreign languages and points out that while the Government certificate should be a mark of competency, "literary distinction should be sought for from other and larger sources." (3)

- (1) Reports 1855. Marvin op cit p. 48
- (2) Reports 1853 " " p. 23
- (3) Report 1863-4 Marvin " p. 192

Though, as has been suggested above, some of his ideas in organisation and curriculum can be questioned, others have stood the test of time. He championed the primacy of reading if it could be supported by a supply of good reading books. He advocated the learning by heart of large amounts of poetry both to increase the scanty vocabulary of the pupils and to bring them under the formative influence of really good literature. He felt that the introduction of 'Naturkunde' - some knowledge of the facts and laws of nature - History - especially of one's own country - Geography, Grammar and Latin and foreign languages would provide a proper basis for a real education. He believed that the introduction into the classroom of actual samples of the weights and measures used, would make for more successful and intelligent working. Above all, he protested against the fashion of blindly following educational doctrines such as those of Pestalozzi when everything depended upon the practical application of them. The basis of all teaching he argued was that the teacher should examine his task in the utmost simplicity, and suggests this approach alone will enable him to make the necessary impact. Surely this basic philosophy that methods are completely secondary to the establishment of contact between teacher and taught is a reminder needed by educationalists of all ages and systems?

Matthew Arnold may have had his share of misconception, but it was fortunate for English elementary education that during this formative period, the best known of Her Majesty's Inspectors was one who really understood its aims and purpose, even when those with more authority did not.

J.G. Fitch

Among the H.M.I's of the 19th century J.G. Fitch is unique both for his background and qualifications. Born in Southwark in 1824 of poor but devout parents (his biographer completely avoids any mention of his father's occupation) he was educated at a local private school, then became an assistant teacher at the Borough Road School and was later appointed to a headmastership at Kingston. In spite of many activities in Sunday school and other religious and charitable organisations he managed to obtain the London B.A. degree in 1850 and the M.A. two years later.

In the same year he was appointed tutor at the Borough Road Training College of the British and Foreign School Society and in 1856 became Principal.

Here his work was outstanding. A former pupil testifies to his remarkable powers, lucid expression and wide sympathies, his zeal for literature and the Bible and his astonishing capacity to secure and retain the attention of children. Even as early as 1858 the inspectors were reporting on the excellent qualities of J.G. Fitch and in 1863 Matthew Arnold mentioned his name to Lord Granville with the result that his Lordship visited Borough Road, heard the Principal teach and offered him the post of Inspector of Schools. He accepted, and went to York later the same year to take over supervision of the British and other Protestant Schools not connected with the Church of England. He remained in the service of the Education Office until 1894 (when he was 70) and

during this period his qualities led to his being chosen for a multitude of special duties. He reported on the School's Enquiry (Taunton) Commission in 1865. He was sent in 1869 as a special commissioner to report on the state of education in Birmingham and Leeds by W.E. Forster. From 1870 - 1877 he acted as Assistant Commissioner to implement the Endowed Schools Act. In 1883 he became Chief Inspector with responsibilities for the Eastern Division and in 1885 he succeeded to the post of Inspector of Women's Training Colleges. He also made official visits to investigate the Educational Systems of the United States and Canada, France and Belgium. As shall be seen below he gave important testimony to the Bryce Commission in 1895 and lived to comment significantly on Balfour's Education Act of 1902. In the midst of this active life he found time to write literally dozens of articles (including the contribution on Education in the Encyclopaedia Britannica), give even more addresses and publish at least nine books, including a biography of Thomas and Matthew Arnold and his remarkably apposite 'Lectures on Teaching' which remained prescribed reading for Pupil Teachers in County Durham at least until 1914.

In achieving this astonishing output he owed a great deal to his orderly habits of industry and hard methodical work, but this would have been of little use without his remarkable capacity for shrewd and accurate observation and his ability to present his findings with clarity

and precision. To all this he added a charm of manner, a graceful courtesy, a liberality of thought and the transparent sincerity of a man of firm belief and deep human sympathy.

As one might expect from his background, his reports show a real concern for the improvement of the actual techniques of teaching and school management and incorporate a great deal of practical advice. In Arithmetic he asks for daily oral practice without the use of slates, and the regular working and daily discussion of 'model' sums in all the rules. Above all he insists that scholars should learn as far as possible by understanding, that instead of trying to anticipate the mind of the inspector, teachers should vary their modes of teaching and try to look at each rule from as many different points of view as possible so that their scholars would be equally well prepared for any form of examination which the inspector might happen to adopt.

His attitude to copying is interesting. He deprecates any attempt made by teachers to reduce it by use of different sum cards and separation of children (as the H.M.I. does) but argues that it "is a great point in the daily discipline of the school to give habits of truthfulness and honour in little things and make each child feel personally responsible for the accuracy of his own work." (1)

In reading he stresses the importance of imitation and encourages

(1) Report 1864-5 p. 171



teachers to improve their own performance and use the capacities of individual children to set a high standard for the rest. He also spends some thought on the subject of reading books. As an inspector he is forbidden either to write reading books himself or to recommend them, so that his approach has to be much more negative than is usual with him. He deplores the use of the " 'Irish Books' with their appalling essays on the graminivorous quadrupeds and monocotyledonous plants and equally those designed to meet the needs of the Revised Code, with childish language and lack of information, which do nothing to enlarge the learner's vocabulary or to familiarise him with the ordinary language of books or of educated men," (1) and at the same time did not even provide the teacher with a proper basis for questioning.

He regards the instruction in writing as satisfactory and praises the Revised Code for its insistence that the upper standards shall use paper and not slates. Failures in spelling are due he feels to too large a reliance on dictation for its teaching and argues as ever for a variety of methods.

There is no doubt that in this field, Fitch was an almost ideal inspector, who earned respect from the teachers because of his obvious knowledge of their problems and gained their admiration by the soundness of his practical advice. In one of his reports he suggests that managers

(1) Ibid p. 172

might profitably purchase copies of the Departments' Annual Reports for the information of their teachers. Certainly if more of them had known and practised what Fitch had to say the Victorian schools would have been much more effective.

But his competence in techniques did not blind him to the wider responsibilities of an inspector. He consistently demanded better recruitment and training for teachers; he regularly put forward proposals for the development of secondary education; he carefully studied the impact of Factory Acts and labour conditions on the schools; with great care he examined the responsibilities of managers. As his biographer says

"He saw the needs of national education as a whole and yet he saw equally the special needs and opportunity of each locality and of each social group. He advocated the extension of State education in England and knew that this would require a measure of popular control and he saw the possibility and consequent duty of gradually educating and using to the full the local interest." (1)

For this his largeness of view, and intellectual humility made him a proper agent. No man had a higher vision or more practical understanding of the inspector's duties and opportunities, or worked more closely to the ideal which he himself set out in his book on Thomas and Matthew Arnold.

(1) Lilley. Sir Joshua Fitch p. 28

"Every official post in the world has its possibilities which are not easily visible to the outside critic, and which cannot be measured by the merely technical requirements laid down by authority. This is true in a very special sense of such an office as Inspector of Schools, when the holder of the office likes and enjoys his work, and seeks 'ampliare jurisdictionem' and to turn to the most beneficial use the means at his command & the authority which his office gives. His first duty, of course, is to verify the conditions on which public aid is offered to schools, and to assure the Department that the nation is obtaining a good equivalent for its outlay. But this is not the whole. He is called upon to visit from day to day, schools of every different type, to observe carefully the merits and demerits of each, to recognise with impartiality very various forms of good work, to place himself in sympathy with teachers and their difficulties, to convey to each of them kindly suggestions as to methods of discipline and instruction he has observed elsewhere, and to leave behind him at every school he inspects some stimulus to improvement, some useful counsel to managers, and some encouragement to teachers and children to do their best. There are few posts in the public service which offer larger scope for the beneficial exercise of intellectual and moral power, or which bring the holder into personal and influential relations with a larger number of people. It will be an unfortunate day for the Civil Service if ever the time comes

when an office of this kind is regarded as one of inferior rank, or is thought unworthy of men of high scholarship and intellectual gifts. To hundreds of schools in remote and apathetic districts the annual visit of an experienced public officer, conversant with educational work and charged with the duty of ascertaining how far the ideal formed at headquarters and under the authority of Parliament has been fulfilled, is an event of no small importance. And it matters much to the civilisation of the whole district whether this duty is entrusted to pedants and detectives who confine their attention to the routine of examination, or to men whose own attainments command respect, and who are qualified by insight, enthusiasm and breadth of sympathy to advise local authorities and to form a just judgement both of the work of a school and of the spirit in which the work is done. He whose own thoughts and tastes move habitually on the higher plane is the best qualified to see in true perspective the business of the lower plane, and to recognise the real meaning and value of the humblest details." (1) (2)

(1) Quoted Lilley op cit pps. 30 - 32

(It is significant that this statement of the inspector's duties and high responsibilities is expressed most clearly by one who combined practical experience in the schools with considerable intellectual ability).

(2) See Overleaf

(2) Fitch's influence on teachers is illustrated by the following extracts from his writings that the Headmaster of Hebburn Wesleyan School inscribed in his school log book ( p. 302)

1. "Variety and Versatility are the very essence of successful teaching. We cannot teach all we know: there is waste and loss in the art of transmission."
2. "A boy compelled for six hours a day to see the countenance and hear the voice of a fretful, unkind, hard or passionate man is placed in a school of vice."
3. "Routine is always easier than intelligence."

Dr. J.D. Morell

Born in 1816 to a family which proudly claimed its descent from French Huguenot refugees, John D. Morell was intended to follow the career of his father and become a Congregational minister. After finishing his training at Homerton, he decided to continue his studies at Glasgow and Bonn so that he was not ordained until 1842, in which year he became Independent minister at Gosport. Practical experience gradually forced him to the conclusion that the work did not suit his type of mind so in 1847 he resigned his pastorate and became private tutor to groups of young men at University College London.

In 1848 Lord Lansdowne, desirous of having a representative of the 'dissenters' among the Inspectors and knowing of his literary reputation invited him to become a H.M.I. He gladly accepted and until his retirement in 1876, ably and happily fulfilled his duties.

Notwithstanding his considerable academic abilities his first impression on the schools was that of a happy and generous personality. A teacher wrote of him, "He had the power of drawing from the children all they know. His kindly manner put them at ease and his skilful examination so brightened their intellects that they did as well on the examination day as on any day of the year." (1)

He was a born musician skilled in part-singing as well as playing the piano, flute and cello and while examining the musical classes

(1) Quoted Thorbald (Memorials of J.D. Morell) p. 29

"his bass voice could generally be conspicuously heard among the childish sopranos who forgot for the time that he was their critic and only thought of him as supplying the musical ground of the harmony." (1) He had a great memory for individual boys and watched their progress and noted changed circumstance with interest while his generous personal help to the needy made him loved as a benefactor.

Teachers too learned to regard him with affection. One lady teacher recalls his three visits to her school "as the pleasantest I ever spent with one of H.M. Inspectors. These gentlemen are apt to be formidable personages ..... but it needed but one glance at the pleasant face and but one touch of the kindly hand to make one feel here was no severe martinet or taskmaster but a genuine friend. (2)

But he was never blind to faults or deficiencies, and only sought to effect reform and improvement with the least possible friction and irritation. Mr. A. Owen who first met Dr. Morell (while a pupil teacher) and was afterwards invited by him to become his assistant inspector records 'All felt that, while unflinchingly doing his duty to the Department, he had the fullest sympathy with the difficulties of both managers and teachers and especially of the latter.' (3) Certainly if there had been more inspectors with the ability and personality of Morell, the whole story of Victorian education would have been a much happier one.

(1) Ibid

(2) Ibid p. 31

(3) Ibid p. 46

Though his comments upon particular issues were, as we shall see, shrewd and penetrating his contribution to educational thought emphasises the personal factor. He believed that a uniform system of publicly-owned free schools with proper denominational safeguards was the proper aim of educational reformers but in his last report of 1875 he expresses his fundamental conviction.

The point which makes all the real difference between one school and another, is the intelligence and energy of the individual teacher to which its fortunes are for the time committed. It matters little or nothing as far as the secular instruction goes, whether it be a National, a British or any kind of denominational or undenominational school; it matters almost as little whether it be situated in a country village, a small town, or in the heart of our densest populations, In all these situations the average English capacity whether in the north, south, east or west of the country, as far as I have been able to judge, is much about the same. But it makes all the difference in the world, and that in every possible situation, what may be the assiduity, good sense, and general character of the teacher. Where good qualifications are secured in the teachers themselves, everything else will follow; where they are not secured, everything else will fail. The character and proper education of our schoolmasters and schoolmistresses, accordingly, I regard as the basis of all success in the prosecution of the great work of national education." (1)

(1) Quoted Thorbald *op cit* pps. 47 - 8.



D.R. Fearon

Shortly after graduating at Oxford D.R. Fearon became an inspector of schools in 1860. His position was unusual in that he was the first layman called upon to inspect Church of England schools and even more unusual he was transferred to inspect British Schools in 1865 and so acquired an experience, unique before 1870, of both denominations.

He was called to the Bar in 1865 and throughout his ten years as an H.M.I. he showed that regard for detail, sense of order and meticulous presentation which goes with the best legal training. He carefully drew up a circular setting out exactly what the Revised Code required saying how he would conduct the examination and the standards he would set, explaining his action thus.

"I sent this circular because I know how slow country places are to apprehend the effect and bearing of changes introduced by your Lordship's Ministers, because I wished my first years' trial of the Revised Code to work smoothly and fairly, and my experiences not to be thwarted and embarrassed by the misunderstandings, misadventures and waste of time which the first trial of a new system would otherwise occasion, and because I desired in a sense, where the passing or rejecting of each child was to be attended with results so important to the schools, to tie myself to a method and system which should be well defined and intelligible to managers and teachers and which should not leave me to work by

an uncertain and random estimate residing somewhere in my own imagination and sure to vary when I was fatigued, annoyed or unwell." (1)  
His concern for the other parties involved and his realisation of the subjective element even in Revised Code examinations are indicative of his quality as an inspector.

With characteristic thoroughness he goes on to consider detailed ways of improving reading and writing and the keeping of the Log Book. He suggests that the power to deduct a portion of the grant will now enable him to take action against those managers who fail to supply their schools with adequate books and apparatus. Finally he looks at his Lake District schools in the context of their environment and argues cogently in favour of reforming the endowed grammar schools of the area for he believes that an improvement of the educational standard of the middle classes will inevitably raise that of the lower.

In his report on the British schools in Wales, he shows the same thoroughness. He has persuaded the other inspectors of the area to join him in the issue of a circular, and he shows the same care in dealing with the errors he has found in the schools. Most interesting of all he compiles a detailed list of all the schoolmasters in his area, listing their training and successes. In another report on the Bangor Training College, he shows the same personal interest in the students and arranges with his successor to follow their careers. His most interesting contribution lies in his little volume on School Inspection which he

(1) Report 1864-5 p. 59

published in 1875 and foreshadowed in his report in 1869. His tight detailed style does not make this book easy reading, but it reveals a man of high professional standards and human sympathy who demanded and largely obtained the same kind of response from teachers and pupils. The examination day was to be planned, but the school was to remain at work. From the inspector's arrival not later than 9.50 a.m. - to the discussion with the staff and Head Teacher at 4.30 p.m. every facet of the inspection process was given its place. Order and method were the two keynotes. Fidgeting and lounging or any kind of slackness were not to be tolerated. Pupils must learn to speak out. Teachers must be thorough in their preparation. In great detail he outlines his method of testing the 3 R's. But although he believed in thorough examination he knew that he needed more to evaluate a school and he had a shrewd and modern ideas about the teaching of other subjects. He believed history and Geography should be closely correlated and suggested using books on the lives of Clive and Hastings for India and County Histories and even the Post Office Directory for home. He wanted more libraries and books in the schools. "Meanwhile it is the teacher's<sup>1</sup> duty to search eagerly for such material as he can get and use it with ingenuity and it is the inspector's duty to encourage such resource."<sup>(1)</sup> Moreover, he felt that work should not be confined to the school building. "Nothing" he writes, "will carry the civilizing influence of the school more universally into

(1) Fearon's School Inspection p. 70

the houses, into the alleys and street doors, than this requirement of home lessons. The inspector should always ask at the commencement of a History or Geography lesson, "what did you require them to prepare for this lesson?" (1)

He believes that History must still involve the learning of dates but it should include other people besides Kings and Queens and events of social and literary importance. Local history should always be included. One comment shows a realisation many years before it reached their Lordships of the Council.

"Very few men examine infants really well. Women are naturally much better qualified for such a task." (2)

Finally he insists that there should be a personal conference with the staff while the events of the day are still fresh in their minds and, thinking of this he ends, "an inspector who will take pains to do this part of his work with earnestness and yet with good temper and impartiality, may form as high a standard and be as severe in his requirements as he pleases. No matter how severe his standard, he will be regarded with respectful affection by the teachers in his district and will be able to feel when he leaves it that he has not wholly missed his opportunities for doing some good for his country." (3)

(1) Ibid p. 83

(2) Ibid p. 65

(3) Ibid p. 93

Thus spoke the humane and dedicated Civil Servant, who saw the inspectorate as a powerful instrument for raising the intellectual and cultural standards of the nation and studied to make himself effective in this task.

It was a great loss to the Education Department that in 1870 his abilities led to his appointment to the Charity Commission of which he afterwards became Secretary.

Rev. Charles W<sup>m</sup>. King.

The son of the Rector of Norham, educated at Trinity College Oxford, he came to Durham in 1859 at the age of 27 as Rector of St. Mary le Bow and to take over the post of Principal of the Female Training School.

As principal and as secretary to the Managers of the Practising School his work was methodical and thorough. He organised the system whereby each student spent a fortnight in full charge of each class in the school and gave regular criticism lessons. As chaplain, lecturer in Scripture and lecturer in Method, he took an active personal part in the instruction, giving model scripture lessons before some of the students every Thursday morning. In the afternoon two criticism lessons were given in the presence of all the students and staff and the procedure described in the log book of the school seems both modern and effective.

"The Principal criticises both lessons assisted by four students previously appointed who state freely their opinions upon the method and

and manner of the teacher and all receive finally the suggestions etc; of Mr. King." (1)

The effectiveness of this college is amply supported by the reports of H.M.I.'s such as Mr. Cook's for 1863, which states "The instruction of the students is remarkably good - the result must be attributed firstly to the vigorous and able teaching of the principal." (2)

"Great pains are taken to train the students in the practical details of school keeping." (3)

As apparently the only really active manager, Mr. King was responsible for organising the building of a new school for infants which was finished in 1864.

With this background Mr. King was obviously a very suitable appointment as H.M.I. for Northumberland and Durham in 1864. Strangely enough he retained his rectorship until 1867 and he was sent to inspect his old school within 6 months of his appointment. This seems to have been a mixed blessing to the school for while his general report was favourable he obviously used his local knowledge about the parents of the pupils to disallow the grants for certain whose parents "did not support themselves by manual labour." (4)

(1) Durham Practising School Log Book p. 5

(2) Report 1863 - 4 p. 340

(3) Ibid

(4) See School Log Book H.M.I.'s reports for 1864 & 5.

The whole of his inspectorial career was spent in Durham and Northumberland and his three general reports 1865-7-9 show that he had a real regard for the area. He refers to the 'vigorous character of the children in these counties' (1) he comments "there is at present a large body of valuable masters and mistresses at work in the district." (2) and in his last report he says:

"There can be little doubt that the present system of church education has produced considerable effect in this district; and that a very much larger proportion of the children of the working classes are now being at least partially educated. There is also a growing interest on the subject of education amongst the landowners and employers of labour and an increased desire to place the means of instruction within the reach of those whom they employ, so that as a rule the necessary funds are not lacking for the establishment and maintenance of schools. The real obstacles to a more universal use of education would seem to be, the apathy of the parents who appear not to realise in many cases the advantages which their children would derive from the enjoyment of it, and the large demand and good remuneration for the labour of children of 10 years old and upwards." (3)

Because of his Training College experience he is very thorough in his analysis of faults in instruction and very concerned to see that a proper

- (1) Report 1865-6 p. 139
- (2) Report 1867-8 p. 185
- (3) Report 1869-70 p. 170-1.

supply of contented certificated teachers is maintained in the district so much of his reports is devoted to these matters. Apart from favourable comments on the keeping of registers and log books, which are in marked contrast to the experiences of other inspectors, he is chiefly interested in religious instruction and his comment in 1867 is typical of his ideas which might be re-echoed in our own time "while children are carefully taught the details of the Bible history, the lessons of life and conduct to be derived from them are not sufficiently impressed upon the children's minds." (1)

King died in 1872 at the early age of 40 and seems to have taken no part in inspection after 1871. It was a sad loss to education in Durham that one who had such an interest in the area and the qualities of mind and personality to lead its educational effort should have had so little time.

H.E. Oakeley.

H.E. Oakeley, the third son of a titled Anglican clergyman became and H.M.I. in 1864, having been a Fellow and Lecturer of Jesus College Cambridge. He was given responsibility for the British Schools in the six Northern Counties and this began a long association with that part of the country. In 1878 he took charge of the Manchester district with a special responsibility for the Northern Training Colleges. In 1886

(1) Report 1867-8 p. 183-4.



he became one of the two full-time inspectors of Training Colleges and carried out this duty until he retired (with a knighthood) in 1899.

His reports on the schools suggests a man of essentially practical mind content to modify educational theory in the light of the actual circumstances and anxious to examine the whole situation so that he could apply his influence with maximum effect.

He approves of the emphasis placed on the 3 R's under the Revised Code pointing out that over 80% of those attending evening schools had at some time attended day schools and all were having to learn to 'read, write and cypher.'

He discusses the possibilities of increased school fees pointing out that the proportion of their income paid by the middle classes for education is five or six times as great as that paid by the working classes in his area.

School pence which he calculated averaged 3d per week could easily be increased with great benefit to education but denominational rivalry deterred any body of managers from making the first move. He points out the real problem of keeping young children over 10 at school when a trapper can earn 6/-d per week and a driver up to 15/-d, and of recruiting Pupil Teachers when the average miner earns 27/-d per week with free house and coal. But significantly he agrees that the discouraging tone of teachers (who felt that their financial and career prospects had been seriously worsened under the Revised Code) had had as much effect as

the high wages available in other employment.

He is a strong supporter of systematic drill both inside the school and in the playground as a means of introducing uniform routine and improving bearing, and he quotes the opinions of Joseph Whitworth (the engineer) as to the advantages such exercises would give as regards employment.

