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THE COUNCIL FOR NATIONAL ACADEMIC AWARDS

THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL CONCEPTS

IN CHILDREN BETWEEN THE AGES OF

SEVEN AND ELEVEN YEARS

Thesis submitted for the Council's degree of Doctor of Philosophy

by

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O.M. Stevens

ABSTRACT

The aim of the study is to explore the hypothesis that children, between the ages of seven and eleven, not only have concepts of politics, but that these develop, following a basic Piagetian model, through consecutive, cumulative stages. Investigation of this idea is carried out by examining childrens' responses, both verbal and written, to particular questions, and subsequently relating these responses to a body of theory, which draws together some important contributions to present knowledge of childrens' cognitive and social development. This provides both a point of reference and a disciplined structure for examining the significance of the collected data, as it enables an analytic approach to be made to studying the ways in which children perceive and enact political ideas, and gradually acquire the ability to use political concepts. The first section of the study is concerned with establishing this theoretical basis.

The second part of the study presents approximately eight hundred childrens' responses to questions which were intended to elicit their perceptions of the content of political activity, concepts of the processes and roles of government and attitudes to authority, freedom and the rule of law. These are accompanied by commentary, and followed by further discussion in terms of the nature of the development observed at different stages, and what appear to be the formative influences upon it. These include the influence of social class on political understanding, and raise questions concerning the role of the family group's language in political concept-formation, the political function of early schooling, sex-linked differences in political understanding and the influence of television on that understanding.

The study has therefore both a practical and theoretical content. It is a study of children in action cognitively, and of the structures and directions of their developing thought on politics, from its earliest identifiable appearance, in ways which have not emerged, or been taken into account, in existing literature.

Appended: The full transcript of all the recorded discussions with children.

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INTRODUCTION

During recent years the idea of political education has gained ground as a focus of interest in educational thinking, both as an area for research and for possible curriculum innovation¹. Though the reasons for this growth of interest are complex, it is connected with an increasing awareness that education has, in its nature and purposes, fundamental political implications. The role of the school as a socialising agent is now generally accepted, and the work of Reimer, Illich and Freire², among others, has insisted on the essentially political nature of that socialisation.

In this context, an investigation into the ways in which children think about politics, how such thinking begins, and how it develops, is both an interesting and pertinent inquiry. It can serve two purposes: firstly, as a contribution to knowledge in an area where there has been, as yet, no study in this country, it may have intrinsic value; secondly, study of the ways in which political cognition develops would appear to precede discussion of the possible nature and scope of political education.

1. Contributions to the growth of this interest include: The Programme for Political Education 1974-77, sponsored jointly by the Hansard Society and the Politics Association, and funded by the Nuffield Foundation; the Schools Council initiative in devising new syllabuses to replace "British Constitution": London University Institute of Education's recent establishment of a lectureship in Political Education; Professor Ian Lister's work in the Department of Education of the University of York. Derek B. Heater's The Teaching of Politics (London: Methuen Educational Ltd., 1969) has joined Harold Entwistle's Political Education in a Democracy (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971) as a basic established text in the field, and two further important contributions, recently published, are Bernard Crick and Derek Heater's Essays on Political Education (Ringmer: Falmer Press, 1977) and Ted Tapper's Political Education and Stability (London: John Wiley and Sons, 1976).

The content and scope of some Open University Education Courses are also contributions to the field (e.g. E 221 Units 8-10, "Politics, Philosophy and Economics in Education"), as are also, in their content and scope, the articles comprising "Teaching Politics", the journal of the Politics Association.

2. Everett Reimer, School is Dead (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1971)
Paolo Freire, Cultural Action for Freedom (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972)
Ivan Illich, De-Schooling Society (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1973)

While it is not intended to pursue that discussion within the limits of this work, it may be possible to contribute potentially useful information to it as a result of exploring a particular hypothesis.

The hypothesis which is here investigated is that children, between the ages of seven and eleven, not only gain concepts of politics, but that these develop through consecutive, cumulative stages as a result of a child's interaction with his environment.

The model of cognitive growth is Piaget's ^{1,2}, the emphasis is on childrens' active construction of political ideas.

According to Piagetian theory, to have a concept is to have acquired the ability to perform a mental operation, which is to say to have grasped a principle, and to be able to apply it. Activity and experience in "concrete"-i.e. practical - situations are the source of childrens' concepts. Practical activity becomes "internalised" to form mental structures, or be assimilated into existing ones, which continue to interact with stimuli from the environment. On such an account of concept formation even the earliest enactive situations of childhood acquire significance. When the earlier stages are considered as areas of experience from which accumulate the ideas, classifications and attitudes that will contribute to emergent political thinking, its significance is evident, and raises questions of how early the study of childrens' political thought might begin. While accepting that it may not completely describe the course of childrens' cognitive growth in politics, these considerations would appear to justify, at least initially, the use of Piaget's model.

In order to study the emergence and development of childrens' political concepts, it is considered crucial to examine what happens between the ages of seven and eleven. This age-range encompasses Piaget's "pre-conceptual" and "concrete-operational" stages; in some eleven-year-olds a movement towards the "formal operational" stage may even be discernible. While it is not intended to suggest that political concepts suddenly appear, in some form, at the age of seven, it is yet accepted that before that age few children are likely to have sufficient communication skills to indicate

1

1. Jean Piaget The Origin of Intelligence in the Child trans. Margaret Cook (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1953 - also published in Penguin Education, 1977).
2. E. Stones An Introduction to Educational Psychology (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1966) ch. 6.

them. This limitation concerns not only literacy, but also basic vocabulary and thought. They may not understand the use of words in a question put to them, or what they are expected to do as a response to it. Even those children under seven who show verbal abilities are unlikely to have sufficient length of concentration for discussion to develop. The seven-year-old stage, then, represents a threshold; and so by studying responses from this age-group, it may well be possible to observe the beginnings of the ability to understand and communicate political meaning at its earliest identifiable appearance. Finally, in our educational system, children enter Junior schools at the age of seven, and remain there until they are eleven. The full age-range of the Junior school is used in the study, and this allows for observation of the development in different age-groups within the same school environment.

There is, then, considerable justification for studying this age-range, in conjunction with Piagetian theory, in terms of the development of political thinking. The age-range is wide enough for the notion of "development" to be valid, and Piaget's model, accepted by modern educational theory, provides a structure for studying the processes of such development.

An understanding of the idea of "development" in childrens' political concepts is fundamental to exploring this issue, and acceptance of Piaget's interactionist account of concept formation leads to questions of what "inputs" are available from the environment to aid such development. What are childrens' achieved, existing ideas to interact with? Empirical and contingent events provide both information and vicarious experience - presenting a sphere of action for children to identify, identify with, and to learn to make judgements about. Such judgements might be expected, over a period of time, to change; the nature and direction of such change is a crucial area for study, for it is on such terms that the notion of development here can be postulated. This in turn raises fundamental epistemological questions: what constitutes a child's understanding of political ideas? What relationships exist between knowledge of, understanding, and attachment to these ideas? What bridges are children able to construct between their own experience and the adult political world? How does that world become intelligible to them?

The objective of this study is to investigate its hypothesis largely through the examination of childrens' own words. It is neither a

psychological nor a sociological study, in a rigorous sense, although these areas have been drawn upon during its course. It is a study of children in action, cognitively, and of the structures and directions of their thinking about politics.

In order to explore the relevant issues in terms of present knowledge of childrens' cognitive and social development, it is considered essential to make use of some seminal modern contributions to those fields, and to build from the insights thus provided, from psychology, socio-linguistics and educational theory, a base from which to work. In the light of such a synthesis, particular examples of childrens' political concepts are studied, in order to trace both their development and possible origins. In addition to providing a disciplined structure for examining childrens' responses, such a body of theory is itself of interest and may be further clarified by the content and style of those responses.

Questions of the range of meanings possible from the different stages of development in childhood must necessarily be left open, in such a study as this, until the childrens' responses have themselves defined what the range is to be. There can be no "self-fulfilling prophecies" in the form of particular expectations. However, terms of reference must exist, or be established, for the purpose of relating any fresh insights to the state of present understanding. It is intended that the wide theoretical base used here as a continuing point of reference will, in its various aspects, provide such a means.

For example, Bernstein's¹ work in socio-linguistics provides, in connection with childrens' use of language, a reference for considering social constructions of political meaning. Consideration of what it is to communicate meaning, or gain understanding, draws upon some of

1. Bernstein, B. "Education cannot compensate for Society" (1970) New Society No. 387, and "Social class, language and Socialisation" in Giglioli, P. (ed.) Language and Social Context (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972)

Wittgenstein's¹ insights, and also upon Michael Polanyi's² discussions of "tacit" knowledge. Consequently, further questions arise of the role of language in political learning: how do children construct meaning from the language of politics - learn to articulate any tacit knowledge they possess - or exclude the extraneous and irrelevant when talking about politics?

There is, necessarily, an interaction between the practical and the theoretical aspects of this study, and some interdependence between the two, which is expressed in the nature of the questions put to the children. Asking them questions which seek not only to investigate any understanding of political roles and structures, but also to draw out childrens' abilities to discuss political issues at their own conceptual level, has a basic purpose. It opens the way to studying, empirically, the central theoretical issue which concerns this work.

The first part of the study is an exposition of its theoretical basis, and the concern is to establish this as a valid and relevant area of reference.

This is followed by a descriptive second part, dealing with the collection of the data, the visits made to schools and the content of the questionnaires.

Childrens' responses to specific questions, and their discussions generated from these, form the empirical component placed as the third section of the work. These results comprise written answers to the questionnaires, and verbatim transcriptions of recorded discussions, collected at intervals during three years, from six schools, two of which were situated in South-East London, two in Dagenham (Essex), and two in North-East Kent. Over eight hundred children were involved, and aspects

1. Some applications of Wittgenstein's ideas as discussed by Anthony Kenny, Wittgenstein (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1973) is made when considering the development of political understanding, thinking and meaning.
2. This idea is discussed at length in Michael Polanyi, Personal Knowledge (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958) and Knowing and Being (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969)

of their thinking investigated included: possession of information on political structures, procedures, roles and their interactions; childrens' conceptions of these and of the content of political activity; their ideas of, and attitudes towards, authority; freedom and the basis of rules; their personal aspirations towards leadership roles and responsibility within the school system.

The follow-up small-group discussions were intended, from loosely structured beginnings, to generate childrens' own directions for discussion on the basis of their interests. The "structure" referred to concerns the initial use of newspaper pictures of political leaders for recognition by the children, as a group stimulus, which was the starting point of all the discussions. Full transcriptions of the discussions are appended.

The fourth part of the study is concerned with the nature of the childrens' achievement, on the evidence of the collected data, and with reference to the initial body of theory. Further questions are thus raised: what are the dominant influences of the growth of political concepts? What significance for these have social class and language environment? What indications might point to the existence of a sex-linked style of political cognition? What are the cognitive results of the early political socialisation carried by the structures of schooling?

Childrens' use of language in expressing political ideas emerges as an important theme, particularly in the ways in which a specific political vocabulary appears, and the re-organisation of "ordinary" language for political usage changes through the age-ranges. If some children are able to present an argument, to "think on their feet" as it were, in politics, what resources of language and concepts do they draw up? Lively critics of values identify themselves during discussions, as issues are examined and interpreted - is this the process of development in political thinking taking place?

The nature of political learning raises questions both of its transmission and of the specific agencies contributing to this. Here the influence of mass-media, in particular of television, is of obvious interest, for this medium presents children with sets of normative values as contexts for action, and therefore implicitly with various social and moral pre-

suppositions and inferences. How can these be evaluated as influences on childrens' developing social and political thinking? Is the process of acquiring concepts affected? Is it accelerated? If that were to be the case, might children become capable of abstract thinking (for example, by formulating hypothetical alternatives in political or social arrangements) earlier, in politics, than in other fields?

The fifth part presents the conclusions drawn in these areas from consideration of the data.

Although some of these questions have been explored in the relevant scholarly literature, traditionally, childrens' ideas of the political world have been examined by considering the ways in which the agencies of political socialisation reach and affect children, conditioning them to present acceptance and future support of particular systems.

Easton and Dennis¹, for example, in examining the processes through which maturing members in a system acquire feelings of positive support for it, illumine the effects of normal daily routines on childrens' acceptance of authority, its symbols and role-occupants. They define political socialisation as "those developmental processes through which persons acquire political orientations and patterns of behaviour"². A person's "development" is conceived as resulting from his having been "exposed to a particular sequence of events that can be expected to produce a particular or characteristic outcome"³. The emphasis seems to be on the passive role of the subject. And so "developmental" is used in a restricted sense; it refers to the fact that time has passed, experience accumulated and information absorbed, rather than emphasising any new intellectual skills that may have appeared as a result of an individual's actively structuring his political environment.

1. David Easton and Jack Dennis (eds.) Children in the Political System (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969)

2. Ibid, p. 7.

3. Ibid, p. 8.

R. W. Connell's¹ work with Australian children, which might be regarded as a reaction against what has become the standard approach to childrens' thinking about politics, emphasises, instead, the child's positive role as an agent in his own political development, within a framework of Piagetian theory. Connell's methodology is logical; his categorisation of political concepts into "task-pool" - "political order" - "party choice and ideology", and the Australian commitment to the war in Viet-Nam, are wide enough to tap a variety of childrens' reactions. There is, however, an emphasis on the wide issues, with an implicit assumption that childrens' political ideas are learned from contact with these; it can conversely be argued that when children are "groping"² for a political concept they are, in fact, trying to extend limited concepts, formed within the social context of schooling, to accommodate wider political events.

Connell's study³, and the work of Easton and Dennis⁴, Hess and Torney⁵, and Greenstein⁶, accept the role of early education as an agency of political socialisation, tending to emphasise the malleable nature of the subject at this stage, rather than his specific cognitive processes. In Greenstein's words:

"The pre-school years and the early school years are a time of great plasticity and receptivity: nothing in later life can compare with this period for the sheer volume of learning that takes place . . . "7

1. Ralph W. Connell, The Child's Construction of Politics (Melbourne: University of Melbourne Press, 1974).
2. Piaget, Origin of Intelligence in the Child pp435-447
3. Op. cit.
4. Easton and Dennis, Children in the Political System.
5. Robert D. Hess and Judith V. Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co. 1967)
6. Fred I. Greenstein, Children and Politics (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 1969)
7. Ibid., p. 79.

The question remains of the quality of early political learning, and its significance - of whether early political thinking is more than socialisation.

Apart from Connell's work with Australian children, the studies referred to above are from the United States. While there are obvious cultural constraints on accepting conclusions as having general significance, the corollary to this is to open a particular question: what are the characteristics of childrens' political thinking in our own culture?

Greenstein's study of American children points to interesting differences in attitudes, or possibly in social development, in children of similar ages, between our two systems. For example, at nine-years old, his typical subject:

" . . . is a small child, quite dependent upon parents and other adults. His world is one of toys, games, fantasy . . . " ¹

While accepting a universal childhood dependence upon adults, we might find that this description of a child in a circumscribed world would apply more readily to a seven-year-old than to a nine-year-old, as emerged during the course of this study.

The American studies reveal stronger affective links supporting concepts of politics in American children, particularly in their attitudes towards the Presidency, which is perhaps most strikingly revealed in Wolfenstein and Kliman's ² survey of the impact President John F. Kennedy's assassination had on children and young people.

Existing work on childrens' perceptions of politics in other countries raises questions for us, in terms of both our political culture and educational system, and the studies cited have contributed particularly to the motivation for making this study. It is, however, concerned with a different enquiry from the traditional - and dominant one - of how subject-roles and affiliative attitudes are learned; it also avoids separation of the content of political learning into Greenstein's "role-learning"

1. Ibid, p. 1.

2. Martha Wolfenstein and Gilbert Kliman (eds.) Children and the Death of a President (Gloucester, Mass: P. Smith, 1969)

categories¹. The difference between this contribution and existing work lies in the nature of the central hypothesis in its social and educational setting. This, and a concern with the development of political concepts in children whose ages range from seven to eleven, constitute its original elements. It is suggested that, over and above the processes of political socialisation, active political learning takes place continuously from an early age, which presents the child in a different role from merely that of the passive recipient of political socialisation.

1. See discussion of this and related issues in Tapper, Political Education and Stability, pp.6-8.

PART ONE

PART ONETHE THEORETICAL BASIS OF THE STUDYThe Nature of the Questions Raised

The hypothesis that children, between the ages of seven and eleven, develop political concepts through consecutive, cumulative stages raises questions concerning both the nature of the postulated development, and the ways in which the adult world of politics becomes accessible and intelligible to children.

These questions are not only connected; they each give rise to many others. In order to investigate these, and understand their implications, it appears necessary, first to construct a framework of theory from which to work, using for this purpose some significant modern contributions to our understanding of childrens' cognitive development. This theoretical construct may then be related, empirically, to the experiences from which children build their understanding of the world.

It may also illumine to some extent the concept of political learning. The following broad questions appear to require investigation:

1. Whether the pattern of childrens' conceptual development in politics follows that of their logical thinking, as revealed by Piaget's analyses and observations.
2. If so, whether it is possible to assess if stages in political thinking occur, for children, at the same ages as in other areas of understanding, or whether any discrepancies arise.
3. Does the acquisition and development of political concepts arise by abstraction from practical experience, as in early mathematical learning or do language and purely verbal communication have a stronger role in political concept development?

This question arises partly because of the suspicion which surrounds the idea of "purely verbal" learning in modern educational theory; this is undoubtedly well-founded in reference, for example, to mathematics, or indeed in any area where the objective is the learning of a new code or symbolic system to express thought. Children can, all too easily, be made to learn by rote some rudimentary exchange of codes, but this is not the same thing as acquiring a form of knowledge or understanding. For this, the question of how children gain and use a concept is crucial, and requires consideration of their use of language.

4. The nature of political learning requires clarification, in terms of its content, processes of transmission, and agencies contributing to it. Individual differences between children themselves are also of importance in any learning situation, as are group characteristics. How significant, for example, are differences in sex, social-class, and language environment, for political understanding?

The attempt to investigate relevant aspects of these questions provides the rationale for this study. As the concern is with the development of political cognition, it will be useful at this stage to review, in summary, Piaget's theories on cognitive development, which are accepted as a general frame of reference.

Piagetian Theory of Cognitive Development and its Relevance for Political Learning

Progressive adaptation is, for Piaget, the essence of intelligent behaviour. Its functions consist in understanding and inventing, and its development progresses through four main stages, in each of which a child's thinking is qualitatively different, not only from adult thinking, but from the kind of thinking characteristic of the other stages.

The first period of development, that of "sensori-motor" intelligence (from birth until eighteen months or two years) is followed by the "pre-operational", which lasts until the age of six or seven. Of the two sub-stages in this period (the "pre-conceptual" and "intuitive" stages of

thought) the period of intuitive thinking is of interest for this study, as it may well include some of the seven-year-old children involved.

During the period of sensori-motor intelligence a child's achievements concern the motor abilities to manipulate objects in space and time, and to see simple causal connections between them; from the age of about two to seven these abilities are transferred to the symbolic and verbal planes.

Symbolic thinking, or the ability to represent one thing by another, enables a child to use language, to interpret and draw pictures, to extend his abilities in play in symbolic or constructional games, and later to read and write. Thus his range and speed in thinking increases, especially as language develops.

In response to stimuli received the processes Piaget terms "assimilation" and "accommodation" interact, and enable a child to extend his thinking and produce intelligent behaviour, adapted to his environment. Change in environment, or increased perception of it, will result in progressive adaptation.

At seven, logical reasoning is not usually possible, for a child is not yet able to regard experiences from any point of view except his own, and this egocentrism is a stumbling-block to the reversability of a chain of reasoning that logic requires. His classification systems are arbitrary and syncretistic, as are his reasons for action.

During the third stage, of "concrete operations", a child becomes, by the age of eleven or twelve, capable of reversing an operation, mentally, but only as an extension of his "concrete" experiences. As his perceptions become "de-centred" instead of egocentric, he becomes able to link mental operations and relate them to each other. Understanding of relationships, such as principles and examples of them, also develops. The physical facts in any situation are still the basis of his thinking, and will be until the stage of "formal operations" is reached in adolescence, when objective and abstract reasoning is achieved, as the fourth and final stage in development.

Possessing concepts enables a child to bring order out of his experiences by understanding similarities between events and objects which appear on

the surface to be different; e.g. once he has the concept 'dog' he classifies a variety of creatures of differing sizes, shapes, colour and temperament as dogs, and reacts to them in a similar way. The three aspects of a concept that change with cognitive development are of importance for understanding a child's political development. These include:

- (a) The validity of a concept, or the degree to which the child's understanding of the concept matches that of the larger social community. As children develop, the meanings of concepts gain in similarity for all children, and so become more valid in this sense¹.
- (b) The status of a concept, i.e. its degree of articulation, and its availability to the child's uses in thinking.
- (c) The accessibility of concepts increases, i.e. the degree to which a child can talk about his ideas and use them in reasoning.

Existing conceptual structures form a framework into which new information can be absorbed consciously, provided it can be understood, i.e. it either matches, or is only a little in advance of, his existing framework. Such association, or connection, of the known to the unknown, makes assimilation, understanding, and therefore learning, possible. It takes place either through the undirected perceptions of free associations, or through the directed thinking that occurs when a child tries to solve a given problem.

The problem-solving process, in political as in any other kind of thinking, necessarily involves the comprehension of events (encoding) and the storage of such information in memory. Only after these can come, in sequence, the ability to generate ideas. This latter ability is not, however, a necessary result of the first two conditions. A child, if he is to re-arrange or re-formulate existing material into new ideas, needs certain insights. He also needs to develop an internal locus of evaluation which will help him to scrutinise and, when necessary, discard some of his ideas.

1. Paul H. Mussen, John J. Conger and Jerome Kagan, Child Development and Personality, Third Edition (New York: Harper & Row, 1969) p. 430.

What Is Involved In Early Political Learning?