He advocates the ball frame for teaching Arithmetic to the younger pupils as "it is a great though not uncommon mistake to present the first ideas of number in an abstract and intangible instead of concrete form." (1) To improve spelling he describes and commends a kind of spelling game used at Redcar school. He deplores the discursive and desultory instruction in the extra subjects and sets out the syllabus in Geography and Grammar on which he will question at his next visit. It is interesting that he is able to say that cases of these subjects being dropped to concentrate on the 3 R's were 'very rare' in his district. In a later report (1867) he compiles a table of schools where Geography and Grammar and in some cases History and Algebra are well and effectively taught and shows that these schools are considerably above the average for the district both in the numbers of pupils in the upper standards and the total percentage of passes obtained. One idea, new to the reports which he later expanded was his firm belief in the

(1) Report 1865-6 p. 264

value of pictures in schools. He comments on the number of good teachers in his district and adds that it reflects great credit on the institutions (chiefly Borough Road and Westminster) where they were trained. He also draws up a list of the best schools in the area and happily comments on the excellence of the good staff - for instance this:-

"Miss McEwan, at the Jarrow Chemical Works School, who is unquestionably the best infant mistress in my district, possesses an astonishing power of training young children. I always look forward with pleasure to the day of inspection of her school. The infants go through their exercises and the infant drill with wonderful precision; pleasing manner, and are very attentive to the lessons given, which are interesting and well adapted to their powers of comprehension. At the 1st examination also 112 children (45 less than seven years of age) were presented in the 1st standard, and about 94 per cent. passed, their average age being a little above seven. It is difficult adequately to estimate the value of such teaching."<sup>(1)</sup>

The quality of the man as well as something about inspection are revealed in extracts like the following:

"The inspection of a good infant school is quite a pleasure. Physical exercises, singing, gallery lessons on form and colour, objects and number, form the first part of the programme, during which the children are kept continually amused and also receive no small amount of instruction. The regiment of babies is then marched off, leaving

the children between six and seven years old, who are individually examined; they are expected to read monosyllables, to form letters on slates from dictation, and to add and subtract numbers as far as ten. This is usually done without difficulty, the bright little faces well polished with soap, far from showing alarm, look up eagerly for their turns. I may here observe as the result of ten years' experience that in good schools children are seldom or never frightened when under examination. Where complaint has been made that they were too nervous to answer, the truth has almost invariably been that they had been badly taught or that the discipline was defective. When children are properly examined and have been properly taught they are not nervous, and generally do their very best." (1)

In contrast to most of his colleagues he is able to report that the writing especially in the boys' schools is very good but like them he complains, "It is a rare thing to hear really good reading." (2) and that in arithmetic "when little questions requiring thought are given (sense sums, as distinguished from figure sums) intelligent answers are rare." (3) His comments on music teaching reflect his concern for higher cultural standards in the area. "I have often been much disappointed at the trivial character of the songs selected, both as regards words and music. At one school I hear with pain a wretched negro melody

(1) Report 1873-4 p. 139

(2) Report 1865-6 p. 265

(3) Report 1873-4 p. 138

married to some incongruous doggerel; at another, the same tune may do duty with entirely different and equally unsuitable words. I deeply feel (on the other hand) how elevating and humanising would be the effect of good music on the poor wholly uncultured colliery children. On a few occasions, some of Mendelsohn's beautiful part-songs have been tolerably well attempted." (1) He is highly appreciative of the initiative shown by all classes in the area in the provisions of new schools and favourably reports the successes of Edward Ed. Pease at Darlington and the railwaymen at Tyne Dock in doing this.

He seems especially proud of the efforts of the Tyneside Teachers' Association which has encouraged its members to organise and conduct definite training programmes for their pupil teachers and test them by a monthly examination at one centre. The result has been a gratifying rise in standards so that one Tyneside Pupil Teacher was first (out of 1200) in the Queen's Scholarship Examination and others were leading students at their Training Colleges. This scheme was extended to five other areas in the County and won such approval outside the schools that the Stockton and Darlington Railway Co. allowed candidates to travel to the examinations at Darlington for 6d from any station.

Oakeley was a shrewd observer of the essential connections between the classroom and the community. He proposed the introduction of some form of teaching "Political Economy" so that pupils in higher classes might understand something of the practice and principles of the

(1) Report 1873-4 p. 139

'Industrial World' in which they had to spend their lives. He knew that whatever standards were applied, or the teacher might think, he had to take account of a mother's letter which said that Mary Ann was quite as good as Sarah Jane and ought to be in the same class. He knew the disruption caused by factors outside the school, as for instance strikes "which I am afraid we cannot now regard as exceptional or abnormal." (1)

Of Oakeley's work in training colleges something will be said below, but there is no doubt that in the North and especially in Durham, his work in the schools was highly effective. Managers and teachers were stimulated and guided by a popular but sensible and highly professional approach to his duties and his work in the area profited from his knowledge of and liking for the county and its people and the obvious realisation that in meeting its educational challenge he was playing a vital role in one of the most vigorous economic and social developments of his time. His style was often prosaic and matter of fact but only an inspector who knew and cared for his district could have written the introduction to the 1873 report.

"The district assigned to me on the introduction of the new Code was the registration County of Durham, which is fringed on the south by a narrow strip of Yorkshire. The population at the last census was 742,205 but in the middle of the year to which my report refers the estimated population was 815, 806. The decennial rate of increase was

greater than in any other county, being 35 against an average of 13 per cent. This indicates unusual prosperity; in fact, the condition of the working classes is extraordinarily good, their wages in many occupations having nearly or quite doubled while the hours of labour are diminished. Strangers have flocked from all parts to share in this prosperity, especially from the west. At one school, I found that a Welsh assistant master had been engaged because so many children were unable to speak English. The various occupations of the labouring classes are of vast importance and extent, the principal being in mines, ironworks, shipbuilding, glass and alkali works. Durham is, however, essentially a mining county, a large part of the coal raised in Great Britain coming from that small area; the eastern portion indeed seems one vast colliery, the air blackened by smoke, the land traversed by tramways and railways, huge chimneys and engine-houses in every direction. On the west, however, there are rich pastures, fine moorlands and well-wooded valleys, with perhaps the sweetest river scenery in England - little suspected by travellers who rush through the other side of the county in express trains, finding nothing to admire except the majestic grandeur of the great cathedral." (1)

Both the people of the county and the Education Department had reason to be thankful that H.E. Oakeley had the qualities and interest

(1) Report 1873-4 p. 137

to make a significant contribution to educating (and civilising) the area.

The inspectors who have been described above are certainly not typical of the whole, for in the study of this kind it is inevitable that one is attracted towards the more outstanding members of the group. Moreover, the deficiencies of the below average are less easy to record for the tradition of English public service makes it very difficult to find precise evidence from official documents of slackness<sup>(1)</sup> over-abuse of authority even when these actually resulted in dismissal.<sup>(2)</sup> In any case, inspectors wrote their own reports and being 'young men of good education' they could at least be relied upon to present the appearance of diligence. The wide divergence in the interest and understanding of different inspectors must be recognised as one of the great difficulties in obtaining a comprehensive judgment on the inspectorate at any time. It was made even worse during this period by their almost complete independence within the framework laid down by the Department. It adds greatly to the attractiveness of their reports but reduces their significance except in conjunction with a study

- (1) For a general comment see Instruction to Inspectors 1882 and 1887  
quoted p. 72 below.
- (2) Robert Cecil asked Lowe in the Commons why an H.M.I. D.E. Morell(not RD) had been dismissed, but Lowe refused to make an ex parte statement. See Hanzard, New Series. (although the reasons were well known) Vol. CLXXIV p. 901



of the men concerned. As will be seen the system of Payment by Results has been justly attacked as being too detailed and restrictive. In fairness to the Department it must be remembered that in the existing conditions of recruitment, training and service for the inspectors the alternative to be a precise system was chaos and inefficiency.

They did however, make a loyal attempt to carry out the new regulations in spite of the extra work entailed. The new districts and the need to stay longer at each school meant the complete recasting of the examination programme for each area and great ingenuity was needed to see that each school got a more or less suitable inspection date. The need for avoiding local holidays, harvest and haymaking in rural areas, and likely epidemics in the towns combined with the facts that inspectors had to work all the year and could not be in all parts of their districts at the same time gave rise to situations where inspectors only succeeded in being reasonably fair to schools at great personal inconvenience. Moreover, the actual physical labour of filling in schedules and making returns was greatly increased. (1)

The early reports show a considerable determination to do justice to the schools. As mentioned above, D.R. Fearon tells how he sent to each of his schools in Cumberland and Westmorland a detailed statement of how and what he proposed to examine. (2) Reverend T.W. Sharpe points

(1) See Appendix A for a photostat copy of a schedule and report completed for a Gateshead School in 1879. Not only had these schedules to be given to the School Board and Managers of the school concerned, but duplicates and regular consolidated returns had to be sent to the Department - all compiled and written by the Inspector himself.

(2) Report 1864-5 p. 58

out the unfairness of expecting the same standards from schools operating under widely different local conditions <sup>(1)</sup> Mr. Waddington proposes that a medical certificate for children absent on the day of inspection should entitle them to a proportion of the grant. <sup>(2)</sup> On the other hand, there is a surprising naivety about some reports which indicates that the inspectors were only gradually coming to the rudiments of teaching. Reverend J.J. Blandford gives an elaborate account of how he organises a school on examination day and describes, with the apparent pride of a new discovery, the need for putting the children in the order in which their names appear on the schedule. <sup>(3)</sup> Reverend N. Green describes how he got order in noisy Lancashire schools, "when banging on the desk and whistling have failed to produce silence, I have said I wished to hear the clock tick." <sup>(4)</sup>

There were, however, inspectors who remembered the wider implications of their work. Reverend J.P. Norris estimates the real value of some schools in Shropshire by giving notes on the careers of old scholars, while Dr. J.D. Morell, having been lately transferred from a Northern Area to the South West of London, discusses how the characteristics of the children of these areas are produced by environment and not by differences in natural ability.

(1) Report 1863-4 p. 137

(2) Report 1864-5 p. 201

(3) Report 1864-5 p. 65

(4) Ibid p. 82

It is certainly wrong to exaggerate the extent of the Inspector's opposition to the Revised Code. Lingen may have exaggerated, as Prof. Frank Smith suggests, when in the Report for 1864-5 he claims that two thirds of the inspectors reports contained 'a decidedly favourable judgment of the working of the Revised Code so far as it relates to the change introduced by it into the mode of examination and payment.'<sup>(1)</sup> but he could certainly feel comfort in the words of Fitch "I have no doubt that in regard to all the subjects of elementary instruction the standard fixed by the Revised Code has wrought most beneficially and it has revealed even to faithful and hard working teachers defects in their methods which they did not suspect. Laborious as the new form of individual examination is to the inspector, every day's experience proves that it furnishes the truest form of test; that it is the only real check to unsound and pretentious teaching, that it secures the proper distribution of the teaching power throughout all the classes of a school and that it enforces a thoroughness and exactness in which, it must be owned, many schools of great repute were seriously deficient,"<sup>(2)</sup> or of H.J. Lynch, the Roman Catholic inspector, who wrote; "a second year's experience in the working of the Revised Code has confirmed the conviction I expressed in my General Report last year, of its beneficial influence upon the state of the schools."<sup>(3)</sup> Or Dr. Morell's tribute: "There can

(1) Ibid p. XXIII

(2) Report 1864-5 p. 171

(3) Ibid p. 212

be no doubt whatever that the reading, writing, arithmetic and spelling of our primary inspected schools are now more perfect than they have ever been." (1)

But this praise of the system did not blind inspectors to its unfortunate consequences for the schools. Morell says "the grammar and geography lessons are not abandoned - they are fast thrown into the shade in favour of the more profitable parts of the school routine - the effort to train thinking powers has to a large extent been abandoned."<sup>(2)</sup> and Fitch comments "I cannot resist the unwelcome conviction that the New Code is tending to formalise the work of the schools - I find too many teachers disposed to narrow their sense of duty to the Six Standards or what they sometimes call the "paying subjects." I find an increasing eagerness on the part of the teachers to get hold of text books which are 'specially adapted to the requirements of the Revised Code' and which claim as their chief merit that they do not go a step beyond those requirements."<sup>(3)</sup>

Similar testimony comes from the reports of almost all the English inspectors (see Fearon, Rev. J.W. Nutt, Rev. N.W. Bellairs., Rev. M. Mitchell etc.,<sup>(4)</sup> and it was joined by an equally forceful complaint about the blows struck against <sup>the</sup> Pupil Teacher system by the

(1) Ibid p. 185

(2) Ibid

(3) Report 1864-5 p. 171

(4) Ibid pps. 53, 118, 14, and 108.

withdrawal of grants and payments to teachers for their instruction. Rev. D.J. Stewart, in East Bedford, Cambridge and Huntingdon, explains that reductions in salaries have led many masters to change to other employment and made pupil teachers unwilling to complete their terms of service or go to college.<sup>(1)</sup> In 1864<sup>1/2</sup> Mr. Waddington reports that in the South West the number of candidates has fallen from 347 to 266 in two years and some areas were having great difficulty in recruitment.<sup>(2)</sup> (A comment which echoes those of five different inspectors in the previous year).

The influence of the inspectors was obvious in the reaction of the Department. They won one success when a proposal that the difficulty of holding night school examinations at a suitable time might be overcome by authorising the managers to conduct these examinations under suitable safeguards, received official sanction in the minute of February 8th, 1865. They achieved another when their more important complaints re the narrowing of the curriculum and the reduction in the supply of pupil teachers was met (at least in part) by the very complicated minute of February 20th 1867 (incorporated in the Code of 1868). This allowed a department of a school to earn an increase of one quarter of the grant obtained in each of the 3 R's up to the maximum of £8 per annum, provided that:

(1) Report 1864-5 p. 144

(2) Ibid p. 193

1. After the first 25 scholars in average attendance, a certificated or assistant teacher was provided for every 80, or a pupil teacher for every 40.
2. The number of passes be twice the number of scholars in average attendance and one-fifth be in standard IV to VI.
3. One or more specific subjects <sup>(1)</sup> be taught in addition to the standards laid down for the 3 R's and at least one-fifth of the scholars over 6 years of age passed the examination therein.

Grants (£5 - £10) were also payable for pupil teachers entering college and a further £5 - £7 for success in the examination. But whatever satisfaction the inspectors felt was no doubt modified when they found that they themselves had to provide the necessary certificates.

That the Education Department felt that its inspectors had a real contribution to make to educational discussion and practice is clearly indicated by a passage in the Report for 1869, which says:

"Some of the reports in this volume may be thought to exceed, both in range and tenor of the remarks, the limits usually observed by the writers of such papers; but we have published them because we feel that we should not be justified in withholding from general perusal..... any opinions however divergent submitted to us by the members of an active and intelligent staff on a question with which many of them have been long practically conversant." (2)

(1) History, Geography, Grammar, Advanced Arithmetic.

(2) Report 1869-70 p. XXV

The fact was that in the period of educational debate preceeding the 1870 Act, W.E. Forster had remembered that one of the essential functions of the Inspectorate was to act as 'the eyes and ears' of the Department and he was anxious not only to find out the opinions on certain topics of current educational discussion but also to obtain factual backing for the proposals he wished to advocate in Parliament.

The Reform Act of 1867 and Lowe's epigram "We must educate our masters" had stimulated a new interest in State Education and raised a series of questions within the more politically conscious of the nation. The most important of these were:

Was the existing school provision adequate?

Should school attendance be compulsory?

Was rate aid the prerequisite of any reform as suggested by the Education of the Poor Bill of 1867 or a threat to the whole system as declared in the Education Bill of 1868?

Could the waste inherent in the existing system of denominational schools be avoided without undermining the basic concept of education as understood by the Churches?

Invited or even encouraged by the Department the inspectors supplied answers to these questions according to their experience or natural proclivities.

Rev. G.R. Moncrieff examines in great detail the provision of school places in Kent, and working rather surprisingly, on average rather than maximum attendances comes to these conclusions:

- (a) That all schools should be inspected.
- (b) That school accommodation should be secured by indirect compulsion, if possible, for all who are now unsupplied, that is for a small number in the country and a considerable number in the towns and suburban districts.

- (c) That children who are at work should be obliged to spend more time on some regular system at school.
- (d) That direct compulsion should be supplied to those classes, but to those only, who are found to neglect (1) the education of their children.

On the other issues he is opposed to an educational rate because it would "throw away the large sum raised by subscription and school pence" and place control of the schools in the "hands of ratepayers (often agricultural employers in his area) whose interest and prejudice were opposed to schools. (2), On the religious difficulty Moncrieff believes that each recognised school should have a conscience clause and quotes with approval the opinion of clergymen that distinctive formularies could be reserved for Sunday School. He is opposed to clerical teaching partly because it is not part of the cleric's duty but largely on the score of efficiency. "If a first rate master taught everything else and an average clergyman taught scripture, it is certain that scripture would be the worst taught subject." (3)

Matthew Arnold is too busy setting out the objections to the principles of the Revised Code to spend much time on the questions under discussion and dismisses these with the observation that they are now entering the sphere of practical politics "where they will not, and cannot, be, settled on their merits." (4) but he does suggest that the

(1) Report 1869 - 70 p. 186-7

(2) Ibid Report 1869-70 p. 188

(3) Ibid p. 189

(4) Ibid p. 138



Managers of British Schools might make a start by drawing up a kind of agreed syllabus which could be subject to inspection.

H.E. Oakeley ignores most of the issues but suggests that there is a strong feeling in his district in favour of indirect compulsion which will work only if penalties were imposed on employers. He does however, reveal the sheer practical absurdities of the situation when he records how he had spent eleven hours travelling to West Burton to examine 14 children when his Church of England colleague had been within six miles of it a month before. (1)

J.C. Fitch questions whether parents realise that the abolition of school fees will reduce their influence and sums up the objection to the existing system:

"I may be permitted to refer to the actual working of denominational inspection as it is visible here. The Nonconformist is irritated by an arrangement which brings the whole power and prestige of a Government officer to bear on the inculcation of Anglican theology, and gives no corresponding help to religious teaching of any other kind. The politician is struck with the inconvenience of a system which forbids any one of those officers to take cognizance of the needs of a district, or its educational provision, as a whole. The economist wonders at its

(1) Report 1869-70 p. 334

extravagance. But it is the inspector of schools who knows best how much of his time and strength it wastes, how powerless it makes him to institute a fair comparison between two rival schools, and to bring them into friendly relations, and above all, how it alienates the teachers, and prevents the growth of a proper esprit de corps, or of useful professional associations in the various districts."<sup>(1)</sup> (Other reports eg., Rev. E.P. Arnold <sup>(2)</sup> go into the religious difficulties in great detail).

The examination of these reports suggests that there was general agreement on certain points. The existing system of denominational inspection was wasteful and educationally undesirable. Inside the schools denominational difference did not create so many difficulties as they seemed to do outside. Some measure for improving the length and regularity of school attendance was necessary though some doubted the wisdom of universal compulsion. But on the issue of rate aided schools they gave little firm guidance. Forster was however, determined to have the information so he despatched Fearon to Liverpool and Manchester, and Fitch to Birmingham and Leeds to report on the state of education in those cities for the House of Commons.

<sup>(3)</sup>  
This report presented by skilled investigators underlines the deficiencies of the existing system. Of 60,000 children in Birmingham

(1) Report 1869-70 p. 333

(2) Ibid pps. 41, 45 - 47.

(3) Report on Schools for the Poorer Classes in Birmingham, Leeds Liverpool and Manchester (Parliamentary Papers 1870 No. 91)

less than two thirds ever attended school and more than a quarter went to private schools 'characterised for the most part by 'extraordinary idleness' so that 25% did no reading, 50% no writing (1) and 90% no arithmetic.

Liverpool had large numbers of private schools "in cellars and other filthy places" while in Manchester where barely half of the children attended school, Fearon has this to say of the private schools "many of them are held in premises in which it is injurious and improper that human beings should be gathered together for any purpose whatever and in which instruction is physically impossible. The teachers of many of them are persons physically, morally or intellectually disqualified for any sort of office, involving even the lowest degree of responsibility. The instruction given, or pretended to be given, in them is deplorably bad; and attendance at many of them is scarcely if at all, to be preferred to vagrancy or truancy in the street." (2)

Forster made full use of this information in Parliament for it showed clearly that the voluntary system could not provide adequately for the educational needs of the country and there is a great deal of truth in the words of Fitch's biographer that this report "opened the eyes of Parliament to the immediate necessity of legislation and largely helped Mr. Forster to pass the memorable Education Act of 1870." (3)

(1) Ibid p 51.

(2) Ibid p. 135.

(3) Lilley op cit p. 95

But whatever the Department might say the inspectors knew their opinions only had real weight when they were relatively minor or supported the policy already decided by the Government. They also knew that their contribution to real education had declined during the past ten years.

As a result of the operation of the Revised Code their primary duty had become the holding of strictly limited examinations. Education in most schools was directed to seeing that as many children as possible fulfilled the meagre demands which qualified them for the grant. Good pupils were neglected, other overdriven. Teachers whose salary now depended upon the amount earned at the examination regarded inspectors as agents designed to deprive them of their just reward and sought to outwit them whenever possible. Inspectors naturally sought to prevent this. The annual visit of the inspector, instead of being the stimulus to sound education which it had been in 1860, became a matter of routine carried out in an atmosphere of fear, strain and suspicion.

Inspectors reacted to this situation according to their nature. Some arrived late and escaped as early as possible to the more congenial pursuits of lunch at the vicarage or hunting with the squire. Others, having known no other system, were reinforced in their beliefs as the impossibility of raising the standards of the working classes. A third group of more experienced men, such as Rev. J.G. Fitch and Matthew Arnold knew that the intellectual life of the schools had declined and that the cause was obvious, "In the inspection the mechanical examination of

individual scholars in reading a short passage, writing a short passage and working two or three sums cannot but take the lion's share of room and importance, inasmuch as two thirds of the Government grant depend upon it, yet I find that of this examination .... more than 49 per cent of the children in the schools inspected by me (1) last year had no share."

Yet none of them suggested the abolition of "Payment by Results" In fact the Reports of 1868 and 1869 either support the existing system by praising its merits or tacitly accept it by proposing only alterations in detail. Even Matthew Arnold, who later was to tell the Cross Commission how he differed from other inspectors in his disapprobation of the code (2) writes:

"The great task of friends of education is, not to praise "Payment by Results" .... but to devise remedies for the evils which are found to follow the application of this popular notion." (3)

It is easy to see why inspectors accepted this system. In the first place, it was in accordance with the political ideas of the time. Even if they did not agree themselves, the forces in its favour were too strong to have it altered. Secondly, they believed that as long as children remained in school for such a short time as they did, a limited

(1) Report 1867-8 p. 296

(2) See Cross Commission 1888. Evidence Vol.1. p. 207

(3) Report 1869-70 p. 291

syllabus and individual examination was the best way of achieving results. But if asked to propose improvements, most of them would have agreed that the basis of the grant should be altered to allow them to penalise mechanical instruction, and that some more effective means should be found to provide an adequate supply of schools and ensure more regular attendance.

It is interesting to reflect what might have been the effect on English elementary education if all the inspectors had had the vision and influence of Matthew Arnold, but in fact the recruitment to the inspectorate during the years 1862-70 was not as careful as in the earlier days.

Moreover, the position of H.M.I.'s in the educational system had declined; they were examiners rather than inspectors; investigators rather than constructors. Their work had lost much of its interest and they were so borne down by routine that they could not carry out their real responsibility to the schools and the children even when they could see it. (1)

This blindness to the needs of pupils and staff was in part due to the increased recruitment of inexperienced university men whose Victorian class consciousness made it difficult to make real contact with the human material with which they had to deal. It was aggravated

(1) See Matthew Arnold's comments on the physical strains of conducting the New Examination.

because the new system made possible a mechanical relationship between the inspectors and the schools. Why should inspectors make the difficult and often distasteful attempt to cross the barrier which separated them from the working class when Parliament had made it possible for them to be efficient without making the attempt?

In the history of the inspectorate, the eight years were of critical importance for during them the experimental structure of the 1850's was reinforced so that it could bear the additional duties of the 1870's. It was a misfortune that in the process the men themselves lost their vision and appeared to most of those engaged in the local levels of education as the pliant unsympathetic agents of a niggardly and far-removed authority.

If the practice and traditions of the inspectorate of 1870 had been as sound as they were ten years before, there can be little doubt that the next twenty years would have been of greater value to English education.

SECTION 3

NEW OPPORTUNITIES BUT OLD TRADITIONS

The Elementary Education Act of 1870 introduced a new conception of the function of the State in national education. The position before its passing was adequately described by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Robert Lowe, when he said:

"At present we have really no public education at all- what is called public education is merely the humble and ancillary task of following private benevolence and societies which interest themselves to educate the people. Instead of leading boldly we follow timidly." (1)

Not that there was much evidence of bold leadership in the Act which finally emerged. Denominational rivalry, financial stringency, a deep rooted objection to any considerable extension of central control, all combined to force compromises upon the Government so that at first sight the Act reads like a determined attempt to support the 'status quo' rather than to initiate new solutions for the problem of public education. Yet in retrospect we are justified in regarding the Act as a new departure which led to a great widening of the State's responsibilities in education and a consequent extension of the duties of the Education Department. This was naturally reflected in the work of its agents, the inspectors, and the development of the inspectorate from 1870 is a record of its adaptation to fulfil a broader conception of its work and of its suitability for carrying out its extended tasks.

(1) Quoted Selby Bigge. "The Board of Education" pps. 7 - 8



The first effect of the 1870 Act was great stimulus to the provision of voluntary schools. No applications for building grants were accepted after December 31st, 1870 but in the five months up to that date 1,633 grants were agreed to by the Department, more than ten times the average for the previous years. The real significance of the Act was in its provision of schools. A School Board for London was ordered by the Act itself, and in all other districts Boards could be formed, either voluntarily, when the Education Department approved an application, or compulsorily where the Education Department was satisfied that there was a deficiency of school accommodation in the district. These School Boards which were selective, were given powers to raise loans for building schools. Where the income of the School Fund from Government grants and pupils' fees was inadequate to run the school and repay the instalments on the capital, any deficiency had to be made good from its rates. Thus there was created in England the first publicly owned and popularly controlled schools, and this fact became even more significant when it is realised that these Boards could now frame bye-laws to compel children between the ages of five and thirteen to attend school.

The state provision of education still had a social limitation as being provided for the children of the poor, but in place of the attempt to define the status of the pupil by the employment of his father, which had previously caused so much difficulty to inspectors, the grants were restricted to "public elementary schools within the meaning of the Act." (1)

(1) Elementary Education Act 1870, Section 7.

and in Section 3 of the Act occurs the well known definition of an elementary school as:

"A school or a department at which elementary education is the principal part of the education there given and does not include any school or department ... in which the ordinary payments in respect of the instruction from each scholar exceed ninepence per week".<sup>(1)</sup>

The use of the word 'public' was restricted to those elementary schools which were open at all times to inspection, and which fulfilled the conscience clauses embodied in Section 7 of the Act, namely that no child should be compelled to attend or abstain from attending any place of worship, and that the times of religious instruction and observance had to be at the beginning or end of the session and any parent had the right to withdraw the child from them without forfeiting other benefits of the school.

The religious instruction in Board Schools was to be completely non-denominational according to the famous clause moved by Mr. Cowper Temple that:

"No religious catechism or religious formulary which is distinctive of any particular denomination shall be taught in the school."<sup>(1)</sup>

It became a very important duty of inspectors to see that these arrangements were respected. They had to approve all time-tables to see that children could be withdrawn from religious instruction at the

(1) Elementary Education Act 1870 Section 14.

beginning and end of the day and they were specifically directed to check that these were being observed when they made "surprise" visits to the schools.

The practical working out of the Act and of Education Department policy was shaped by the conditions laid down in the Department Code of Regulations which now gained statutory force by being laid on the table of both Houses of Parliament for one month before becoming operative.<sup>(1)</sup>

The new code became operative on April 1st, 1871 and although its various articles were modified during the period, it determined the distribution of Parliamentary grants until 1883. Its chief terms were:

1. Day schools had to meet at least 400 times per year for sessions of at least 2 hours, and pupils over 4 years of age could qualify by attending 250 times (150 half-time)
2. Needlework and cutting out had to be taught to all girls and attendance of boys at drill and girls (after 1875) at practical cookery could count up to 40 hours per year.
3. Grants were paid as follows:
  - 6s. 0d for each pupil in average attendance (after 1872 3 - 18 years).
  - 4s. 0d for a pass by a pupil over 7 in each of the three R's.
  - 3s. 0d for each pass in not more than two specific subjects, (Geography, History, Natural Sciences, Natural Philosophy, Political Economy, etc.,) by pupils in Standard IV to VI.
  - 8s. 0d for infants (4 - 7 years) increased to 10s. 0d if educated in a separate department.

But no payments had to exceed half the annual income of the school or 15s. 0d per scholar in average attendance.

(1) Elementary Education Act 1870. Section 97.

4. Standard 1 of the old code was abolished and the requirements for the 3 R's were advanced by one year throughout. In the new Standard VI pupils were expected "to read with fluency and expression, to write a short theme or letter or an easy paraphrase and to work sums in proportion and vulgar or decimal fractions" (1) (2)  
(After 31.3.1873 no pupil over 9 was to be examined in standard 1). (2)

The influence of the inspectorate is obvious in the drawing up of this code for it was undoubtedly because of their repeated comments that the amount of the grant given for attendance was increased, that the standards were raised and that separate accommodation for the infants was encouraged. But the principle of 'Payment by Results' was maintained and for the next twenty years the basic work of the inspectors was to remain the examination of individual children according to detailed instruction laid down by the Department.

The passing of the 1870 Act, required and made possible several changes in the duties and organisation of the inspectorate. In the first place, religious instruction no longer had to be examined, so the selection and distribution of inspectors on a denominational basis as agreed by the Concordat of 1840 was unnecessary. No clergyman was appointed after 1869 and it became possible to reorganise the inspectors' districts so that each became responsible for all the schools in a much smaller area. By this means much overlapping and time wasting was avoided while the inspector was able to obtain a much more accurate understanding of the educational situation in a particular district.

(1) Report 1870-1.

(2) Among the offences of D.E. Morell (see <sup>ante</sup> p.61) was that he had passed almost all the 16-17 yr olds under std.1. Bryce Comm. Ev. p. 275

In spite of this the Act greatly increased the work of the inspectors and it was found necessary to make further changes. Fourteen new inspectors, chiefly drawn from young men of good university degrees and accepted social status were appointed and after a purely cursory training were put in charge of districts. There were now (1871) eighty-two inspectors with seventy-six assistants and these latter were given greater responsibilities for statistical work, scrutiny of registers, inspection of buildings and revision of pupil teachers' papers, as well as an increase in salary and the right to use the title 'Esquire'

A further result of the Act was the appointment of sixty-three 'Inspectors of Returns'. They were chiefly barristers for their work was more legal than educational, examining returns as to the supply of schools, dealing with applications for building grants and drawing up School Board regulations. (1) Some were subsequently made full inspectors.

The arrangements of this legislation and its implications for inspectors are illustrated from the activities of the Hedworth, Monkton and Jarrow School Board which was elected in March 1871.

After drawing up its bye-laws and submitting them to the Department of Education for approval it turned to its important task of ascertaining the deficiency in the amount of public school accommodation in the area. A report with an elaborate schedule, showing the existing provision and the local proposals for meeting it was sent

(1) Syned-Kynnersley 'H.M.I' pps. 1 - 75

to the Department before the end of the year.

In March 1872, Mr. Westmorland, Inspector of Returns, visited the district and reported to the Board that he could only accept one of the Adventure Schools as efficient and so the total deficiency in the area was 3,780 places instead of the 903 in the original returns. The Board decided to take over a disused theatre as a temporary school and this was inspected and declared satisfactory by Mr. Oakeley the H.M.I. for the district. Meanwhile the proposals for building the permanent Board Schools were going ahead. Their plans were twice revised at the insistence of Mr. Oakeley. In the first case he suggested that a deficiency would be best met by the building of a separate infant school on the same site. In the second case the H.M.I. pointed out that the existing plans left a considerable shortage of accommodation in one part of the area and a school for the younger children was necessary, as it was too far for them to walk to Jarrow. "After much consideration the Board unanimously resolved to build a school. They soon succeeded in obtaining the site at the point indicated by H.M. Inspector and forwarded plans to the Education Department which were approved." (1) The choice of their site incidently was a tribute to Oakeley's forethought for although the place was unoccupied at the time in two or three years it was almost completely built up.

(1) Hedworth, Jarrow and Monkton School Board Report 1871-2 p.9

The Board included in its bye-laws regulations for compulsory attendance which they circulated to every family in the town. Vigorous action by officers appointed and supported by magistrates (over 200 prosecutions in 2 years) led to the doubling of the school population in the area.

A year later a petition from 300 ratepayers at Hebburn New Town led to another investigation and the building of a further school.

These events at Jarrow multiplied many times throughout the country indicated the extent of the extra work given to the inspectors by the 1870 Act and the increased opportunity they had for influencing the development of education in their district. More children at school certainly meant much more of the dreary routine of ordinary inspection but the enthusiasm and well meaning amateurism of the school boards gave opportunities to inspectors like Oakeley, who combined pleasant authority and good sense, to use his professional judgment and advice to the benefit of the service.

In view of later developments an interesting change brought about by the 1870 Act was the designation of ten experienced members of the staff as 'Senior Inspectors'. Two were given responsibility for training colleges and each of the others was put in charge of a group of districts in a particular part of the country. (1) The aim was to meet the urgent need for co-ordinating the inspectors' standards of work,

(1) Report 1872-3 p. CXX

but as each Senior Inspector was also responsible for his own district it is not surprising that the scheme had little effect until after 1894. This desire to secure uniformity is one of the marked characteristics of this period, because it was the most common complaint of the managers and teachers who were adversely affected by the Inspector's reports. The response of the Department finds expression in new machinery and in the many sets of instruction which were issued to the inspectors. The most comprehensive are those of August 9th, 1882, which may be taken as embodying the rest:

'My Lords do not propose to interfere with the methods by which each Inspector may prefer to arrive at results, but will expect that the standard obtained by the actual agreement of the Senior Inspectors and approved by their Lordships shall be faithfully observed in each district. For this purpose occasional conferences shall be held in each division with a view to compare sums set and passages dictated in each standard, questions asked in class on specific subjects and the methods and results of inspection generally. Uniformity of standards will also be further secured by the proposed special training of all inspectors who may hereafter be appointed.<sup>(1)</sup>

(1) Report 1882-3 p. 148

This proposed special training is also referred to in the Report for 1887-8 p. 153. There is no evidence of its implementation.



The instruction goes on in precise detail:

"An infant class may be deemed 'Fair' when half of the scholars examined proved to have been satisfactorily taught in reading, writing and arithmetic, when discipline and singing are fairly good; and when one of the requirements specified under (2) and (3) in Article 106b (Object lesson or activity) is fairly fulfilled." Similar though higher standards are prescribed for 'Good' and 'Excellent'.

So the instruction continues through each subject in each standard; often very sensibly as when it suggests Standards V, VI and VII should read stories of travel and adventure or such works as 'Robinson Crusoe' or when it insists that the essential quality of good handwriting is boldness and legibility or when it suggests that the teacher might be allowed to read the dictation passage to the children; at other times very pedantically as when it prescribes that 4 spelling errors will bring failure in Standard III and 3 in Standard IV or above. (1)

In fact, this search after uniformity shows clearly the deficiencies of a system of 'Payment by Results'. Inspection was a contest between teacher and inspector and although both knew that the rules were often pedantic and meaningless as far as real education was concerned, neither knew how to continue without them.

Yet this period did see a great expansion of the amount and scope of Education and it can be fairly held that the inspectors were

(1) Report 1882-3 pps. 151-7

pioneers in securing the reforms. Further attempts were made to restore class teaching and encourage inspection rather than examination. In 1874 the payment of one shilling of the basic grant was made conditional on the teaching of singing and another on satisfactory discipline and organisation. In 1875 the grant for the 3 R's was reduced by 1s. Od to 3s. Od, but 4s. Od were to be paid for satisfactory work in "class" subjects such as grammar, history, geography and needlework based on a consideration of the class as a whole. Unfortunately this good work was sometimes more than offset by the practice of cramming individual pupils for passes in 'specific' subjects which were narrowed down to the smallest sub-divisions the Department would recognise for the grant. Education for many still meant memory and not understanding.

The advances however were greater than the retreats and the most important step forward was the introduction of compulsory education by the Acts of 1876 and 1881. It was true that many children contrived to avoid school, but the requirement that children who wanted work had to produce certificates of attendance or proficiency in the 3R's gave a stimulus to education which the inspectors had long advocated, although the actual examination of all children between 10 and 14 who applied for the certificate involved them in a great deal of extra work on their annual visits to the schools.

The year 1882 saw the introduction of a new code which included many innovations intended to give bigger grants for a broader curriculum

and more intelligent teaching. Basic grants were to be paid on the average attendance of the whole school and every child who had been on the register for six months had to be presented for examination (not only those with 250 attendances as previously) but the attention of teachers (and inspectors) was still likely to be focussed on the detailed inducements offered for success. Older children could earn no fewer than 7 different grants, namely:

1. A fixed grant of 4s. 6d
2. A merit grant of 1s.0d., 2s. 0d., or 3s. 0d based upon the quality of discipline and instruction.
3. A needlework grant of 1s.0d for girls.
4. A grant for a percentage of passes in the 3 R's which could be 8s. 4d.
5. A grant for singing of 1s. 0d
6. A grant of 1s. 0d or 2s. 0d for each of two class subjects.
7. A grant of 4s. 0d for each individual pass in two specific subjects.

In theory it appeared that a girl in the upper standards might earn £1. 9s. 10d., and a boy a shilling less. In fact schools were limited to a maximum grant of 17s 6d per child in average attendance, or to the amount received from other sources, whichever was the less. (1) According to the report of 1885-6 the average grant paid was 17s 5½d of which 8s. 11¾d was largely determined by the instruction in elementary

(1) Report 1881-2 pps111-144 gives the whole code.

subjects. Payment by Results obtained in examination in the 3 R's was still the main basis of government help to the schools. That the Inspectorate played a significant part in the introduction of this new Code was fully attested by Mundella in his speech to the House of Commons on August 8th, 1887. He informed the House that in fulfilment of his pledge of the previous year to make a full inquiry into the operations of the Code, "we have had complaints as to the Code from, I think, everybody who takes an interest in education."<sup>(1)</sup> He went on to describe the procedure.

"In the first place we had Memorials from school boards and from persons connected with education who made suggestions for the improving of the Code. We found ourselves able to agree upon certain principles and then papers were prepared by 20 or 30 of our principal Inspectors, and we elicited from them the freest possible criticism and asked them to give suggestions as to the best system which their long experience enabled them to give. Having received these Reports we were enabled to make a draft Report and we agreed further that the matter should be thoroughly sifted and the detail worked out by a Committee. The House would like to know the process by which we arrived at that. Sir Francis Sandford, Mr. Sykes and Mr. Cumin represented the three chiefs of the Education Department; Mr. Warburton, Mr. Sharpe and Mr. Fitch, the three inspectors representing the great Training Colleges - Mr. Warburton for his

(1) Hansard CCLXLV p. 1223 (3rd series.)

experience in smaller schools and Mr. Sharpe for the larger schools. I presided over this committee myself and we (arrived) .... at the scheme which we have now submitted to the House. When we had accomplished that we felt that we must put our work through a finer sieve and must call in additional critics, and we added to the Committee Mr. Matthew Arnold, Mr. Moncrieff, Mr. Oakeley and Mr. Blakiston and Lord Spencer himself presided over that Committee and the result is what I have laid on the Table."<sup>(1)</sup> This Code Committee provided the machinery for regular consultation between inspectors and the Department and marks a significant recognition of the value of inspectors' experience. Previously, contact had been intermittent and partial at the whim of the political chiefs, but now, as Cumin testified to the Bryce Commission in 1888, difficulties and complaints in the working of the Code were discussed by the Code Committee <sup>(2)</sup> and he did not recall any Vice President having 'held his own' against a decision by that Committee.<sup>(3)</sup>

Other parts of Mundella's speech reveal his desire to meet criticism of the inspectorate. He indicated that the annual entries made by inspectors on teachers' certificates were to be discontinued after they had reached the first class, because of complaints of the endorsements

(1) Hansard Vol. CCLXIV 3rd series. p. 673

(2) Bryce Commission Evidence para 971-9

(3) The TIMES for June 18th had an article on the new procedure obviously aimed at helping Managers and Teachers.

made by some young inspectors on the certificate of old teachers. More important he proposed, to divide England and Wales into districts under some of our best and most trusted Inspectors and arrange that the Chief Inspectors shall meet annually at Whitehall to lay down a regular system of examination for their districts.. They shall agree upon a plan and upon their tests as to good, fair and excellent and shall then enforce that uniformity upon the Inspectors below them. <sup>(1)</sup>

The additional work brought about by the greater complication of the Codes and the greater number of schools and children necessitated another increase in the staff of inspectors.

In 1881 there are listed the names of ten Senior Inspectors and another 120 in charge of districts, but a most interesting development was the creation of a new class of sub-inspector recruited either from experienced teachers or headmasters in the elementary schools or by the promotion of some of the older men from the class of inspector's assistants. The establishments of this class was the outcome of questions asked in Parliament in 1879 about the qualifications for Her Majesty's Inspectors but although the sub-inspector certainly brought closer knowledge of the schools, he was not allowed to make any responsible decision. Even when he examined a school by himself his superior officer was obliged to visit it the next year.

Another problem which concerned the Department during this period was the publication of inspectors' reports which, because of the

(1) Hansard Vol. CCLXVI 3rd Series p. 1236

increase in district and schools, had become very bulky. As a result, a minute of August 1880 once again directed inspectors to confine themselves to describing the state of the schools under their charge and to practical suggestions for their improvement. To ensure compliance inspectors were warned that reports which did not conform to these instructions would be put aside as not proper to print at public expense. As a final check they were limited to twelve octavo pages including appendices (1) In 1884 it was decided that district reports should no longer be published and each year five of the ten senior inspectors were asked to draw up reports on their division. These documents became general statistical surveys with little of that personal interest which gives much pleasure to the reader of the earlier reports.

One of the disheartening aspects of this period ~~is the period~~ is the apparently fragmentary and often contradictory nature of the views of the Department and its inspectors on the problems of education and their own place in the national system. Inspectors are warned that they must not remove or find fault with teachers, or told that they may approve or reject schemes submitted to them, but they may not originate or suggest schemes themselves. (2)

(1) Report 1880-1 p. 203

(2) Report 1877-8 p. 337

In another place the inspector is directed: "You will urge the teachers .... not to be satisfied with just enabling the children to pass the standard examinations but to endeavour to provide that all the children before they leave school shall at least have acquired the power of writing with facility, or using the simple rules of arithmetic without difficulty and of reading without exertion and with pleasure to themselves. As regards History and Geography you will encourage .... such teaching as is likely to awaken the sympathies of the children."<sup>(1)</sup>

Such words read well and could reasonably be accepted as an aim for the schools of today, but coming from the Education Department of 1878 they read like self delusion or deliberate pretension.

Did not the same Department maintain the niggardly system of payment based chiefly on success in a mechanical examination in the 3 R's which they were operating in direct contradiction to their declared aim? And even worse, did they not continue to use as their agents some inspectors whom they knew to be inefficient and even harmful to the cause of education? In the instruction for 1882 they apparently accept the complaint from Managers that some inspectors have been unpunctual, hasty, impatient and lacking in proper consideration in their treatment of teachers and scholars. They certainly knew that many inspectors

(1) Report 1877-8 p. 335



managed to leave most of their work to their assistants while they enjoyed the company and recreation of persons of their own class. (1) In spite of this warning the Department was constrained to issue the Revised Instructions to Inspectors in 1887 which were obviously inspired by renewed complaints and indicate that some at least of the inspectors needed elementary instruction in their responsibilities.

"All hurry or undue haste in the day of the examination is incompatible with your main duty - that of ascertaining, verifying and reporting the facts on which the Parliamentary Grant is administered. An early attendance at the school is absolutely indispensable, not only on account of the short time available for work, but in the interests of the children who are far more capable of sustained exertion in the early parts of the day. A hurried inspection probably necessitates some evils which are such to be deprecated - the attempt to do two things at once

- (1) In Spring 1882 Alfred Graves took charge of the Somerset district and writes: "I had succeeded a fox hunting inspector who visited the schools in pink, looked at the registers, school accounts and log-books, chatted with the managers and then rode off to the hunt, leaving his sub-inspector to do all the examination work alone .... I found an immense accumulation of inefficient schools, for the sub-inspector had barely had time to examine let alone inspect; nor had he the authority to produce a better condition of things"

See A.P. Graves "To return to all that" pps 218-9

e.g., to give out dictation on sums while hearing the reading of another class; keeping classes employed instead of dismissing them to play; retaining children in school in the dinner house and thereby not allowing them sufficient time for the meal; prolonging the examinations to a late hour in the afternoon and embarrassing young scholars by want of clearness in dictation or asking questions".<sup>(1)</sup>

In this elementary matter of imposing a reasonable discipline on their own officers, the Department seems to have been very lax. Inspection was an occupation for gentlemen and those of the same class hesitated to interfere with the privileges of their social equals even when they couldn't agree with their use. It was perhaps too much to expect that all inspectors should have the knowledge, diligence and enthusiasm of Reverend G. Moncrieff, Dr. J.D. Morell, Mr. J.G. Fitch, Reverend W.T. Kennedy or Mr. W.P. Turnbull, but if the Department had been prepared to insist on reasonable standards from all its inspectors the efficiency of the whole organisation and its contribution to educational development would have been raised considerably.

Whether, however, the inspectors were good or bad, most of their time was occupied in the annual examination of the schools of their district and no account of them is complete without some description of their main function. Fortunately, we have a realistic account of inspection in a late Victorian Board School (c. 1887) by F.H. Spencer,

(1) Report 1887-8 p. 160 Similar directions were issued annually until 1895.

H.M.I. who had been a pupil there. (1)

He describes how the 800 boys of the school having suffered three months of intensive training were in their places by 8.45 a.m. on an October morning, wearing their best clothes and looking as clean and tidy as possible.