In terms of developmental psychology, the mental processes under consideration as relevant to political learning are:

1. Encoding, or giving selective attention to one event or aspect of a situation rather than another, and interpreting the relevant information¹. The encoding process is directly related to age, and to individual selectivity of attention. The latter aspect is related to some extent to a child's expectations, and to his capacity to sustain attention. By the age of eight, the dramatic increase in a child's capacity for sustained attention which occurs between five and seven years of age will have been completed, enabling his performance on lengthy tasks to improve in quality.
 2. Memory functions which can be expected to improve during middle childhood. Differences in memory between children of the same age appear to be related to the ability to sustain attention, the availability of language, concepts and images associated with events that help to 'fix' them in memory, to anxiety-creating distracting stimulation, and to variations in motivation². Retrieval of information from memory demands some effort, and a crucial factor here will be whether the child is motivated to go on searching for further information in his memory store, after the first, easily accessible layer is obtained. Variables on this aspect are demonstrated during some of the discussions with children, and it could be considered that a first political discussion provides a unique opportunity for observing the motivational level of children in this area;
1. "The school years are marked by three important developments in the encoding process increasing use of words and concepts at the expense of imagery in the interpretation of the environment: the learning of expectations that direct the child's attention to relevant aspects of an event; increased ability to maintain attention on a problem without becoming distracted. The child becomes more efficient, more selective, and more accurate in his encoding of events." Ibid., p. 435.
 2. Ibid., pp. 435-6.

for no stimulus-response bond already exists, and in responding to a new set of stimuli, the child decides for himself how far he is willing to engage his skills and memory-store in such response.

3. Problem-solving abilities, or generation of ideas can be expected to develop as a function of the two attributes discussed above. The ability to generate ideas can be described as "learning to learn"¹, and this process, in a political context, is of immediate interest for this study.
4. Evaluative abilities can also be expected to develop with other cognitive and intellectual skills. A child in attempting to solve a problem, or answer a question, produces a solution; whether he decides it is the solution will depend on the degree to which he stops to evaluate his own thinking, for its appropriateness. Some children display an impulsive style of hypothesising, accepting their own first ideas as a basis for action, while others may take considerably longer, and reject several ideas on the way to producing a solution. These different attributes may also help to determine how easily influenced a child will be to discard his own ideas and accept those of others, and from this point of view will be significant for the development of political thinking.

Can the ideas of political "cognition" or "concepts" be justified in reference to seven-year-old children? Cognition is a term which depends, for its specific analysis, on relationships with particular content, and the extent to which such content is itself amenable to categorical analysis. When we try to locate the earliest "cognition" of political content, we are dealing with childrens' recognition of terms denoting particular kinds of activity. We are attempting to reach any insights they may possess, and help to make these explicit in language.

1. "One of the clearest demonstrations of the importance of developmental changes in the generation of ideas is seen in a phenomenon called 'learning set' or 'learning to learn'. A learning set is the acquired set or attitude that is relevant to solving a particular class of problems, a disposition to attend to the relevant stimuli in the problem, and to discard incorrect classes of hypotheses. In brief the child learns a general solution approach to a specific class of problems." Ibid., p. 439.

The aspect of "insight" is difficult to specify; it is variously regarded as a creative leap, a sudden cohesion of previously unrelated fragments of "tacit knowledge"¹, or, as in modern psychological theory, the development of new perceptual relationships that generate new questions and thus gives an account of what is meant by "creative thinking"².

This was, perhaps, best exemplified at the seven-year-old stage by Penny (see Appendix 1) as she countered the question of whether the Queen makes laws with: "Well, does she have the power to make the laws?"

The notion of a child's own "construction of reality" is basic to an interactionist account of mental development. This reality, or state of consciousness, becomes accessible to observation largely through a child's own account of what is significant for him. In some areas of learning children provide, at an early age, active accounts of the significant; however, for political learning, a child's verbal account must provide the clues as to the closest points of contact between his world and the wider realities. Usefully, the verbal account will also provide the generative words and ideas from which further gains may be expected to develop, and point the way towards the possible construction of effective teaching and learning methods.

Childrens' awareness of instrumental relationships in politics leads, logically, to an awareness of political structure and to an appreciation, however tacit, of the existence of causes and intermediate ends. To the extent to which this appreciation is achieved, there will exist a conceptual basis for further political understanding.

Younger childrens' perceptions of politics are, to some extent, accessible through the individual child's own account of what is significant for him. The broad context for individual perceptions is a general awareness of the political world, existing at some distance but occasionally brought much closer, for example at times of heightened political activity.

1. Michael Polanyi, Personal Knowledge (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958) ch. 4.

2. See also the Piagetian account of "groping" for solutions in Piaget, Origin of Intelligence in the Child, pp. 435-447

It is thus conceptualised and re-conceptualised, and political content classified, eventually, as a recognisable category of information.

This is not to suggest that seven-year-olds are capable of abstract logical thought, but rather that this is not necessary; what is at stake is the nature of a "political" concept.

Politics is not an abstract concept, but a class of activities that can be grasped in terms of intermediate ends, rather than in theoretical terms. This is a significant point in the discussion of concept-formation - that political concepts have a particular construction.

It might be usefully asked whether, in this case, their acquisition is correctly described by a general theory of cognitive development. Is a theory of political cognitive development required?

Other views than those of Piaget on concept-formation may be usefully considered, in terms of their relevance for thinking in politics.

Robert Thomson¹ suggests that "the psychologist's use of the term 'concept' . . . refers to a 'psychological operation.' But this, it has been pointed out . . . is in general false, because even psychologists talk of having or grasping concepts: and it is not valid, (even in psychology) to talk of having or grasping an operation . . . there is no clear psychologist's use of the term 'concept' . . . "

This is in contrast to Piagetian theory, where to have a concept is to have acquired the ability to perform a mental operation: which is to say to have grasped a principle, and to be able to apply it to particular instances which are classed as appropriate.

A further contrast can be found in the view of Paul Hirst²; for "To have the concept X, I take to mean just the same as 'To know the meaning of the term X or its equivalent'."

1. Robert Thomson, The Psychology of Thinking (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1959) p. 106.
2. Paul H. Hirst, "Language and Thought" in the "Proceedings of the Phil. of Ed. Society of G.B. 1." (1966) p. 69

John Wilson's¹ discussion of this poses two questions: Does "knowing the meaning of the term" imply being able to use the term correctly as a sufficient condition of having a concept? Or should we rather require that a person is able to give an account of its correct use?

Wilson's argument distinguishes usefully between "having" a concept and being able to use it in real-life situations, and gives a reminder of the important motivational aspect - that of wanting to use a concept.

If we insist on a child's being able to answer correctly the question: What is politics? as the necessary condition for accepting that he has a concept, there may well be a danger of avoiding the real issue. That is, of ignoring any ability or interest he may have in discussing the activities and questions which constitute politics.

If a child has such abilities or interests then he has concepts of politics, though his capacity to define politics remains incomplete and may well be only completely achieved in the stage of formal operational thinking.

Piaget's system deals consistently with empirical and enactive aspects of cognitive growth, and his account of concept-formation is as yet the most comprehensive that we have. In common with Bruner², Piaget emphasises "knowing" as construction and the essentially active role of the learner. This is in contrast to stimulus-response theories of learning which, in spite of some views³ that much of Piagetian theory can be re-formulated, without losing meaning, in S-R language, do not describe satisfactorily the explorative nature of early concept-building in politics.

1. John Wilson, Philosophy and Educational Research (Windsor: National Foundation for Educational Research, 1972) pp. 73-74.
2. Jerome S. Bruner, Beyond the Information Given (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1973)
3. D. E. Berlyne, "Comments on Relations between Piaget's Theory and S-R Theory", Society for Research in Child Development Monograph 27(2) : 127-31. See discussion of this in Johanna Turner, Cognitive Development (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1975) pp. 35-36.

For these reasons it is considered that Piagetian theory is indispensable to the study of the ways in which childrens' thinking in politics develops, but accepted also that it may not provide a complete account of this.

Early Political Perception Through Play : The Enactive Stage of Understanding

In order to examine the enactive mode of forming social and political concepts, some consideration of the environment which children construct for themselves within the school is necessary; their play, which is above all a chosen activity, provides particular insights into preferences for group or personal action, ways of choosing games, liking for being one of a team and understanding of the reason for rules.

Childrens' self-motivated activity mirrors to a large extent the political world; they come together in groups for certain purposes - a different situation from being in a school or a particular class, which is not voluntary. Once established, the groups are semi-permanent; alliances, shift dynamically towards a minimal combination - the 'best friend' syndrome which is more pronounced in girls' friendships than in boys.

On this social basis, the principles internalised through interaction concern choices; of games, of territory to be established, of new members to be admitted to the group, of leadership roles and a hierarchy of influence to be established. The problem for childrens' groups is basically of how such decisions are to be reached. Training in school, and the innate desire for a secure situation, establish a propensity towards conformity that reduces anxiety; but the awareness of developing identity brings with it a need for recognition and status within the group. The need to maintain the stability of the group calls for a balancing of personal interests with co-operation - a willingness to accept a definition of the general interest, in order to continue in a position to contribute to it.

Childrens' needs for large-group membership vary according to the activities they want to engage in; a crowd of little boys highly motivated towards playing football, for example, needs considerable organisation, and the only alternative to accepting direction from outside the group is to establish a working basis of co-operation with internal dynamics. Which

means that some of the basic procedures of democracy have to be invented, and this, in effect, is what happens. Principles of fairness are enshrined in the ethic of not cheating, with its appropriate sanctions; notions of equality and equal rights require implementation in 'all helping to decide', and in discovering the ritual of voting, which supersedes earlier, cruder methods of choosing games or allocating roles.

Perhaps most important, the principle of having principles is discovered - i.e. that an ethical structure gives an ordered basis to activities, and consequent attachment to such a framework is developed. This can be seen in childrens' early intuitive attachment to rules, which is not abandoned at the concrete operational stage, but rationalised.

Sex Differences in Play

From observing their play activities, it is possible to conclude that girls develop less ability to perceive and make use of spatial relationships than boys. This affects the nature of their play; they are less attracted to exploring the possibilities of open spaces, preferring to consolidate small areas of 'personal space'. In this way their play and social interactions from an early age tend to take place on a smaller scale than those of boys; there is less emphasis on large-group activity, and consequently less need for finding ways of organising such activity, and of keeping the members of the active group under normative control.

It appears that boys come together in their first social groups for the purpose of making a football game, the scope and area of which is only limited by the size of the playground. This is a procedure independent of authority, needing only a ball as equipment, which is easily obtained. It would be extremely difficult to find a Primary school where this form of organisation, independent of authority, does not take place among the boys.

For girls, there is no comparable activity; a shared skipping rope, the hide-and-seek game, the individual hoops and balls do not provide a large-group situation, and rounders is not a general favourite. The established organised game for Junior school girls is netball, and netball is a complex activity requiring special equipment not usually available in the play spaces, so it does not arise as spontaneous activity. It is a

game that has to be organised and refereed by authority in some form, a closely rule-governed activity, that takes place within carefully defined spatial limits. The structures of the team games available for girls are so formalised that they are not easily transferable to an informal setting, for example, playtime in the playground. The question might then arise as to why girls do not join the football or cricket groups, or play all-girls versions, if they need this kind of activity. The usual situation is that they do not in fact do so. While this may be in part due to the peer-group pattern of single-sex membership, which is rarely broken at the Primary stage, there is also the apparent factor of sex-linked preference for one type of play activity over another.

On the basis that different physical organisation of play¹ takes place, it can be suggested: (a) that girls' social organisation results from this, and (b) that such social organisation in turn leads to further differentiation in forms of play; for example, symbolic play might be expected to be more pleasurable to girls and therefore last longer as a developmental stage. (c) That an awareness of function rather of a structure is consequently likely to develop as a cognitive style, for girls, and that verbal abilities are more likely to develop at an earlier age for them than for boys.

Verbal interaction during play is a particularly valuable style of communication in that it is often unselfconsciously exploratory; however, during strenuous ball games it is likely to be brief and cliché-ridden, which indicates a limiting of experience in this aspect of learning, for many boys.

It can be suggested that, as a result of such differences in play and social organisation, and the language and interests that emanate from them, the culture of the school revolves itself into the girls' culture and the boys' culture; that at the deeper level two essentially separate environments exist, which result ultimately in different ways of organising mental structures.

1. For a full discussion in this area see L. M. Terman and Leona Tyler, "Psychological Sex Differences" in L. Carmichael (ed) Manual of Child Psychology (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1954) 2nd edition, ch. 17.

For these reasons it was considered of interest to conduct some of the research for this study in the two Junior schools, segregated by sex although sharing the same site, with the objects of

- (1) comparing responses from children in the two schools, and
- (2) of comparing these with responses from girls and boys in unsegregated schools.

The Central Role of Language in the Development of Political Concepts

Observation of childrens' play and social interactions can provide clues to their thinking in areas connected with issues ⁱⁿ political and social philosophy. What, for example, is involved in a child's accepting the rules of a game? Are these "given", pre-existing and discoverable, in the sense of natural law? If so, who is able to discover them - the leaders of the peer group? Or everybody? Or are rules contingent, the result of group decisions? What is involved in certain children acquiring prestige, and emerging as leaders? And for other children to not only consent, but contribute to, this process?

What rights do children think they have, in relation to each other, and to adults - what sense do they make of the notion of obligation? How is it possible for an observer to begin to look for answers to these kind of questions?

The attempt to do so could take place in one of several ways; an observer might remain in contact with a group of children on a long-term basis, awaiting their spontaneous social/political behaviour. However, his presence would serve to modify that behaviour, and unless the groups were very small, few interactive situations could be fully appreciated or assessed. This type of long-term observation might, in practice, be only possible for the class-teacher in a Primary school, in contact with the same class of children for a school year.

Another alternative, the classroom debate or discussion with Primary-age children, tends in practice to produce disappointing results. This is often due to the relationship between quality of discussion and numbers of children; the more children present, the larger the proportion of non-

participant 'audience' becomes, and the less willing any participants become to experiment with words or to risk real communication. In order to achieve this it is necessary to work with a small group or with individuals, and to use particular techniques of questioning with them. The prime example here is Piaget's 'clinical' method of questioning on a one-to-one basis. Emphasis thus reverts back to language and individuals, rather than the direct observations of behaviour or group reactions. For this study, verbal communication occupies a central position, as having two main functions: it not only provides the most direct way of examining childrens' thinking on politics, but the demands of communication function to organise such thinking, and to bring it into conscious form. The childrens' previous practical and social actions provide the raw material for this process, which involves aspects of encoding, remembering and evaluating experiences.

Two areas that need to be investigated if the relationships between language and thought, and their implications for learning in any area are to be understood, are:-

Firstly, the question of what language is, and what it does.

Secondly, questions as to the nature of mental acts and perception.

Language, any language considered as an entity, is by no means homogeneous. To understand one's mother-tongue is also to understand the existence of a number of specialist vocabularies that are related to "ordinary language and to each other"¹. There is often overlapping between ordinary language and specialist vocabularies, although when terms from the latter are incorporated into general usage they tend to acquire different connotations from their specialist function.

To what extent does the understanding of political ideas and processes require specialist use of language?

To answer this question is also to indicate one of the ways in which politics differs from those social science subjects which are characterised by innovatory and reformatory use of language; i.e. which produce technical

1. Peter Scrimshaw, "The language of social education" in John Elliot & Richard Pring (eds.) Social Education and Social Understanding (London: University of London Press Ltd., 1975) See for a fuller discussion of this - basically Wittgensteinian - topic

terms in the attempt to give explicit accounts of the structure of social experience.

Justification for such linguistic innovation stems partly from the work of analytic philosophy over the past few decades. This has directed attention to the complexities of surface meanings, and to the need for clarity of expression. The support thus provided for presenting specialist vocabularies in the social sciences, as tools for eradicating confusions in meaning, appears to have generated little, if any, linguistic innovation in politics. (In this sense, the more widespread understanding of a few simplified terms from economics can hardly be counted.) The basic vocabulary which describes political activity is embedded in common usage, and so it will follow, that initially at least, for childrens' development of political concepts, ordinary language will suffice.

Common usage provides the words, gives some context to them, and makes possible some general account of relationships in non-specialist ways. To illustrate: politicians, like everyone else 'make up their minds'. They 'meet', 'talk', 'ask' and 'tell', 'give' and 'look after' things. It is not until some elaboration of such 'meeting', 'talking' or 'looking after' is attempted, that children need even the "common-usage" political terms.

Which is to say that children, in building political concepts, face no hurdle or stumbling-block in any special vocabulary to be first learned.

The attribute most conducive to childrens' political learning would logically appear to be some ability, arising from interest, to become dissatisfied with the generality of their own language, and so attempt to re-organise it to accommodate new information and ideas. In this way, the acquisition of more complex language and more specific understanding can be expected to reinforce each other.

There exists a constant stimulus to this process - an "external pull" from the environment, in Bruner's¹ sense - from the mass media's daily coverage of politics. From this source, what is available to children

1. "One finds no internal push to growth without a corresponding external pull, for, given the nature of man as a species, growth is as dependent upon a link with the external amplifiers of man's powers as it is upon those powers themselves." Jerome S. Bruner.

Jerome S. Bruner, Rose R. Olver, Patricia M. Greenfield et al (eds.)
Studies in Cognitive Growth (New York: John Wiley
 & Sons, 1966)

includes not only information and images, but vocabulary and models of the re-organised use of everyday speech.

Their re-organised use of the normal speech of childhood, as well as growing abilities to use and relate political terms to each other, indicate that childrens' thinking about politics can be developing.

A reminder presented from the philosophy of education¹, of what language does in terms of shaping - and sharing - experience, has relevance to the study of how children acquire social and political concepts.

Their attention is moulded by the forms of thought which have evolved with the language itself. In being taught a language, children are not only having this presented and explained, and to that degree initiated into a common way of life; but those who teach them language themselves draw upon a complex cultural tradition, made accessible through language.

Which is to say that the more complex forms of socialisation can only be realised through the medium of language, which establishes the terms of the existing social and intellectual structures.

The search for meaning in human affairs will tend to be in terms of these existing structures.

Language learning, for children, involves initiation into existing values and arrangements; its function is not, per se, to promote a critical mode of thought. If such modes of thought do arise, they may be linked with a child's spontaneous re-organisation of ordinary language; for in order to accommodate critical or independent thinking, new language structures will be needed.

Consideration of language-codes as mediators of cognitive styles demand a place in a study of early political development. The debate initiated

1. R. F. Dearden, The Philosophy of Primary Education (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968) p.115

by Bernstein¹ is a source of some pertinent and interesting questions; accepting that a restricted language-environment may well act as a constraint on political concept-formation, the issue remains of exactly what it is that is being inhibited. Could any such process of constraint be analysed? If it does occur, might both political language and understanding of working-class children be different from that of middle-class children? This would not be merely a matter of holding different opinions and attitudes, but would involve abilities to understand issues concerning relationships and abstractions. It can be further questioned whether some children might be able, within a restricted language-code, to yet develop personal strategies for expressing ideas and developing them.

It would seem that if Bernstein's conclusions regarding the effects, for children, of restricted access to language are carried to a logical conclusion, the process of concept-formation in politics may well be an area where some children are particularly vulnerable. For in the absence of "concrete" activity in the "concrete-operational" stage, language has a double task; that of both formulating new concepts, and of rendering explicit any tacit political understanding a child may possess. If to refine a concept is for some tacit dimension of knowledge, in Polanyi's² sense, to become explicit, the role of language can hardly be over-emphasised.

These are some of the questions concerning language and politics that are considered later in the study, in terms of the childrens' own words.

1. Basil Bernstein, "Education cannot compensate for society" New Society, 26th February, 1970, pp. 344-7, and "On the classification and framing of educational knowledge" in Michael F. D. Young (ed.) Knowledge and Control (London: Collier-Macmillan Ltd., 1971)
2. Michael Polanyi, Personal Knowledge (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958) Knowing and Being (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969) See for continuing discussion of this aspect of knowledge.

Early Schooling as Context and Source of Political Understanding

1. Childrens' Understanding of Freedom, Authority and Equality.

The notion of freedom is a pervasive one in Primary education. There is continuing debate concerning its nature, its intrinsic and extrinsic value for education, its desirable extension and its applications. The idea of freedom has close connections with what have come to be regarded as morally right teaching methods. Values such as creativity, critical thinking, that cultivation of the imagination which for a writer such as Mary Warnock¹ is the basis of quality in education, . . . are all considered by many teachers and theorists to be fostered by a maximum of freedom in the classroom. Such freedom is actualised by children 'learning by discovery', through organising their own projects, and by being, to a large extent, free to choose their own tasks and methods of pursuing them.

Interestingly, little, if any, attention has been paid, educationally, to the childrens' own attitudes to the concept of freedom as structured by authority; or to their ideas about (a) what constitutes a free situation, and (b) how much freedom is desirable, or indeed tolerable.

The implicit assumption of much 'progressive' theory in education is that freedom, to a child, is an absolute; the basic problem being one of how to increase it. This emphasis is to a large extent a reaction from nineteenth-century modes of teaching children, when the emphasis in education lay on the acquisition and storing of information, for which purpose memory provided the basic intellectual tool, and harsh discipline the primary motivation.

The present situation, in moving away from this tradition, has produced, in our Primary Schools, highly individual institutions. If the "traditional - progressive" polarisation is seen as a continuum, then individual schools find their particular ethos somewhere between the two extremes. Where exactly a school decides to 'settle', what particular educational values it supports, in terms of curriculum content and teaching methods, are matters for each institution, and particularly for the Head teacher to decide.

1. Mary Warnock, "Towards a Definition of Quality in Education" in Richard S. Peters (ed.) Oxford Readings in Philosophy: Philosophy of Education (Oxford University Press, 1973)

The position of a Primary Head teacher is one of considerable power. He, or she, has no formal obligation to involve staff or parents in decision-making in educational matters, or to run a school on democratic lines. In practice, a high degree of co-operation and consultation exist in the majority of schools - but they exist as the Head's policy.

The structure of power communicates itself to children at a very early age. Infants are quite aware that the Headmaster or Headmistress is the ultimate source of authority, and therefore that ultimate sources of authority exist. The internalisation of this concept is probably the most significant fact of early political socialisation, and it has taken place after a few weeks attendance at the Infants School - i.e. by the age of five. This is not to say that the Head will be feared or disliked; he or she may well be liked as a person. But children are aware that any interpersonal relationship is paralleled by their relationship with the role, and this is also true of their relationship with their class teacher.

Concepts of authority structures are built most firmly by those teachers who use the 'Head-image' in support of their own authority, i.e. by the relatively insecure, and this fact also communicates itself to children.

The fact that some adults find the process of keeping children constructively occupied easier than others, means that class-control is a highly variable attribute between individual teachers. It is to a large extent a personality function. Accordingly, some teachers are able to exert a charismatic authority that needs to draw very little on the formal authority of the role. Others need to lean more heavily on this, and some find their actual authority in the classroom is less than that invested in their role - they find difficulty in actualising their formal authority.

Children have little difficulty in perceiving that the links in a chain of authority are not all of the same strength, and of using this fact in ways that seem appropriate and interesting to them. Testing or 'trying-out' of teachers' authority styles is part of any group's initial response to a new arrival, and such exploration of personality seems to be the social parallel to childrens' need to physically explore their environment.