"At nine o'clock punctually the assistant inspectors arrived arrayed in frock coats or black morning coats and top hats, with Government satchels filled with examination schedules and arithmetic 'cards'. For Standard 1 the inspector's assistant gave the teacher sums to write on the blackboard, and for the others cards were distributed, each containing three 'straightforward' sums and one 'problem'. After about 45 minutes the papers were gathered in and the school proceeded to mechanical tests in reading and writing. By the end of an extended morning session the examination in the 3 R's was over, except for marking the papers which the assistants did during the afternoon at their second class hotel." (2)

The H.M.I. who of course stayed at the best hotel, never arrived before 10 a.m. on the first day and often not until the second. On the next day began the examination of the class subjects, and here the assistants showed great skill in handling the pupils while the H.M.I. frequently showed his incompetence. Talking of the opinion of his fellow teachers Spencer says:

- (1) F.H. Spencer An Inspector's Testament pps. 86-100
- (2) Ibid p. 90

"It was the competence of his assistant which we at once dreaded and admired. It was the social superiority and the occasional complete lack of sympathy which were disliked in H.M.I. himself." (1)

The assistants showed "their superiority in music (tonic sol-fa) for they could hear the time tests and give ear tests like shelling peas" and in needlework "no woman could deceive them as to the quality or generally the proper construction of 'garments.'" (2)

By the end of the second day most of the examination was finished except for the boys from Standard V and above, who offered 'Specific' subjects and the Pupil Teachers who had to read, "say their poetry" and sometimes give a lesson before H.M.I. himself.

"We knew and he knew that in actual ability to hold a class and expound some simple facts we could do better than he could. Few of that generation of H.M.I.'s had even a theoretical knowledge of the art of teaching, still less of its practice". (3)

In addition, there were the routine duties - the examination of the log book, registers and time-table, the careful checking of the list of children absent from the examination to see that none were being deliberately withheld and the examination of apparatus and premises.

(1) Ibid p. 95

(2) Ibid p. 97

(3) Ibid

This is one picture of the 'Great Day' but it conceals much that was vitally important. Teachers and managers knew that the performance on this day determined their financial position for the next twelve months and for the former even their future careers. An examination of school log books shows how the tension mounted as examination day approached. Managers paid extra visits to check registers. The building and the 'offices' received an unusually thorough cleaning. The schedule and the financial statements (Form IX) had to be prepared strictly in accordance with the instructions of the Department as interpreted by the visiting inspectors.

Sneyd-Kynnersley describes Form IX thus:

"There were countless questions spread over nine pages of foolscap, and arranged sometimes in horizontal, sometimes in vertical columns. For the unwary, there were more traps to the square inch than are contained in any other nine pages in the world. Two pages were devoted chiefly to signatures and general declarations. (*Dolus latet in generalibus*) Two more were for the school accounts: five remained for the statistics of the school; the size of the rooms; the names; ages; salaries; qualifications and past histories of all the teachers, the number of children on the roll; the number in average attendance; the number at each age between 2 and 14; and so on." (1)

The writing out of lists of names grouped according to attendance and for standards, the checking of names in registers, the rounding up

(1) Sneyd-Kynnersley H.M.I. (*op. cit*) p. 156.

of qualified absentees was a tedious labour to the teacher and for many it must have been complicated by the knowledge that a little ingenuity in this task could improve the percentage of passes (and therefore the grant) for the school. Managers as Sneyd-Kynnersley illustrates were often befogged by having to make financial returns completely beyond their experience and sometimes their education. (1)

As the day approached, children were put under pressure for extratime was worked at lunch time and at the end of the day, and non-counting subjects, such as drawing (after the Science and Art Department examination) and military drill were suspended to allow greater concentration on the 3 R's.

The atmosphere particularly of the many marginal schools, where for weeks before the examination children were hounded by anxious teachers through the dull routine of the standards or the limited 'matter' of the class subjects, must have been anything but educational. No wonder inspectors were often regarded as ogres! Unfortunately most of them lacked the time and many the inclination to find out what schools were like under normal conditions.

Moreover, the examination days were characterised by an atmosphere of haste. Results sufficient to calculate the grant and write the report had to be obtained as quickly as possible (often before 1.30 p.m.) on the day. A surprising amount was done and many defects

(1) Sneyd-Kynnersley H.M.I. pps. 161-3.

H.M.I.'s EMPLOYMENT (AVERAGE NO. OF DAYS PER ANNUM)

	INSPECTING SCHOOLS	HOLDING EXAMS	REVISING PAPERS	TRAV- ELLING ETC.	CORRESP ANCE, REPORTS ETC.	VACATION	PRIVATE BUSINESS	TILL	NO. OF CHILDREN EXAMINED
1871	164.77	13.42	17.30	2.5	67.51	40.71	4.55	2.19	23984
1877	169.33	10.54	18.54	1.59	62.0	43.7	3.56	3.74	24746

Source:

Board of Education Statistics  
1871-1877

and excellences uncovered for one of the astonishing features of the actual report is the inspectors' knowledge of minute regulations of the Code. The system demanded snap judgments which could be very unfair to the school. For instance, the report in April 1882 on the Boys' School at Hebburn by A.B. Fisher begins with a complaint that 20% of the pupils qualified were absent for the examination. The Headmaster at the time appends a note to the report pointing out that he had already made entries in the log book telling that during the previous month many families had left the town to seek new employment and that a serious fever epidemic was raging.<sup>(1)</sup> The Evidence before the Cross Commission amply supports the allegation of undue haste. J.H. Devonshire tells of dictation being given at twice the proper speed and after giving many other instances of unfair practice sums up the situation with the statement "the present routine and hurried examination provides no culture whatever."<sup>(2)</sup>

That this was known to the Department is obvious from the Revised Instruction for 1886-7 listed above and yet it is difficult to justify. An examination of the employment of inspectors indicates that the average inspector was not so pressed as he sometimes made out. It is true that the work in the schools was repetitive and boring but this too little more than half of their time and ten or eleven weeks at home writing reports and seven or eight weeks vacation gave ample opportunity for more relaxed living.

(1) Hebburn Boys School Log p. 132

(2) Cross Commission Evidence para. 23946-7

(3) See Table on p. 100



With some H.M.I's this insistence on the need for haste made them incapable of establishing a proper relationship with the schools. When an inspector journeyed from Darlington to Evenwood (which would probably take four hours return) and the only impact on the school appears to be the letters V. W. N. in the log book followed by his initials he was scarcely using his time and abilities in the profitable furtherance of educational relationships.

Another cause of difficulty must have been the variation in the requirements of different inspectors even when working in the same district and visiting the same schools. Oakeley occasionally required a note of the specific and class subjects for the ensuing year. Ward at Hebburn was content with a list of twenty object lessons but A.E. Bernays at Durham not only required a list of about 30 object lessons and all the songs and recitations to be learned as well as a geography syllabus, but he went through the whole with a blue pencil making alterations and initialling what he approved. (1)

Bernays who succeeded Oakeley in charge of the Durham district had very definite ideas and went further than most of his colleagues in impressing them upon the schools. While others obeyed instructions and simply deplored the badness of school books, he mentions by name the best Readers and Copybooks he has found, and so encourages their use in the area. (2)

(1) See Log Book page 466

(2) It is interesting that Nelson Royal Readers which he regarded as being the best though expensive, were still to be found in Durham schools in the 1920's.

He believed in firm action to secure improvement and in his report for 1879 he declared, "for the past twelve months I have not allowed a scrap of paper or slate in Standards III to VI and am glad to find the accuracy of the children's work greatly increased."<sup>(1)</sup>

Bernays had considerable influence on his schools for his ideas were basically sound and were supported by considerable human understanding.

To improve reading we find him recommending that schools should acquire copies of the School Newspaper and Boys' Own Paper for distribution and group together to provide a circulating library.<sup>(2)</sup> In another report we find that in visiting a Teesdale school it was his habit to take copies of the Boys' Own Paper for a boy in whom he had become interested.<sup>(3)</sup>

He had firm ideas on poetry and expressed his dislike of constantly hearing Pupil Teachers declaim 'The Deserted Village' or 'Chatham's Speech on the American War' and of the bowdlerisers who substituted blood red for bloody. He made the radical proposal that Shakespeare and Milton were too difficult for children and Scott would be better.<sup>(4)</sup>

(1) Report 1879-80 p. 225

(2) Ibid

(3) Report 1883-4 p. 253

(4) Report 1883-4 p. 255

This incidently reflects one of the inspector's major influences for by his choice of poetry to be learnt he could determine the literary background of a community for a generation. (1)

His comments on infants reflects the soundness of his understanding. In his report on the Durham Practising School in 1884 he writes:

"The children are far too solemn and there was even a gloom over their singing and exercises." (2)

(1) Typical of the poems set, are the following entries in the log book of the Bill Quay Board School, pps. 217, 233, 248.

<u>Std.</u>	1887 ( H.M.I. A.W. Newton)	1888 (H.M.I. J.R. Fearon)
V1 & V11	From King John	from Merchant of Venice
V	Horatius	Edinburgh after Flodden
1V	The Wreck of the Hesperus	Llewelyn and his Dog
111	We are Seven	Sale of a Pet Lamb
11	The Sparrow's Nest	Swallow and Child
1	The Skylark	The Field Mouse

Newton gave the same list in 1889 with the substitution of the Burial of Sir John Moore & Hohenlinden for the Wreck of the Hesperus in Std. 1V.

(2) School Log Book p. 466.

In his General Report for 1879 he points out that infants are not interested in lessons based on information and goes on "I have even heard a capable and well intentioned mistress give a lesson on "form" (1) and infants were called upon to distinguish between obtuse, acute and right angles. In the name of common sense I must enter my protest against such absurdities." (2) He goes on to suggest that they should have collective recitation and story reading by the teacher (e.g. Alice in Wonderland) and finishes, "No greater mistake can be made than to look upon these schools as mere cramming establishments and forget that their occupants are in full occupation of the morning freshness of life." (3)

In contrast the reports of R.P.S. Swettenham who was based at Darlington are largely descriptive of things as they are and suggest one who is receiving from, rather than giving to the schools. "Writing is in some schools almost a marvel. Before I was acquainted with an elementary school I used to think that many people were by nature prevented from writing well. I have now completely abandoned that idea." (4) The extent to which academic preferences could separate him from the same report. "Grammar is to me the most satisfactory subject in an elementary school." "I am driven to the conclusion that the subject

(1) This was struck out of the Practising School List by Bernays.

(2) Report 1879-80 p.222

(3) Ibid

(4) Report 1877-8 p. 562

(Geography) is too hard for them."<sup>(1)</sup>

The underlying philosophy of the inspector was obviously a matter of prime importance to a school and yet we can see how within the bounds of a county, chance favoured one group of schools rather than the other. Multiplied throughout the country one realises the extent to which haphazard selection and lack of training for the inspectorate threatened uniform educational development.

Worse than this it was the waste of a national asset. While European countries with more direct aims based a new technology on rationally planned and effective technical education in their schools, England was content to leave the system in the hands of amateurs as long as they were gentlemen. Matthew Arnold's words to the Endowed Schools Enquiry Commission "our civil organisation in England still remains what time and chance have made it,"<sup>(2)</sup> were equally true of state education.

There was, however, one field in which the influence of the inspectors brought considerable benefits to the schools, namely the improvement of the physical conditions for education.

That the premises should be satisfactory had been one of the original conditions of the award of grant and as inspectors accumulated a mass of evidence as to deplorable buildings the Department resolutely

(1) Ibid p. 561

(2) Endowed Schools Enquiry Commission 1862 Vol.VI p. 623

(3) Ashburne - Memories of a School Inspector p. 75

issued recommendations and circulars aimed at improvement.

Two basic difficulties prevented this work from being as effective as it might have been. The first was the expense. When inspectors knew that the bad local school was the only alternative to none and that improvements were only deferred by sheer lack of resources, it seemed folly to make matters worse by reducing the grant on account of existing defects. The second was the sheer difficulty of persuading local managers to make alterations which they regard as unnecessary. Here the inspectors were frustrated by the very system of political influence which had secured them their own employment. Swinburne remembers with gratitude the honourable lady by whose recommendation he had obtained his appointment but he is very angry when a titled manager uses 'back-stairs' influence to secure the restoration of a grant which he had withheld. (1) Sneyd-Kynnersley explains the continuing existence of two obviously quite horrible Manchester voluntary schools by remarking that the Roman Catholics had a Duke, and the Wesleyans the Principal of Westminster College, whose influence with "Their Lords" far exceeded that of all the inspectors. (2)

None the less they loyally and sometimes with enthusiasm pressed for improvements. They carried plans of new schools, or classrooms or

(1) Swinburne - Memories of a School Inspector p. 75

(2) Sneyd-Kynnersley - H.M.I. p. 334-5

improved offices which they put before managers. Some of their recommendations are associated with suggestions for saving expense though they seldom go as far as the inspector who in advocating the adoption of his plans for new offices assured the managers that they would recoup the extra cost from the sale of manure. (1)

Their insistence on separate infant departments which was backed up by the grant system, their advocacy of galleries and cloakrooms all had their effect in making school buildings more tolerable but they were often more concerned with lesser matters.

In his report for 1883 Bernays demands that every school should have a proper lavatory and two or three wash hand basins, that there was a need for chairs and high stools for lady teachers and that pictures "such as Mr. Ruskin would have" (2) should be provided. His report on the Infants' Practising School at Durham in 1882 is typical of many. In 1880 he had suggested that backs should be fitted to the gallery seats and ~~in~~ two years later he writes:

"I fail to understand what is the precise difficulty in complying with my recommendations as to the gallery seats. The offices should be made more convenient for the younger children and the Air Shaft in the classroom is too high to be of much use. The managers attention is requested to Section 18 of the enclosed Circular (Circular 217) H.M. Inspector's recommendation about the gallery seats should be carried out otherwise the next grant may suffer. (3)

- (1) Report 1879-80 pps.157-160 gives Memorandum for guidance to H.M.I.'s re offices.
- (2) Report 1883-4 p. 252
- (3) School Log Book p. 414

Bernays paid special attention to ventilation. He argued that to be effective it must not depend solely on the windows which were often kept firmly closed, but ventilators should be placed in the roof and the chimney. He deprecated the use of ground glass and quotes an oculist Mr. Liebreich as to its harmful effect on children's eyesight. <sup>(1)</sup>

As to the offices his comments are regular (almost every report) and pointed. He notes that they are usually clean on inspection day but not on the visits without notice and makes this comment. "Few managers and teachers can be induced to see the necessity for the supervision of these places and plead the habitual uncleanliness of the children." (2) (3)

Similar ideas are expressed by almost every inspector and the reports abound in suggestions for improvement (and) while the log books indicate that nothing was more likely to ensure the reduction of the grant than failure to implement recommendations in this matter.

For this the inspectors deserve considerable credit for it is undoubted that by their faithful and methodical attention to this unpleasant part of their duty they made a significant contribution to the improvement of social life.

Improvement meant for Bernays the praise of the good as well as the condemnation of the bad and though perhaps we may not share

(1) Report 1879-80 p. 223

(2) *ibid*

(3) See praise for Bernays expressed by his successor Northrop. Report 1894-5 p. 75



his satisfaction we can understand his enthusiasm when he writes:

"In respect of school buildings my district is very fortunate. The more modern ones, especially those created by School Boards are frequently very handsome and form the one bright spot in many a pit village. In fact the aesthetic taste of the day is clearly traceable in the architecture of these schools."<sup>(1)</sup>

In this whole matter of buildings, furniture and fittings Bernays speaks for the inspectorate. The constant pressure brought significant progress and benefits for the schools and prepared the minds of both Parliament and public for the famous circular 321 which Mr. Acland issued in 1893 and is discussed below.

The most significant change in the twenty years after 1870 was the great increase in the number of children coming into contact with the schools. The average attendance rose from 1,225,764 in 1870 to 2,461,698 in 1878 and 3,732,327 in 1890. In 1878 however, the total number on the register was approximately  $3\frac{1}{2}$  millions out of an estimated child populations of 5 million and by 1890 it had risen to 4,800,000 out of about 5,900,000.

This significant rise was due to the extension of compulsory education through the 1870 Act, Lord Sandon's Act of 1876 and Mundella's Act of 1880. By the latter, School Boards and School Attendance

(1) Report 1879-80 p. 222

Committees were compelled to make bye-laws. These were unfortunately far from uniform so that in different parishes children could leave legally from 10 years of age to 13 or even 14, depending on the standards of proficiency and attendance set. But the real gain was the general acceptance of the principle of compulsion.

Though some of the inspectors (e.g. Fitch) had had reservations re compulsion before 1870 they soon recognised its need and their reports make constant mention of the "necessity" for extending and strengthening the law. (1)

Those of 1878 are particularly interesting in this connection for they gave ammunition to those who felt that Lord Sandon's Act was insufficient. W.H. Brewe at Blackburn praises the success of compulsion in the town itself but points out anomalies created by the regulated and unregulated., employments and the serious extra labour imposed upon the teacher and inspector by the system of 'Child's School Books.' (2) which the Act introduced.

In the Northallerton District H.W.G. Markheim complains that the Guardians, "many of them belonging to the class most interested in infringing its provisions" (3) deliberately delay

(1) e.g. W.S. Coward's Report 1877 p.447 and see Sneyd-Kynnersley Report 1878 p. 606

(2) These recorded the child's date of birth and the age at which he passed his various standards.

(3) Report 1878-9 p. 638

the introduction of bye laws in the 1876 Act or make them ineffective by withholding the money to pay an enforcement officer. He quotes a teacher who writes "The Guardian of my own parish takes children away to do his work from our school and says 'he is the only master in the parish.'" (1)

In the York District Rev. G. French voices a complaint (which is not unheard today) that when delinquents are finally brought before the court the magistrates impose such petty fines that the prosecution is largely a waste of time and concludes

"I trust that I am not exceeding my duty in thus drawing attention to what is felt here, I know, to be a real grievance. I do hope that magistrates will cordially co-operate with schools in their earnest and certainly not unkind or thoughtless endeavours to make elementary education a reality. The Act must be vigorously and thoughtfully administered to render it efficacious, and I am quite sure that in this district, every effort is made with delinquents before they are brought under the notice of the bench." (2)

There can be little doubt that in this matter the observations of the inspectors encouraged Parliament to pass more effective legislation.

(1) Ibid

(2) Report 1878-9 p. 566

The other great achievement for the mass of children in this period was the progressive lengthening of the time spent at school and the raising of the standard reached.

The following table illustrates the trend:

	PRESENTED	OVER 10 YEARS OLD	OVER 10 YRS PRESENTED IN STD 1 - 111	
1872	661,589	318,934	203,172	Many driven into schools by compulsion. (1)
1878	1,562,224	775,772	457,013	
1890	2,596,100	1,402,572	440,131	

Especially significant is the much smaller percentage of elder pupils examined in the lower standards and the significant increase in Standards IV and V which now included 483,936 and 315,605 children respectively. Much of this improvement was due to legislation and the efforts of local Schools Boards, Attendance Committees and Teachers.

While all the inspectors gave general support, the extent of this varied as usual according to their individual beliefs. Some believed that social and economic factors must always dominate education as for instance Mr. J.G. Ley in Mid-Kent who writes:

"Granted that regularity of attendance is the 'sine qua non' for efficiency and thoroughness of elementary instruction, it seems

(1) Statistics from Reports for years indicated.

to me at least a question whether more could be done by legislation, or practically even by administrative pressure for securing it; il faut vivre; and the ultimate question, of course, is how far parents can afford to dispense with the help, I do not say labour, of their children. In a county like Kent, where the women are largely employed in agriculture, it is, I fear, useless to expect that the girls at any rate will be sent to school regularly during a considerable part of the year." (1)

E.G.A. Holmes accepts that practically every child in Halifax is a half timer and then goes on to praise the School Board for its efficiency and economy.

But the majority really believed that all children should have the advantage of education and sought to eliminate those factors which might take children out of school at too low an age.

Mr. Barrington Ward in Lincolnshire comments "Time would fail me to enumerate all the field operations for which the help of children is alleged to be indispensable." (2) and finishes up "thanks to prejudice, ignorance and the desire of gain, the days of regular attendance in country districts seem still far distant". (3)

- (1) Report 1878-9 p. 618
- (2) Report 1877-8 p. 569
- (3) Ibid

In particular they pointed out the detrimental effects of Factory, Mines and Agriculture Acts which cut short a child's schooling.<sup>(1)</sup> Cornish at Salford in 1878 reports that Manchester has raised its standard for exemption and hopes his district will do the same. Several complain that half-timers are often too tired to learn or that their bad manners corrupt the school. Some call attention to the ridiculous system which allows the bright child who has most to gain from extra schooling to be the first to leave.

It is fair to those inspectors who regularly complained about the inefficiency caused by partial or irregular attendance to report that they influenced the Department and Parliament to limit these abuses and did see the progressive raising of standards.<sup>(2)</sup> (Perhaps the Trade Unions which recruited many of their greatest leaders from bright boys, who went early into industry, have some reason to be thankful for the faults of the system).

On the curriculum their comments varied widely. There is general agreement that the teaching of the 3 R's was efficient by the standards of the examination, but that in too many cases the work was mechanical and repetitive, often lacking intelligence and attempting nothing more than the minimum required to pass.

(1) Ibid p. 570

(2) But the limits of their influence meant that half-timers and leaving certificates for early leavers lasted until the 1920's

E.G. Holmes writes " but thought in however minute quantities is a treasure for which in nine schools out of ten one looks in vain." (1)

Indeed this feeling of many inspectors about all the 3 R's could be expressed in the words of Rev. Chas. Routledge who writes of the Kent district "reading is generally passable, but it is rarely good." (2)

On the other hand it is fair to record the considerable increase in the number of children receiving some education. Markheim gives a table for his district (Northallerton) showing that between 1874 and 1877 the number of children examined had risen by 42% and the percentage in those passing in the 3 R's had risen from 75% to 83%. (3)

By 1890 there had been a considerable improvement and Sneyd-Kynnersley was expressing the opinions of the other chief inspectors when he remarked upon the increase of intelligent reading and teaching of the 3 R's in his district. (4)

There was considerable satisfaction at the introduction of the class and specific subjects which many felt had fostered the intellectual life of the schools, though few would go as far as the Reverend Robert Temple who said in Shropshire,

"Now we seem to me to be getting the accuracy of

(1) Report 1878-9 p. 600

(2) Ibid p. 682

(3) Ibid p. 642

(4) Report 1890-1 p. 352

elementary instruction secured by the Revised Code, together with the intelligence and general knowledge of the golden prime of inspection." (1)

Opinions vary as the value of various subjects. Geography and English literature are generally approved and often taught well, but while Arnold and Stokes praise the educational values of grammar several of the younger inspectors had obvious doubts. Markheim begins his examination by asking "How many parts of speech are there in this school?" (2) and Routledge says "Grammar is too technical and too unsettled to be anything but a doubtful guide." (3)

Pretentious teaching is everywhere attacked and the inspectorate fought against the attempt by many teachers to hide their ignorance of a subject inside a mass of verbiage. "Domestic Economy is often simply rubbish" (4) says Ley in mid-Kent.

"The physiology was more undigested cream." (5) reports Page Renouf of his examinations in Tower Hamlets, and Mr Kenney Herbert in Oxfordshire writes "It is very seldom that candidates are presented for examination in any of the specific subjects and it is

(1) Report 1877-8 p. 565

(2) Report 1878-9 p. 644 (Head teachers sometimes introduced classifications of their own)

(3) Ibid p. 688

(4) Ibid 1878-9 p. 625

(5) Report 1877-8 p. 496



still more seldom that I see a paper that repays the trouble of revision." (1)

This was legitimate criticism from men who knew the value of academic discipline, but they themselves must have often found their knowledge being tested almost to vanishing point. They could be called upon to examine not only the 3 R's and ordinary class subjects such as History and Geography, but also specific subjects such as animal Physiology, Botany, Mechanics, Mathematics, Latin French or German, not to mention music, domestic economy and needlework. Little wonder that inspectors were taken in over needlework or judged the music by the expression on the head teacher's face. (2)

The extension of the grant system to encourage the acquisition of snippets of varied information convinced inspectors of its basic weakness. Even the use of a Merit Grant based on general performance could not offset the obvious folly of judging education by testing almost irrelevant knowledge and the consequences on teachers and children were obvious.

Inspectors complained about the number of subjects and the lack of understanding in such instruction but they were too involved in the process to see any clear remedy. This highlights an outstanding weakness in the organisation of the inspectorate during this period.

(1) Report 1877-8 p. 474

(2) See Sneyd-Kynnersley op cit p. 287

Many members knew that schools needed help to determine a satisfactory curriculum, they knew that the study of extra subjects simply to earn grants threatened real education, but most seem to have been powerless against the teachers, managers and politicians who threatened the whole structure by extending its upper storeys (1) when its foundations were already under strain.

The real benefit came from inspectors like Bernays who saw the real situation and determined that they would give firm advice on a strictly limited curriculum and took pains to follow it by careful supervision. The inspectors had been chosen as educated men with the capacity to make judgments. This period suggests that whatever their academic qualities many lacked the understanding or experience to make the real decisions about the shape of the curriculum.

No account of the influence of the inspectorate during this period would be complete without some mention of the part played by the inspectorate in the examining and training of teachers.

The increasing extent of their responsibilities is indicated by the following figures.

TEACHERS	PUPIL	ASSISTANT	CERTIFICATED	1st YEAR P.T.'s.
1870	12,847	1,236	12,027	3,392
1890	29,610	21,784	46,539	5,884

(1)

See Lowe's comment to Lord Geo. Hamilton. 'Parliamentary Reminiscences' p.157-8  
"The idiots who succeeded me have piled on top of the 3 R's a mass of class and specific subjects which they propose to test in the same way. The result is wholesale cramming and superficiality."

The introduction of the pupil teacher system had been Kay Shuttleworth's innovation to get rid of the monitorial system. From the very first, the inspectors had a very close connection with it for at the annual visit it was their duty to see and examine all pupil teachers, who could make no progress or complete their apprenticeship without the Department's authority. This duty was carried out conscientiously and seems to have occupied at least a quarter of the time spent at the school resulting in log book entries like this by Oakeley at Durham in 1877.

"A. Clarke is passed fairly and qualified under both articles 60 and 79. J.G. Liddle is now qualified under article 79 but can only qualify herself under article 60 by passing satisfactorily the examination specified in article 91."

Or this by J.R. Jarman at Bill Quay in 1890 (asterisks indicate distinction).

"G. Brown has passed fairly.

M.D. Heslop Euclid.\*

MJ. Forrest, Grammar\*and Composition.

A.R. Metcalfe, Grammar,\* Composition\*and Needlework.\*

She should be informed she is not qualified by this examination under article 50 or 52. She can be qualified for article 50 only by passing the examination specified in article 46.

E. Doxey is continued under article 84

H. Hindmarsh, Failure.

But sometimes it was necessary for the H.M.I. to be very vigilant and extremely firm as is shown by the following report by W.J. Jarman at Oakwellgate Girls' School in 1886.

Looking to the conduct of a pupil teacher who changed some cutting out and to the untruthfulness of the Girls' in the Fifth Standard who endeavoured to conceal her fault, it is only with considerable hesitation that the highest Merit Grant been recommended.

E. Gossett and I. Thompson have passed fairly. Gossett cannot be allowed any benefit from her examination owing to her conduct thereat. Should anything of the same kind happen next year she will be disqualified for recognition as an Assistant Teacher. (1)

Though no doubt Jarman was right it is difficult to avoid sympathy with poor Miss Gossett, driven to error by the rigidities of the system. For the rest of her life she would fear H.M.I's and this fear was shared by her many colleagues who did their best and yet knew how many things could go wrong. Inspectors could never make their proper impact on teaching staffs when their very presence seemed a threat to guilty and innocent alike.

There are constant complaints about the weakness of Pupil teachers in discipline or examination and about the difficulties of recruiting satisfactory students in industrial areas of high wages or

(1) School Log Book p. 121 (H.M.I's were often unconventional in their use of capitals)

rural areas of low attainment, but the inspectors seem to have tackled this work with sympathy and helpfulness. (1)

To find out that the dreaded inspector was human must have comforted many a young student and we have many instances of personal interest and concern. (2) The inspectors knew that 13 years of age (14 after 1876) was too young to begin, they knew that students who went straight from standards to the staff had little to offer the schools and they knew that the training as measured by their visits and the entrance examination for Training College at 18 was generally poor. But they also knew that in many schools pupil teachers made up half of the staff and any alternative was financially impossible.

They did their best by encouraging the taking of a Queen's Scholarship examination and by asking managers and head teachers to take an active interest in their students. They publicised their approval of such a scheme as that already mentioned in County Durham or Swinburne's East Suffolk Prize Scheme. (3) which sought to bring pupil teachers together to join in learning and stimulate each other by competition. Some of them such as Fitch anticipated later developments by advocating the sending of young people to Higher Grade or local endowed schools before entering their apprenticeships.

- (1) At Bill Quay one H.M.I. actually asked the Headmaster to arrange lodgings near the school for a pupil teachers and came back next week to see that it was done.
- (2) See Sneyd Kynnerlsey op cit p. 201
- (3) See Memories of a School Inspector.

Their enlightened attitude in this matter is one of the most satisfactory parts of the work of inspectors. There can be little doubt that the 'Memorandum on the Training and Instruction of pupil teachers' issued by the Department in 1895 embodied the thoughts of the best inspectors accumulated over the past twenty years as to the practical ways of overcoming some of the deficiencies of the system. This made certain specific demands:-

More systematic preparation of pupil teachers and closer supervision by managers; more reading aloud and practice at elocution; the avoidance of text books which are strictly limited to the examination syllabus; the reorganisation of time tables so that the Head Teacher could hear pupil teachers once per week and give them a right understanding of arithmetical principles and a proper apprenticeship in the art of teaching; and permanent written notes to be presented to H.M.I's Inspector. In more general terms they complained that mechanical instruction prevented the acquisition of habits of application in intellectual pursuits and advised collective instruction (e.g. The Prize Scheme) and the use of a library for books not necessarily connected with examinations or lessons.

The final paragraph deserves quotation in full for it shows a conception of education far removed from the usual utterances of the Department:

"Study and bookwork are insufficient. A natural history club, a cricket club, a little debating or library society, a course of University Extension Lectures, a visit to a neighbouring factory or picture gallery or famous building, a well planned excursion could be of benefit, for the future usefulness of the teacher depends not only upon what he knows and can do, but what he is in his tastes, on his aims in life, and his general mental cultivation and the spirit in which he does his work." (1)

But this was an ideal, and the inspectors who had inspired it knew that practical considerations predominated. The realistic comment on this subject is that of Foster who reporting on his Sunderland District writes:

"The work of the pupil teachers will never be satisfactory until they cease to be regarded as cheap substitutes for properly qualified teachers. I look back on my own apprenticeship more than a quarter of a century ago when I was neither pupil nor a teacher and life was hardly tolerable when it should have been at its brightest." (2)

The movement towards better education for the young people who intended to become teachers certainly owed a great deal to the

(1) Report Minutes 1895-6 p. 464-5

(2) Report 1894-5 p. 85

experience and vision of the inspectorate.

These qualities were also apparent in the general training of teachers. The Department supported the aim of an adequate supply of trained teachers and used its influence to secure this. Untrained assistants had to be approved. Every pupil teacher who had not gone to College was listed as to the school and standard he could teach and the examinations for entrance to college as well as the final award of certificates for both internal and external students was controlled by the inspectors. They were deliberately forbidden to interfere with the arrangements inside the colleges but as each was inspected every year and inspectors controlled the examination, they were obviously in a strong position to influence ideas and practice.

Before 1870 Training Colleges were usually visited by the H.M.I. for that denomination who lived in the district but after that one of the Senior Inspectors took full responsibility. Canon Tinling and later Fitch visited the women's colleges and Sharpe and later Oakeley the men's but they often called in other inspectors to help with the examinations and occasionally to advise.

They commented freely on physical conditions and demanded reports on the health of the students.<sup>(1)</sup> They obviously felt that many colleges pushed the students too hard though strangely enough

(1) In 1877 three Durham men students out of a group of thirty one died of tuberculosis.



they said little about the considerable amount of domestic work (cleaning rooms, helping in the kitchen and dining room, washing clothes etc.,) required from practically all the women students.

In 1871 the inspectors found a substantial degree of uniformity in the practice and standards in the various colleges and by 1879 they had sufficient experience of their working for Rev. d T.W. Sharpe to attempt a detailed analysis of their problems and suggest possible cures. The first problem was that the extension of the syllabus by the introduction of languages and science had brought excessive pressure and too many lectures. Sharpe argues that the best solution would be to allow the student to complete his course for ordinary subjects (English, History, Geography etc.) in the first year so that he could concentrate on the newer and more advanced subjects in the second. He also holds that the system of continuous lecturing (often eight hours per day) is hard and suggests that actual lecturing should only take up to three hours and the young man should be encouraged to spend the rest of the time in independent study under helpful supervision, which would not only raise the standard of attainment but give him an attitude of mind desirable in later life.

As regards professional training Sharpe feels that the student does not get sufficient actual contact with the schools and some of

the 'Normal' schoolmasters are too inexperienced to give as much as they should. In general however, he declares that "scarcely any type of institution shows such rapid and clearly marked results of work as Training Colleges can at the present time produce." (1)

The real threat comes from the increasing weight of their studies and the distortion of their effort by the disproportionate money payments for special work and in Music, Art or the Sciences.

He knows that the existing staffs of the colleges could not cope with the suggested system so he proposes that they should increase the number of lecturers and find the necessary money by reminding the denominations of how small a proportion of the actual cost is met by them, and by increasing the fees and drawing more students from higher classes who were able to pay them.

As to curriculum, he argues strongly for a reduction in the number of subjects and even more strongly for an organisation of instruction adequate for the development of the better students rather than one geared to getting the worst through the examination. He asks two fundamental questions.

"Is the knowledge acquired at the training college to be almost the whole knowledge of their after life?

Does not this thorough training interfering with the whole mental activity destroy its freedom and elasticity?" (2)

(1) Report 1877-8 p. 616

(2) Ibid p. 620

These questions could easily be asked about the children and by raising them about the training colleges the inspectorate were ensuring that they would ultimately be answered in the schools.

But the progress was slow, and Oakeley, in his last report on 1898, though stating the colleges are in a thoroughly sound condition and that no other educational institution is more conscientious and hard working, is still demanding a reduction in the number of subjects, that there should be no lecture in the afternoon and that more time should be given for independent study and self help. He also pleads for better recreational rooms and more university men on the staff and expresses his obvious satisfaction at the prowess of the Durham College teams at football and cricket.

This slow adoption of the inspectors suggestions was partly the result of financial stringency in the colleges but largely because pupil Teachers and Staffs reared under the existing schools system found it difficult to adopt new ways when the old were so often successful. The inspectors deserve credit not only because they saw and advocated the way whereby students, and through them, the schools could replace mechanical instruction with a measure of real education. As Fitch remarked:

I am glad to report that year by year the conception formed by teachers and managers as to the true function of a training

college is becoming broader and more practical. It is not merely a seminary in which students are prepared to pass certain examinations and to learn certain technical rules of school keeping, but a place for the formation of character and tastes, for broadening and liberalising the mind and for encouraging generous aspiration that the training college has its chief value." (1)

This however, was to set the pattern for the future. One cannot leave this consideration of the effect of the inspectorate on the teachers without some mention of the relationship which existed between them. Many instances of cordiality occur. The Hebburn schoolmaster who listed 13 H.M.I's whom he had known and remarked he had never had a word of disagreement with any of them was probably much more typical than he supposed. But whatever questions of recruitment and training are discussed H.M.I's exhibited their notions of class superiority. Collins discusses at length the improvement which would occur if 'ladies' could be induced to become schoolmistresses. (2) As we shall see below, H.M.I's were almost united in saying that schoolmasters should not aspire to their exalted rank.

This exposes the basic contradiction of the system. For the working classes the Training College had become the main channel

(1) Report 1890 p. 455

(2) Report 1877-8 p. 434

to higher education. Because of their background, achievements and training they became firm believers in equality and the right of able men to hold the highest office. The inspectors represented in large measure the conception of men born to rule and never seem to have realised that a liberal education and a caste system are contradictory. It was impossible to believe that any agreement between these groups could be on anything but a temporary basis and the misunderstanding suspicion and misconceived effort produced by this underlying conflict was the source of much frustration and real waste in the Victorian educational system.

No description of the influence of the inspectorate during this period would be complete without some reference to the teaching of Music. This had always been found in some schools and colleges and some inspectors such as Morrell had actively encouraged it, but after 1870 instruction became more systematic.

In that year John Hullah was appointed Inspector of Music for Training Colleges. Already 58 years of age having been an organist, composer, writer of books on musical theory, visitor to two Training Colleges and incidently a bankrupt, he brought to his task wide knowledge, great drive and supreme confidence.

In 1871 he visited the colleges and introduced a practical test in music as well as the usual theoretical one for all students.

Accepting a lower standard at first he warned the students that he would expect a higher standard in the next year. Having heard every student sing and those who could do so, play a musical instrument, he 'never discussed him until I had fully satisfied myself as to the extent of his capabilities.'" (1)

On this particularly thorough examination he was able to base his suggestions. He objects strongly to the lack of suitable music and to the practice of singing soprano parts an octave too low and advocates mixed choirs wherever practicable. He wants instrumental music encouraged wherever possible and complains of the shortage of instruments ( Borough Road with 128 students had only a single harmonium). As one might expect he finds most of the students passable readers of music on sight but complains most strongly of their inability to keep time. In one matter his opinion was decisive, for after examining carefully the most effective methods of teaching sight reading he comes down firmly in favour of the 'fixed tone' with inflected syllables" (2) and five years later he is able to refer to his suggestions and claim "the majority of them are now acted upon in every training school in the country" (3)

(1) Report 1872-3 p. 362

(2) Report 1877-8 p. 657

(3) Report 1885-6 p. 650

His report tells of a great increase in musical activity - a piano in every training college (8 in Edinburgh) a band of a stringed instrument at Cheltenham - ear tests dealt with increased facility and more general readiness - the power of reading fresh music and much more general and competent. He was no easy examiner - students were expected to read their own parts from Bach or Mendelsohn or Handel on sight, but one can imagine that one of his proposals increased student participation in music for he goes on to complain that sometimes even adjacent colleges for different sexes ignore each other rather than join together to make a choir and is impatient of those who prefer 'to carry on their monophonus practice independently and of necessity imperfectly.' (1)

He tells of a successful experiment in scientific musical teaching in the Home and Colonial infant school but

(1) Report 1877-8 p. 658

bewails that the work in the schools generally does not keep pace with that in the colleges.

John Stainer succeeded Hullah in 1883, was a more successful musician and equally determined. One of his first tasks was to replace his second assistant by W.G. McNaught who was an authority on tonic sol fa. Like his predecessor he continued to visit colleges and give the same thorough examination to the 80% of students who offered music. He complained that theory outweighed practice in the final examination and argued against external qualifications for teaching such as those offered by the Tonic Sol Fa college or the R.S.A. but the obvious complexity of the test pieces indicates a steadily rising standard inside the college. He believed that for the students the true object of musical training was to make them good teachers of children and he sought to make their knowledge both technically and artistically sound.

Obviously this spurt of musical endeavour had its effect upon the schools. In 1876 the grant of 6d. for singing by ear and 1/-d for singing by note was introduced and although it became possible to get the maximum grant without it, singing became a normal subject in most schools. Inspectors who were not musical themselves usually found it necessary to recruit an assistant who was. The reports clearly indicate that not all



music (even in Wales) was good and that songs were often banal, but there is no doubt that this enthusiasm fired by the specialist inspectors in the Training Colleges and encouraged by those inspectors who had the knowledge made a significant cultural impact on the land. The modulator became a standard piece of equipment in the classroom but in the life of the community in Church and Chapel, male voice choirs and glee clubs men and women often led by their teachers found a delight in using a skill which they had first begun to acquire in school.

This period in the history of inspection is brought to a close by the Report of the Cross Commission in 1888. For two years it had been investigating the operation of the Elementary Education Acts and although differences over the voluntary system led to the production of a minority report, the commissioners agreed on many matters of great importance to education. They felt that the real need was better rather than more schools and that education should be improved by better trained teachers and a more liberal curriculum based on individual or local needs. When it came to the vital question of 'Payment by Results' only two of the minority (Dr. Dale and Mr. T.B. Heller) wanted its complete abolition. The opinion of the majority was:

"After weighing carefully all the evidence laid before us, tending to show the evils arising from the present method of payment by results we are convinced that the distribution of the Parliamentary Grant cannot be wholly

freed from its present dependence on the results of examination without the risk of incurring graver evils than those which it is sought to cure." (1)

All they would admit was that:

"The present system is carried too far and it is too rigidly applied and that it ought to be modified and relaxed in the interests equally of the scholars, of the teachers and of education itself." (2) and to this end they thought that the money hitherto spent on the "Merit" grant might be used "in such proportions as the inspector may deem expedient to reward superior intelligence displayed by the scholars and other merits not now recognised by grants." (3)

(1) Though these matters are more important in the general field of education, the work of the Commission which is of greatest interest, is its investigation into the composition and qualifications of the inspectorate

They were told that the staff in 1886 consisted of:

12 Chief Inspectors

120 District Inspectors

30 Sub Inspectors

152 Inspector's Assistants.

(1) Final Report Cross Commission p. 183

(2) Ibid. Report Cross Commission p. 183

(3) Ibid p. 184

and Mr. P. Cumin (Secretary of the Department) felt that a good ideal staff for each district would be "One H.M.I., One sub-inspector and two assistants." (1)

The recruitment and training of each of these groups was carefully examined. All were nominated by the Lord President of the Council from men between 25 and 35 possessing the qualifications mentioned previously, namely H.M.I.'s from university graduates usually with good honours degrees, (2) inspectors' assistants from head teachers of elementary schools and sub-inspectors by promotion from class of assistants.

Two questions in particular engaged the attention of the Commission, the amount of training given to H.M.I.'s and the opportunities for promotion for ex-elementary school teachers.

With regard to the first, Cumin's evidence was that H.M.I.'s are "USUALLY not in charge until they have acquired some knowledge of their duties." Several of the H.M.I.'s recommended a longer period of probation and the Reverend F. Synge wanted a definite course of training for new recruits. The second question produced varied opinions. Matthew Arnold thought teachers could become H.M.I.'s but doubted if they could be satisfactorily raised to the rank of Chief Inspector.

(1) Cross Commission Evidence 2221.

(2) An examination of the qualifications of the 20 H.M.I.'s appointed between 1871 and 1881 shows that all nine of the Cambridge men had good honours degrees. This is generally true of those from Oxford, but the evidence given to the Royal Commission on the Civil Service shows that at least two of those appointed in 1880 had not these qualifications.  
Royal Commission 1912. Appendix XII p. 522.

The two inspectors of Training Colleges, J.G. Fitch and H.E. Oakley, differed us to whether teachers could make satisfactory inspectors. Evidence on behalf of the teachers pointed out that the salaries of inspectors' assistants were too low to attract many successful headmasters. (1) On these points the Commission made the following recommendations:

1. The definite appointment of an inspector should depend on his giving proof of competent knowledge of school work. (They also felt that inspectors should be directed to study previous minutes of the Committee and that copies of reports, circulars and minutes should be available for new recruits).
2. The highest grades of the Inspectorate should not be closed to elementary teachers (though there may be the danger of their being tied to a particular method).
3. The salaries of inspectors' assistants should be raised to a minimum of £200 and the maximum age at entry raised to 40. (2)

Other matters concerning inspection were also discussed by the Commission with the following results:

On the question of uniformity, ~~inspectors~~ were asked to spare no effort to secure a common standard between districts by conference and comparison inside the division, and by the association of the chief inspector with his colleagues outside.

(1) See Cross Commission Evidence 19608, 21613-9 and 54226-8

(2) ~~Ibid~~ ~~Report~~, p. 79

The Commission felt that tests had varied only within narrow limits and complaints that they had favoured certain districts or schools were not supported. (1)

To increase the efficiency of inspection it was suggested that the staff should be reorganised and increased and the Chief Inspectors should be relieved of district duties so they could supervise and others should pay more visits without notice to see schools under normal conditions and be able to note the tone and offer friendly advice. (2)

The Commissioners felt that there was some ground for the complaints about the conduct of examinations and suggested that inspectors should bear in mind the difference between a competitive and a non-competitive examination, that their aim was "to find out what the pupils know and how they know it and not what they do not know". They also felt that teachers should normally be allowed to read the dictation passages to the class. (3)

With the widening of the curriculum it was becoming increasingly necessary to have some specialist examiners and the Commissioners advocated the recruitment of a larger proportion of inspectors with qualifications in natural science as well as a knowledge of elementary education. (4)

The question of women inspectors to deal with exclusively female subjects was discussed and while it was felt that difficulties of travel made it inadvisable to enlist women in the ordinary inspectorate, the experiment of appointing a

<sup>Cross Commission</sup>  
(1) Final Report p.77

(3) Ibid p. 78

(2) Ibid

(4) Ibid

sub-inspectress for work in a large town might be tried. Such a person should be recruited from the elementary schools or training colleges.

There can be little doubt that in spite of the great increase in the quantity of elementary education which took place between 1870 and 1890 the period was for inspectors, who measured educational progress in spiritual rather than material terms, one of comparative stagnation. Details might vary, but the work remained routine and uninteresting, much of it carried out in an atmosphere of suspicion and gamesmanship. The Department made no real attempt to secure the efficiency of its staff, and under a system of laxity and mechanical repetition it is not to be wondered at that for some vision and enthusiasm languished. Nevertheless there had been real and substantial gains in which the inspectors had played their full part. Many schools were cleaner, better equipped and staffed than they had been in 1870.

More children were staying longer, learning more and over a wider range. Teachers were better trained and improvements in their personal education promised even more progress. H.M.I.'s might be justly criticised for being class conscious but this very fact had enabled them to influence many managers, clergy and school boards towards improvements which they would have refused to officials who stood lower in the

Victorian social scale. Before the Cross Commission their representatives displayed an enlightened regard for the sound progress of national education and showed themselves as honest men who had to work "entangled in a network of Lilliputian regulations."<sup>(1)</sup> The practical good sense of the Commissioners promised better things for education and the nineties seemed to offer new hope that for inspectors and their work would once again offer inspiration and a challenge.

(1) Chas. Alderson Esq., H.M.I. Quoted Selby Bigge 'The Board of Education p. 133.'

SECTION IV.      A NEW FREEDOM 1892-1902

In 1890 Sir Geprge Kekewich became Permanent Secretary to the Education Department and held the office for the next twelve years. Although the details of organisation sometimes escaped him, he was a reformer at heart and his appointment promised well for education.

His first task was to implement the recommendations of the Cross Commission as to the modifications of the system of 'Payment by Results' and he did this liberally by his new Code of 1890.