Conclusions are reached, experiences repeated, concepts are formed concerning the nature, legitimacy, functions, flexibility and desirability of authority.

Closely linked with the notions of freedom and authority are the set of ideas that express themselves as expectations of the system - of justice and fairness, of equality of treatment, built on the necessary assumption of purposes that promote the general good.

Childrens' concepts of fairness and equality, although manifestly linked to the idea of distribution of almost any commodity, i.e. of equal shares, find difficulty in approaching the logic of Aristotle's principle of distributive justice. That particular understanding of equality can be compared with perception of the Piagetian idea of conservation. To apply this, cognitive structures that enable children to free themselves from the 'here and now', and to realise that appearances can be deceptive, are necessary. What needs to be conserved is initial information; a child will need to be able to return to the beginning of his chain of thought and be able to assess what reasons are relevant when drawing conclusions. Efficiency here is not usually achieved until the age of eight or nine, and refers to concrete phenomena. The understanding of equality which can perceive the variables in a situation, cannot be expected to develop until adolescence. So far this study, childrens' ability to use the ideas of equality is assumed to have practical limitations.

However, the idea of fairness, of having voices in discussion, or equal rights, for example, to choose a game or activity, can be handled. This equality may be expressed democratically. Children's choosing games in turn, or according to majority preference, reflect normal behaviour. It might be asked whether this is based on principles of equal sharing, leading to the intuitive democracy of "one individual, one vote". In practice, this seems to be what happens; the idea of sharing equally becomes the procedural principle, ritualised as part of the game.

Whether children develop any concept of a 'public good' is another question of interest. The possibility is necessarily circumscribed, for what aspects of a 'public good' would children identify in school, or isolate as instances? If they themselves, as a group, are to be the

'public' concerned, the questions become easier because linked to the satisfaction of needs. One of childhood's basic emotional needs is for the security of being able to regard authority as benevolent¹. Experience of the 'helping' function of familiar authority, is transferred to public figures; the early expectations of "helping us" becomes elaborated into the idea of legitimate obligations.

'Us' can mean either the small circle, or it can mean a child's identification with the larger community "out there". With this acceptance of overlapping worlds, comes the realization that certain people work in certain ways to "help us", i.e. structures exist in order to serve the public good. On this basis it can be understood that ideas, goodwill, intentions, specific tasks, operate through institutions and networks.

The concept of helping, can, in a political sense, be used in various contexts and situations, and it is one which children have no difficulty in transferring and approving. If politics and political figures "help us", then they are in the "our" interest; logically, there must exist a common interest, to be served.

2. Childrens' Understanding of Rules and Government.

Childrens' concepts of the nature, purposes and justification of government are gained initially from the rule-governed situation in which they live, i.e. the home and the school. The earliest socialisation by the parents is designed to produce socially acceptable behaviour in their children, and most children, by the age of school entry, have internalised the familial norms securely enough for the school to build on them. The school sets out to achieve institutionally acceptable behaviour by inculcating support for the institution's norms, for the processes of education need an ordered and disciplined environment, if they are to continue. The notion of what constitutes order and discipline is not at issue, for these are variables in Primary Schools. The area for consideration is childrens' ideas about rules and government.

1. See discussion in Hess and Torney, The Development of Political Attitudes in Children. Ch. 2.

These ideas about rules and government in the school are linked with childrens' ideas about justice and fairness, with their attitudes to authority and the acceptance of influence. They are linked also with childrens' ideas about freedom - its safe limits and its uses. A child's view of rule-keeping and its associated concepts is likely to influence his attitudes towards government in the political sense, as he develops towards cognitive maturity. On the ways he relates to government will depend his expectations of, and confidence in, the society in which he lives, in terms of its stability, its principles and procedures. His view of these attributes will determine to a great extent the quality of his participation in them.

Do children rationalise and consciously support rule-keeping? Does the rationalisation, if it takes place, have any transfer to the idea of government on the national scale? It has been suggested by Piaget, that childrens' ideas on rule-keeping are linked with their developing capacity for making moral judgements and passes through cognitive developmental stages. Do their concepts of government develop significantly in this way between the ages of seven and eleven?

Kohlberg's¹ suggestion that although the cultural content of moral beliefs differs the development of their form is a cultural invariant, stresses the uniformities in the ways in which children conceive of rules, and ultimately internalise social principles from such experience. Initially, he claims they see rules as functioning by power and compulsion. Later, rules are seen as a function of security - they become instrumental to the satisfaction of needs, can be used for gaining rewards. Progress then is towards conceiving of rules as supporting some desirable or ideal end, and finally as principles connected with justice, supporting the accepted social order. His main point is that the sequence of levels of the understanding of rules is the basis of moral development, and that because of the relationships of the concepts involved, this development could not take place in any other sequential way.

1. Lawrence Kohlberg, "Stages of Moral Development as a Basis for Moral Education" in C. M. Beck, B. S. Crittenden and E. V. Sullivan (eds.) Moral Education: Inter-disciplinary Approaches (New York: Newman Press, 1971)

This is an interactionist position; maturation theories in moral matters are rejected, as is also the Kantian view that ways of understanding rules are 'moulds' into which experiences are fitted. Like Piaget and Bruner, Kohlberg insists that development occurs through the individual restructuring the ways in which he understands his environment. The question that remains is one of commitment; of how children become emotionally attached to principles, of the way in which the desire for justice, or the capacity for moral indignation, is awakened. Commitment might logically appear to be connected with the stage of being able to visualise some 'ideal' situation (for example, in which everyone was treated fairly), and to become apparent in childrens' use of moral imperatives.

Children and Ideological Thinking - The Perception of Alternatives in Politics

The concept of ideology is an abstraction. Its comprehension involves the ability to grasp and to contrast alternative political and social arrangements, and to bring to this task some understanding of relevant criteria for judging systems of social priorities.

Childrens' abilities to consider the world as it is, and formulate alternatives of how it might be, belong, in cognitive theory generally, to adolescence, as does also the commitment to such choices.

What can be expected of the seven to eleven year-olds here? How do children come to perceive the possibility of alternatives in political affairs? In the period of concrete operations (the Primary School age range), childrens' ability to understand alternatives in Piagetian terms is assessed largely in terms of their ability to handle mathematical or spatial concepts. The understanding, for example, that a certain distance can be measured in any direction from a given point is one early achievement. At a later stage, children are often given the opportunity to discover that the view of a three-dimensional model of a mountain top will vary according to the position from which an observer looks at it.

The child's understanding of practical alternatives arises from his earliest opportunities to make choices. When he can handle the concept of choice, a child is ready to have his range of possible alterna-

tives expanded. It can be argued that his needs then are not so much for 'freedom' to make his choices, as for appropriate information that will help him to make the judgements on which to base them.

To ask how a child is to acquire such information in order to make political judgements is to ignore the facts that children do acquire political information and do make judgements here. The quality of judgements, in terms of rationality and objectivity, will be a function of the development of a child's concepts of politics. The ability to be other than subjectively oriented, to be able, not only to arrange social and political priorities in time and space, but to visualise oneself as occupying two positions simultaneously, for example as a member of a small interest group and a member of the larger community, is the political interpretation of the spatial model. Its end stage is an essential freedom of thinking from the 'here and now' socially, the transcending of the narrowly self-interested point of view.

Appropriate information for making judgements might be regarded as those experiences which help children to construct their political world on as broad a foundation as possible. The information itself flows from the environment, to be processed by children as it is received, and categorised. The categorising process is likely to be limited to a narrow, or even single basis¹ for judgements, which will only be extended when children are able to structure relations between relations, or to make use of proportionality.

It has been suggested (Mealings, 1963²) that a mental age of at least thirteen is required before these mental processes are developed, and that more usually a mental age of fifteen or sixteen is necessary before the establishment of formal operational thinking. Beard³ points out that the differences in thinking are largely socially and educationally determined. It might usefully be added that the realm of discourse in which the thinking takes place is also of considerable relevance.

1. An example of such a single basis would be the conviction that politics is about prices, as a single concern.
2. Mealings, R. J., "Problem Solving in Science Teaching" Educational Review, XV 1963, pp. 194-207.
3. Ruth M. Beard, An Outline of Piaget's Developmental Psychology (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969) p. 17.

The comparison between conceptual development which takes place in science and mathematics, and that which takes place in political thinking, has to take into account the particular attributes of political concept-formation. Not only has motivation a direct and personal bearing, but the mechanism of political processes ensures that from time to time the social life of the country is pervaded by intensified political campaigning. This occurs not only during a General Election, but at times of strikes, shortages or greater or lesser crisis. A General Election is, of course, the strongest of these influences; its presentation of alternative personalities, structures, priorities and criteria for the common good, presents conceptual models, usually via the media, to which children are exposed, and which some of them find to be of interest.

It would be difficult to justify the disregarding of this exposure in cognitive development in politics. If there were to be, occasionally, a few weeks of highly intensified mathematical activity on the same scale, it could be expected to effect considerable differences in the general level of understanding and interest, even for those who had little or no previous experience of the subject. Add to this the immediacy of television news coverage, and, returning to the subject of politics, it is suggested that there might well be expected to occur some telescoping of certain aspects of Piaget's stages of cognitive development, to some extent, in this area. It is suggested that this takes place, particularly in intermittent periods of strong political activity, but that it also continues for those children who spend significant amounts of their leisure time watching television current affairs programmes or news.

It is not suggested that whatever is gained in this way is, in cognitive terms, operational. Children are not acquiring skills or knowledge. But they may well acquire the vocabulary and information useful to aid transfer and extension of limited social concepts to ideas that relate to the larger world, and extend their perceptions of alternative social arrangements.

How interested are children in politics? Individual motivation and levels of interest are of obvious importance for any account of learning; however, political learning is outside the sphere of institutionalised motivation. So it might be considered that, given any political learning

at all to have taken place for a child, he must have been, to that extent, interested in politics.

The affective dimension of cognition is neglected by Piaget, nor does he attach any vital importance to the effect on learning of a child's social environment. It is impossible to ignore either of these two factors when considering early political learning; indeed some authors^{1, 2} have suggested that such learning is based on emotional attachment to symbols, roles or personalities. Others³ would suggest that cognitive processes and styles, as mediated by language codes, are environmentally structured, in this country, by the influence of social class on that language.

It would seem hardly possible for political concepts to develop or exist without reference to moral, social and emotional, as well as cognitive development, unless the term 'political' is given a purely denotive character. Its function in that case would be to enable children to pin a label reading 'political' on institutions and procedures with no comprehension of their purposes. This is not the sense in which it is proposed to try to examine childrens' thinking, but rather to discover what awareness, if any, they have of politics as an area of human purposes and commitments.

1. Easton and Dennis, op. cit.

2. Hess and Torney, op. cit.

3. Bernstein, op. cit.

PART TWO

PART TWOCOLLECTING THE DATA

The aim of the study is to examine the hypothesis that development of political concepts in children takes place between the ages of seven and eleven, and that the course of such development is similar to that described by Piaget's theory of cognitive growth.

In order to examine this hypothesis it will be necessary to investigate the following aspects of childrens' thought:

1. Their possession of any information about politics.
2. What attitudes, if any, children have towards politics.
3. The content and nature of their thinking on politics, at various ages, as revealed by verbal questioning and discussion.
4. To discover whether children, in small groups, would be able or willing to generate their own discussions from questions presented to them.
5. Whether the ability, or interest in discussing political questions might appear to differ between the sexes in this age-group.
6. What sources of political ideas, and influences on political thinking might appear to be formative, or dominant.
7. The relating of their responses to a point of reference in the form of a body of established theory from current educational debate, drawn together for this purpose. This connection will, it is suggested, give the possibility by deeper insights into the childrens' responses, and may itself be illumined by interaction with the products of childrens' thought on the political world.

If concepts can be shown to be qualitatively different, between different age-groups of children, and if some of the important differences in their thinking on politics were to resemble Piagetian theory by progressing through consecutive, cumulative stages of cognition, then it would appear possible

- (a) that development in childrens' political concepts between the ages of seven and eleven takes place; and
- (b) to observe to some extent its significant stages and mechanisms.

Design of the Study

The study is designed on the basis of collection of data consisting of (a) childrens' written responses to questionnaires, and (b) their verbal responses to questions in discussions with small groups. Six schools were used, two in South-East London, two in Dagenham, Essex, and two in North-East Kent.

The number of children involved in answering questions were as follows:-

<u>School</u>	<u>No. of Children</u>
St. Mary's R.C. Primary, Eltham, London S.E.9. ..	228
Horniman Primary, East Dulwich, London	91
Knockhall Primary, Dartford, Kent	100
Bedonwell Primary, Erith, Kent.. ..	114
Hunters Hall Junior Girls School, Dagenham, Essex ..	200 *
Hunters Hall Junior Boys School, Dagenham, Essex ..	85
	<u>818</u>

* Extras 1.

Written data was collected from all the schools; discussion groups were used at St. Mary's, Eltham, Hunters Hall Junior Girls and Junior Boys Schools, Dagenham.

Choice of Schools Used

Several factors exert an influence here -

- (i) The practical necessity of using an accessible geographical area.
- (ii) The desirability of using differing types of locality within that area. Thus the Dagenham schools, situated in a large council estate in an area dominated by the Ford Motor Company as both employer and environmental influence, present one kind of environment; the two North Kent schools, Knockhall and Bedonwell, reflect recently semi-rural areas, increasingly changed by industrial development and major London to Kent coast road works. These schools draw from housing areas consisting of a mixture of council and privately owned housing, and might be described, socially, as working-class to lower middle class, with the former predominating. Of the two London schools used, Horniman Junior, situated at East Dulwich, represents a mixed and increasingly cosmopolitan area, while St. Mary's R.C. Junior School, at Eltham, serves a stable residential area, predominantly middle-class. The greatest environmental and social differences appear between the latter school and the Dagenham ones: in addition, the Dagenham children are segregated into single-sex schools, which is an unusual feature of organisation at the Junior stage of education.

Permission was gained to record discussions on politics with small groups of children in the Eltham and Dagenham schools, for the purpose of studying the styles and content of their approaches to politics. The childrens' ideas, attitudes, language, degrees of interest, their possession of information and its sources, are all of interest as aspects of their thinking. Also of interest are the possible influences of environment and school organisation on the childrens' development of political concepts.

- (iii) There is a problem in gaining access to Junior schools in order to pursue a research project in connection with politics. The schools used were those where existing professional contacts with the Head-teacher had established a situation of mutual

confidence, and co-operation could be requested, and explanations given of the proposed research project, on that basis. Even so, the idea of such projects as this comes as a surprise, and careful explanation of the purpose and methods of the study are essential. This is not surprising; the Head-teacher is responsible for whatever happens in his or her school, and allowing such a research project to take place may well result not only in questions from parents after the children have discussed their participation, at home, but in queries from staff who see their normal timetables interrupted. There is also the important question of what exactly is to happen to the children involved?

It is obvious, then, that the choice of schools for any researcher will be limited, and that the exercise itself must be carried out with care and consideration; for example, when interviewing children, alone, the making of a spare transcription or recording for presentation to the school would be a mark of such consideration, in that it informs the Head of exactly what happened to the children concerned, and of what was expected of them.

- (iv) There is a problem in deciding how many children shall be involved in a project such as this. The number (approx. 800) is the number of children who were available from the six schools approached. This number is considered to be viable for the purposes of this study in that it appears to be large enough for trends or characteristics to appear; and, comparatively, more children are involved than Greenstein's 700 of "Children and Politics". No child's written contribution was rejected or omitted.

The Questions Used

Thirty-eight questions were used in the questionnaires, as follows:-

1. What is the Prime Minister's name?
2. What do you think he does?
3. Does the Queen do any work?

4. What does she do that you know about?
5. Do you know what a law is? (Underline "a rule", "a game", "a story" or "don't know")
6. Is there a form captain or leader in your class?
7. Would you like to be a form captain?
8. Why?
9. Would you like to be a monitor?
10. Why?
11. Some games have rules. What are rules for?
12. Do you ever make up the rules?
13. Is it important to keep the school rules?
14. Why?
15. Would it be nice to do just as you like all the time?
16. Have you ever voted for anything?
17. Do you know what that means?
18. Do you know what Parliament is?
19. Do you know what people do there?
20. Do you know how people come to be there?
21. People who help to make the laws are called Members of Parliament. Do you think we could all do that if we wanted to?
22. Do you think only some special people could?
23. Do people who make the laws need to be very clever?
24. More clever than most people?

25. Do they need to be good?
26. Do they need to be as good as most other people?
27. What do you think politics is about?
28. What do you think political parties do?
29. Why do we have different parties?
30. Do you think the different parties agree about most things?
31. What kind of things might they not agree about?
32. How do we know a good Prime Minister?
33. What kind of things should a Prime Minister do?
34. What kind of things would a bad Prime Minister do?
35. What should happen to a bad Prime Minister?
36. How does a Prime Minister decide what to do?
37. Does anyone help him?
38. Do you know what the House of Commons and the House of Lords are?

These questions can be classified into four sets (1-10; 11-17; 18-26 and 27-38) on the basis of the kinds of concepts, or the attitudes they were intended to explore. Thus questions 1-10 are concerned with childrens' possession of basic information and attitudes towards the kinds of authority and responsibility accessible to them in the classroom. Questions 11-17 introduce a requirement for judgements to be made of familiar situations, probably for the first time, in connection with ideas of authority and freedom. The questions on voting follow, as any experience the children have of voting is usually linked to either choosing games, in peer groups, or filling classroom offices. Questions 18-26 require more specific political information than the earlier questions, and investigate to some extent childrens' attitudes towards elite groups and their accessibility. The final group, 27-38, make complex demands, and

with the exception of No. 38, require answers in terms of evaluative thinking in politics; the final question makes the strongest demand for specific information, and presents an opportunity for children to relate whatever they are able on the subject. There is some gradation of difficulty between the sets of questions, and between individual questions in each set. It was intended that all the participant children should be able to produce answers of some kind, while the more able would have the opportunity of presenting, or even extending, their ideas.

It would be unrealistic to expect answers to all the questions from all the children involved in the study. In most of the schools, a limited period of time was available for completing the questionnaires. Accordingly, as all the questions included were considered valuable, the whole range was used by having different sets worked in different schools; the essential aspect being that as wide an age-range as possible within the same school should contribute responses. The exception to this limitation was provided by St. Mary's School, Eltham. There, as it was possible to make several visits, the full range of questions was used. This was the school where questions 27-38 were used, in July, 1975, as by this time the earlier results obtained in all the schools had indicated that children might well be able to cope with more complex questions, and indeed might be interested in doing so.

In the earlier questionnaires, the questions relevant to politics and extracted for discussion were accompanied by other, general questions, concerning social aspects of school. This was for reasons of motivation, and to ensure that each child would have some experience of success in dealing with the questionnaire. On the last visit to St. Mary's School, however, this technique was changed and the children were then presented with a wholly politically-oriented questionnaire.

As it was possible to make three visits to St. Mary's School, Eltham, (December, 1973; February, 1974 and July, 1975) full use was made of the opportunities to question as many children as possible. Some children, therefore, have worked more than one set of responses, and accordingly a discrepancy arises between the number of responses and the number of children involved. Sets of responses have been checked against names, so that no child has been counted twice when the numbers of children involved in the

study are given. Indication of childrens' ages in particular sets of responses refers to the time at which these were obtained.

A study such as this can encounter slight complications by using a school over a period of time. However, the opportunity of establishing even a modest research project in the field of politics in a Junior school is extremely rare, and may well be unique. It is considered to be well worth the slight inconvenience of extracting the numbers of children participating from the total of responses collected, and, in the interests of accuracy, presenting an explanation of what has been done.

The information was collected from the schools involved between November, 1973, and July, 1975. The first exploratory visits were made to St. Mary's Junior School, Eltham, and Knockhall Junior School, Dartford, in November/December, 1973, in order to ascertain whether the questions were appropriate to childrens' abilities across the age-range. This was done by presenting questionnaires containing questions 1-17. As children throughout the age-range of seven to eleven were able to complete these, and their answers reflected different levels of thinking, the material was considered appropriate. It was later extended to two additional schools, Hunters' Hall Girls and Boys Junior Schools, Dagenham, during 1974.

In the Spring term of 1974 the following schools were visited: Horniman Junior School, Dulwich; Bedonwell Junior School, Erith, Kent; St. Mary's Junior School, Eltham. During the following Autumn term visits were made to Hunters Hall Junior Girls and Junior Boys Schools, where discussions with some of the children were also recorded. Questions 1-38 were used during this time.

In July, 1975, a further visit was made to St. Mary's Junior School, where questions 27-38 were used, and discussions recorded with some of the children.

During this entire period of collecting the data, there was considerable political activity. There were two General Elections in 1974, and in 1975 the referendum on Britain's proposed entry to the E.E.C. took place. In addition, shortly before the July visit to St. Mary's school there had been a by-election in that constituency.

Accordingly, childrens' responses were made against a background of political stimulation of a generally consistent level.

The questions were presented to children in the different schools as follows:-

Questions 1-10:

SCHOOLS								
	<u>St. Mary's</u>		<u>Knockhall</u>		<u>Hunters Hall</u>		<u>TOTALS</u>	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Age 7	*27	*27	-	-	-	32	27	59
Age 8	14	16	-	-	20	48	34	64
Age 9	15	10	15	10	25	54	55	74
Age 10	10	10	30	23	36	64	76	97
Age 11	5	3	13	9	4	2	22	14
	71	66	58	42	85	200	214	308 (522)

*In these numbers are included 15 boys and 14 girls who were given the questions in July, 1975, as there was then a class of new 7-year-olds available.

Questions 11-17:

SCHOOLS						
	<u>St. Mary's</u>		<u>Knockhall</u>		<u>TOTALS</u>	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
Age 7	12	13	-	-	12	13
Age 8	14	16	-	-	14	16
Age 9	15	10	15	10	30	20
Age 10	10	10	30	23	40	33
Age 11	5	3	13	9	18	12
	56	52	58	42	114	94 (208)

Questions 18-26:

SCHOOLS									
	<u>St. Mary's</u>		<u>Hunters Hall</u>		<u>Horniman</u>		<u>*Bedonwell</u>	<u>TOTALS</u>	
	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls		Boys	Girls
Age 7	-	-	-	32	8	7		8	39
Age 8	5	12	20	48	12	10		37	70
Age 9	21	19	25	54	11	13		57	86
Age 10	20	34	36	64	12	12		68	110
Age 11	14	15	4	2	1	5		19	22
	60	80	85	200	44	47		189	327
								(516)	

*As the children at Bedonwell Junior School had left blank the spaces provided on the questionnaires for names, evidence of sex remained unavailable. The numbers of children in each age group are as follows:

	<u>Bedonwell Junior School</u> Children
Age 8	60
Age 10	50
Age 11	4
<u>TOTAL</u>	114

Total children to whom this group of question were given:

630

Questions 1-10: 27-38.