In place of the small fixed grant of 4s. 6d per pupil in average attendance and the variable grants based on the percentage of passes in the 3 R's and the 'Merit' of the school as judged by the inspector, there was a new principal grant of 12s. 6d to 14s. od based on average attendance, and another of 1s. Od to 1s. 6d based on organisation and discipline. The grants for class and specific subjects remained as before, but the former now depended on average attendance and not on the number of pupils presented. The broadening of the curriculum was also shown by the fact that pupils could now receive instruction in Drawing, Manual Instruction, Science, Physical Training and Swimming (away from school if necessary).<sup>(1)</sup>

This policy was expanded during the next few years. By 1896 girls could earn grants for cookery, laundrywork or dairywork, and boys for cottage gardening, in place of the specific subjects.<sup>(2)</sup> Visits to

(1) Report 1890-1 p. 210

(2) Report 1895-6 p. 6.



art galleries, museums and historical buildings, were allowed in school time. Concessions were made for attendances lost by local epidemics,<sup>(1)</sup> and no scholar's grant now depended on his having made 250 attendances.

By 1897 the policy of Payment by Results had practically disappeared and the official end of the old system came in 1900 when a block grant of 2ls. 0d to 22s. 0d per child was substituted for all special grants<sup>(2)</sup> except in certain practical subjects. The old policy of cramming was replaced by one which was aimed at the development of interest and intelligence and the acquirement of real substantial knowledge.<sup>(3)</sup>

Another important change during this period was brought about by the Education Act of 1891 which gave parents the right to demand free education for their children. A fee grant of 10s. 0d per annum for all children (3-15 years) in average attendance was paid to all schools which abolished fees or reduced them by the same amount. This involved the state in an annual payment of £2,000,000 but by 1900 over five million children were receiving free education and another half million paying reduced fees. The benefits to the schools of more certain income and improved attendance were obvious.

- (1) Report 1898-9 p.XXII (Article 101)
- (2) Report 1899-1900 p. 10
- (3) Kekewich - The Education Department and After p. 53
- (4) Report 1891-2 Appendix A. pps. 194-5

A further improvement, and one in which the inspectors played a considerable part, was the improvement of buildings. This was begun when the Vice President, Mr. Acland, issued Circular 321 which directed inspectors to make a thorough survey of the school buildings throughout the country. This produced an outcry from many interested parties and was represented as a deliberate attack on Voluntary schools.<sup>(1)</sup> Inspectors too, often were placed in a difficulty for they "had often to condemn what they had passed for years to press for alterations which they had never suggested or hinted at before."<sup>(2)</sup> In even the clearest cases they could be thwarted by political action taken over their heads, while even the most necessary alterations were impossible to managers who had no funds. But the inspectors in most districts continued to press and when the Voluntary Schools Act of 1897 gave an "Aid Grant" to such schools there was a substantial improvement. Many children had reason to thank Mr. Acland and the inspectors for improved health and comfort.

There was also during this period an increasing recognition of the State's duty to care for the physical welfare of children. Drill was insisted on, organised games were encouraged and inspectors paid special attention to matters which might harm the health of children. For instance, Messrs. Fisher and Cornish in the North Western Division stressed the effect

(1) Sneyd-Kynnersley H.M.I. p. 150

(2) Kekewich op. cit p. 87

of poor lighting on harming the eyesight of scholars<sup>(1)</sup> and Mr. Aldis in London complained of the bad results of poor seating.<sup>(2)</sup> Reports were given on special classes for mentally defective<sup>(3)</sup> or deaf and blind children and Mr. Fisher in 1893 suggested that the physical development of every child throughout its school age should be carefully recorded. Kekewich would have liked to have a special medical inspector and when his request was refused secured the appointment of Dr. Ercholz as an ordinary H.M.I.

The inspectors in the North East were equally active in seeking the physical welfare of children. A.W. Newton reporting on Hebburn Wesleyan School in March 1893 writes "The children generally should be taught not to stoop as they do at present over their writing. The new desks should be properly secured together; as at present arranged they are likely to bring about serious mischief to health and eyesight. A proper cloakroom for the girls and infants is very desirable, such a one could be easily contrived."<sup>(4)</sup>

Two years later at Oakwellgate Girls' School he had been even more specific, "the desks used by the first standard children are more than 12 inches above the seats and the seats are 16½ inches above the ground. These dimensions necessitate postures which are hurtful in the extreme."<sup>(5)</sup>

- (1) Report 1895-6 p. 5.
- (2) Ibid p. 117
- (3) Ibid p;132
- (4) School Log Book p. 142
- (5) School Log Book p. 205

The extent to which provision of furniture engaged the minds of inspectors is well illustrated by Foster at Hebburn Wesleyan School in March 1900. His full report on ~~the~~ Mixed School reads,

"The Head Teacher shows both originality and skill in handling his school. A cupboard and a number of new desks have been provided during the year."<sup>(1)</sup>

Other inspectors made determined efforts to protect the children from over-pressure. After a visit without notice to Oakwellgate Girls' School in November 1890, H.M.I. Wilson sent the following report to the Gateshead School Board;

"at 12.17 p.m. nineteen girls were present and working upon slates. The reason given for their presence was that they had not done their home work. I cannot for a moment believe that the Board has authorised the teacher of this school, which is situated in a very poor neighbourhood, to enforce the doing of home lessons."<sup>(2)</sup>

Another and largely successful campaign by the inspectorate was aimed at ensuring that financial justice was done to both schools and parents. In several cases notice was taken of adverse circumstances as for instance at Hebburn Wesleyan School in 1895

"The grant for needlework is recommended on the same scale as last year in consideration of the fact that the school was closed on account of an epidemic."<sup>(3)</sup>

or at Hebburn Quay School in April 1894

- (1) Log Book p. 243
- (2) Log Book p. 190
- (3) Log Book p. 219

the local inspector reported that there had been much sickness during the last six months and these circumstances having been considered by the Department together with the results of the examination, the award has been exceptionally raised from 'good' to 'excellent' (1)

Protecting families was more complicated and required considerable perspicacity on the part of the inspectors. In his report on the Hebburn Wesleyan School for 1894 A.W. Newton makes the following observation.

"The entries in the Cash Book do not shew the dates or receipts of all the various payments and there is reason to think that several amounts paid and received since the close of the school year have been entered as having been actually disbursed or received during the school year." (2)

There was no personal misappropriation of funds, but simply that a voluntary school in financial straits had been collecting 'voluntary' payments for books or making no refund when these were provided from Government grants which were paid in lieu of fees.

The matter was referred to the Department and in March 1897 after some correspondence, we find the following official entry signed by the Chairman of the Managers:

"The Managers have followed Their Lordships' directions as set

(1) Log Book p. 481

(2) Log Book pps. 130-1

forth in Sir George W. Kekewich's letter to Reverend Dr. Waller  
(2nd Dec. 1896)

1. The entirely voluntary nature of the payments for books has been explained to Parents collectively at a recent school concert and individually on the admission of new scholars.
2. A separate account has been kept in the name of each child, showing on one side the total payments made for him in the school year, and on the other side specifying the books etc., supplied to him with their respective prices.
3. To fourteen scholars who were found to have paid sums in excess of value of books etc., received, the excess has been returned.
4. Twelve scholars have made no payment for books, and they have not been asked to do so."

Thus H.M.I's were able to make effective the decision of Parliament and ensure that free education really meant without cost to the parent.

The opportunities presented by this new policy were used more fully because of changes in the organisation and methods of the inspectorate. In 1890 Reverend T.W. Sharpe was appointed Senior Chief Inspector at a salary of £1,000 per annum. He is finely described by Kekewich as "a very practical and excellent man and a very unclerical cleric ..... he invariably managed to solve the many difficult and contentious questions which arose with a tact, judgment and good temper which were beyond praise." (1) His chief duty was to achieve a

(1) Kekewich op cit p. 69

degree of centralisation, not by impersonal mandate, but by the more human method of co-ordination after personal discussion. Under him was a staff of 11 Chief Inspectors, 94 other H.M.I.'s, 44 sub-inspectors and 152 inspectors' assistants.

Another important change was the re-organisation of the lower <sup>the</sup> grades of <sup>the</sup> inspectorate. As the need for individual examination ceased the qualities required in the assistants included those necessary to appraise the whole work of the school. A qualifying examination was instituted for this class in 1892 and in 1896 they were joined with some specialist inspectors of drawing and manual work from the Science and Art Department to form the second division of sub-inspectors. In 1893 Acland had promoted some of the original sub-inspectors to be full H.M.I.'s and the others were given duties which had previously been reserved for district inspectors. Although many obstacles stood in the way it was now possible for a certificated teacher to rise to the inspectorate.

In 1896, a Department for Special Inquiries and Reports was opened under Mr. Michael Sadler and later Morant became his assistant. The volumes which this Department produced did much to spread information and stimulate discussion of educational matters and reading them reminds the present day student of how little is really new in this field.

Particularly interesting during this period is the increased share of inspection given to women. In 1883 even before the Cross Commission, Miss E. Jones had been appointed Directress of Needlework,

and in 1890 Miss M. Harrison, Inspectress of Cookery and Laundrywork. (1)  
At first these posts were only for two years but the Honourable  
Mrs. Colbourne, who had succeeded Miss Jones was made permanent in 1894  
and Miss Deane who had followed Miss Harrison was given a pensionable  
post in 1898.

The successes of these appointments led to the appointment of  
four lady sub-inspectors in 1896-7. These appointments were of great  
help in the inspection of girls' and infants' departments and of "feminine"  
subjects and their value to education was enormous. What Kekewich says  
of the Honourable Mrs. Colbourne might truly be said of most of her  
sister inspectresses. "She was extremely competent and under her wise  
guidance a proper standard was established and new and improved methods  
of teaching were introduced - the working women and mothers of today owe  
much to the unremitting labours of herself and her assistants." (2)

- (1) Instruction in cookery was usually given at 'centres' adjacent  
to one school and used by girls from other schools in the  
district. Not only were these insufficient (School Boards  
had little money and Voluntary Schools even less) but they  
presented difficulty in organisation. (There are many complaints  
about faulty registration and accounts and the following entry  
in Hebburn New Town Log Book (p. 403) shows that the new cookery  
classes posed personal and organisational problems of which the  
new specialist H.M.I's remained unaware).

Tuesday 16th June 1891

"I sent 24 girls down to Quay School for cookery this morning  
at nine o'clock and they came back at 15 minutes past ten.  
Annie Hall informed me that it was not the day and she sent them  
all back again. This has occurred repeatedly."

- (2) Kekewich op cit p 212



On the other hand Swinburne records a story of the Honourable..... a woman inspector who used to visit schools accompanied by her dog "a famous fox terrier" whom she delighted to exhibit to the children informing them of his prowess as an exterminator of rats. 'seven a minute' was her claim. To the embarrassment of the Office she also too the dog to Whitehall until Lord Londonderry was induced to acquire it. (1)

These changes was accompanied by what was in effect a revolution in the methods of inspection.

In 1893 occasional visits of inspection were substituted for examination in Infants' schools and in the following year the experiment was extended to cover all departments of schools in Lambeth and Berkshire. The Code of the same year exempted schools of special merit from examination provided the inspector had found them satisfactory on two visits in the twelve months. During the next two or three years the new method of 'Inspection' spread through the country and by 1898 the change was complete.

This new attitude is clearly expressed in the instructions given by the Department. In 1895 it said "The main and primary object of your visit is not to inflict penalties for defective points, but rather through your educational suggestions and influence to remove defects

(1) Swinburne - Memories of a School Inspector p. 155 (Graves has a rather different version.)

in the school management and instruction..... It is the desire of the Department that its officers should aim at being the helpful and sympathising friend of all concerned in the work; and that without dictating to Managers or teachers they should throw out suggestions whether towards greater freedom of organisation, or in the direction of more effective educational work and confer with all concerned both as to the general school arrangements and as to the details of the teaching. " (1)

The consequences of this instruction were obvious in at least one school. After a visit on October 25th 1895 the Headmaster of Hebburn Wesleyan School writes three pages under the heading 'Suggestions by Mr. Thorpe, H.M.I.'s Assistant for the proper working of schools, under New Code.' Because they illustrate the rigours of inspectorial demands even after 'Payments by Results' - they are worth quoting in full.

(Capitals and abbreviations are the Headmaster's).

Registers - Attendance Registers, Admission and Summary Registers all posted up to date.

Time Table Approved by H.M.I. Synopsis to show the number of hours devoted to each subject - per wk - Copy to be sent to H.M.I. and Sub-Inspector for the district.

Syllabus Geog, English, History & Oral Arith; to be dated daily. In the other subjects, monthly.

Summaries To contain the pith of each oral lesson in such detail as may furnish matters for exam: at H.M.I.'s visit. These should be made out by teacher of class and dated.

For the more efficient carrying out of the Instructions regarding Syllabus the following hints are given -

1. It is suggested that separate Exercise Bks (3d. or 4d) may <sup>(1)</sup> be kept for separate subjects for separate classes; the first 12 pages of each book should be Syllabus and the remainder Summaries.
2. In Reading it will be sufficient if each teacher has his own Reading Book, and dates it at the end of each Reading Lesson - This will show how often the lesson has been gone over.
3. Children's exercise books for Arith, Composition, Word building Dictation etc should be dated -
4. Children in St. V, VI & VII should have note-books which should contain the pith of each oral lesson.
5. Composition dated similar to reading (VI. VII) List of Essays with chief heads should be kept and dated -
6. In Arith: a typical exercise of each kind of sum taught should be kept by class teacher and dated when taught.
7. In oral Arith, which should be taught on 'Systematic Lines' a similar prac. should be followed. No book to be used by teacher in front of class as it suggests want of preparation etc.
8. Word-building according 'par 23' (Revised Instruction)
9. Record kept of all long words taught -
10. Geography - Lower Classes should have a Globe.  
County Map: Map of Neighbourhood, familiar distances should be known and a Meridian line laid on floor.  
Upper Classes at the beginning of school year Sketch Maps must be submitted to Inspector containing names as in page 9 of Revised Instruction.

- (1) Schools were invariably short of stationery and all kinds of economies were introduced to save paper. Hence the precise definition of price to be paid.

- History - Syllabus must be agreed upon - Records of examinations must be preserved and dated.
- Criticism - Each Pupil Teacher must keep a record of all Criticism Lessons - as a proof that he has been trained to keep them. Third and Fourth Yr P.T.'s (Par 46 Instructions) should write out weekly notes and be ready to give any that H.M.I. may select at his visit.
- Recitation - To be ready for end of year. Teaching, Reading, Recitation for Candidates for Certificates or Scholarship (also note books). Teaching Reading, Recitation, Music, Needlework, Exercise Bks, Indentures of P.I.'s to be ready at school at final visit paid, with notice; at end of school year.
- Discipline - The strictest required. School premises, out-offices etc., to be scrupulously clean in every particular. Copy of B.B. Sketch and typical sums worked as 'Models' Historical & Geog. Notes. Notes in Specifics all of which should be dated - It would be better for teacher to dictate or write on B.B. anything noteworthy. (1)

Whatever the Department might intend it was obvious that one inspector intended to keep a tight grip on his schools and greater freedom of organisation merely meant conforming to his ideas.

In 1898 inspectors were required only to report on schools in alternate years and were directed "it should be confined to a short judgment upon the general character of the school, with the addition of your opinion of any special excellence or defect to which it is desirable to call attention. (2)

In 1895 the instruction seems finally to bury the system of Payment By Results for it says:

(1) Log pps. 179-182

(2) Report 1897-8 p. 435

"Inspection should not include any of the processes heretofore employed in formal examination. The inspection of a school, as far as it relates to the instruction given, consists chiefly in the observation of methods pursued by the teacher."<sup>(1)</sup>

All this reads finely. It would appear that a new freedom had come to education, that schools were becoming places of happy purposeful activity and inspectors were pleasantly occupied in stimulating teachers and managers as they moved towards this ideal. But the reality was different. Although progress had been made the educational machine was not ready for any great advance. Schools were hampered by parochialism and parsimony and until the basis of local control was widened and strengthened they could not take advantage of the new freedom they were offered. In fact, the very offer was liable to lead to misunderstanding or abuse. As we have seen above, some inspectors gave rigorous instruction, based on personal preferences and in other places experienced teachers and managers complained about the imprecise nature of the new inspection and in 1896 headmasters were warned to hold quarterly examinations so that schools would not degenerate because of slipshod methods.

The inspectorate too was not ready for the change. They appreciated the greater freedom from routine but after years of meticulous direction they did not easily find criteria to judge the new

(1) Report 1895-6, p. 430. p. 328

type of education. Even J.G. Fitch in 1902 complained that the Board of Education had ceased to recognise the difference between good, bad and indifferent schools and wonders from where the stimulus to improvement will come. (1) Other inspectors were even less competent to lead. The instructions still warn against hasty and unfair examination and talk of lack of sympathy and rudeness. Even Sneyd-Kynnersley could say the principal charm of his post as Senior Inspector was its "irresponsibility". (2) Class consciousness was still apparent. A.T. Swinburne could not understand why people refused to let their children sing (3)

'The rich man in his castle  
The poor man at his gate  
God made them high or lowly  
And ordered their estate.'

and deplored the replacement of the varsity culture of the parson and leisured classes by the "hollow windy substitute - the examination won B.A." (4)

The history, recruitment, organisation and discipline of the inspectorate made it an imperfect instrument for playing its part in spreading the educational ideas of the 1890's. Conditioned by years of operating 'Payment by Results' made up of many who were humane but

- (1) Board of Education Miscellanies, Vol. XXX No. 53 p. 960
- (2) Sneyd-Kynnersley H.M.I. p. 328
- (3) A.J. Swinburne, Memories of a School Inspector p. 74
- (4) A.J. Swinburne, op cit p. 75

could not believe in equality, and belonging to a group in which effective action was difficult, it needed time to understand and act on its new responsibilities. But time it could not have. The inspectors were just beginning to come to grips with the new situation when it was transformed by the Education Act of 1902.

The extent to which the inspectors directly influenced the passing of this act was probably small. The actual form of the changes was largely the result of political and personal factors rather than by any close knowledge of the defects of the existing system. None the less the act did meet difficulties previously mentioned by the inspectors. Although many of them were by tradition and temperament in favour of denominational schools they had consistently reported the superiority of the Board Schools and indicated that this was the result of proper financial backing. They had often complained that managers had failed in their responsibilities and with the exception of an occasional devoted clergyman, they argued that the best informed and most active managers were those chosen by the large School Boards, which had a wide choice of candidates for a more attractive field of service. In addition to this recognition of the advantages of larger units with a more consistent financial backing, many of the inspectors were demanding opportunities for brighter pupils to gain secondary education. Probably most of the inspectors would have preferred some tinkering with the

existing system to meet these points, for as long as it continued their dignity and status seemed to be secure. It seems that it was with some surprise as well as trepidation that they found themselves called upon to work the new system.



PART V. NEW OPPORTUNITIES BUT OLD PROBLEMS 1902-1920

The Act of 1902 produced a revolution in educational ideas and practice. The School Boards were abolished and control of public education was handed over to some 300 separate authorities of whom 120 were responsible for all types of schools, while the remainder looked after only elementary education. Voluntary schools under their new description of 'Non-provided' lost their direct association with Whitehall, and by receiving rate aid for secular teaching passed under the same general control of an Education Committee appointed by the council of the responsible local authority. This council, as the Local Education Authority, received practically all the grants directly from the Board of Education, and as it was also usually the rating authority it exercised financial control. The Act was of course the starting point for new departures in the field of secondary education, but its importance in this discussion is that for the first time it placed effective power for the direction of elementary schools in the hands of intermediate bodies. To the central inspectorate this brought great changes, for many of their routine examination and supervisory duties now fell to inspectors appointed by the local authorities, while they themselves were increasingly employed to help and advise or act as the representatives of the Board in local discussions.

The Act left enormous scope for administrative action and definition. In Morant, the new Permanent Secretary, the Board had one who would delight in building according to his own ideas and with

characteristic energy he wasted no time.

In 1903 he embarked upon a reorganisation of the inspectorate which led to a reorganisation of the Board itself in 1904, so that both were divided into three main branches Elementary, Secondary and Technical while the Office was arranged on a geographical basis so information was available on all forms of education in a particular area. Each branch was controlled through England by a Chief Inspector, and two other Chief Inspectors were responsible for Training Colleges and Women's activities.

From the point of view of elementary education this reorganisation was not to be as beneficial as it could have been. During the next few years the attention of the Board, Local Education Authorities and public was attracted to the new secondary schools which were the spectacular result of Balfour's Act. The system of full scale inspection which was devised to meet their needs meant that this branch of the inspectorate tended to attract the most forward looking and best qualified of both new and old inspectors to the detriment of the 'E' branch.

Moreover, Morant was very much the type of domineering administrator who knew that his ideas were good and was impatient of the notions of lesser men which seemed to run counter to them.<sup>(1)</sup> As a result, the personality of individual inspectors had less importance than at any time previously and the measure of their influence was the extent

(1) See Swinburne's semi guarded comments on the Board's refusal to extend his retiring age. (Swinburne. op cit p. 334)

to which the policies of the Central Administration were effective. In fact, this period is characterised by almost complete silence on the part of Elementary Inspectors who (except in the manner of their appointment) seem to have been regarded by the Board as approximating to the executive civil servants in other departments.

Sir Cyril Jackson whose chief educational activities had been in Australia, was appointed Chief Inspector of the Elementary Branch in 1904. He was not attached to any district or division and his duties were:

"to exercise a general control and supervision over the whole elementary inspectorate, to be the channel of official communication between Inspectorate and the Board, and be the chief educational advisor of the Board in matters affecting Elementary Schools." (1)

Under him were nine Divisional (previously Chief) Inspectors each in charge of a geographical division coterminous with the areas of a group of Local Education Authorities and directly responsible for a small district therein. Morant was determined that his control be effective for he writes - "He will be required to supervise in a more specific and effective manner than has hitherto been the case the work of all the inspectors in his Division .... and will hold periodical conferences with all of them upon which he will submit reports to the Board." (2)

(1) Report 1902 - 3 p. 9

(2) Ibid p. 10

Under him were a group of district inspectors, each having one or two assistants.

This general organisation continued until after 1920 and the most interesting feature is the steady increase in the number of specialist inspectors, both inside and outside the Elementary Branch, upon whom the District Inspector could call. These included experts in music, drawing, domestic subjects, handicrafts, physical training and rural subjects. In 1919 a staff inspector (T. Howard) was appointed to collect, arrange and render available information concerning elementary schools in general.

The story of the subordinate inspectors during this period is very confused. The promotion hopes of the sub-inspectors were dashed in 1901 by the recruitment of a new class of Junior Inspectors drawn from young university men. In 1908 the two grades of sub-inspectors were merged into one. In 1913 a new Assistant Inspector class was created largely from well qualified teachers and appointments to the other two classes ceased. In 1921 all the remaining Junior and Sub-Inspectors were raised to the position of Assistant Inspector.

The numbers and status of women inspectors also increased. In 1905 the Honourable Miss Maude Lawrence became Chief Woman Inspector and in the next year two women became full H.M.I's. A woman Staff Inspector was appointed in 1918 to arrange and render available information concerning girls' schools and by that date there were 75 women inspectors of all grades.

In an attempt to infuse a new spirit into the service and help

its adaptation to the changed circumstances, Morant began to issue a series of circulars and instructions to Inspectors.

In August 1904 they were told that the Board wished to free inspectors from more routine work so that they might concentrate on matters of real moment bearing on the efficiency of the instruction given in the schools and the character of the premises. (1) The old elaborate report forms were replaced by six of a much simpler kind and instead of annual reports the inspector could visit schools as he deemed it necessary.

The problem of examining schools is raised in several of the Codes, for Morant was obviously anxious that the freedom given by the removal of 'Payment by Results' should be kept, but not abused. The inspector is told that he must be prepared to discuss his findings with the teacher or give his help. (2)

An important part of the inspector's duties now became his co-operation with the Local Education Authorities. It was necessary to consult with local inspectors to avoid overlapping of activities and obtain information. As standards rose it became an increasing duty for the inspector to meet Local Education committees and managers to stimulate action or to give advice when desired. At the end of this period this work was greatly increased by the 1918 Education Act which required the Authorities to prepare comprehensive schemes for the whole field of education so that the clerical work and correspondence involved became a considerable burden.

- (1) Board of Education Circular 1904 No. 573 See also Report 1904-5  
(2) See Codes for 1905 and 1909 pps 8&9

One pleasant feature of this period is the new conception of the work of the elementary school which first found expression in Morant's Code for 1904. "The purpose of the public elementary schools is to form and strengthen the character and to develop the intelligence of the children entrusted to it," and assist them to fit themselves both practically and intellectually for the work of life ... it will be the aim of the school to train the children carefully in habits of observation and clear reasoning ..... to arouse in them a lively interest in the ideals and achievements of mankind ... to give them some power over language as an instrument of thought and expression .... to develop in them such a taste for good reading and thoughtful study as will enable them to increase that knowledge in after years by their own efforts." (1)

Equally evident of a new conception of the elementary school and a new relation between the inspectors and the teachers was the issue of the first "Suggestions" to teachers in 1905 and its subsequent re-issue in 1908 and 1918. Its title indicated a new conception of co-operation, if not partnership, and its contents were a distillation of what was best in experience and wisdom of the inspectors. The new spirit finds expression in the preface:

(1) See Code 1904 - 5.

(2)

"The only uniformity of practice that the Board of Education desire to see in the teaching of public elementary schools is that each teacher shall think for himself and work out for himself such methods of teaching as may use his powers to the best advantage and be best suited to the particular needs and condition of the school," (1)

When this was followed by an introduction that inspectors had not to be rigid in their requirements for timetables and syllabuses, it seemed that a new period in the relation between inspector and teacher was beginning and the previous atmosphere of suspicion was being broken down by a sense of joint purpose.

(1) H.M.S.O. Suggestions to Teachers. 1905 p.2

This pleasant dream was rudely shattered by the publication of a confidential report which had been submitted by the Chief Inspector Edmond Holmes, to Morant in 1910. It read as follows:-

"The Status and Duties of Inspectors Employed by  
Local Education Authorities."

6th Jan'1910

Sir,-

In June, 1908 I sent a circular to all the Inspectors inquiring in general terms which of the Local Educational Authorities had Inspectors of their own, what salaries they received, what work they had to do, how they did their work, and whether the Board's Inspectors concerned found them a help or a hindrance.

Of these 123 Inspectors, 109 are men and only 14 are women. No fewer than 104 out of the 123 are elementary teachers, and of the remaining nineteen not more than two or three have had the antecedents which were usually looked for in candidates for Junior Inspectorships - namely, that they had been educated first at a Public School and then at Oxford or Cambridge. The difference in respect to efficiency between ex-elementary teacher Inspectors and those who have a more liberal education is very great. Very few of our Inspectors have a good word to say for local inspectors of the former type, whereas those of the latter type are, with three exceptions well spoken of. In .... for example, where, out of nine Inspectors, only three are of the elementary teacher type. His Majesty's Inspector is able to say their work is well done on the whole, and there certainly it is a help, whereas in .... and .... where, out of fifteen Inspectors, fourteen belong to the ex-elementary teacher class. His Majesty's Inspector says the existence of these Inspectors stereotypes and perpetuates cast iron methods, and forms an effectual bar to development and progress.

It is interesting to note that the two local Inspectors about whom our Inspectors are really enthusiastic hail, one from Winchester and Trinity, Cambridge, the other from Charterhouse and Corpus Christi College, Oxford ... Men with such antecedents provided they possess the ability and culture, and are personally fitted for their work, make the best local Inspectors .....



The £500 which is being spent on the one Oxford man in (East Sussex) is being laid out to infinitely better advantage than the £900 a year which is being spent on the three ex-elementary teacher Inspectors in (DURHAM). Indeed the (DURHAM) Education Authority is beginning to realize that its £900 a year is being wasted, or worse than wasted, and now that it is receiving full reports from the Board's Inspectors it is beginning to wonder what use it can make of the three Inspectors it appointed with such undue haste.

The counties have an advantage over the boroughs of having started with a clean sheet. It cannot, however, be said that they have made the best of their opportunity. Out of the 24 county Inspectors no fewer than 16 are ex-elementary teachers. Apart from the fact that the elementary teachers are, as a rule, uncultured and imperfectly educated, and that many, if not most, of them are creatures of tradition and routine, there are special reasons why the bulk of the local Inspectors in this country should be unequal to the discharge of their responsibilities. It is in the large towns the local authorities have inherited from the School Board not merely a vicious system of local inspection, but also a large number of vicious Local Inspectors.

Having regard to all these facts, we cannot wonder that local inspection as at present conducted in the large towns is on the whole a hindrance rather than an aid to educational progress and we can only hope that the Local Chief Inspectors, who are the fountain heads of a vicious officialdom, will be gradually pensioned off, and if local inspection is to be continued in their areas, their places will be filled by men of real culture and enlightenment. As compared with the ex-elementary teacher usually engaged in the hopeless task of surveying, or trying to survey, a wide field of action from a well-worn groove, the Inspector of public schools of the Varsity type has the advantage of being able to look at elementary education from a point of view of complete detachment, and therefore of being able to handle its problems with freshness and originality. (1)

- (1) The full text of the Holmes' Circular has not been published. The above is as quoted by F.H. Hayward in the "Psychology of Educational Administration and Criticism" pps 574-5 amplified (additions in brackets) from the Official Minutes of the Durham County Council Education Committee. 28.6.1911 Vol.1 pps 27-8

The reaction of the Durham County Education Committee was firm for they instructed the clerk to inform the President of the Board of Education that "the Education Committee are satisfied that much of the improvement effected in the educational condition of the schools of the County within the past five years is directly attributable to the able manner in which the Council's Inspectors have discharged their duties, and that the statement made in the Holmes' Circular is untrue in so far as it professes to record the opinion of the Local Education Authority upon their inspectors and their work; that the President be requested to indicate the nature of the evidence upon which Mr. Holmes based his statement, and how such evidence was obtained, and that, as the portion of the circular relating to Durham County has now become public property, the President be further requested to give instructions that Mr. Holmes' remarks be officially withdrawn and the County Education Authority be notified accordingly." (1)

Whatever may have been the justification for Holmes' statement (see Appendix C) there was little sense in the way it was made. It suggested that the Board and its inspectors had an innate

- (1) DURHAM COUNTY EDUCATION MINUTES 1911-2 p. 28  
A.J. Dawson, the forceful and influential Director of Education for Durham County had been an assistant inspector when Holmes had been a Senior Inspector in the adjacent district. One wonders the extent to which personalities influenced the choice of area and the language of the correspondence.

superiority in educational appreciation that even the best products of the state system could hardly attain. It seemed to imply that the increasing numbers of the working class who dreamed that through education they would achieve real culture and position were seeking the impossible. However much the notion of a superior class might be unquestioned in much of Edwardian society, there was an increasing number of able and articulate citizens who believed in social and political liberty. The outcry led by an indignant National Union of Teachers was taken up by Parliament and Press. Questions as to the training and recruitment of inspectors were raised. Worst of all, relations between elementary teachers and the inspectorate were poisoned by a revival of a feeling of distrust which had begun to disappear.

In effect the controversy over the Holmes Circular was a significant point in the history of His Majesty's Inspectors for it led to the steady elimination of some characteristics which had marked the service from its inception. The idea that the efficiency of the nation's schools and the direction of its basic education could best be maintained by a body of 'enlightened amateurs,' appointed by patronage from a superior caste who had no understanding of the work or the people involved, was effectively challenged. The critics of Holmes could not expect an immediate victory, but they ensured that the

increasing democratisation of the country would include the creation of a professionally trained body of inspectors who entered the nation's schools as partners with the teachers.

The Royal Commission on the Civil Service which sat from 1912 to 1914 began this change. This may not appear immediately obvious from the majority report which began;

"We do not propose any important change in the existing methods of selecting the Board's Inspectors",<sup>(1)</sup> but in fact it went on to emphasise the principles which had not always been observed in the past. They felt that inspectors should be appointed at a mature age and must possess certain kinds of experience. "They are professional officers and the method of selection which we recommend for such appointments will be in this case appropriate, care being taken to ensure that when candidates outside the Government Service are desired, the vacancies are advertised."<sup>(2)</sup>

In the general report the Commissioners had already suggested that when professional officers were appointed, a representative of the Civil Service Commission should sit with the appointing Board of the appropriate Department and that other Universities should be regarded as being able to provide the kind of training which characterised Oxford and Cambridge. Patronage had not been abolished, but when the posts were advertised and filled according to general

(1) Royal Commission on the Civil Service 1912.- 4.  
Majority Report Chapt. IX p. 68

(2) Ibid p. 69.

standards applying to the whole Civil Service, by candidates much more widely drawn, the inspectorate was certainly being changed.

Moreover the setting up of the Commission encouraged changes. The case for the Board was ably argued by Morant's successor, Selby Bigge, who forestalled criticism by claiming that the policy of the Board included certain practices, without revealing that they were in fact very recent innovations. In particular was his establishment of the new Assistant Inspector class in place of the old grade of sub-inspectors.<sup>(1)</sup> This made it much more easy for ex-headmasters to become full inspectors whereas <sup>as</sup> sub-inspectors they had been generally passed over in favour of younger and less experienced university graduates.

The other considerable contribution of this Commission to the reform of the inspectorate was that the evidence put before it showed how far the criticisms of the old inspectorate could be substantiated.

According to the tables supplied there were 86 inspectors engaged in the elementary branch and of these only 20 had taught in elementary schools for more than 3 years and 54 had apparently never been in that type of elementary school until they began to inspect.<sup>(2)</sup> Of the same 86, 73 had been at Oxford or Cambridge and of the remainder, one had only

(1) Ibid - Evidence para. 35074 (24.4.1913) Appendix XI

(2) Civil Service Commission p. 531: XII op cit p. 531

a teacher's certificate and two others apparently had no academic qualification which the Board considered worth recording. (1)

Finally the report expresses the official comment of the teachers of the time who although they may have been prejudiced, were in fact the only body of adults who consistently saw the inspectors at work. In his evidence, M.W.D. Bentliff the President of the National Union of Teachers presented this statement:

"It is submitted that the manner in which the inspectors of schools are selected and appointed by the Board of Education is very unsatisfactory and that owing to serious defects in the method of selection much injury has been inflicted upon teachers and scholars and the work of popular education has failed to make satisfactory progress. The defects of the inspection are of three kinds:

- (a) Inability to appreciate the real object of true education.
- (b) Ignorance of the manner in which a school or class should be conducted.
- (c) Failure to recognise the influence of local social conditions of school environment upon school life. (2)

The Commissioners obviously viewed the statement with some suspicion and pressed Bentliff vigorously. (In marked contrast to their attitude to Selby Bigge) (3)

- (1) Royal Commission on the Civil Service 1912. Tables pps. 522-4
- (2) Ibid Evidence 17826 (1.11.1912)
- (3) Ibid Evidence 17826-17839

He did not waver but his criticism was largely ignored. The fact that it was made at all by a responsible group with real experience of the system was a considerable indictment of the school inspection of the period and at least did something to publicise the need for reform.

This unhappy relationship between teachers and inspectors continued to reduce the influence of the inspectorate for it encouraged many teachers to rephrase and proclaim their belief in the transient and fluctuating nature of the inspectors' contribution to education (especially as compared to their own).

This finds expression in a memorandum circulated by the National Union of Teachers in November 1913, which says "It is known that inspectors of schools have taken and are still taking different views with regard to the subjects to be taught and the method of teaching."

The varying suggestions of inspectors and the readiness of some teachers to accept these suggestions and to alter their methods with every change in the inspectorate have become a source of positive danger to the schools .... the Executive attach considerable importance to the conference between the inspector and the members of a teaching staff of a school but it should be a perfectly free conference and not merely a lecture by the inspector or a recitation of his adverse criticism." Finally in its recommendations it states "the responsibility for the conduct of the school rests with the head teacher and not with the inspector."

It was true that some H.M.I.'s had expressed similar ideas in the past, but when teachers began to speak and act as though they believed them it was obvious that the authority and status of the inspectors had been considerably diminished.

The inspectors however still maintained their contact with the schools. To the great loss of students annual reports on inspection had not been published since 1902 but in 1913 the Board gave instructions for reports to be prepared for the North West and South West Divisions. The latter was not published because of the death of the inspector but the former which was carried out by H. Ward in Lancashire and Cheshire indicated the the schools were much better than many supposed and provided strong arguments against those local authorities who wanted to impose external tests on the schools.

He showed that teachers and pupils were reacting well to the new freedom, especially in the infants' departments and that the development of practical activities (e.g. manual work) had been a notable success.

He commented "few of the critics visit the elementary school first before condemning it." (1) and argued from his own experience that the mechanical achievements of former days were largely illusory. He showed clearly that any slight loss in accuracy was more than compensated for by the increase in

(1) General Report on the elementary schools of the N.W. Division 1914  
Board of Education 1914



general intelligence. He admitted that teachers especially head teachers, had not devised suitable internal examinations and urged them to do so as a matter of urgency for if the proposals by some L.E.A.'s to impose external tests should materialise "I cannot but feel that such a measure would, by at once crippling and levelling the schools do much to counteract the advance that had been made in the last twenty years." (1)

He held that overcrowding of the timetable was the cause of much ineffective teaching but argued that any attempt to narrow the curriculum to the 3 R's or reimpose the rigid discipline of the earlier period would be disastrous.

He completes the report with a comment which needs to be repeated at regular intervals even today.

"If the children of the present day display an increasing fondness for amusement, in this respect they are no worse than their elders. As long as children are massed in hundreds in schools for five hours only each day there will not be those opportunities for training in "character" which a public school enjoys, and it is idle to expect that children at thirteen and fourteen will be turned out in hundreds of thousands as fully armed at all points, moral

(1) Ibid Quoted John Leese. Personalities & Powers. p. 256

and intellectual, as the favoured boys and girls who leave the 'public schools' at seventeen and eighteen."<sup>(1)</sup>

So one inspector was at least resisting the forces that sought to crush the possibility of new life in the schools. The Log Books of the period show that a new relationship was being forged elsewhere.

Change was slow and depended upon the arrival of new men (and women) both as inspectors and teachers.

Foster's three line report on Hebburn Wesleyan School in 1905:

"On the whole the school reaches a creditable level of efficiency" <sup>(2)</sup>

or that of E.G.A. Holmes at Oakwellgate in 1906:

"The Girl's Department is managed in a quiet able and conscientious manner and the discipline is kindly and effective."<sup>(3)</sup>

could have been written almost any time in the past forty years. In the next few years reports became increasingly constructive.

In March 1909 an entry in the Log Book of Gateshead Shipcote Boys' School reads:-

- (1) Ibid pps 256-7
- (2) School Log Book p. 287
- (3) School Log Book p. 489

"Mr. Foster H.M.I. and Mr. Gomersall, manual work inspector, spent the afternoon in the school and went thoroughly through from Standard I to Standard VII to see where and how manual and practical work was brought into the curriculum." (1)

In April, Foster consulted the managers and as a result we get the following entry for June 14th 1909

"The following alterations in the curriculum are being tried:

1. In Stds. I, II and III instead of fixed object lessons being taken, object lesson methods are to be used where suitable either in the time hitherto provided for Object Lessons or in ordinary lesson times.
2. Arithmetic is termed Mathematics and besides being made more practical, is not being divided into Arithmetic, Algebra, Mensuration or Euclid but is being made a combination -

(2)  
Woodwork is now being taken in Std VI

Similar visits were made to other Secondary Schools in the town and in February 1914 the following entry appears in the Log Book of Brighton Ave. Junior School

"Mr. Gomersall H.M.I. for Handwork present for upwards of

(1) School Log Book p. 250

(2) School Log Book p. 251

of an hour and talked with teachers on the object to be aimed at when taking handwork lessons" (1)

H.M.I's were increasingly encouraging teachers to widen their experience, Payne sent the Headmistress of Rose St. Girls' School to spend a morning at Sunderland Rd. Boys School. (2) and in 1910 after a visit from Miss Carson she had her first visit to the Cookery Centre at Victoria Road to see the girls at work. (3)

If teachers hoped that women inspectors would make relationships more human, they must have been disappointed. When the Honourable Mrs. Colborne inspected the needlework at Hebburn Wesleyan School in 1904 her report was purely factual.

Summary Mark - Good

Girls Class 11

The joinings need more attention.

Girls Class V

The darning does not satisfactorily fulfil the purpose of the exercise, viz to teach the mending (by darning) in stocking web material (4)

Perhaps the lady was more constructive in her contacts with pupils and staff, but it seems that women inspectors generally inspected as part of a team and did not write the reports except in female subjects. (5) In fact the first record of a complete

- (1) School Log p. 27
- (2) " " p. 49
- (3) " " p. 30
- (4) " " p. 442
- (5) " " p. 140

inspection by a woman does not occur in the Sunderland District (Sunderland, South Tyneside and Gateshead) until April 14th, 1921 when the Brighton Ave. Junior School Log Book has the entry

"H.M.I. Miss Spencer visited and examined all classes" (1)

Unfortunately her report is not recorded

None the less the support of women H.M.I's was appreciated by their male colleagues. In June 1907 Foster had carried out the general inspection at Bill Quay and found a class of 56 pupils being taught in the cookery room at the same time as the cookery class. He reminded the Hebburn Education Committee of the Board of Education regulation ~~regulation~~ "that the cookery room must not be used for class purpose when cookery instruction is being given." (2)

In the following July, Foster complained of excessive overcrowding (2 teachers had 101 and 79 children respectively) and obviously having suspicion arranged for Miss Carson to visit the school on September 29th. Her report is worth giving in full not only for its contents, but because it shows that she was as competent as her male colleagues in relevant observation and comment.

(1) School Log p. 95

(2) School Log p. 456

"The room used for cookery instruction is a school classroom providing accommodation for sixty scholars. I visited the cookery class on 29th September and I found the room occupied by a class of 66 children (75 on register) as well as the 18 forming the cookery class; the two teachers were obliged to talk against each other.

The floor space was so limited that only one form could be fitted in at the end of the room used by the cookery class, and nine children had to stand throughout the lesson" (2½ hours)

Remarks by the Board of Education.

"I am to call attention to the official letter of July 3rd 1907 in which the Authority were warned that the cookery class room must not be used both for cookery and for class instruction at the same time. I am to request that the practice may be discontinued." (1)

Miss Carson returned on March 23rd 1909 and found two classes working in the cookery room. 58 children in Std IV and 15 girls taking cookery. Finally Foster came on July 2nd and on the same day the Headmaster received a letter from the Education Committee saying that as a result of a letter (2) they had received from the Board of Education, Cookery classes at Bill Quay were to be discontinued until after the Midsummer Holiday (i.e. 8 weeks)

(1) School Log p. 472

(2) School Log p. 481

This whole incident illustrates the concern of the inspectors to preserve minimum standards and the difficulties they had to overcome even to secure obvious reforms. In fact it was only in financial matters (especially falsification of registers) that they were able to take speedy action against a recalcitrant I.E.A.

The arrival of J.J. Steele in Gateshead in 1911 ushered in a new chapter in inspection for the area. He had served with Swinburne in Suffolk and had been liked by him, but he seems to have had a rather different approach to his duties from the easy-going benevolent attitude which Swinburne adopted. (1)

Steele's forceful personality was reinforced by efficiency and hard work. Armed with the ideas of "Suggestions to Teachers" and determined that the last traces of the 'Payment by Results' should be driven from the schools, his reports show an objectivity and practicality which must have made them of real value though not necessarily welcome.

In 1914 we find Steele with two inspectors visiting Hebburn Quay School where the Headmaster had a considerable local reputation for his successes under the old system and for the discipline he imposed upon his staff. Some parts of the ten point report are very revealing.

"It is not possible to report in very favourable terms

(1) A retired Headmaster (Mr. Wm. Dinsley J.P. of Eppleton) who was inspected by Steele in the 20's describes him as a little man of dynamic personality with blunt direct speech. He was highly efficient and knowledgeable and the teachers who was not frightened by his attitude found him most helpful. On the other hand his reputation made him a 'terror' to practically all the teachers of his district.

of this department .... The supervision has not been sufficiently vigilant and thorough to prevent certain members of the staff room from becoming narrow and stereotyped. These teachers appear to regard their work as a NEW routine. On the other hand there are others (Stds. I, III, IV and VII) who are adaptable and anxious to be progressive and who only need inspiration and encouragement.

No staff conferences have been held though these are essential if the present state of the school is to be remedied, and no regular and systematic steps have been taken to train the children to study independently and overcome their own difficulties. The scheme of oral lessons - History, Geography and Science is based almost entirely on school readers and manuals, thus affording an excuse to avoid preparation from wider sources and the useful labour of framing courses suitable to the needs and capacities of the children.

At the close of the inspection the whole position was discussed with the Headmaster and various suggestions were offered in the hope of indicating lines along which progress may be made.

It is obvious however, that if the school is to improve from year to year, teachers must keep themselves informed in all that is best in modern elementary education, should not be afraid to try experiments and should revise their schemes and methods in the light of past experience.



A school library would be a great help. (1)

Steele continued to visit the school regularly about twice a year and the Headmaster makes reference to staff conferences and new schemes which are certainly an indication of the effectiveness of sound inspection.

In Gateshead he was equally thorough and comprehensive as is indicated by the following report on Gateshead Rose Street Girls' School also made in 1914 which is an model document of its kind:

ORGANISATION AND EQUIPMENT.

1. The three smaller classrooms with accommodation for 38, 43 and 45 scholars are occupied by classes having 60 children on the roll; the numbers found at the time of the visit were 54, 55 and 54 respectively.
2. There are few good pictures in the school; the dingy and useless charts which disfigure the walls should be removed.
3. The supply of reading books for the lower class is inadequate and many of the books in use are in a dirty and delapidated condition. The need for song books has been noted in a previous report. Poetry books should be provided for the upper standards.
4. The apparatus available for instructing in Cookery does not meet the needs of the school. Increased facilities for practical work of a domestic nature are particularly desirable in a neighbourhood like this.
5. The ages of the children who have passed through (the infants) department show improvement, but the numbers of migratory scholars has increased and there are in consequence many girls of comparatively advanced age in the lower classes. The classification of girls entering the school at 12 and 13 years of age is a difficult problem; the presence of old and backward scholars among the younger children hampers the work of the Teachers and appear to be of doubtful benefit to the girls themselves. As far as possible arrangements should be made for them to receive instruction with girls of their own age in Housewifery, Cookery, Needlework, Physical Exercises and Singing. They might also join the higher classes for the oral lessons.