AGE	SCHOOL		SCHOOL	
	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	<u>Girls</u>
7	15	14	-	32
8	-	-	20	48
9	14	11	25	54
10	12(5**)	11(7**)	29	64
11	29	19	2	3
Totals	70	55	76	201
	(125) (12**)		(277)	

* The timing of this last visit was arranged for late in the Summer term, in order that a larger group of children aged eleven might be found than existed in previous visits to schools. **Denotes numbers of children who answered questions 1-10 only.

Administering the Questionnaires.

These were presented to the children by their class teachers in the course of a normal day's teaching.

The instructions for administering the questions were as follows:-

1. Ask the children to write answers to the questions, explaining that this is not a test, but that they were being asked to help the researcher.
2. Help any children who have difficulty in reading the questions, by reading them aloud.
3. Do not help children with the content of their answers by explaining, reminding, or suggesting anything.
4. In the case of children who ask for help with spelling, please do this on an individual basis, quietly, and without using the blackboard.

Interviews and Discussions with Children.

Small groups of either two or four children, aged seven, eight, nine, ten and eleven respectively, were used. These discussions, although initially structured to the extent that particular questions were asked, were left sufficiently "open" for the children to be able to pursue any ideas or interests arising through questioning or conversation. Small numbers are used in order to encourage an informal, relaxed atmosphere, responsiveness between the children to each others' ideas and styles of communication, and willingness to not only contribute but to listen to each other. Observation of responses and interactions of the single-sex groups as compared with those of mixed groups is also of interest.

The greatest emphasis is placed on the significance of the childrens' own words. Written answers to questions can be expected to indicate levels of achievement, to demonstrate whether development in some basic political understanding (e.g. use of everyday language to express political ideas) has taken place. In contrast, discussion with different age-groups might be expected to illumine to some extent how that development takes place, by approaching political ideas through the words of the children themselves, free from the task of accommodating their thinking to the format of a written exercise.

On the final organisation of the written data, some attention is paid to the achievements of the nine-year-old stage. In order to do this, both the seven and eleven-year-old stages need to be taken into consideration; the former age as the chronological starting-point for this study, from which subsequent development may be measured. The latter, in order that childrens' achievement after the age of nine may be assessed, in terms of abilities acquired and changes having taken place in conceptualising. The written responses, then, indicate the childrens' established ideas, which are capable of written quantitative expression.

The conversations, on the other hand, are concerned with the processes of development, i.e. in the thinking revealed by childrens' first-time discussions of political matters, in which they were free to generate their interests as groups. Investigation of the development of these abilities appears to require continuity throughout the full age-range, so all age-groups between seven and eleven were involved. This is in order to explore, in such discussions, the possibilities of:-

- (i) demonstrating the close connection between the development of language and concepts, in politics;
- (ii) presenting the opportunity to observe any growth in understanding which takes place during the course of such discussion;
- (iii) providing opportunities to observe whether any consistent sex-linked differences in political understanding appear to be present.

It appears relevant, when comparing responses between the several groups of children, to do this on the basis of such criteria as:-

- (i) the circumstances of the political environment at the time the study was made;
- (ii) the childrens' differing personal attributes and social background;

Concerning (ii) above, interest centres on the idea of any links discernible between social class, linguistic competence and cognitive style in the childrens' perceptions of politics. In other words, whether there might be implications for politics in the socio-linguistic debate initiated by Bernstein¹. Of the notion of sex-linked differences in political cognitive style, this is at present problematic and elusive. The premise is basically logical; accepting the validity of modern work in human physical and psychological development, there would appear to be certain fundamental behavioural differences in the selection and processing

1. See Bernstein, B. "Social Class, Language and Socialisation" (1970) in Giglioli, P. P. Language and Social Context

of information from the environment, between the sexes¹. Whether these are the result of behavioural conditioning or innate dispositions or abilities, is not the point presently at issue, but rather whether any such differences reveal themselves in political concept-formation. If this should appear to be so, then further questions arise; for example, of the nature of such differences, their possible origins, and variation or persistence through different age-groups and social classes. Some aspects of this issue are explored in relation to the content and styles of childrens' responses during the course of this study.

It remains to present the approach used in interviewing children, which might be considered in terms of the problems involved. The basic problem is to gain the co-operation and responsiveness of the children in what are for them, unusual and artificial situations, so that they will be, firstly, willing to talk, and secondly, to talk about politics. To this end some structure, in the use of motivating factors, is required. Children need to see the situation as a rewarding, not a threatening, one, and this is most likely to result if they are given, initially, a pleasant stimulus as a group, followed by early experience of success as individuals.

The role of participant-observer requires a careful balance in relating to the subjects, particularly when asking them to participate in a completely new experience where they might possibly seek for guidance or instruction. Accordingly, the problem at the start of discussions or interviews with children is to establish rapport and interest, without in any way using material which teaches or leads them, yet gives a focus for attention.

For this purpose the cassette-recorder was found to have a use other than its technical one; demonstrating its workings to the children, allowing them to make a brief "test", i.e. non-politics, recording, and hear it played back, was found to be a worthwhile investment of a small amount of time. The children had been shown something of great interest to them, the situation had been "warmed up" in terms of establishing a relationship between group and interviewer, and a further problem solved by making,

1. See Mussen, P., Conger, J. and Kagan, J. Child Development and Personality
pp. 501-8.

implicitly, the point that this was not to be a lesson. It also seems important to make this point explicitly, especially when working with children who are used to a formal school atmosphere, by stressing that the interview is to be "just talking" - there are no "right answers" to find.

This opening, having been found productive, was retained.

Other aspects of organising the discussions which appeared to contribute to their success were, firstly, grouping. Interviewer and children, grouped around a microphone together, produce a different, more positive situation from one in which the children are further apart from each other, or even one in which the children form a group from which the interviewer remains apart, and by that token aloof. Proximity, the second contributory factor, allows for all the small but significant ways of encouraging the child who happens to be speaking - for example through facial expression, eye-contact, a signal to another child not to interrupt quite yet.

The subtle details of inter-personal communication are lost in the recording of interviews with children; however, they play an important part in establishing a successful interview or discussion. While the personality of the interviewer is an important factor in determining what kind of communication takes place, many personality-types are able to be at ease with children, which would appear to be the essential attribute. The vital aspect of this might be described as the ability to respect children, in the real sense of treating them as equals in rationality, and hope as a result to establish a relationship in which ideas can be exchanged.

The experience of success in the early stages in an interview can be constructed by presenting a very simple task to children. For the purposes of these discussions, newspaper cuttings containing photographs of party leaders were presented for recognition. This was intended to start discussion during which generative words might emerge, that would lead to further social and political ideas being produced. This technique is similar to methods used by Paolo Freire¹ in his work for political literacy, and indeed it may be considered that the two situations, environmentally so different

1. Freire, P. Cultural Action for Freedom (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1972) Appendix.

yet contain, conceptually, some common elements.

In considering the problems of encouraging children to respond to an interview or discussion situation, it might be most informative to suggest that an interviewer working with the seven to eleven age-range draws upon certain of the skills of the teacher, while carefully avoiding drawing upon the role. Further, that each interview, discussion or conversation is unique, and requires to be explored in terms of its own realities.

PART THREE

THE EMPIRICAL COMPONENT OF THE STUDY

This presents data collected from childrens' written answers to questionnaires, and also from recorded discussions with children in their schools. There are five sections.

PART THREETHE EMPIRICAL COMPONENT OF THE STUDY
(Comprising Five Sections)

The organising principle of this part of the work is the emphasis placed on studying each separate age group's written answers to questionnaires presented to them.

The questions used are grouped into three broad, related themes. The first section deals with questions relating to the theme of "What is politics?" This is represented by the following questions:-

What do you think politics is about?

What do you think political parties do?

Why do we have different parties?

Do you think the different parties agree about most things?

What kind of things might they not agree about?

What is the Prime Minister's name?

What does the Prime Minister do?

How do we know a good Prime Minister?

What kind of things should a Prime Minister do?

What kind of things would a bad Prime Minister do?

What should happen to a bad Prime Minister?

How does a Prime Minister decide what to do?

Does anyone help him?

What does the Queen do that you know about?

Do you know what the House of Commons and the House of Lords are?

These questions are examined in terms of the thinking of each year's age-group of children between seven and eleven. Childrens' written responses to each question are quoted, and these are separated according to sex and the different schools representing different areas.

Also given are the numbers and percentages of children in each year who were able to answer each question. "Able to answer" is used here to refer to children who were able, to some extent, to use a political frame of reference, however narrow, when replying.

The characteristic features of the first section are (i) the directly political references of the questions, and (ii) the depth of treatment given to the questions, in that each is treated as a separate entity as considered by children in each successive year of the five year-groups.

Section two deals with the responses to questions representing the theme of childrens' attitudes to rule keeping, freedom, authority and personal aspirations towards authority and responsibility within the school.

The following questions are used to illustrate this theme:-

Do you know what a law is?

Is there a form captain or leader in your class?

Would you like to be the form captain?

Would you like to be a monitor?

Why?

Some games have rules. What are rules for?

Do you ever make up the rules?

Is it important to keep the school rules?

Why?

Would it be nice to do just as you like all the time?

The questions in this section are treated differently from those in the first section, in the manner of presentation of the childrens' responses. Each question is treated as a vehicle for presenting one continuing picture of development through the age range, of the childrens' thinking on that topic.

Section three presents some questions which show the direct political application of the previous section's more personal ones. They are aimed at investigating childrens' attitudes to governing groups, and ideas on how open access to elite groups might be.

The following questions are used:-

Do you know what it is to vote?

Do you know what Parliament is?

Do you know what people do there?

Do you know how people come to be there?

Could we all be Members of Parliament if we wanted to be?

Do you think only some, special people, could?

Do people who make laws need to be very clever?

More clever than most people?

Do they need to be good?

As good as most other people?

Why?

As most of these questions required either "Yes" or "No" as a response from the children, the results are expressed as numbers and percentages of the age-groups concerned, again on a basis which allows for a complete developmental picture to emerge for the age-range. Where written responses were also obtained, as where children were asked for reasons, these - or typical selections - are also quoted.

These three sections present different ways of organising the data, each considered to be the most useful and informative for the particular content and style of the questions and responses concerned.

Section four deals with the childrens' discussions in small groups, and comparisons presented between results obtained from the two schools where these were carried out. Discussions took place in each school with each age-group, enabling comparisons between similar groups of children to be made.

In section five, the overall development in childrens' thinking on politics is discussed in terms of the development of their political language; this forms the final section of Part Three.

SECTION ONE: What is Politics?

(Questions used: nos. 1,2,4; 27-38)

The children involved in this section of the study were from Hunters Hall Junior Girls' and Junior Boys' Schools, Dagenham; St. Mary's Roman Catholic Junior School, Eltham, and Knockhall Junior School, Dartford.

The children from the latter school were involved only in the questions concerning the specific roles of the Prime Minister and the Queen, in the age-groups nine, ten and eleven.

The numbers for each age-group and school are given with each question, after the childrens' quoted responses.

Original spellings are sometimes quoted. This is in order to illustrate individual childrens' ability to communicate meaning, even with very limited literacy.

Seven-year-old childrens' written responses to the questionnaires:-

SCHOOL	NUMBERS OF CHILDREN INVOLVED		TOTALS
	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	32	-	32
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	14	15	29
	13 (answered 3 questions)	12 (answered 3 questions)	25
	59	27	86

Written Responses of the Seven-Year-Old Children

Question: What do you think politics is about?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School(Dagenham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

I think politcs is abote making ruls (sic).

I don't know have to do something with Lauber.

I think it is about histrey.

People talk with other people.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

Science.

Labour and Libral parties.

Parties.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:

Voting.

The priminester.

Parties.

It is a part(y).

It is something about voting.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	4/32 (12.5%)	-
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	3/14 (21%)	5/15 (33%)

Question: What do you think political parties do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

Talk about things.

Play gam(e)s.

The(y) is political.

They make laws.

Because they are people's party.

They vote.

About th lor (sic).

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

W(r)ite about other people.

Vote if they want thing(s).

To see who will be Prime Minister.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:

They vote.

They tok to gathe (talk together).

To government.

Help the Queen.

Find out if we go out of the comon (sic) market or stay in.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	7/32 (22%)	-
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	3/14 (21%)	6/15 (40%)

Question: Why do we have different parties?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

Becose (sic) there are different names.

Becaese of all sorts of things.

We have different parties so that there is Labour.

To talk about things.

Beycos it is in difrun plasis (sic).

Because every party does a different thing.

Because of Laber and Librall.

They tell us about histrey.

Otherwise we get bored.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

So that we can vote.

Because Prime Minister ned a teme (sic).

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:

So that one person doesn't have to be Prime Minister all the time.

Because otherwise we would have everything the same.

People like different people.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	9/32 (28%)	-
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	2/14 (14%)	3/15 (20%)

Question: Do you think the different parties agree about most things?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 20 (62%)

No - 6 (19%)

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 2 (14%)

No - 3 (21%)

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:

Yes - 3 (20%)

No - 4 (27%)

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	26/32 (81%)	-
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	5/14 (36%)	7/15 (47%)

Question: What kind of things might they not agree about?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

Who is going to be Prime Minister.

Being someone.

Prices.

Ivorys thing (everything).

They might not agree about god.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

Things going up.

Do not have enuf money.

Being part of Eupoen (sic).

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:

Who should be Prime Minister.

People being in palement (sic).

London Bridge was to open every (h)our.

Who is Prime Minister.

Staying in or out of the Common Market.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	5/32 (16%)	-
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	3/14 (21%)	5/15 (33%)

Question: What is the Prime Minister's name?

Number of seven-year-old children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	18/32 (56%)	*
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	22/27 (81%)	24/27 (89%)

* The seven-year-old boys in this school were not considered capable (by the school) of completing the written questions, and consequently were not given the opportunity to do so.

Question: What does the Prime Minister do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

He signs important papers.
 The Prime Minister look after the connortay.
 I think he rules the conutrey.
 He helps people.
 He tells us the news.
 He is on teley.
 The Prime Ministers the Govment.
 I think he makes prices higher.
 He voters.
 He tavles round weld.
 He looks after our country.
 He signs letters.
 He does the noes (news).
 He tells all about the world.
 He is aPrinse and woks for the aremy.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

He plays golf.
 Leader.
 He works on papays.
 He goes to important meetings.
 He does work.
 News.
 He tells people to bluid houses.
 He goes to very important meetings.
 He puts prises on shop t(h)ings.
 He send people to gaol
 He makes peace.
 He juges (2).
 He writes letters (2).
 Writes about things.
 He talks to the M.Ps.
 He tells us the rules.
 He wrights things for the Queen.
 Tell you what to do.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:

He goes to very important meetings and says his speech.

He works with the govermant.

Opens letters.

He sometimes torks with orther people.

He tell people to do thin(g)s.

He writes letters.

He rules ingland.

Makes things go up.

He talks to the M.Ps.

He rules over the country.

He does some writhing (sic).

Judges.

Writes letters.

He helps in the budget and finds out about the voting.

He works but has some rest.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	15/32 (47%)	-
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	20/27 (74%)	16/27 (59%)

Question: How do we know a good Prime Minister?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

We know because of the rules he makes.

He will tell you things.

Bacos he has to dow good wuc (work).

Becas he is on teley (sic).

Becos we do.

If he does things good.

Check him.

Because they test him first.

They test him.

By asking him History questions.

Bekos th prisis (sic).

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

He witr (sic) a lot.

If he is kind to people.

See what he does.

Because he gives the works(er-s) more money.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:

He goes through a test.

By good rules.

Because he would do good things.

He gives good prices.

By his work.

Put him on a commando cus (sic).

The test him.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	11/32 (34%)	-
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	4/14 (29%)	7/15 (47%)

Question: What kind of things should a Prime Minister do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

The Prime Minister should look af(ter) the country.

He should make evrey body happy.

Help people and do things for people.

Make good rooles (sic).

Say the news.

Has tu dow wuc (sic).

Work hard and writ a lote (sic).

I think he should not put prices higher.

Give medals.

The Prime Minister should look after the pepple (sic).

Do ruls (sic).

He should look after our contrey.

Tell us news that's what he should do.

Make laws.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

Help people.

Write about things and about people.

Tell people to pay taxes.

He should give fair price on things.

Give more money to the workers.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:

Good things.

Make good rules.

Look after the country.

Writing and work.

Good work.

Find out about the voting.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	13/32 (41%)	-
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	5/14 (36%)	6/15 (40%)

Question: What kind of things would a bad Prime Minister do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School(Dagenham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

He mit not tell the truth.

Put people in prison and tell people off.

He mite tak paprs that dusnt blog to him.

Say the rong things.

He dus bad wule (rule) all day.

Do bad things.

Do it all rong.

Put all things higher like prices.

He might kill people.

Do norty rules like you may do eneyfink.

Get out of the job.

He would not look after our contrey.

Rob us.

No good things.

Do things all wrong.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

Write wrong things.

He might vote on unimportant things.

Cuts down the workers money.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:

Bad things.

Make silly rules.

Make the prices go up to high.

Crush old houses that people live in.

Bad work.

Silly things.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	15/32 (47%)	-
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	3/14 (21%)	6/15 (40%)

Question: What should happen to a bad Prime Minister?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

He should not be a Prime Minister (6).
 He would be put into prison by the police.
 He wöd go to prison for ever.
 He will go to prison (2).
 He should go to jail (3).
 He will lose the job.
 He should be sacked.
 He should be moved out of the place.
 The bad Prime wod let the good Prime come on.
 He wood get shot or hagd if he was a Bad PM.
 He should die.
 He would get fotid (voted) out.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

Killed
 He will not be Prime Minister any more.
 Got sacked.
 He should be made to retier.
 The queen would get a new Prime Minister.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:

He should be sacked.
 He would be chucked out.
 He would be frid (fired).
 Put him in prison.
 He will be put in prin.
 He would be thrown out.

Number of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	20/32 (62%)	-
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	4/14 (29%)	6/15 (40%)

Question: How does a Prime Minister decide what to do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

He thinks.

Bi going to metins.

By thinking very hard.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

He thinks.

By thinking.

People help him.

By asking people what they would do if they would do.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:

He votes.

By thinking.

He decides with men.

Political party tells him.

By the queen orders.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	3/32 (9%)	-
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	4/14 (29%)	5/15 (33%)

Question: Does anyone help him?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 10 (31%)

No - 16 (50%)

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 2 (14%)

No - 1 (7%)

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:

Yes - 5 (33%)

No - 2 (13%)

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	26/32 (81%)	-
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	3/14 (21%)	7/15 (47%)

Question: What does the Queen do that you know about?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

The Queen sits on a throne.

No, I do not think the Queen does any work.

She helps people.

She writes letters.

She calls a servant.

She writes things on paper and goes to other countries.

She rides a horse.

She goes round the world.

She gives medals out.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

She looks after the palace.

She rules the country.

Meets people.

Housework, meets people.

She reads papers from people.

She goes tramping.

She tells people what to do.

She reads papers from people.

She wears jewels (2).

She travels to look after people.

Looks after the Kingdom (2).

She rules.

She talks.

She writes letters to people who are a hundred.

She tells the government.

Offes (sic) work.

She does a parade.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:

She goes to tramping of the colour and receives the new colour.

Rules the country.

Visits places.

She does work.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:

(Cont'd ...)

She reads speeches.

She does messegs.

She helps to rule two countries, Australia and England.

Goes to another country.

She goes to parts of G.B.

Looks after her children.

Makes the beds.

She does writhing (writing).

Writes letters and rule the country.

She helps the mayor.

She visits different places at different times.

Numbers of children able to answer the question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	12/32 (37%)	-
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	13/27 (48%)	12/27 (44%)

Question: Do you know what Parliament is? Do you know what people do there?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

Yes, they cook.

Yes I do.

Sometimes the aiforc came and bloow it up (sic).

Voting.

They do a lot of work.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

Group round and discuss.

They make laws and biuld biuldings (sic).

Choose the govemnt (sic).

Group round and discuss the laws. People vote for them.

They make laws.

They do lots of work.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:

They make ruls.

They decide laws.

They build houses.

Talk.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	5/32 (16%)	-
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	6/27 (22%)	4/27 (15%)

Question: Do you know what the House of Commons and the House of Lords are?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:
 The House of Lords - that is all Lords.
 In the house of Commons they have meetings.
 The House of Lords is when you go to Church or Sunday School.
 It is a place where you can make lords.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:
 The House of Commons is in London.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:
 They are both Members of Parliament.
 The Queen lives in it.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	4/32 (12%)	-
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	1/14 (7%)	2/15 (13%)

Eight-year-old childrens' written responses to the questionnaires:-

SCHOOL	NUMBERS OF CHILDREN INVOLVED		TOTALS
	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	48	20	68
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	16(answered 3 questions)	14(answered 3 questions)	30
	64	34	98

It was only possible to work with the eight-year-old children of the two above schools on these questions, except for the questions concerning the specific activities of the Prime Minister and the Queen.

Children in all three schools were involved in those.

Question: What do you think Politics is about?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

Abot the primster.

Politics is about your work.

I think politics are people, like the priminsta.

I think politics is about important business.

I think it is Election.

They digust (discuss) thing.

It is about people.

Hospitals.

Politics is people voting.

Politics is where people sit down and talk.

I think politics are against the Law.

It is about the law.

The poele (people) on the moen.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Boys:

The labour.

It's a sort of meeting.

It is where people learn when they leave school.

Government.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

Girls	Boys
13/48 (27%)	4/20 (20%)

Question: What do you think political parties do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

They talk about Election (2).

Political parties do talking and things like that.

They work all the time.

I think political parties have eletons.

I think parties make rules.

They degust (discuss) things.

They do the elcection.

They talk about important things.

They tack sets (take seats) in a speshull hows.

They make the Elecs.

They tell people on television to vote conservative.

Elicons.

They tack about things.

They dised (decide) things.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Boys:

Cose of the votes.

They stop the prices.

Have a meeting.

They learn.

Talk about different things (2).

Argue.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

Girls	Boys
15/48 (31%)	6/20 (30%)

Question: Why do we have different parties?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

Because then the parties can agree.

Because the wot (won't) be the same.

Because they have different names.

Because if there were seven parties all saying the same thing it would all be a waste of time.

Beous they are difrent (2).

Because we're not ipportant people.

As we have to vote for different men.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Boys:

So we can have different votes.

Because one party would win.

Because if there was one he would have to be it.

For elections.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

Girls	Boys
8/48 (17%)	4/20 (20%)

Question: Do you think the different parties agree about most things?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 17 (35%)

No - 10 (21%)

Sometimes - 3 (6%)

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Boys:

Yes - 8 (40%)

No - 4 (20%)

Sometimes - -

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

Girls	Boys
30/48 (62%)	12/20 (60%)

Question: What kind of things might they not agree about?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

Not having parties.

They might not agree about who is the Prime Minister.

Countrys and Pole (poll?).

They might not agree about the Elesn.

Good working and things like that.

They might not agree about Mr. Heath being Primister.

They might not agree about who rules the country.

Changing the law.

Food.

Thing(s) they can not do.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Boys:

Politics.

Selling house.

Who is Prime Minister.

Prices.

Money.

That one party might say I win.

Letting one partie win.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

Girls	Boys
12/48 (25%)	7/20 (35%)

Question: What is the Prime Minister's name?

Numbers of children able to answer this question correctly:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys	Totals
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	28/48 (58%)	16/20 (80%)	44/68 (65%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	15/16 (94%)	13/14 (93%)	28/30 (93%)

Question: What does the Prime Minister do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

He goes to 10 Downing Street and talks about rules with other people.

The Prime Minister does a job.

I think he makes sure that everything is under control.

The P.M. works.

He helps the country to not have a fight.

He tells what is happening around the world.

The P.M. goes round working for countrys.

He talks to people.

The P.M. tells the country not to fite.

He speaks.

I think he puts the broadcast on television.

He does prices.

He builds the houses and shops and helps the people.

He tells the people to vote.

Goes to meetings to organise things.

He does the news.

He makes the prices go up.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Boys:

Rule England.

Works.

He gets the prices down.

He keeps the Labour going.

Vote.

Take charge of the country.

He puts the prices up and down.

He does elections.

He votes for Labour.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

He makes laws, he helps us.

He looks after the country.

To rule lands and people like a Prime Minister does.

He deals with polotics (sic).

To protect his country, his job is Prime Minister.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

(Cont'd ...)

He looks after our country.

He goes on business trips.

He works and writes letters to people in other countrys.

He has to look after his land and people.

Work in an office.

Tells us if we go wrong or something.

He makes important reports for the newspapers.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eight-Year-Old Boys:

Has meetings with other Prime Ministers of the world.

He gives letches (lectures?).

He looks after England.

Govern the country to have talks for peace.

He looks after the things that go wrong with the country.

Tells you what to do or not.

His job is looking after things.

He talks to the people.

He goes to talks and controls and settles things.

He goes sailing in his spare time.

He makes rules up in Parliament and goes to meetings.

He keeps the country in order and has talks with other Prime Ministers.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Degenham)	21/48 (44%)	6/20 (30%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	10/16 (62%)	11/14 (78%)

Question: How do we know a good Prime Minister?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

Because he works hard (3).

If he acts good.

When he talks about good things (2).

By the way he does it (2).

If he is good to you who is Prime Minister.

You would not by the way they treated you.

If he looks after the country well you can tell that he is a good Prime Minister.

He talks like a Minister.

Because they test him (3).

If he gives good laws.

If he does good things.

Because we have seen one.

As he would be the leader of the party.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Boys:

If he is not so bossy (bossy).

If he is clever.

Because he is on the telly.

How rule the country.

He helps us.

If he smiles.

By having votes.

By him winning the Election and putting the prices to the right level.

By talking (2).

By the look of him (2).

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

Girls	Boys
19/48 (40%)	12/20 (60%)

Question: What kind of things should a Prime Minister do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

He should look after the country (6).

Work all day long.

Go to countrys.

A Prime Minister should do things about the shops prices (2).

Look after the countries.

The Prime Minister should talk about elections.

He should go and have talks about food.

A Prime Minister should put the prices of things down.

Make things right and talk about things.

He should work hard (4).

He should give good laws (2).

He tel rite thing.

He should do his work.

He should work hard to rule his contrey.

He should do meetings and sort things out.

The Prime Minister should do news.

Be kind (2).

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Boys:

He should help us (4).

Own politics.

Writing.

Go roud countery.

Vot(e).

He should win the election.

Look after the country.

Work.

Put the prices down.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

Girls	Boys
28/48 (58%)	12/20 (60%)

Question: What kind of things would a bad Prime Minister do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

Naughty things.

He would want everything for himself (2).

Get ever(y)one out of the countrys.

A bad Prime Minister would kill good people.

A bad Prime Minister might do a bad thing.

He wood make everone does as he said.

He would not look after the count(r)y atall.

Bad things (2).

He would lie (2).

He might give bad laws (2).

A (bad) Prime Minister hits children with a stick.

He would never agree with things.

Not work hard.

Do things rong.

Take all the money.

Take all the food.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Boys:

He migh(t) put taxis up.

Shout.

Rise the prises.

He will be wicked.

Say I win, I win.

He would put the prices up.

Not look after the country.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

Girls	Boys
20/48 (42%)	7/20 (35%)

Question: What should happen to a bad Prime Minister?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

Get sacked (7).

He would not be a Prime Minister any more (5).

Put in prison (3).

Someone would change the Prime Minister.

He should be killed.

He would lose his job.

Some one els wood become prime minister.

The bad Prime Minister will be hanged.

He would get set to jayl (4).

He would be thrown out (2).

He might die.

Get the sack and have another election.

He would be sacked for not doing work.

He should be told you are not a Prime Minister.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Boys:

He should be put in prison.

Get a new one (2).

Get slung out.

He will go in Jail.

He should be sent away.

He would be fired.

Other men would take over him.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

Girls	Boys
30/48 (72%)	8/20 (40%)

Question: How does a Prime Minister decide what to do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

He is told what to do so he knows.

By working it out.

The Prime Minister would get help.

When he is tell to do something.

He asks.

By looking out other people doing it.

No-one helps the Prime Minister.

He can do what he likes.

He asks people.

He toks to his members.

He gets a lot of people together and talk about it.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Boys:

He studys hard.

Look in a book.

He finkes about it.

By talking to the country.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

Girls	Boys
11/48 (23%)	4/20 (20%)

Question: Does any-one help him?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 27 (56%)

No - 11 (23%)

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Boys:

Yes - 10 (50%)

No - 4 (20%)

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

Girls	Boys
38/48 (79%)	14/20 (70%)

Question: What does the Queen do that you know about?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

She rides her horse and goes out with her husband.

She helps people.

She is our Queen and helps the country.

She does writing and she goes to football to see what is happening.

She goes to visit countrys.

Sometimes she goes to the Town Hall.

She goes over the world.

She sits on a big chair.

She sends notes to the Prime Minister.

The Queen writes important letters.

She goes to visit important people.

She walks slow.

She goes in the carreg (sic).

She sits in her chair and talks. We saw her on television and she is the Queen of England.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Boys:

Rule politics.

Writes letters.

Rules country.

Goes about in a coach.

Takes charge of London.

She leads the Parliament.

She goes on trips.

She gave the Cup to Liverpool 1973.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

Calls the servant all the time.

She has to get ready for festivals such as a royal wedding.

She goes to royal weddings and makes lots of speeches.

She goes to talks with other people.

She rides a horse.

She goes to trouping of the colour.

She sits in her palace.

Writes letters and does speeches.

She helps out with things.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eight-Year-Old Boys:

Stops quarrels with the Prime Minister.

Helps the country (2).

The Queen argues things.

She presents prizis (sic).

Goes to other countries.

She signs papers.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	14/48 (29%)	13/20 (65%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	7/16 (44%)	7/14 (50%)

Question: Do you know what the House of Commons and the House of Lords are?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Girls:

The House of Commons is a talking place.

The House of Lords is a court.

In the House of Lords they are all Lords.

They are very inpotint (important) to the Minsts.

The House of Commons is a big house where people visit it.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eight-Year-Old Boys:

The House of Commons is were the priministers meet.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

Girls	Boys
5/48 (10%)	1/20 (5%)

Nine-year-old childrens' written responses to the questionnaires:-

SCHOOL	NUMBERS OF CHILDREN INVOLVED		TOTALS
	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	54	25	79
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	11 10 (answered 3 questions)	14 15 (answered 3 questions)	50
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	10 (answered 3 questions)	15 (answered 3 questions)	25
	85	69	154

Question: What do you think politics is about?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Asking people what to do.

Political parties (2).

Voting (2).

Politics is about parliment.

I think it is about laws (4).

Prime Minister.

History.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

It is about Pallerment.

Trying to look after the country.

Governing the country (2).

Protect the country.

Money.

It is about the State of Britain.

Makeing laws.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Doing thing(s) for the country.

It is about our country.

I think it is about the laws of the country and the way we make and spend money.

About the laws.

People who belong to parties that help you.

Work to do with the Prime Minister.

Politics is about the parties.

I think politics is about the country.

Ruling London.

It is about who should be the next Prime Minister.

I think it is about when Conservative, Labour and Liberal disagree about something.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

They are the parties like Edward Heath.

About the wo(r)ld.

Somebody who belongs to a party to help the country.

They help the guvern.

Laws and how to keep the country.

Politics keep Britain on there feet.

Governing the country.

Ruling the country.

I think it is about the government parties.

Labour, Conservative, Libarel.

I think it (is) to help the country.

Ruling London.

The ruling of the country.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	12/54 (22%)	8/25 (32%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	11/11 (100%)	13/14 (93%)

Question: What do you think political parties do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

It is where people sit and talk.

They talk about electshions.

Talk.

Talk to each other.

Political parties are election parties.

They vote (4).

Look after us.

They help the countrys.

Make better laws.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Talk about the electoin.

They talk about what to do.

Vote against each other (2).

To decus.

Put prices up and down.

They make speechs at meetings.

Make laws.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Help the country.

Help people.

To help with the country and vote.

I think that they try to do things they think is right concerning the country and the people.

They vote.

They help you.

Where the Prime Minister meets with other people.

The parties try and make people vote for them.

Discuss important things.

Have votes.

I think political parties argue about something.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Vote (2).

They try to decide what is right.

Help us.

They deskus (sic).

They do what they think best.

To stop crises.

Auganise things.

Help people.

I think they deal with keeping Britain going.

Look after the country.

They do things that's best for the country.

Discuss important things.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	12/54 (22%)	8/25 (32%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	11/11 (100%)	13/14 (93%)

Question: Why do we have different parties?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

We have different parties to look after us.

To think about uffer (other) people.

To do a lot of work.

So we can vote.

Because they are not all the same.

Because they are many man (men).

To see which man is going to be Prime Minister (3).

Because if it was all one party it would be too big.

We have different parties because some parties are big and small.

Because they have different meetings.

We have different parties because . . . we no all about election.

I think we have different parties to help us (5).

We have different parties for voting.

To vote for different people.

So we can vote for them (3).

So that we have a choice of people to look after the country.

We have different parties so that we have a Priminster each.

So that we don't get mixed up.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Because people might not like one party.

To help the country.

Because when we vote one comes through (2).

If we have the same parties it will be boring each year.

Because they want different Prime Ministers (2).

For elections.

Because we would get fed up with the same one.

Because we would get fed up with the same Prime Minister.

To compeet again ech over.

So we can have different Prime Ministers.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

So they won't always agreed the same thing.

To see who wins.

We have different parties so that we can decide . . .
how we want to govern.

To vote for the Priminester (sic).

Because they work for different things.

To see if other parties have better suggestions.

So that (a) party is not a government all the time.

Because they all have different ideas.

So we can vote.

So people who think parties are right can choose
which is right.

We have different parties because if we just had one
person we wouldn't have anybody chosen for Prime Minister.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Because we want different leaders.

To vote against each other.

So if one is bad we get a new one.

We are different parties.

Because they think differently.

So that parties would be ? Prime Minister.

To have competitions.

So each time we don't get a different government.

Because some have different schemes.

So we can vote for different people.

To see which party has the most (people?).

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	22/54 (41%)	12/25 (48%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	11/11 (100%)	11/14 (79%)

Question: Do you think the different parties agree about most things?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 28 (52%)

No - 12 (22%)

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Yes - 4 (16%)

No - 9 (36%)

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 5 (45%)

No - 5 (45%)

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Yes - 4 (29%)

No - 8 (57%)

Sometimes - 2 (14%)

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	40/54 (74%)	13/25 (52%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	10/11 (91%)	14/14 (100%)

Question: What kind of things might they not agree about?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Most things.

They do not agree about conncel(sic).

People running on football grounds.

They might not agree about politics.

Prices (2).

Like chuking Wilson out of his job.

Elections.

They might not agree with executing murdereres.

They don't agree about nothing apart from elections.

About different Labour.

They might not agree about the votes what people give in.

Giving people more money.

How to run the country.

A man might say someone is a good leader somebody else might not.

About some laws.

Doing work.

Building home (5).

About food going up.

They might not agree about giving rises.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Changing all the laws in England.

Throwing bombs.

Having anover Prime Minister.

Mr. Heath.

Talking about who should come thouw.

The prices of things (3).

About who will be Priminster (2).

Some laws.

Prices pentions rents.

About food and pensions and rates.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Buildings.

Flowers.

Voting each other's parties.

About how to govern country and who governs it.

The Priminester.

Getting out of the Common Market.

Having extra supermarkets.

What people do.

Wages and inflation.

A person . . . to be Prime Minister.

They might not agree about whose (sic) the next Prime Minister.

About prices of things.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Who is Prime Minister (2).

Fuel crisis.

Building houses.

Prices.

Housing.

Keeping Britain out of Europe and elections.

Holding banners, etc.

Income tax, mortgages, etc.

Prices of food.

They might not agree about things that we get from other countries.

How to look after the country.

Money.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	24/54 (44%)	13/25 (52%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	10/11 (91%)	13/14 (93%)

Question: What is the Prime Minister's name?

Number of nine-year-old children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	29/54 (54%)	25/25 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	21/21 (100%)	27/29 (93%)
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	8/10 (80%)	10/15 (67%)

Question: What does the Prime Minister do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

He puts food prices up.

Elections and speeches.

Looks after the government.

Rules his part of the country.

He is on television.

He pays the wages to the men who work.

He keeps his eye on the prises (sic).

He looks after the Common Market.

Making sure that everything is right for the people.

Helps the Queen rule the world.

He rules the country.

He looks after all the country and talks about money, tax, etc.

He has meetings and talks to other people.

He forms a government; he enters and withdraws us from the Common Market.

He works out problems of the world.

Works in Parliament.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Looks after the country.

In charge of rent and wages.

Rules the workers.

Leads the country.

A lot of talking about Labour and Conservatives.

He keeps the country carm (sic) and he looks after the world.

He does elections.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

I think he makes final decisions and governs England.

He leads the government of parliament.

He tells us to put prices up or down.

Looks after people.

He does things about things going wrong.

In charge of meetings.

In charge of a comitey (sic).

I think the P.M. settles things.

Gives orders to people.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

He talks to other Prime Ministers.
 Works in the Houses of Parliament.
 Discusses political matters.
 Travels around.
 He makes the laws.
 He works in politics.
 Rules the government.
 Talks with Unions.
 He trys to control inflation.
 He auganises political parties and he is the head of
 the Labour Party.
 He decides if laws are fair.

Knockhall Junior School (Dartford), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Looks after the country.
 He does the rules for things and tells you what to do
 if you don't know.
 Signs papers all the time and talks.
 He helps the Queen.
 He helps the people.
 Does speeches.

Knockhall Junior School (Dartford), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Talks to foring (sic) ministers.
 Helps people.
 Makes rules.
 He goes around the country seeing how they are getting on.
 When he goes to see the Queen he tells the Queen something.
 Works for G.B. to keep their power cuts and saves it
 for Christmas.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	29/54 (54%)	16/25 (64%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	17/21 (81%)	19/29 (66%)
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	9/10 (90%)	13/15 (87%)

Question: When a man gets to be Prime Minister, how do we know if he is a good Prime Minister?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Lots of people will vote for him.

By his prices halt/put prices down.

They test him (2).

Because he has an honest face.

By his kindness and voice.

Because he is kind (2).

We do not.

With the good clothes he wears.

The Queen tested him.

By the things he does.

Because he helps us /looks after us.

Listen to the news on T.V. (3).

We wait a little while and if we are happy and get more for our money we know he is good.

By his laws.

He might say all profit goes to the country.

He tells good.

Wait for a few weeks and see.

We will know when he stops things.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

You do not.

Makes the prices go down.

Because he tells you.

We lison to the newes.

Tell by his face.

If he make sensible rules.

By talk.

Because he helps our country get along (2).

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Vote.

By his speech.

We know if he is a good Prime Minister because he should do what he said before he was elected.

They test him.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

(Cont'd ...)

By what he does.

By seeing how he takes hard suggestions.

Because he does good for the country.

If he is good he will look after the country well.

The(y) have elections.

He has a speech.

You know because of the way he sorts things out.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

We know by what he does.

Because we give him lots of tests.

By how he helps.

He has obade (sic) the law for many years.

How (he) controls inflation.

By asking him questions.

By helping people to get their wages.

Because whether he puts the prices too expensive or cheap.

If he is a learned man.

By doing what he should do.

We do not.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	22/54 (41%)	9/25 (36%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Dagenham)	11/11 (100%)	11/14 (78%)

Question: What kind of things should a Prime Minister do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Put prices down. (4)

Take prices down from food.

Sort things out.

Tell people to be kind and good.

Work a lot.

Make the prices go up.

He should make laws (3).

He should talk about things.

The Prime Minister should stop things (2).

Speeches.

A Prime Minister should look after the country.

Help people a lot (2).

Say things on T.V.

A Prime Minister should pay wages to the workers.

A Prime Minister should take care of politics.

Stop people having wars.

Make things cheaper and take away tax and give more wages for those who don't earn much.

Do good things.

Save Briton.

Form a sensible government.

Tell the truth.

Put down the price of food - send out blacks.

Not boss people about and make people go on strike.

Rule the country.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Look after his country (2).

Work.

Help people.

Help the country.

He should look after the law.

Put the prices down and allso don't give oil away.

Reduse the prices of food/of things.

Put down prices (2).

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

(Cont'd ...)

Make laws (2).

Lead the country.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Do thing(s) for the country.

Good things.

He should try to give Britain a better place in the world and do what is right.

He should look after the government.

He should tell us what happens throughout the country.

Look after his country and see that items aren't dear.

He should explain things that are new.

Discuss matters and help.

He should try to stop people fighting.

He should make decisions.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Not put the prices up.

He should be Prime Minister of a town.

Send prices up or down.

Look after houses.

Keep the country's prices low as possible.

Control Britain.

Be honest and keeping the law.

Help the country (2).

Make the old peoples' pensions higher.

He might let communism in.

Make changes in the country.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	31/54 (57%)	14/25 (56%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	10/11 (91%)	12/14 (86%)

Question: What kind of things would a bad Prime Minister do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Make food prices go up (5).
He would do bad things (3).
A bad Prime Minister might kill or steal.
He might keep all taxes.
He would be unkind.
He might tell lies about things (2).
Start trouble (2).
A bad Prime Minister might not pay the workers wages.
A bad Prime Minister will put rate(s) up.
I think that he calls people liers.
Start wars.
Be unfriendly.
He would make other people do his work.
Put $\frac{1}{2}$ p sweets to 15p.
He would hier the tax.
Say silly laws.
Max things expensive and have more tax.
Starve us and kill
Keep things of the country for himself.
Lie.
Put up food and keep blacks in.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Make prices go up and wages go down.
Kill people.
Don't help the country.
Boss people around.
He might let the miners not get there money.
Give oil away for nothing all of it.
Not make laws.
He might not trete the country well.
Make the food go up in price.
Put prices up (4).
Put costs too high and pentions down.
Terrible things.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Put the cost of living up.

Vote for himself.

He might spend the money we earn and not do what the people want.

Vote for the wrong Prime Minister.

He might try and get us out of the Common Market.

Make taxes high and make items very dear.

Not do what he should do.

Forget about the country's needs.

Nothing.

To tell people to fight.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Make the prices of shopping higher.

He might put the country the wrong way round.

Shut out (?) the world.

Put everything up and treat people badly.

Lowering wages.

Disobeying the law, etc.

Decrease wages.

Make prices go up.

He might let communism in.

Do silly things.

He could do anything.

I would not like it.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	29/54 (54%)	15/25 (60%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	11/11 (100%)	13/14 (93%)

Question: If a man were a bad Prime Minister, what should happen to him?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

He would get put in jail (5).

They would not let him be Prime Minister (5).

He should go to prison (2).

He would be chucked out (2).

He would lose his job (3).

He would get the sack (3).

There would be an eletoin.

The Prime Minister would be sent away.

The bad Prime Minister would get in trouble.

They should get another Prime Minister (2).

Be killed.

He should be lockt up.

The public would probably call for an election to get him out.

He would not be votid.

Vote against him.

He would get slung out of the parties and be xsocutied.

Vote him out.

I would vote for another Prime Minister.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Have his head chopped off.

Sack him.

They should start voteing.

Kicked out of England.

He will be replaced.

He won't be a Prime Minister.

Get sent out.

He should be voted out.

Have a nuver eleksion.

He should wait for the next elextion.

He'd be throughn out of Parliment.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Be sacked.

He could be changed.

He should not be allowed to continue and a new one elected.

He should be changed right away.

He would be told he can't be Prime Minister.

I think someone else would get the job.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Have a vote.

He would be changed.

Lose his place.

Be brought in court.

He would get fired.

People would be against him.

Be put in prison.

Get the sack.

They should get another Prime Minister.

He should not be Prime Minister.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	33/54 (61%)	11/25 (44%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	9/11 (82%)	14/14 (100%)

Question: How does a Prime Minister decide what to do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

With help from his party.
 He writes letters to the concil.
 He tells a lot of other people.
 With help from the parties.
 He has a meeting with other members.
 He has a meeting with other people.
 He things (4).
 He has meetings and talks (3).
 He decides what to do by reading (the) paper.
 He votes.
 He put it to the vote.
 He has people who help him.
 He tells the other people.
 He makes laws that other people approve of.
 He calls a meeting.
 By having a talk with other Prime Minister.
 His party helps him decide.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

He has been told.
 He votes.
 He ask Mr. Heath.
 Ask other people.
 He asks the rest of the party.
 He asks.
 Have meetings.
 He forms meetings.
 Let people vote.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eitham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

He decide(s) because people help him.
 He thinks it over.
 He decides by asking the people and having meetings.
 He thinks hard.
 By looking (at) what is happening.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

(Cont'd ...)

By having different votes.

By making speeches.

He calls on his fellow-partners.

He decides what to do because he has to.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

He thinks.

He votes.

By help.

He gathers up people.

He asks the nation.

Goes (to) cabinet for some information.

By deciding which is wrong and right.

By having elections.

He decides what to do by having a conference.

The Queen tells him.