6. A separate course of work has been taken by the highest class Standard VII under the personal direction of the Head Mistress.

INSTRUCTION

The instruction is characterised by sound and conscientious effort and the standard of attainment in the elementary subjects is distinctly creditable to the Head Mistress and her staff. The girls are well prepared and evident care is taken in matters of personal cleanliness, distinct speech and neat and tidy work.

The experiment of assigning the instruction of the few higher classes in Drawing to one Teacher has been fully justified by the satisfactory results obtained.

It would be well to supplement the oral lessons by written tests and preparatory exercises calling for individual effort on the part of the scholars enabling them to become proficient in the use of books for the purpose of acquiring information for themselves.

The work in the four lower classes proceeds on satisfactory lines and good general progress has been made.

It is gratifying to record that all the teachers have recently attended a course of instruction in Physical Exercises.

REMARKS BY THE BOARD OF EDUCATION.

The Board should be furnished with an explanation of the infringement of Article 19 of the Code in the Girls Department of this school.

Attention is directed to H.M. Inspector's criticism of the equipment of the school. (1)

Although his range was wide he was still convinced of the primacy of the 3 R's and determined to foster his special interest in Physical Education (2) as evidenced by his report on Gateshead Brighton Avenue Junior School in 1912.

(1) School Log p. 140-4

(2) Mr. Dinsley mentioned above, first encountered (and crossed) Steele as the determined apostle of the 1921 P.E. Syllabus

(Steele was right!)

"Attention has been chiefly and rightly given to the Elementary Subjects. Reading is far from the most part satisfactory, the Handwriting of the girls of Classes 11b and 1a deserves praise and the value of practical work in Arithmetic has been recognised. Appliances are needed for the teaching of the latter subject to the lowest class.

Suggestions were offered to the staff as to the method of conducting the lessons in Physical Exercises; each teacher should possess a copy of the Board's Official Syllabus (1909).

The Reading Books are lacking in variety and many of those in use in the top classes are in a delapidated condition.

The supply of pictures is meagre. (1)

Steele however, knew that schools were often the victims of the local authorities and his report on Nuns Lane Senior Girls' School in October 1917 was entirely and forcibly directed at the Gateshead Education Committee.

"This school has had no less than 20 teachers for periods of a fortnight or so.

Many reading books are dirty, delapidated and unfit for further use. Practically all the Arithmetic and Dictation Exercises are worked on slates.

(1) School Log Book pps 170-2

The approximate cost per head in this Department of school materials for the past five years was:-

1913	1914	1915	1916	1917
2/1d	2/-d	8d	1/4d	10½d

10½d is worth about 5½d in 1913 in the market for school supplies.

Of these hindrances, the low attendance, the late age of admission, the staffing and equipment, the limited hours of instruction all but perhaps the last are within the powers of the Local Education Authority to remove or mitigate. (1)

It seems that if all inspectors had had the force and competence of Steele the years between 1910 and 1920 could have been a great improvement in the schools but this did not happen because they were not given the opportunity.

When the war broke out in 1914 the government requisitioned school buildings for the troops and L.E.A.'s encouraged their young teachers to enlist (In many places pupils went half time and teachers worked double shifts). As to inspection the following extract from the Board of Education Report for 1918-9 (2) makes their position clear.

"The whole staff of Inspectors of the Elementary Education Branch and Women Inspectors of Domestic Subjects were placed at the disposal of the National Committee for the promotion of War Savings Associations. 21 actually devoted their whole time

(1) School Log Book pps 165-6

(2) Report 1918-9 pps 11-12

to War Savings Work during the 1914-18 War.

4 obtained permanent posts."

Inside the limitations imposed by the Government ideas of national priorities the educational work of the inspectors languished. Three successive visits to the Wesleyan School in 1914 were concerned in seeing whether the offices had been repaired, 'measuring' the rooms and encouraging the school to take part in the War Savings Scheme, and the most prominent communications from an H.M.I. during the next few years was a letter thanking the Head and pupils for their efforts in War Savings. (1)

In Gateshead as we have seen, Steele managed to write his report of 1917 but in general his activity was confined to giving lectures on the subject of Thrift (and War Savings) and visiting school gardens. The most usual reference to the work of an H.M.I. was a mere mention of his visit and reports are almost negligible. Undoubtedly the system of misusing officials of high qualifications on routine enquiries was developing and the educational significance of the inspectorate declining. Even worse when a purpose is mentioned for his visit it is 'to check the registers'. Probably no part of an inspector's duty so irritated teachers who rightly resented the high importance given to the routine of recording attendances and the heavy penalties for minor failings in this direction. Perhaps it was necessary as long as the grant depended upon average attendance, but certainly it made

(1) School Log Book p. 227

partnership between teachers and inspectors almost unattainable.

The 1914-8 war focussed attention on the elementary schools. At first it was unfavourable, as the percentage of illiteracy among recruits made headlines, but as the schools and ex pupils made their contribution to the national effort their worth was realised. As H.A.L. Fisher said in 1917 "If anyone had doubted the value of our elementary schools that doubt must have been dispelled by the experience of the war"<sup>(1)</sup> Moreover, the joint experience of the trenches, conscription and rationing as well as the high incomes of the munition workers and miners helped to break down the barriers between the classes.

1918 brought Fisher's Education Act, which achieved the dream which some inspectors had cherished before 1870 by abolishing 'half timers' and introducing compulsory attendance to the age of 14. Physical training centres, school camps or nurse classes could be set up. Fees in elementary schools were abolished.

The act aimed to increase the co-operation between L.E.A.'s and between them and the Board of Education while at the same time it sought to break down the rigid separation between the various departments of the Board which threatened its effectiveness. It is hard to say that inspectors initiated any of these reforms but they certainly supported them.

(1) Hansard April 19th 1917 5th Series Vol. 92 p. 1893

In the same year came the Report of the Machinery of Government Committee which held that policy in the Board as well as other departments should be preceded by more research, and that greater care should be taken in the recruitment of personnel. The concept that only men of the right social background could govern effectively was threatened and with it a fundamental assumption in the choice of inspectors. But the far reaching effects of these government actions were not worked out until after the end of this period.

By 1920, the Inspectorate had had time to adjust itself to the needs of the 1902 Act and there were indications of real progress. The writer of the Board of Education report for 1922 sums it up:

"We believe that the last twenty years have witnessed a real and not merely an apparent advance and that the return which is being made for the large national and local expenditure will disappoint only such expectations as are extravagant or premature. The increased general interest in the subject, the activity of suggestion and experiment, the higher academic qualifications of many teachers, are notes of genuine development. But such things do not make the inspector's task so much easier and the general work entailed on him as the Board's representative seems likely to increase rather than diminish. He has to assist in maintaining not merely a standard but a rising standard of education and those who know best what has been and what is being done know also how much there remains to be done.

As to what changes the Inspectorate may undergo in the future we are not concerned to speculate. But it is safe to say that so long as our national system of education retains anything of its present form, the necessity will remain for a body of men and women charged with the duty of ascertaining and making known what is done throughout the whole country and, so far as they may, helping it to be done better". (1)

But another writer encouraged by a late chief H.M.I. takes another view:

"No one who has any considerable experience of schools and teaching will deny that Mr. Edmund Holmes in his new book "In Quest of an ideal" describes the potent cause of that lack of instruction which is still a reproach to all who are concerned with the organisation and administration of English Education. The intolerable narrowness of outlook fostered by the system of Payment by Results still trails its soul - killing influence upon inspectors, teachers and pupils owing to the fact that the old regime still survives in the schools and among the inspectorate. The monotonous uniformity of syllabus, the multitudinous formalities which must be observed with every departure from the ordinary routine of school, the growing demands of the authorities for merely clerical returns from teachers, the inveterate habit of petty criticism and lack of outlook which distinguish so many of the minor officials who come

(1) Report 1922-3 p. 43-4



into personal relationship with teachers - all have had the cumulative effect of forcing teachers and inspectors into the narrow and deepening groove of a life governed strictly by precedent." (1)

The fact is, that both are true, No one can doubt the real contribution of the Inspectors to the development of English elementary education and though there have been some of inferior worth the majority have been of more than average ability and energy. Each change in educational ideas has been interpreted with realism, sound good sense and not a little charity, but by 1920 the story was not one of outstanding success. However, devoted and skilful, Inspectors were men pursued by their past. However sound their wisdom or stimulating their suggestions many teachers viewed them as high caste government inquisitors, despising and not understanding the human beings with whom they had to deal, and seeking to earn prestige by someone else's downfall. That the picture is generally false is beside the point; until new experience could kill the tradition the inspectorate would remain unwelcome in the schools which it was designed to serve and its necessary contribution to education so much diminished.

(1) Journal of Education August 1920 p. 538

APPENDIX 'C'

Mr. E.G.A. Holmes on "The Circular"  
(from "The Schoolmaster", March 2nd 1912)

At the 1st meeting of the Cambridge University Fabian Society, Mr. Holmes, late Chief Inspector of Schools read a paper on "Socialist Education .....

In the discussion which followed, Mr. Holmes was asked if he would repeat in public what he had written in private - namely, the statement in the famous circular that the desirable "complete detachment" of mind was confined to the products of our "public schools" and the "Universities of Oxford and Cambridge." In his reply Mr. Holmes said he would give the history of the circular in some detail as it had been very much misunderstood. The origin of it lay with the National Union of Teachers, for Sir James Yoxall called on him one day with a complaint about the local inspectors in certain districts, who, he said, were re-imposing a vicious system of examination in the schools, and in many ways departing from the practice of the Board. These local Inspectors were bad, having been appointed years ago,<sup>(1)</sup> merely on their ability to produce a high percentage of results, and it was thought they would be able to show the teachers under them how to achieve the same high water-mark. He thereupon asked the Government Inspectors to send in a private report on the matter, and these reports he had summarised in 'racy language', never dreaming it would become public. The remarks about the public schools and the older Universities were quite incidental, for he was no fanatical believer in the value of these institutions though, other things being equal, he thought it likely they produced the best type of man. His sole concern was for educational efficiency, and they needed even better men than the Government - for the local inspectors has more direct concern with the schools, and had greater influence in them. He had never denied that there might be men who had not had a public school education or a University training who could have this "complete detachment". Indeed, there were several of this type under him when he penned the Circular. But he wanted to insist that detachment was a much more valuable asset than twenty years' experience, if the experience were confined to one groove. There was no question of patronage in his mind; his aim was then, as now, to achieve greater efficiency in the all-important national education.

- (1) Obviously the Durham inspectors could not have been appointed before the County became L.E.A. in 1902 well after the end of "Payment by Results".

A P P E N D I X B The Chief changes in the size, structure and maximum salaries of the Inspectorate 1860 - 1920

Year	H.M.I.'s	Assistants	Special Appointments.
1860	36 \$300 - \$500	24 \$200	
1868	70 "	21 (New Class) \$150 - \$200	
1871	82 Senior 10 \$700 District 75 \$400	76 "	"Returns" \$400
1875	10 \$950	76 "	Music \$500
1880	12 \$900	76 "	Needlework \$250
1884	12 \$900	76 Sub Inspectors Assistants 36 \$500	"
1889	12 \$900	101 \$800	Cookery \$200
1890	1 Senior Chief \$1,000	44 "	
1897	11 others \$900 1 Senior Chief \$1,100 12 others \$900	Sub.let Class \$500 Sub. 2nd Class 161 \$300	2 Women \$200 Special Reports \$800 11 Inspectors for Manual Instruction and drawing \$500
1902	" 1 Chief \$1,100 11 others \$900	52 \$500 Jun. Inspect. 14 \$400	
1904	1 Chief \$1,100 9 Div. \$900	53 " 22 Unifried Grade \$520 154 Women	
1909	" 1 Chief \$1,250 9 Div. \$1,000	107 \$500	45 \$400
1914	79 \$880	68 "	58 \$500
1920	67 \$850		Staff Inspector \$1,000

Digest from official report and Whitaker's Almanac.

S E L E C T   B I B L I O G R A P H Y

OFFICIAL PUBLICATIONS.

Minutes of the Committee of Council for Education  
1840-1857

Reports of the Committee of Council for Education  
1858-1899

Reports of the Board of Education 1900-1922

Board of Educations Codes Circulars and Instructions  
1904- 5 (CMD 2783)      1906 - 7 (CMD 3862)  
1905-6 (CMD 3270)      1912 - 3 (CMD 7341)

Report of the Commission on Popular Education in England  
(Newcastle) 1861

Report on the Operation of the Elementary Education Acts  
(Cross)

1st Report 1886      (CMD 4863)

2nd Report 1887      (CMD 5056)

3rd Report 1887      (CMD 5158)

Final Report 1888 ( CMD 5485 1, 11 & 111)

Appendices 1888      (CMD 5485 1V)

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2nd Report 1912-3 (CD 6534)      "      "      (CD 6535)

3rd Report 1913 (CD 6739      "      "      (CD 6740)

4th Report 1914 (CD 7338      "      "      (CD 7340)

5th Report 1914-6 (CD 7748)      "      "      (CD 7743)

6th Report 1914-6 (CD 7832)      "      "      (CD 8130)

Report of Royal Commission on Secondary Education  
(Bryce) 1894-5

LOCAL MATERIAL

DURHAM COUNTY

Log Books of the following schools (by kind permission of the  
Head Teacher)

Durham Female Practising  
Durham Infant Practising  
Evenwood C of E  
Butterknowle  
Hebburn St. Andrews  
Hebburn Iron & Ship Building  
Hebburn New Town Board (G)  
Hebburn New Town Board (Mixed)  
Hebburn Quay Board (Mixed)  
Hebburn Quay Board (Infants)  
Hebburn Wesleyan  
Bill Quay (Mixed)

Minutes of the Hedworth, Monkton and Jarrow School  
Board 1870 - 1874

Minutes of Durham County Education Committee 1911

GATESHEAD (By kind permission of the Director of Education)

Inspectors' School Reports

1873 - 85	1885-6	1887-8	1889-91
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- SMITH, Frank The Life and Work of Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth Murray 1923
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EDUCATION DEPARTMENT,

11th July 1879.

should be addressed—  
The Secretary,  
Education Department,  
Whitehall,  
London, S. W."

Head of Letters  
relating to this case,  
write—

Gateshead Prior Street Board School.  
School Board of Gateshead Borough  
A. G. N. County of Durham No. 19891

- N.B.—1.—Letters containing enclosures should enumerate them specifically, with a line in the margin for each.
- 2.—Write clearly, on good FOOLSCAP paper of the same size as this sheet.
- 3.—Applications relating to different Schools are to be made in separate letters.

SIR,

The Report of Her Majesty's Inspector upon this School, has been examined and payment of the grant allowed, according to the following Schedule (over), will be made in the course of a few days.

The Department agrees to the engagement of each of the following Scholars, viz.—

4

William J. Hall	} for three years
and	
James Plumpton	

as a Pupil Teacher, in fulfilment of Article 32, c.

The engagement is intended to commence from the First day of May 1879.

Memorandum

The enclosed Memorandum of Agreement should not be signed, until the several parties interested have thoroughly comprehended its terms; and each of them ought to procure a copy of the Code to which it refers. The price of this Code is 2½d., and copies may be procured (through any Bookseller in Town or Country) from Mr. Hansard, Messrs. Spottiswoode, or Messrs. Longman. It should be described in the order as "The New Code of Minutes and Regulations of the Education Department." Copies cannot be procured from this Office.

If the engagement intended to be made in the accompanying stamped form be not entered into, the form should be returned to this office, in order that the cost of the stamp may be recovered. No duplicate stamped form can be issued in place of one spoiled except on receipt of the cost of the stamp. It will be prudent, therefore, not to make the entries in ink until they have been rightly made in pencil.

If the Agreement be made on unstamped paper, it will not satisfy Article 32, c.

Managers are responsible for providing that Pupil Teachers receive the stipulated amount of instruction from the Teacher, and at the close of each year they will have to certify that this instruction has been given.

The most convenient hours, which circumstances permit, being fixed for the Pupil Teachers' lessons, the Managers should attend in person, from time to time, without previous notice, to see that the arrangement is faithfully executed.

My Lords further desire to bring under your consideration the importance of taking care that the Principal Teacher, and each Pupil Teacher, be furnished with a good Text Book for private study on each of the subjects of examination.

At the close of each year, the Pupil Teachers are required to present CERTIFICATES of good conduct from the MANAGERS of the School, and of punctuality, diligence, obedience, and attention to their duties from the SCHOOLMASTER or MISTRESS.

Their Lordships' decision as to the amount of the Grant to be paid, the Report of Her Majesty's Inspector, and any remarks contained in this Form, should be at once communicated to the Managers, and to all persons whom they may concern.

You are requested, unless there are special circumstances to explain, not to write any letter in reply to this present communication between the receipt of it and the arrival of the payment.

I have the honour to be,  
SIR,  
Your obedient Servant,

E. J. Harding Esq  
School Board Offices  
Gateshead.

F. R. Sandford

(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)

	Boys (or Mixed) under Master	Girls (or Mixed) under Mistress	Junior Infants Boys	Total Infants Day School	Evening School	
					Males	Females
Claim on average Attendance, Art. 19 A and 22 (a)	1. General (4).....	4/	4/	4/		
	2. Music (1/)					
	3. O. and D. (1/)					
	Number for Payment at	6/ 276	6/ 269	6/ 283	6/ 234	25 4/
Deduct Infant Girls.....						
Infants, 4 to 7 years of age Art. 19 B 1	Qualified for Presentation .....			4	194	
	Presented .....				192	
	Number for Payment at	8/	8/	10/	10/ 192	
Examination in Standards Art. 19 B 2, and 22 (b)	Qualified for Examination .....	252	230	237		39
	Presented for Examination .....	238	218	220		37
	Passes in Reading .....	229	205	150		35
	"    Writing .....	208	159	162		29
	"    Arithmetic .....	192	170	114		33
	Total...	629	534	426		97
	Passes Article 19 B 3 .....	18	20	34		
Number for Payment at	3/ 611	3/ 514	3/ 392		97 2/6	
Classes, Article 19 C 1 and Article 19 C 6	Two subjects	4/ 517	269			
	One subject*	2/				
	Two subjects	2/				
	One subject*	1/				
Specific Subjects. Art. 21	Passes in <u>Literature</u>	48				
	Passes in <u>Mathematics</u>	0				
	Passes in _____					
	Passes in _____					
	Passes in _____					
Number for Payment at 4/	48					

\* Specify.

Schedule of Grants.

(7) GRANT CLAIMABLE	(8) Boys (or Mixed) under Master	(9) Girls (or Mixed) under Mistress	(10) Junior Infants Boys	(11) Form. Infants Day School	(12) Evening School
1 Average Attendance .....	82 16	80 14	84 18	90 4	5
2 Infants presented .....				96	
EXAMINATION {	In Standards .....	91 13	77 2	55 16	12 2 6
	In Classes .....	103 8	53 16		
	In Specific Subjects .....	9 12			
3 Amount under Article 19 D .....					
4 Amount under Article 19 E for Pupil Teachers required by Article 32 (c) }	6	10	4	8	
<b>Gross Total of Claim.....</b>	<b>293 9</b>	<b>221 12</b>	<b>147 14</b>	<b>174 74</b>	<b>17 2 6</b>
<b>REDUCTIONS.</b>	<i>* Total Day School</i>			<i>836 19</i>	
Article 32 (d) — months .....					
32 (c) — (Staff).....				<i>Inf. S. — 4 6 8</i>	
32 (b) — tenths.....					
32a .....					
* Months or Tenths					
<b>Total Reduction .....</b>					

Balance after Reductions..

832 12 4 17 2 6

AMOUNT OF GRANT £

849. 14. 10

Add for Children's Fees..... £

5. 0 " 4

Total Sum payable..... £

854. 15. 2

visit, or any visit made without notice, and any remarks made upon it by the Department, when communicated to the managers, must be immediately copied verbatim into the log-book, with the names and standing (certificated teacher of the — class, or pupil-teacher of the — year, or assistant-teacher) of all teachers to be continued on, or added to, or withdrawn from the school staff, according to the decision of the Department upon the inspector's report. The correspondent of the managers must sign this entry, which settles the school staff for the year.

29. The inspector will call for the log-book and portfolio at every visit and will report whether they appear to have been properly kept. He will specially refer to the entry made pursuant to Article 29, and he will require to see entries accounting for any subsequent change in the school staff. He will also note in the log-book every visit paid without notice (Article 12), making an entry of such particulars as require the attention of the managers:

Boys' School. " The general order

of the School is creditable, and the Boys have passed for the most part well in elementary subjects, the only weak Standard being the fourth, which broke down

in Arithmetic. The extra subjects were fairly done. The singing is very good, and the Military Drill was creditably gone through."

Junior Boys' School. " The order has

improved, and the Grammar and Geography in the second Standard have been better taught, but there has been a considerable falling off in the results of the elementary teaching. A large number of children were either absent on the day of examination, or presented again in their former Standards. Column IX<sup>a</sup> in the Examination and Duplicate Schedules has not been correctly filled in in several cases. A new copy of Regulations, and some Maps are needed."

Girls' School. " The two lowest Standards

NOTE.—The subject (if any) specified after each name denotes that the result of the examination therein has been unsatisfactory, and that improvement will be looked for on the next occasion. The marks ° or \* denote respectively—(°) that no exercise has been performed, and (\*) that there has been a failure, in the subjects against which they severally stand. The word "failure," after the name of a Candidate for admission, denotes that the Candidate failed in the examination.

have

have been well taught in elementary subjects and the general results of the examination in these subjects are fair, but Spelling is poor in the third and fourth Standards, and Arithmetic needs attention in the third Standard. The second and third Standards should do better in Grammar. The specimens of Needlework done by the girls during the year were very satisfactory, and their singing deserves great praise. The order is satisfactory. "Infants' School." "The gallery exercises are creditable, and the attainments are very fair. Each Class should be provided with a blackboard or large slate."

The School Fees for J. Brown, W. J. Harrison, R. Dingwood, R. Pattison, J. Scott, J. Rice, M. A. Bell, E. Payne and A. Gauson have been allowed.

R. C. Donaldson, N. P. Irving,  
W. Buchan, J. Gardner, H. J. Nicholson,  
Jeanie McKenzie, Joanna McKenzie,  
H. Goodlet

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M. Goodlet, A. Peel, M. Humphrey, I. Brown,  
F. J. Sharp, K. L. Spence and A. Inness  
have passed fairly, but Irving should  
attend to Arithmetic and Algebra, Jeanie  
McKenzie to Arithmetic, Humphrey to  
Composition, and Inness to History. Donaldson  
(whose Euclid and Algebra need attention)  
should be informed that he is now qualified  
under both Articles 60 and 79.

J. Douglas { Grammar  
Composition and  
History

M. Fairweather { Composition  
and  
Arithmetic. She and

Douglas must improve generally.

J. McRoberts' name has been  
removed from the Register of Pupil Teachers  
serving in this School.

Mr. Hedley and Mrs. Wilkinson  
will shortly receive their Certificates.