He does not, he gets help.

He has a meeting to decide.

By the partys.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	22/54 (41%)	9/25 (36%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	10/11 (91%)	13/14 (93%)

Question: Does anyone help him?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 38 (70%)

No - 7 (13%)

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham) Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Yes - 12 (86%)

No - 1 (7%)

Sometimes - 1 (7%)

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 11 (100%)

No - -

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham) Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Yes - 14 (56%)

No - 3 (12%)

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL.	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	45/54 (83%)	17/25 (68%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	11/11 (100%)	14/14 (100%)

Question: What does the Queen do that you know about?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

The Queen helps us to do nearly everything.

The Queen visits different countries.

Speeches.

Rules the country.

Writes things and goes to football matches.

She looks after England.

The Queen rides about in a carriage and waves.

Goes to dances.

She goes round the world talking to help people.

She lives in a big house and rules.

She christens ships and opens buildings.

Makes speeches for us.

She goes to different countries and talks to Prime Ministers, and on television.

She helps to keep the country in order, she helps the pensioners.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Visits countries.

Gives soldiers medals.

Goes to weddings.

Travels around the world.

Talks about the House of Lords.

Makes speeches.

Horse-riding.

Governs Britain.

She goes in coaches.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

She rules the country and tries to do as much for the people as she can.

Fills in forms and papers.

She names ships.

Travels to many countries.

Rules her country.

Opens many things.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

(Cont'd ...)

Writes letters to people answering their letters.

Rule the kingdom.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

She works on the oil.

Paper work.

Visits places.

Visits people, goes to talks, gives medals.

She signs many documents and writes letters.

Rules the country and governs things.

She gets all we need.

She goes to any celebration.

Gives advice to the Prime Minister.

She makes laws.

All I know is that she reigns Britain.

Knockhall Junior School (Dartford), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Visits other countries.

She has to sign things.

Goes to meetings to help the people.

Knockhall Junior School (Dartford), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Go to countries.

Paper work.

Rukes the Country.

Shakes hands with a lot of people.

Looks after England.

She writes letters to ambassadors in other countries.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	26/54 (48%)	12/25 (48%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	16/21 (76%)	22/29 (76%)
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	8/10 (80%)	9/15 (60%)

Question: Do you know what the House of Commons and the House of Lords are?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

The House of Lords is where people work.

The House of Commons is where the men have meetings.

The House of Lords important men have special meetings there.

The House of Commons is about the Prime Ministers.

Something to do with the commons market.

Where the Prime Minister go to do work.

It is royle.

The House of Commons is Big Ben and the other buildings around it.

The House of lords is were the Prime Minister lives.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

They are Houses of Parliament.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Yes, the House of Commons is where they sometimes decide things.

The House of Lords is where they meet and think about different problems.

The House of Commons is where the Prime Minister decides about things.

The House of Lords is a place where all Prime Ministers meet.

The House of Commons is where they de(b)ate.

They are historical and many important talks have taken place there.

They are big buildings.

The House of Commons is where the Priministers meet.

The House of Lords is where all the important people live.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

The House of Commons is where the Prime Minister lives.

The House of Commons is a place where the Prime Minister talks.

The House holds meetings where important people go.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

(Cont'd ...)

The House of Commons is where laws are made.

The House of Commons is where they have conferences about politics and the House of Lords is where lords meet.

The House of Commons is where the Prime Ministers meet.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunter's Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	10/54 (18%)	1/25 (4%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	9/11 (82%)	8/14 (57%)

Ten-year-old childrens' written responses to the questionnaires:

SCHOOL	NUMBERS OF CHILDREN INVOLVED		TOTALS
	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	64	29	93
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	12 16 (answered 3 questions)	11 16 (answered 3 questions)	23 32
Knockhall Junior School	23 (answered 3 questions)	30 (answered 3 questions)	53
	115	86	201

Question: What do you think politics is about?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

Making laws.

Polititians are in charge of politics, they want to be in charge of England.

Politics is about who rules the government.

Politics is about voting.

Elections.

All different people arguing.

The law . . .

Priministers.

Polotics is about the government.

Peope that argue about being Prime Minister.

It is about people voting.

It is about polins day (sic).

It is a poling staiton (sic).

It is about voting for the Prime Minister.

It is to find a goverment (sic) who the most people want.

Politics is about V.I.P.s.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

It is about Labour and con and Lib.

I think it's about the country and the state it's in.

It's about an election broadcast.

Trying to look after the country.

The cost of living.

Something to do with the keeping of the country.

Getting the party the people want.

Where someone wants a law changed.

To find a leader.

Labour Consevitis and Librels.

It is about things that people have meetings deside if it is all right.

Politics is things to do with Great Britain.

Voting.

Unbelievable.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

Helping the country.

They help Mr. Wilson with his work.

Help the council with many jobs.

Help the country to solve problems.

I think politics is about the country.

The Government.

It is elections.

The country.

It is about big sum(s) of money.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

Industry and works.

To make our country a better one.

It is about M.P.s who have certain parts of Britain to look after and help.

Rules of England.

To keep the country on its feet.

To help their country.

The elections.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	33/64 (52%)	13/29 (45%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	11/12 (92%)	9/11 (82%)

Question: What do you think political parties do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

Political parties take votes from people to see which Prime Minister to have.

I think they argue over things.

Try to get more votes in.

They go to meetings.

Discuss about people and things like that.

Sit in parliment.

Talk about the law.

Vote and have meetings.

They try to keep our country under control.

I think they try to settle agrements.

They work hard but they all want people to vote for them.

The political parties talk about the future.

The(y) compete (with) the other side.

They sit at a table and talk.

Voting in a hall.

Political partis help by putting prices down.

I think they decide a law and who is going to be Prime Minister.

I think politic (sic) parties are to tell us about things.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

Argue about the price of food.

They try to help the country.

Speak about the election.

Try to make the Britis Isles better.

Try to be Priminister.

They try to see if prises should go up or not.

They make the laws and try and beat inflation.

They try to get into the government, and do what they think best for the country.

Try to govern the country.

They decide about the strikes.

They see who has the most votes.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

They want you to vote for them.

Desus (discuss) an electsions.

Discuss things.

Run the country.

They are a group of people and help Mr. Wilson with his work.

Help the country to solve problems.

Have meetings.

Help the country.

Decide new things for the country.

They talk about rises and rent.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

They try to gain more power.

Give you advise.

Decide how to make our country better.

They try to solve problems.

They ask the government to lower the food prices and raise the pensioners' money.

I think they help the country.

Make rules.

Try to lead the country to safety.

Think up ideas.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	35/64 (55%)	16/29 (55%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	9/12 (75%)	11/11 (100%)

Question: Why do we have different parties?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

Because they all want to make different laws.

We have different parties so people do not have to vote for one party.

We have different parties so that we have a choice.

I think they have different parties so that the other parties don't know about their job.

To see how many each get.

So you can vote for wick one you like.

So we can get right minsters.

So we can see which is best for our country.

To have a proper opinion.

We have different parties so they can say what they think.

We have different parties because they all want to be Priminister.

We have different parties because we have leaders with different ideas.

Because the parties don't agree with each other.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

Because they do not like each other.

So that they can all be voted.

Because you would not be able to fit others in to one big party.

To compeat to each other.

To fight out different problems.

So that one leader would not stay there.

For different opinyans.

So if the people don't like one party they can vote for another.

To see who can get the most votes and see who can win the election.

Because people think different.

So that we can choose who is the best Government.

Because they represent different thing(s).

So there is an election.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

To find out what people want done.

Because some of them might not agree.

Make plans to do things.

So we have choices of the future.

Because some may not want to vote the same as others.

So we have a choice of what one we think is best.

Because they all argue.

To help people in the country.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

So that it will be fair for people who want to vote for a different party.

So they all can try to solve something.

One party might do wrong and the others could argue and correct them.

Because they all think different.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	30/64 (47%)	21/29 (72%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	8/12 (67%)	8/11 (73%)

Question: Do you think the different parties agree about most things?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 22 (34%)
 No - 36 (56%)
 Sometimes - 3 (5%)

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

Yes - 6 (21%)
 No - 13 (45%)
 Sometimes - 5 (17%)

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 4 (33%)
 No - 8 (67%)

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

Yes - 7 (64%)
 No - 4 (36%)

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	61/64 (95%)	24/29 (83%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	12/12 (100%)	11/11 (100%)

Question: What kind of things might they not agree about?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

They don't agree with putting wages up too high.

Prices of food and wages.

They might not agree about the Prime Minister.

They might not agree about laws.

About giving old day (sic) pentoners more money.

They might not agree about voting.

They might not agree about the different labor and libralls.

Who might be Priminester.

Prices going up.

Letting people be free if they go to jail.

The common market.

Having more flats built and prices.

They might not agree about giving a child the cane.

Prices, wages, disaplin.

They might not agree about the schools the law and the rules.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

Price of food/things.

Voting for the same party.

The Prime Minister.

Food prices and production.

The comers (commerce?) in England.

How to stop inflation and keep prices low.

The common market.

About the money.

The rents, houses and clothes.

The State of houses are in to-day.

House mortgages, food, prices.

Throwing bombs.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

Schools, the land.

Giving workers more money.

About the contry (sic) and its people.

Faceing danger.

The Common Market (3).

Having parties.

Wages and infatum (sic).

His laws.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

What they should do about wages.

Coming out of the Common Market.

Inflation and rules.

About pay-offers and work.

Wages and the cost of food.

Anything done wrong by the leader other parties gain.

Not having comprehensif (sic) schools.

Prices taxes and industries.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	26/64 (41%)	22/29 (76%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	10/12 (83%)	11/11 (100%)

Question: What is the Prime Minister's name?

Number of 10-year-old children able to answer this question:

School	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	47/64 (73%)	32/36 (89%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	23/28 (82%)	24/27 (89%)
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	21/23 (91%)	29/30 (97%)

Question: What does the Prime Minister do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

He helps the country and discusses problems about London.

He helps the Queen to decide about wars and things (sic).

The Prime Minister is a man of law, so he talks about shortages and all things like that.

Mr. Wilson works for the cancel (sic).

I think the Prime Minister's job is to run the country.

He is the Guverment.

He tells how much wages people have and says what the prices are.

He helps make new laws.

His job is a Prime Minister.

I think he goes to countries to get things we need and give other countries what they need.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

Cuts inflation, puts tax on things he tries to make respect the law (sic).

Looks after the country.

Helps keep everybody in their places helps people with laws.

He makes disishenes about the cost of living.

He runs our food prices and trys to keep Britain rich.

Try and beat inflation/tries to stop inflation/tries to cut inflation.

He goes to meetings and talks about beating inflation and about puting prices up or down.

He changes food prices and other prices and he tells fermes to give their workers more money if they are on strike.

He look after the Houses of Parliment and gives prices like V.A.T. on things, and he tries to stop inflation.

Tries to pass things through Parliment.

He is a member of parliment. He collects money and makes higher prices.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

Keep the country in order and help make laws.

He keeps the country in order and keeps Plarment (sic) in order.

Talks with other presidents. Peace-keeping, suggests things.

Speeches, goes to meetings.

He looks after the govement and goes to convesaitions (sic).

Opens places, sail's his boat visits other primenister's for talks, speeches (sic).

He look after me the country.

He orgernise things.

Sails in his boat Morning Cloud.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

He gos into confrenses and is no use.

He keeps law and makes others.

Makes laws, asks the Queen if she accepts, he makes the law.

I think he rules our country helps the Queen in other words.

He opens houses of Parleмент and the pay policy . . . and goes to other places in England.

He goes to other places than England and helps to get things for us.

He deals with the countrys problems.

Knockhall Junior School (Dartford), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

He helps the Queen.

He looks after the country and to teach everybody to keep the law.

He tells the people what is going on in other lands.

He puts up the prices of food and keeps the country in order.

He trys to keep the country in good order but he doesn't always get his way.

Helps cause peace . . . Helps the country out of crises and a lot more.

I think he looks after allthe banks.

He has a lot of work to do and he goes to meetings.

He raises and lowers the prices of things.

Knockhall Junior School (Dartford), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

He is part of the govement.

Find new laws and give them to the queen to say what she thinks about them.

He deals all the buisness (sic) of the country and deals with foreign affairs.

He goes to Parlament and he argus with over prime ministers (sic).

He puts prices up on food and governs the country.

I think he is ment to keep the country in order and settle its problems.

He works with plitics.

He looks after our problems like shortesh of petrol.

He governs the prople and makes new laws.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

School	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	44/64 (69%)	26/36 (72%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	21/28 (75%)	18/27 (67%)
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	13/23 (56%)	19/30 (63%)

Question: When a man gets to be Prime Minister, how do we know if he is a good Prime Minister?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

We do not know if he is a good Prime Minister or not.

By how many votes he got and what he does for the country.

He should come to our school and tell us things.

We know whether he runs the country right.

By the things he said he is going to do.

We know that he is a good Prime Minister because he will be on T.V.

Test him with knowledge.

When he helps a lot.

By watching and listening to him.

By the work he does and how good he is.

If he puts wages up and prices down.

We test him on things.

We have to know if he is a good Prime Minister before he is the Prime Minister.

He looks happy.

By the way he changes the state of our country.

By ruling honestly.

By his clothes and shoes.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

He should help the people.

Help the country.

When he put prices down.

By what he does.

By the election that's how they tell.

Because the country would not loose (sic) money.

If inflation is beat he is good.

Give him a chance to prove whether he is good or not.

Because the country will run smooth.

By the way he governs the country.

By the way he reacts.

We test them before.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:
(Cont'd ...)

He cares about the country.

Because of his speech.

You do not.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

Because when he appears to the people.

By the way he talks and the things he does.

We find out by testing him for a year.

They probably have a test.

Because if he didn't do his duty he would not be
Prime Minister.

He does something that everybody likes.

Because so many people voted for him.

By his action.

When we see what he wants for the country.

By his persunalaty and talks.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

We don't.

By what he thinks we should do.

By his actions.

He works hard for the country.

When the food prices go down and the wages go up.

He should let us vote to see if we want it or not.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	47/64. (73%)	25/29 (86%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	11/12 (92%)	11/11(100%)

Question: What kind of things should a Prime Minister do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

Be honest.

He should put down prices and give more to old people.

He should help the Labour and librel parties and find out about things.

Help the world.

Work and rule.

Help people.

He should make sure things are alright if their not he sorts them out (sic).

He should come to our school and tell us things.

Look after the country and lower prices and rise wages.

A Prime Minister should help to make new laws.

He should be helping people by putting pentions up and the costs of living down.

Sign important papers and say how things should be done.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

Put the price of food down.

Make different laws.

Go to different places and meet people.

Drop prices, look after the country.

He should make sure that everyone leads a healthy life.

Make the laws and beat inflation.

Think about how to destroy the IRA and save the country from its dangers.

Higher pensions bring back school milk.

Cut the cost of living.

Look after the country.

Make things better make the country do better.

Bring down costs of food bring down rent and make better houses for people to live in.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

Look after the country.
 Help the coman Market.
 Keep the prices down.
 Help his people and country.
 Be helpful kind and thoughtful.
 Do the right things for a country.
 Hclp lead his party.
 Support his country.
 Serve his country.
 Keep everything going well.
 Help to keep the world in order.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

Help his country.
 Help the Queen, give us good advice.
 He should have talks about Britain's present and future.
 Stop all the arguing and fighting in our country.
 Make adjustments in taxes and pentions.
 He should make all food go down.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	43/64 (67%)	21/29 (72%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	11/12 (92%)	9/11 (82%)

Question: What kind of things do you think a bad Prime Minister might do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

Put prices up.

Be dishonest.

A bad Prime Minister would not look after the country, and make everything go up.

He would try to start a war and say bad things.

He might just forget about the parties.

He might cheat in the election.

Put the country in a worse state.

He will shout.

Take no notice of things that go on.

He would put innocent people in jail, and let people run wild.

Put up prices and would always be arguing in meetings.

He would be cruel to the people and give a secret away when he is not supposed to.

He would not look after people and he would put the taxes higher than they should (be).

A bad Prime Minister might get everything wrong and muddled up.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

Lie to the broadcast.

Rise prices.

He wouldn't help our country.

Make bad laws.

Argue and make trouble.

Lower the pensions take the taxes off the rich people.

He might not help the country and let everybody go on strike.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

Put the prices up.

Keep the prices up.

Give some people less food.

Not do their duty properly.

Not help the country.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

(Cont'd ...)

Not carry out his job.

Keep the country's money to himself.

He would go against the Queen.

Not bother, and everyone would want him to go.

Not help in any way.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

Get us into trouble over wages.

Go against the Queen.

Govern it (the country) bad.

Let the people have their own way.

Higher the food prices lower the wages.

He wouldn't be bothered to help his country.

Not let us vote just decide for himself.

Make all schools privit ones.

The prices would rise, wages sink.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	34/64 (53%)	20/29 (69%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	10/12 (83%)	11/11 (100%)

Question: If a man were a bad Prime Minister, what should happen to him?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

There would be an election and he would be out-voted.

I think there should be another election.

He would get thrown out.

People would try to kill him.

If the police found out he would be put in jail.

He should not be a Prime Minister.

He should be put in prison (9).

He should be taken away.

Be executed.

He will be put out.

Change him with another Prime Minister (6).

He should be chucked out of Parliament.

We should never vote him so he will go.

A bad Prime Minister would resign.

He should go to another country and try there.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

He should be thrown out of parliament.

He would be sacked.

Call another election.

He would not be Prime Minister any more.

No-one should vote for him.

Lose the job.

He would be expelled by his party.

He should be . . . out of politics.

He would be put in prison.

In the election he would not get no votes.

Someone else will take his place.

He would have to resign and have an election.

He would get sacked.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

He might be banished from the contrey.

Chuck him out.

He will most probbly get the sack.

Someone else should take his place.

He would not be Prime Minister.

He should be expelled from Goverament.

He would be changed.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

We should have an election.

Be thrown out of his party.

Be sacked.

A new man should become the Prime Minister, or another election.

He would be voted to leave.

He would be band from Parliment.

There would be an election from the government.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	50/64 (78%)	23/29 (79%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	10/12 (83%)	11/11 (100%)

Question: How does a Prime Minister decide what to do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

He decides by looking around the country.

He gets help from his party.

He asks the government.

He looks up records to see what is wrong and tries to put it right.

He decides by thinking.

He look(s) in his book.

He has some people.

He has a meeting to see if some others agree.

He has talks.

The Queen tells him.

Thinks.

People come to him and tell him.

The prime Minister goes to political parties.

He looks at what is going on.

He gets all the Prime Ministers together and then he decides.

He does what he thinks is best.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

He has meetings.

By having a parliament meeting.

His party helps him decide.

By vote.

He has a meeting and his party members vote what they think is right.

People of the government help him.

He adds up results.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

He decides what he thinks is best.

He has elcsoins (elections).

He decides with a group.

The Parties help him.

He has a meeting and he decides there.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

(Cont'd ...)

He might have a vote or the parties help.

By thinking about it all.

Has a vote with the country.

With help of other men.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

By asking some men or women in his own party.

By the political parties.

By voting and by meetings.

He discusses with the management of what he is deciding about.

By talking with the Queen.

Let us vote.

He would call upon his fellow-members and see what they say.

He thinks and gets help from the government.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	27/64 (42%)	15/29 (52%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	9/12 (75%)	10/11 (91%)

Question: Does anyone help him?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 47 (73%)

No - 13 (20%)

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

Yes - 27 (93%)

No - 2 (7%)

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 9 (75%)

No - 1 (8%)

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

Yes - 10 (91%)

No - -

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	60/64 (94%)	29/29 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	10/12 (83%)	10/11 (91%)

Question: What does the Queen do that you know about?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

The Queen rules the country.

She writes out letters and forms and writes out everything else.

The Queen signes (sic) new laws that the Priminister wrote.

The Queen keeps the country at peace.

The Queen signs letters and agreements from the government and other people.

She works in an office and helps the government.

She rules the country and makes laws and speeches.

The Queen makes speeches, goes to other countries and looks after the country.

She goes on visits and gives lectures when a famous person dies.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

She aproves of things.

Goes to events and tourments.

She visits people and places.

She governs the country and makes the laws.

Travels round the world giving money to funds.

She looks after our countrey and goes on royle proceciens.

Signs papers and reads documents.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

She helps in Plarment (sic).

Visits countrys and meets people.

Gives awards, Commonwealth visits, opens things.

Visits countrys, signs papers.

She signs papers and contracts to show she represents England.

She wrights lots of letters. She gives talks.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

If there was a war she would say to attack or not to attack.

Keeps horses looks after documents.

She wright letters and knights people.

She travels, looks at and signs documents.

She visits other places and other parts of England.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

(Cont'd ...)

Signs contract gives advice.

She visits other people and sometimes has big parties.

She opens new founded places.

Visits other countries on business.

Knockhall Junior School (Dartford), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

She tries to make friends with the world.

She rules the country and makes the laws.

She goes and sees some of the countrys and tells them about us.

Seds people telegrams on their diamond wedding and attends a lot of celebrations.

She writes letters to other kings and queens of the world.

She goes round all the country and makes sure everybody (is) all right.

Signs papers.

Knockhall Junior School (Dartford), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

Visits every country and finds out what it is like.

She signs documents.

She also handles some affairs foreign and British.

She rules the country.

She makes the laws and presenttaions.

She goes to other countrys and tries to keep the peace.

Reighns over the country.

She goes to diffrent countrys and talks to them.

She has to right (write) and do speeches.

Keeps the laws.

(A selection only has been quoted)

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	37/64 (58%)	19/36 (53%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	15/28 (54%)	23/27 (85%)
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	11/23 (48%)	16/30 (53%)

Question: Do you know what the House of Commons and the House of Lords are?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

The House of Lords is where the queen opens parliament.

The house of lords is where all the lords go.

The House of Lords is a place where there is meetings.

The House of Lords is a place where the judges make rules.

The House of Commons is the head of the Parliament.

They are both houses of parleyment.

It is where the priminister meets people.

The House of Commons is a building where they hold government meetings.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

They discuss politics.

The House of Commons is the same as the parlement.

The House of Commons is where the Prime Minister lives.

The House of Commons is where the communists have meetings.

The House of Commons is where the Prime Minister goes.

The House of Commons is to discuss about the election.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

The House of Commons is a place where they all tak.

When the(y) all have elections, when the Laber conservative get together.

The House of Commons is where the Priminster lives.

The House of Commons is the common market.

The Priminster sometimes goes to the House of Commons.

They have meetings and masses.

The House of Lords is god in heaven.

Yes, they are places where the people there help the country.

The House of Commons is Harold's house . . .

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

They are where negotiations take place.

The House of Commons is the place where the M.P.s meet.

The House of Commons is where the politicians meet.

The House of Lords is where the Lords meet.

Conferences are held.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	14/64 (22%)	6/29 (21%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	10/12 (83%)	6/11 (54%)

Eleven-year-old childrens' written responses to the questionnaires:

School	Number of children involved		totals
	<u>Girls</u>	<u>Boys</u>	
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	3	2	5
	2 (answered 3 questions)	4 (answered 3 questions)	6
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	19	29	48
	3 (answered 3 questions)	5 (answered 3 questions)	8
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	9 (answered 3 questions)	13 (answered 3 questions)	22
	36	53	89

Eleven-Year-Old Childrens' Written Responses to the Questionnaires.

As the work at Hunters Hall Junior School, Dagenham, was carried out in the month of October, near the start of the school year, very few children in the top classes had attained their eleventh birthday, and consequently these groups are very small. The work was given, however, to the four boys and three girls who were eleven, as it was not possible to return to these schools at a later date.

In order that a larger eleven-year-old group should be available for the study, the last visit to St. Mary's Junior School was timed to be as late as possible in the Summer term following. Most of the children in the top class there were by this time eleven, and it is these childrens' responses which form the bulk of the data in this section.

Owing to this discrepancy between the sizes of the groups, the most fruitful comparisons appear to be (a) between the boys and girls in the larger groups, and (b) between, so far as possible, the two different schools, although the possibilities here are obviously very limited.

Accordingly, the childrens' responses have been grouped according to their schools, with no re-grouping of the total responses according to the sex of the children.

The three questions referring specifically to the name and role of Prime Minister, and the role of the Queen, have been completed by children in Hunters Hall, St. Mary's and Knockhall Junior Schools.

Question: What do you think politics is about?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

People go voteing every year.

Wages, prices and tax etc.

I think politics is about law.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

About the law and the prices of food etc.

Who's going to be Priminister.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

Ruling the country.

It is to keep the country together.

Government (2).

Financial problems.

Politics is about Priministers.

It is a group which stand as our country and make deals with other countries.

Helping your country.

What people think to run the country.

Keeps the country in order (2).

It's about a group of people fighting.

I think that unless the government does something about the country, the country is going to be in such a state that nobody will be able to cope with it.

First of all they should house people and instead of spending money on cars, building some council houses.

There should be more jobs available and everyone should help each other.

I think the government should not spend as much money on building roads and cars.

They should leave some of the country as country side.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

It is about the country's affairs and foreign affairs.

It is to do with government and ruling the country.

Trade unions.

It's about parties deciding.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

(Cont'd ...)

The future of Britain, government.

I think they are about voting.

I think that politics is to keep the country going.

Order in the country and prices going up.

About money and affairs concerning the country.

It is what people think to run the country.

Making rules.

Discussing the British affairs.

Keeping Great Britain a decent place.

The government of our country (2).

It is about finding out what's best for your country.

Politics is a group of different thought put together on the economy of the country.

The wealth of our country and people.

The Common Market.

Running the country (4).

Keeping the country in order.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	3/3 (100%)	2/2 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	13/19 (68%)	24/29 (83%)

Question: What do you think political parties do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

They try to choose the best for our country.

They have meetings on whether to raise or lower wages and prices.

See who is going to be Prime Minister.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

Cut down prices (2).

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls;

Ruling the country.

Helps the country.

Keep the country together.

Talk about our country (3).

Govern the country.

They help with all business problems, etc.

A quarrel among people.

The political parties argue with other parties.

So that we get the best for our country.

Decide who is going to be Prime Minister and different things.

Fight against each other.

Talk about their own problems.

They have meetings about our country.

They try to get a better government.

They all have different views of the country.

Political parties fight for rights to help the country.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

They try to help (the) government.

They improve things or supposed to raise wages, etc.

Help to rule.

They think of ideas for the country to choose.

There to help prices not going up (2).

Try to get a better government.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

(Cont'd ...)

Make rules.

Make ideas of governing the country.

They all try and make people vote their way because they think it is right.

Nothing except argue.

Have their own views of running the country.

Organise different things.

Give their own views.

They fight to gain power.

Make the country what it is.

Compete against each other.

Have different views about keeping the country in order.

Number of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	3/3 (100%)	2/2 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	15/19 (80%)	24/29 (83%)

Question: Why do we have different parties?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

They try to choose the law for our country.

Because some poor people like a working party and rich people like to have their own party.

Who will be Prime Minister.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

So we can for the that think are the best (sic) (2).

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

To get different opinions.

Because people may want to vote different.

So we can change instead of having the same one.

Because each party has a different point of view.

To figure out difficult things.

To argue.

Because we all have different views on different things.

To give us a choice.

To talk about different politics.

Because if you had the same party they would not have as many ideas or may not be good at ruling.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

Because different people agree on different things.

Each party does different things.

Some might be better.

So there are different views.

Because one wants to win.

One group of people agree about one thing and another group agrees on another thing.

Because we can vote different.

To choose the one picked to rule the country.

Because different parties stand for different things.

So we can choose which has the best policies.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

(Cont'd ...)

Get different decisions.

Otherwise we would have the same ideas.

To fight for rights for different grades of people.

Better deals and new Prime Minister.

So people have a choice of views.

Some parties are bad.

People believe in different things.

So that they can come to a firm agreement.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	3/3 (100%)	2/2 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	15/19 (79%)	25/29 (86 %)

Question: Do you think the different parties agree about most things?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 1 (33.3%)

No - 2 (66.6%)

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

Yes - -

No - 2 (100%)

From one boy: No because otherwise we would
have a national crisis.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 5 (26%)

No - 10 (53%)

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

Yes - 6 (21%)

No - 19 (65%)

Sometimes - 2 (7%)

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	3/3 (100%)	2/2 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	15/19 (79%)	27/29 (93%)

Question: What kind of things might they not agree about?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

Wages, prices, elections, mortgages, tax, new laws.

Who's going to be Prime Minister.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

The growing prices on food.

Who should be Priminister.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

Electing someone.

Food prices and things like that.

Who should be Prime Minister.

Electing a Prime Minister.

About who can rule the country.

Schools, about comprehensive schools.

Prices of things.

Deals with other countries.

About who's going to knock those houses down and mostly everything.

Who is goind to lead.

Food prices, petrol, etc.

About prices and inflation.

Voting.

They do not agree about being in the Common Market or not.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

About how much wage(s) people should get.

Wage packet, food prices, inflation.

Who should win the elections.

Prices (of food, etc).

Prices, inflation.

Taxes and rules.

Taxes, schools.

Who's going to be Prime Minister.

Equality.

How to fight inflation and things such as that.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

(Cont'd ...)

Common Market.

Inflation, Common Market, Food.

Who should govern the country.

Wages, inflation.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	3/3 (100%)	2/2 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	17/19 (89%)	23/29 (79%)

Question: What is the Prime Minister's name?

Numbers of eleven-year-old children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	2/2 (100%)	4/4 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	21/22 (95%)	32/34 (94%)
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	7/9 (78%)	12/13 (92%)

Question: What does the Prime Minister do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

He puts up prices and gives people wages and pensions,
and puts mortgages on houses.

He does the prices and government.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

Cuts inflation.

Puts tax on things.

He tries to make respect to law.

} One answer

He cuts or stops the prices of everything going up.

Looks after the land.

He keeps England at peace.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

He keeps the country in order, and he keeps Parliament
in order.

Sails Morning Cloud.

Goes to conferences and makes speeches.

He is the Queen's adviser, keeps the country
in order and makes the law.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

Looks after the place.

Keeps the country in order and makes decisions.

He does most of the work for our country.

He tries to stop strikes.

Knockhall Junior School (Dartford), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

He travels a lot and he is an M.P.

He rules the country.

He helps the countries in the Common Market.

Looks after the country and joins us in the Common Market
with other countries to trade.

Looks after our country.

He helps the country to keep the rules and to keep
you from danger.

Knockhall Junior School (Dartford), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

I think he puts up prices and sends more plastic things abroad.

Tries to keep all of the prices down so we can spend less money and he tries to get some more oil into England.

He makes the laws of the land.

He makes the rules we live by.

He solves the country's problems.

He tries to keep the prices down, and he looks after the state of the country.

Not very much at all.

Sits in his office all day and thinks about conferences.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	2/2 (100%)	4/4 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	18/22 (82%)	29/34 (85%)
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	7/9 (78%)	8/13 (61%)

Question: When a man gets to be Prime Minister, how do we know if he is a good Prime Minister?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

By the way he acts about things.

Because he tries to get low prices, high wages and high pensions.

Because he should give more money.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

If he is good he will make good decisions (2).

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

By not putting up prices and disagreeing with everything that is suggested.

We have to wait and find out.

By his actions.

He does not put prices.

From the number of votes.

He could not be good if he did not have a lot of votes.

If he keeps the country in order.

If he gets us on our feet and makes our country tidy and clear up bad situations.

He must be strong.

Put more shops and houses where needed.

We don't.

By the way he rules the country.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

By the way he governs the country.

He keeps his promise.

For the things he does.

Because everyone votes for him.

If there is nothings (sic) going wrong in (the) country.

If he takes other people's point of view.

By how (the) country is richer or poorer.

If Great Britain gets better and has less problems.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

(Cont'd ...)

By the trade, by the place in the world.

By how quickly improvements are made.

If he is kind.

By the state of the country.

Number of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	3/3 (100%)	2/2 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	14/19 (74%)	22/29 (76%)

Question: What kind of things should a Prime Minister do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

He should decide about prices and government.

He should try to help poor people.

He would put prices up on food.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

Cut inflation.

Keep laws.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

Think of people now himself.

Help keep prices down.

See that the country is in order.

Look after the country.

A Prime Minister should rule the country.

Get the best for us.

Settle arguments of all sorts.

Put up more shops and houses where needed.

Rule the government wisely.

He should try to get people on his side.

Help us with all the things.

A Prime Minister should help his people.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

He should make sure prices stay at a steady price.

Think of the elderly and poor.

Try to stop trade increase.

He should help decide on an agreement.

Keep the boys and girls quiet.

Help the welf (sic) of the country.

Help the country as it goes.

Try and keep inflation down.

Make the prices of food stand at a level.

He thinks of others.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

(Cont'd ...)

Freeze prices.

Stop inflation from getting worse.

Improve on what is already done.

Make England a better place.

He for one should try to keep prices down and prevent unemployment.

Make speeches.

Make country more powerful.

Develop the country's state to a good state.

Give more money to people.

Keep inflation down.

Keep wages sensible.

Number of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunter's Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	3/3 (100%)	2/2 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	10/19 (53%)	23/29 (79%)

Question: What kind of things do you think a bad Prime Minister might do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

He might put prices up and not care about the poor and think of the rich.

Would give not enough money for people at work.

Raise prices, lower wage raise tax and lower pensions.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

Put things up too much.

Change the laws.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

Disagree to everything and higher prices.

Put up all the prices.

Not rule properly.

He might decide to do something that is setting a bad example.

He might put us in all the bad things and put bad laws in.

Say something that needs doing and then not do it.

Think of himself all the time.

He would not help us.

He might let inflation go up.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

Gigantic ridiculous wages rises.

Let the prices go sky-high.

Think of neither those things, the elderly and poor.

Put prices up when not needed.

Not run things properly.

Not do much for Britain.

He wouldn't care about the country.

Not agree and take no notice of other people.

Make inflation higher.

Giving out less wages.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

(Cont'd ...)

Give out too much money.

Not fight for other people, but himself.

He would make bad mistakes in his way of help(ing)
the country.

Give the coal miners £100 a week.

Take wages down or cause inflation.

Be on the bad side.

Hide himself away from the people and be shy.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	3/3 (100%)	2/2 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	13/19 (68.4%)	22/29 (75.8%)

Question: If a man were a bad Prime Minister, what should happen to him?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

He should be chucked out of Parliament.

He should be thrown out of the party.

He should get the sack.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

He would be sacked.

Chuck him out.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

He should be taken off his job at once.

We would have to throw him out.

He would be kick(ed) out.

Should be taken out of Parliament.

Abolish him.

He should be changed.

Another Prime Minister should be elcted.

His position would be taken away.

He would be replaced.

He should be dismissed.

There would be another election.

They would elect another one.

He would get chucked out and there would be an election.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

Be forced into have a General Election.

He should be dismantled.

He should be degraded and vote against him.

Have an election and have a new Prime Minister.

He should be changed.

He will be expelled.

He should be dismissed.

He should get chucked out.

There would be a election again and he might lose his job.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

(Cont'd ...)

There should be an election.

He should be abolished.

He should not have his job.

He might get impeached (sic) or the sack.

He should be removed.

He would be taken from power by an election.

He would gradually find another man has been voted.

He would not be elected again.

He should stand down.

Stop being Prime Minister.

He would be outvoted in the next election.

He should be stripped of his title.

Locked in jail.

There would be a new one elected.

There would be an election.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	3/3 (100%)	2/2 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	17/19 (89%)	27/29 (93%)

Question: How does a Prime Minister decide what to do?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

He decides with his party and then he knows what to do.

By having meeting with other important people.

He thinks what to do.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

He have a meeting with the parties (2).

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

Asks the Queen, he has a party political broadcast.

He decides with his ministers.

Talks with his party.

From the help of the rest of Parliament.

By elections.

He gives the suggestion to the cabinet and find(s) they hink out what.

He has meetings with his parties.

Well, he first of all decides what to do with his government.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

Have a ballot and asks fellow M.Ps.

He decides by communicating with other politicians.

He thinks and does his best to do it.

See what other(s) think.

By the help of his Minister.

He asks the other politicians.

He has a meeting with his Party to agree.

By talking with his men at Parliament.

Asks his advisers.

By help of M.Ps.

By the country's votes.

Thinks on all possibilities.

He figures out how to fight things, and how to get the best things for his country.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:
(Cont'd ...)

With his brains.

On what the other members of the party say.

He asks different people.

He consults his ministers.

He asks for votes from those in his party.

He is told what to do.

By sorting out the matter with the government.

Have meetings.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	3/3 (100%)	2/2 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	11/19 (57.8%)	23/29 (79.3%)

Question: Does anyone help him?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 2 (66%)

No - -

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

Yes - 2 (100%)

No - -

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

Yes - 15 (80%)

No - 1 (7%)

The Queen.

His Party.

Government.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

Yes - 28 (97%)

No - 1 (3%)

The government.

Home Secretary.

His party.

The M.Ps.

People who believe as he does.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	2/3 (67%)	2/2 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	16/19 (87%)	29/29 (100%)

Question: What does the Queen do that you know about?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

The Queen goes to other countries, and writes letters to people.

She helps people who are poor and she helps the government and deals with strikes. }

She goes to many places but she doesn't have to pay. }

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

She opens famous buildings.

She goes on a lot of cruises.

She looks after the land.

Goes to events and tournaments.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

She helps in Parliament.

She goes to different countries.

She works in the office at Buckingham Palace.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

Looks after the country.

She is head of Gt. Britain.

She helps.

She rules the country and deals with foreign affairs.

Knockhall Junior School (Dartford), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

The Queen rules a lot of countries, and I bet that is a hard job to do.

Helps rule the country.

The Queen rules England.

Makes friends with different countries.

Rules the world.

She rules the country to try to help us.

Knockhall Junior School (Dartford), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

I think she tries to keep the peace.

The Queen does all letters from other Prime Ministers and other lands.

Visits other countries.

She feeds her corgi dogs.

She rules the country.

She visits other countries to show friendship.

The Queen helps the country.

Work in an office of her own and gets served when it is meal times.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	2/2 (100%)	3/4 (75%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	10/22 (45%)	20/34 (59%)
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	6/9 (67%)	6/13 (46%)

Question: Do you know what the House of Commons and House of Lords are?

Answers: Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

They work at the House of Commons

The House of Lords is where the queen's men work.

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

The house of commons is a place where people have meetings.

They are near the river thames near big ben.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

They are where very special things take place.

Where government parties work.

The House of Commons is about the political parties.

The House of Commons is where all of Parliament meet and discuss.

The Commons is where the government meet and the Lords is where the Lords meet.

The House of Commons is where political people.

The House of Lords is a cour(t).

Places where rulers meet.

The House of Commons is where they have the talking.

The House of Commons is where the politic parties meet.

Well a House of Commons is where all the parties meet and discuss things and a House of Lords is similiar.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

It is where the government meet and have debates.

The House of Commons is where the common people government has meetings, the House of Lords is where the leaders of parties decide on what to do.

The House of Commons is where common people decide, the House of Lords is where Lords decide.

The House of Commons is the politicians.

The House of Commons are a lot of Minister(s).

The House of Commons is by Big Ben and the House of Lords is near where by Mum works.

Where all the politicians gather and talk.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

(Cont'd ...)

The House of Commons is where Parliament is held where common people decide about the country. And the House of Lords is where the Lords decide.

The House of Commons is where the M.Ps meet.

I think it is a place for different parties.

M.Ps meet in House of Parliament.

It is a place where the Prime Minister and M.Ps and the Government meet to make important decisions about Great Britain.

They are the only houses the Queen can go in.

Sometimes politicians meet there and discuss certain things.

The House of Lords is where the retired politicians go.

Commons is where the politicians work, House of Lords is where all the ceremonial occasions.

They are very old buildings.

The House of Lords is for M.Ps retiring from the House of Commons.

All (I) know is they are situated by the Thames.

Debates can be held in both of them.

The House of Commons is a place where England's affairs are sorted out.

Numbers of children able to answer this question:

SCHOOL	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	3/3 (100%)	2/2 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	10/19 (52.6%)	21/29 (72.4%)

The childrens' performances on three of the preceding questions are expressed below as tables comparing results of the different age-groups, sex-groups and schools. The questions selected for this purpose are those requiring, in answer, specific information which even the seven-year-old children might reasonably be expected to possess.

Some aspects of interest are:

1. The perceptible differences in achievement of boys' and girls' groups at various ages;
2. the achievement which appears to have taken place by age nine, which represents a peak - or the arrival on a plateau - for many children;
3. the generally impressive performance of the children comprising the seven-year-old groups.

Table 1 Numbers and percentages of children in the age-range 7-11 able to answer the question: "What is the Prime Minister's name?"

* Denotes responses collected between 1973-75

SCHOOL	<u>Age 7</u>		<u>Age 8</u>		<u>Age 9</u>		<u>Age 10</u>		<u>Age 11</u>	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	18/32 (56%)	-	28/48 (58%)	16/20 (80%)	29/54 (54%)	25/25 (100%)	47/64 (74%)	32/36 (89%)	2/2 (100%)	4/4 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	*22/27 (81%)	*24/27 (89%)	15/16 (94%)	13/14 (93%)	* 21/21 (100%)	* 27/29 (93%)	* 23/28 (82%)	* 24/27 (89%)	* 21/22 (95%)	* 32/34 (94%)
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	-	-	-	-	8/10 (80%)	10/15 (67%)	21/23 (91%)	29/30 (97%)	7/9 (78%)	12/13 (92%)
TOTALS	40/59 68%	24/27 89%	43/64 67%	29/34 85%	58/85 68%	62/69 90%	91/115 79%	85/93 91%	30/33 91%	48/51 94%

The table shows the trends appearing when comparisons are made between different sex-groups and the schools involved.

1. In the single-sex schools, the boys performed consistently better than the girls.
2. In both mixed schools, girls performed better than boys at age nine, though less well after that age.
3. Girls in the mixed schools achieved better results than girls in the single-sex schools while the boys' results showed greater similarity between schools.
4. By age seven all groups show a high degree (over 50%) of success with this question.
5. When the group of children is considered as a whole, the boys in all age-groups performed considerably better than the girls, although the gap between their results almost closes at age eleven.

Table 2 Numbers and percentages of children in the age-range 7-11 who had attained some concept of the Prime Minister's role and activities. (This is a more specific categorisation than the previously used "able to answer the question" requirement, and demanded correct information.) * Denotes responses collected between 1973-75.

SCHOOL	<u>Age 7</u>		<u>Age 8</u>		<u>Age 9</u>		<u>Age 10</u>		<u>Age 11</u>	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	15/32 (47%)	-	21/48 (44%)	6/20 (30%)	29/54 (54%)	16/25 (64%)	44/64 (69%)	26/36 (72%)	2/2 (100%)	4/4 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	*12/27 (44%)	*9/27 (33%)	10/16 (62%)	11/14 (78%)	*17/21 (81%)	*19/29 (66%)	*21/28 (75%)	*18/27 (67%)	*18/22 (82%)	*29/34 (85%)
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	-	-	-	-	9/10 (90%)	13/15 (87%)	13/23 (56%)	19/30 (63%)	7/9 (78%)	8/13 (61%)
TOTALS	27/59 46%	9/27 33%	31/64 48%	17/34 50%	55/85 65%	48/69 70%	78/115 68%	63/93 68%	27/33 82%	41/51 80%

Comparisons between the different ages, sex-groups and schools involved show:

1. In the single-sex schools, girls performed better than boys at age eight, after which age boys performed rather better than girls.
2. In both mixed schools, girls tended to perform, over all, rather better than boys.
3. Performance of children in a mixed school improved rapidly until age eight (boys) and nine(girls), after which there shows a falling-off at nine and ten, with regaining of ground at eleven. In the single-sex schools both boys' and girls' performance improves consistently with age.
4. By age nine all groups show a high degree (over 50%) of success with this question. No group showed less than 33% success at age seven.

Table 3 Number and percentages of children questioned in the age-range 7-11 who had attained some concept of the Queen's role and activities.

* Denotes responses collected between 1973-75.

SCHOOL	<u>Age 7</u>		<u>Age 8</u>		<u>Age 9</u>		<u>Age 10</u>		<u>Age 11</u>	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	12/32 (37%)	-	14/48 (29%)	13/20 (65%)	26/54 (48%)	12/25 (48%)	37/64 (58%)	19/36 (53%)	2/2 (100%)	3/4 (75%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	*13/27 (48%)	*12/27 (44%)	7/16 (44%)	7/14 (50%)	*16/21 (76%)	*22/29 (76%)	*15/28 (54%)	*23/27 (85%)	*10/22 (45%)	*20/34 (59%)
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	-	-	-	-	8/10 (80%)	9/15 (60%)	11/23 (48%)	16/30 (53%)	6/9 (67%)	6/13 (46%)
TOTALS	25/59 42%	12/27 44%	21/64 33%	20/34 59%	50/85 59%	43/69 62%	63/115 55%	58/93 62%	18/33 54%	29/51 57%

Comparisons between the different ages, sex-groups and schools show:

1. In both one mixed and the single-sex schools, girls in the younger age-groups perform less well than boys, although equal results are obtained at age nine.
2. No consistent differences in performance are evident between the sexes in the mixed schools.
3. In both mixed schools, three of the four groups of children reach a peak of performance at age nine, with subsequent poorer performance from three of the groups at age ten, and all four groups at age eleven. The boys of the single-sex school reach such a peak at age eight, while the girls' group from the single-sex school shows its poorest performance at that age, progressive improvement showing in each subsequent age-group.
4. Considered as a whole, the group of children questioned presented their peak performance at age nine. In all age-groups the boys achieved more than the girls, the greatest discrepancy in this respect occurring at age eight (26%).

SECTION TWO: Childrens' concepts of authority and responsibility.

The Idea of a Law.

The children were asked to underline one of the following: "a rule", "a story", "a game", "I don't know", in answer to the question - "Do you know what a law is?" (See Table 4.)

The concept of a law was established earliest, and most strongly, in the school where the strongest emphasis was on conformity and the internalisation of docile behaviour patterns. It was established least strongly in the school which placed the strongest emphasis on 'democratic' relationships between pupils and staff, i.e. reduction of the formal authoritarian relationship in favour of a more informal style of teaching, with some emphasis on catering for childrens' interests.

The early age by which concepts of rules, and of participation in a rule-governed community are gained, enables children to transfer them, during the Junior school years, to the world outside school.

This process of internalisation and transfer may well be regarded as a significant achievement of early education.

Table 4 Numbers and percentages of children questioned in the age-range 7-11 who had attained a concept of what a law is.

* Denotes responses collected between 1973-75.

SCHOOL	<u>Age 7</u>		<u>Age 8</u>		<u>Age 9</u>		<u>Age 10</u>		<u>Age 11</u>	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	22/32 (69%)	-	41/48 (85%)	17/20 (85%)	52/54 (96%)	25/25 (100%)	61/64 (95%)	36/36 (100%)	2/2 (100%)	4/4 (100%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	* 23/27 (85%)	* 24/27 (89%)	16/16 (100%)	13/14 (93%)	* 20/21 (95%)	* 29/29 (100%)	* 28/28 (100%)	* 27/27 (100%)	* 22/22 (100%)	* 34/34 (100%)
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	-	-	-	-	9/10 (90%)	11/15 (73%)	23/23 (100%)	27/30 (90%)	7/9 (78%)	12/13 (92%)
TOTALS	43/59 73%	24/27 89%	57/64 89%	30/34 88%	81/85 95%	65/69 94%	112/115 97%	90/93 97%	31/33 94%	50/51 98%

Childrens' Aspirations to Leadership and Responsibility in the School.

The positions of form captain, and class monitors, were found to exist in all the groups.

The question "Would you like to be form captain?" was intended to investigate childrens' attitudes to the one position of authority possibly available to them within the classroom. In many Junior schools a boy and/or a girl are elected by their classmates for the role(s), which usually consist(s) of being to a certain extent responsible for certain classroom tasks being performed, or standards of behaviour or quietness maintained, should the teacher be absent for short periods from the room.

The connection between this question and the next one "Would you like to be a monitor?" is one of comparison, and concerns childrens' different attitudes towards being the form captain or class leader, and a responsible helper within the class group. Many children explained the latter preference by stating that they "liked to help" generally, or liked particular jobs. The level of motivation towards this role rises with the ages of the children, in contrast with their desire for leadership and authority. (See Tables 5 & 6.)

Power appears to be perceived by Primary children in two ways - there is the 'bossing' element, which some children cited as a reason for rejecting the form captain's role ('Because I do not want to boss people' - 'They would call me 'bossy-boots'.'), and there is also, the much more highly approved, 'helping' or 'looking-after' that is projected on to government and public figures. It seems that more children are quite prepared to accept such a construction of power and authority, and to act as a member of a group with specific duties, than act in an purely authoritative capacity - except when a school situation presents, implicitly or explicitly, the idea of power as desirable, or as a reward.

Tables 5 & 6.

Numbers and percentages of children questioned who expressed a desire for a role of leadership or responsibility within the school.

Table 5 Personal Aspiration to Possess Authority of Class Leader or Form Captain

* Denotes responses collected between 1973-75.

SCHOOL	<u>Age 7</u>		<u>Age 8</u>		<u>Age 9</u>		<u>Age 10</u>		<u>Age 11</u>	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	24/32 (75%)	-	27/48 (56%)	12/20 (60%)	19/54 (35%)	20/25 (80%)	26/64 (40%)	13/36 (36%)	2/2 (100%)	1/4 (25%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	*17/27 (63%)	*20/27 (74%)	11/16 (69%)	8/14 (57%)	*17/21 (81%)	*17/29 (59%)	*14/28 (50%)	*10/27 (37%)	* 9/22 (41%)	*21/34 (62%)
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	-	-	-	-	5/10 (50%)	6/15 (40%)	10/23 (43%)	14/30 (47%)	1/9 (11%)	6/13 (46%)
TOTALS	41/59 69%	20/27 74%	38/64 59%	20/34 59%	41/85 48%	43/69 62%	50/115 43%	37/93 40%	12/33 36%	28/51 55%

Table 6 Personal Aspiration to Responsibilities of a Monitor

* Denotes responses collected between 1973-75.

SCHOOL	<u>Age 7</u>		<u>Age 8</u>		<u>Age 9</u>		<u>Age 10</u>		<u>Age 11</u>	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham)	20/32 (63%)	-	32/48 (67%)	8/20 (40%)	36/54 (67%)	13/25 (52%)	47/64 (73%)	10/36 (28%)	2/2 (100%)	3/4 (75%)
St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham)	*15/27 (56%)	*18/27 (67%)	11/16 (69%)	8/14 (57%)	*17/21 (81%)	*19/29 (65%)	*19/28 (68%)	*19/27 (70%)	*16/22 (73%)	*20/34 (59%)
Knockhall Junior School (Dartford)	-	-	-	-	7/10 (70%)	7/15 (47%)	7/23 (30%)	18/30 (60%)	7/9 (78%)	8/13 (61%)
TOTALS	35/59 59%	18/27 67%	43/64 67%	16/34 47%	60/85 71%	39/69 56%	73/115 63%	47/93 50%	25/33 76%	31/51 61%

Comparisons between Tables 5 and 6 reveal attitudes to authority and responsibility in school differ between age and sex-group. Some long-term trends are discernible in Table 5, where the age of nine years appears to be of some significance. It represents the time of highest aspiration to authority for the girls in the mixed schools, and the lowest point for the girls in the single-sex school. The reverse is shown for the boys in the single-sex school, while for the boys in the mixed schools, nine appears to be an age of relatively low aspirations to this particular elite.

Table 6 shows, with some exceptions, a general trend among the children to desire more responsibility with increasing years, and a greater tendency to prefer the responsibilities conferred by authority (monitorial) at age eleven, than to occupy the elective office of captaincy.

On the subject of the form-captaincy, seven-year-old childrens' rationalisation of these attitudes was as follows:-

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham) - Girls

Answers: YES

Because I would to lead (led) the class (2).

I would like to be a captain because I mite boss.

Liking for particular jobs.

Because you can put a team point down(2).

I like doing little jobs.

Because I would like to (12).

Answers: NO

Because you have to do things all the time.

Because everybody will come to me and it will make by work bad.

Because I do not want to (3).

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham) - Girls

Answers: YES

I would be helping.
Liking for particular tasks.
Because you boss people around.
Because I would feel important (2).
I like to help people.
So the class would not be a mess.
So the classroom is tidy.
You are in charge of something.

Answers: NO

Because people call me Bossy Boots.
Because it is hard work.
Because I am a girl.
Because it is boy's work (2).
Because I do not.
Because I would not like the jobs.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham) - Boys

Answers: YES

I would be able to help others.
Liking for particular jobs.
Because you can put names down (3).
Because I can be in charge of things.
Because I wouldn't have to play.
Because nobody would boss you about.
Because they do work.

Answers: NO

Because you would work all day.
Because it is hard.
I don't like telling people what to do.
Because it might be hard work and I don't like hard work.

Reactions to 'Would you like to be a Monitor' followed a pattern:

Hunters Hall Junior School (Dagenham) - Girls

Answers: YES

Liking for "doing jobs" was again the general reason.

Answers: NO

Reasons not given beyond "Because I do not want to".

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham) - Girls

Answers: YES

"So the classroom is tidy."

"You are in charge of something."

Answers: NO

"No, it is boring."

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham) - Boys

Answers: YES

"Because I could help with some jobs" for the affirmative.

These attitudes, established in some children at the age of seven with reference to leadership and responsibility, were found to be similar throughout the age-range as rationalisations for their answers to these questions. There are however, some fluctuations at different ages.

Reasons for choices were congruent between the three groups. Children showed themselves to be capable of conceptually separating 'helping' - 'leading' - and 'working' functions and making a personal decision as to the intrinsic or extrinsic worth of power and its instrumental value in their own situation. One boy displayed a self-knowledge and self-acceptance many adults might envy: 'Because it might be hard work and I don't like hard work!' While another hinted at thwarted ambitions: 'It is a nice job and for once you are in charge'.

Leadership concepts, and motivation to lead, can obviously certainly exist as early as the age of seven; as also can altruism, social responsibility, ambition, self-doubt. These qualities are accessible

to questioning, in many children. Others, answering evasively: 'Because I would/would not like to' may well be only aware of a subjective reaction to the suggestion of their assuming a particular role, which remains for the present unarticulated. This kind of answer was most in evidence among the Dagenham girls.

Rules and Authority.

The following questions were given to children between the ages of seven and eleven in St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), and the ages of nine and eleven in Knockhall Junior School (Dartford).

Some games have rules. What are rules for?
(children to underline either "To stop people cheating"
or "To make a good game.")

Do you ever make up the rules?

Is it important to keep the school rules?

Why?

Would it be nice to do just as you like all the time?

The answers of boys and girls were separated, and comparisons made between the answers given by the children of nine, ten and eleven in the two different schools. (See Table 7.)

Table 7 This presents information on the attitudes of the children questioned towards rules and rule-keeping, on the basis of their answers to specific questions. Percentages only are shown in the table, and numbers of children involved appear below.

QUESTION	Age 7		Age 8		Age 9		Age 10		Age 11	
	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls	Boys
Some games have rules. What are rules for? <u>Alternative Answers</u>										
1. To stop people cheating										
<u>St. Mary's Junior Sch.</u>	69%	92%	37% (13% no answer)	71%	50%	67%	90%	50%	67%	80%
<u>Knockhall Junior Sch.</u>	-	-	-	-	50%	60%	69%	70%	55%	54%
2. To make a good game										
<u>St. Mary's Junior Sch.</u>	31%	8%	50%	29%	40%	33%	10%	40%	20%	33%
<u>Knockhall Junior Sch.</u>	-	-	-	-	20%	50%	30%	27%	47%	44%
Do you ever make up the rules?										
<u>St. Mary's Junior Sch.</u> ("YES")	42%	77%	54%	100%	100%	90%	80%	90%	80%	100%
<u>Knockhall Junior Sch.</u> ("YES")	-	-	-	-	87%	70%	73%	68%	53%	89%
Is it important to keep the school rules?										
<u>St. Mary's Junior Sch.</u> ("YES")	100%	92%	100%	94%	100%	100%	90%	100%	100%	100%
<u>Knockhall Junior Sch.</u> ("YES")	-	-	-	-	93%	90%	97%	100%	92%	100%

Would it be nice to do just as you like all the time?										
<u>St. Mary's Junior Sch. ("YES")</u>	33%	15%	29%	13%	40%	40%	10%	30%	20%	33%
<u>Knockhall Junior Sch. ("YES")</u>	-	-	-	-	27%	30%	23%	4%	15%	0%
Numbers of children involved:										
<u>St. Mary's Junior Sch. (Eltham)</u>	12	13	14	16	15	10	10	10	5	3
<u>Knockhall Junior Sch. (Dartford)</u>	-	-	-	-	15	10	23	30	13	9

Total Number of children

St. Mary's Junior Sch. (Eltham) .. 108

Knockhall Junior Sch. (Dartford) .. 100

Points of interest shown by this Table:-

- (i) Early acceptance of a rule-governed situation;
- (ii) low value attached to freedom and autonomy;
- (iii) freedom appeared to be more attractive at nine than at other ages;
- (iv) the Eltham children appeared rather more committed to support for rules, and to making rules, than the Dartford children, and the Eltham girls rather more strongly than the boys.

Children are trained to obey some rules; even in the most democratic institution the rules of safety are indispensable, and those of essential administration usually considered so.

Rules also spell security; they enable children to satisfy authority, and to predict with some accuracy other people's behaviour. For some children rules give valuable clues for interaction, for understanding of what is expected of them, and are a means for obtaining approval and reward. For others, they provide a challenge to energy and ingenuity. Children are used to being expected to support rules; they are not so used to being asked to explain why they do or do not support them.

It is, therefore, of some interest to consider the childrens' own rationalisations of keeping school rules.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Girls:

because it is safe and good.

Then you will not get told off.

Because they are important.

Because you might hurt your nose.

'cause you will get in a muddle.

Because you will get hurt.

I think it is because you will not get told off.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Seven-Year-Old Boys:

Because otherwise everything would be in a muddle.

Because the school rules can help you.

To keep the school going.

Don't know.

Because you would get told off.

Because it will get ruf (sic).

Because they're important.

There is a firm link here between the idea of rules, and notions of order and security, and keeping out of trouble. Restraint appears to be accepted as a lesser evil than having others unrestrained; we are not told why 'you will get hurt'; whether the child fears being bullied, or perhaps inadvertently pushed in a scramble from one place to another, nevertheless, rules prevent behaviour by others which might result in personal

hurt being suffered. The classroom then could be a Hobbesian jungle for some. For others it could be a mess, and rules are preferable to muddle.

By age eight, more information is available:-

Girls:

Because children will run about in the corridors and knock the smaller children over.

There is also another point of view - the emergence of institutional solidarity:-

Because it would be disobeying the school and letting it down.

It will keep the School's good name.

An environmental hazard appeared in:-

Sometimes you get watched.

Not keeping rules mean't - you are not being sensible.

Because everyone else does.

Because all the school will then do the same.

Some saw no choice:-

Because you've got to obey.

Boys:

Because you could cause an accident to other people.

Because there could be a fight.

The rules are to keep people from cheating.

You might disturb other classes.

It will keep you out of trouble.

For the boys in particular, it seems, rules are concerned with restraint of physical actions; freedom, conversely, will be the absence of physical restraint on this account.

The girls are not so much concerned with their personal restraint, rather they see a world which has a natural propensity towards chaos.

The attraction of the idea of discarding rules is highest between the ages of nine and ten, according to the information collected from the two schools. Some children would not discard rules on the grounds of 'you would not know what to do' - 'you wouldn't learn anything' -

'it wouldn't be the same'. The rebel elements simply preferred 'no work' - 'I could read all the time' or 'because you would not have to take orders from anyone', and 'we would have more freedom' (both schools). From the reasons given for their choices, it would seem that between these ages children become aware of the regulations of their own behaviour by the adult worlds' contingent rules. This consciousness becomes rationalised either in a decision to go along with the system: 'You get on better if you do', 'So I don't get told off', or with the conviction that without the security of a rule-governed existence life would be unpleasant in some ways - chaotic and muddled or even dangerous - the Hobbesian thesis. The resulting emotional commitment to rule keeping is further rationalised, when questioned. Some children, it seems, need the aid of imagination in order to preserve or construct their commitment after the age of about nine. After this age, simple cause and effect such as 'you will get told off' gives way to specific reasons. (For example, the ten-year-olds in Eltham supported rules because they 'stop accidents - screaming and shouting - getting in a mess', 'because you are embarrassed when told off', 'because you won't learn anything'.)

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Girls:

Because you don't get muddled up.
 The school would not be very nice.
 Because you know what you are doing.
 Because no one fights with you.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Nine-Year-Old Boys:

Because if you did not the school would go to rack and ruin.
 It would get in a terrible mess.
 Get expelled.
 To make a better school.
 If you didn't there would be no discipln (sic).

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

You would get in a mess.
 There would be screaming and shouting.
 So we all behave ourselves.
 You will get told off. (These are typical responses)

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

You will be safer.

It is not fair to the rest of the school.

Because people could go around with bombs.

The school would fall apart.

There would be chaos, no discipline.

If I don't I shall have a bad report and disappoint my parents.

Because the Headmistress says we have to.

Knockhall Junior School (Dartford), Ten-Year-Old Girls:

Because the school would look odd.

So you know what to do.

Accidents could happen.

So we do not have silly boys running about.

School would be untidy.

If you didn't keep the school rules you wouldn't know anything, so I keep to rules.

If everyone didn't keep the rules the school wouldn't be like a school.

Everyone in the school would be swearing and running down the corridors.

So everybody wears the same.

You get along better.

School will be much better.

Everybody be happy.

Knockhall Junior School (Dartford), Ten-Year-Old Boys:

Because if you fight there is no one to stop you.

Help us make a better school.

School would be in a riot.

So we do not go like a bad apple.

Different clothes look untidy.

If we didn't the school would be nothing but a dump and no one would do anything on time or anything any time.

Because some rules are stupid.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

I think a school should have discipline.

My class would get in an uproar.

To help stop accidents.

It keeps things in order.

St. Mary's Junior School (Eltham), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

You might get hurt by knives.

You could get hurt.

Knockhall Junior School (Dartford), Eleven-Year-Old Girls:

If they didn't take any notice of the rules the school would be destroyed.

To keep a reputation.

You wouldn't know what to do.

You are likely to do all your work wrong.

Knockhall Junior School (Dartford), Eleven-Year-Old Boys:

We would have people getting knocked over.

It would be a place of riots.

Yes, the school will go mad without them.

So that you do not get violence.

The school would be a mass of junk.

There would be shouting in classrooms.

Fighting all the time.

The ten-year-olds in Dartford provided a rather more imaginative set of reasons; it seemed that in a less authoritarian situation, the children produced stronger reasons for rule keeping at this age.

At age eleven, the unpleasantness of possible alternatives to rule keeping had become more elaborated. Girls were rather more concerned now 'to keep a reputation'. For the boys 'the school would go mad without them'. Rules exist for the sake of safety, but are also seen as instrumental, enabling work to be done and order to exist. There is, in this, not only passive acquiescence, but the elements of moral judgement; the objectives of schooling are endorsed.

Childrens' support for rules seem to fall into two basic categories; the strongly supportive, for whom the rules represent quality of life, and those who accept rules as part of a contingent situation, where conformity avoids unpleasantness in some form.

These are basic attitudes which, internalised as a result of early educational training will affect later political and social concept-building. It can be said that such attitude formation has particular elements of interest for political growth.

Firstly, children appear to have little urge to extend their own freedom of action in the school situation. They see freedom as a relative good, less attractive than security.

Secondly, children accept given rules as moral values, and construct value judgements accordingly. These value judgements concern collective versus individual rights, and particular conceptions of the general good reputation, safety, security and even tidiness.

Thirdly, crude forms of utilitarian ethics appear to operate for children, crude so long as the consequences of an action can only be guessed at, or perceived intuitively. This utilitarianism is based on peer-group membership, valued initially insofar as it does not conflict with a child's personal interests. Once he has transferred certain rights to the peer-group (e.g. when a group as a whole make up rules for games to which all agree), he has entered into a basic democratic situation. The early, crude utilitarianism becomes the germ of perception of democratic processes. For children this stage is signified by using any way of voting to make a group decision. This principle is internalised once a child, finding himself in the minority, can yet accept the majority decision. Thus, through play and through school organisation, children learn two different concepts of rules; one active, one passive.

If the content of school rules at the Primary stage seems to have little connection with political concept building, a consideration of the principles involved can be revealing. What is at issue is usually the restraint of individual behaviour, that is, questions of individual and collective rights, the relationship of individual members to the group and the concomitant obligations.

In summary, from the answers of this group of children, it would appear that children, by the age of nine, are generally convinced that a rule-governed situation is essential to the preservation of order and safety; that in its absence life, if not actually short, might well be nasty and brutish. The great majority here are committed to the need for the rule of law, although the system has its occasional failures. 'Some rules are stupid' observed a non-conforming ten-year-old, exceptionally.

SECTION THREE: Childrens' Perceptions of Parliament and Members of Parliament.

Table 8 (see over) presents information on the childrens' knowledge of Parliamentary processes, and attitudes towards M.P.s. Their attitude to the open/closed nature of the Parliamentary group is also examined. Childrens' comments and descriptions are listed subsequent to the table.

The question: "Do you know what it is to vote?" was initially put to the group, but although it provided a useful starting-point for the questions on Parliament, as no child provided further comment than "Yes" or "No" the affirmative answers remain unsubstantiated and are not included in the tabulated data. (The subsequent questions, when answered affirmatively, were accompanied by some description.)

This table presents childrens' answers at different ages, unsegregated by sex or school. As the questions are related, and in some cases connected to each other, the set is arranged as one table. This enables comparisons of childrens' responses in the different areas to be more easily made.

Table 8 Summary of Childrens' Responses Through Age-Range 7-11, Unsegregated by Sex or School.
Schools involved: St. Mary's, *Bedonwell, Horniman, Hunters Hall Girls and Hunters
Hall Boys

QUESTIONS	NUMBERS AND PERCENTAGES OF CHILDREN ABLE TO ANSWER				
	<u>Age 7</u> ‡(47)	<u>Age 8</u> (167)	<u>Age 9</u> (143)	<u>Age 10</u> (228)	<u>Age 11</u> (45)
	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %	No. %
Do you know what Parliament is?	7 (15%)	40 (24%)	57 (40%)	116 (50.8%)	34 (75.5%)
Do you know what people do there?	8 (17%)	33 (20%)	63 (44%)	120 (52.6%)	35 (77.7%)
Do you know how people come to be there?	3 (6%)	22 (13%)	30 (21%)	82 (40%)	19 (42.2%)
Could we all be M.P.s if we wanted to? (Yes)	18 (38%)	45 (27%)	31 (22%)	53 (23.2%)	13 (28.8%)
Do you think only some special people could? (Yes)	28 (60%)	117 (70%)	97 (68%)	147 (64.4%)	28 (62.2%)
Do people who make laws need to be very clever (Yes)	33 (70%)	138 (83%)	108 (75%)	141 (61.8%)	31 (68.8%)
More clever than most people? (Yes)	29 (62%)	117 (70%)	83 (58%)	116 (50.8%)	23 (51.1%)
Do they need to be good? (Yes)	36 (77%)	150 (90%)	104 (73%)	196 (86%)	38 (84.4%)
As good as most other people? (Yes)	41 (87%)	122 (73%)	94 (66%)	186 (81.6%)	36 (80%)

*This school did not separate boys' and girls' responses, or allow the children to enter their names on questionnaires.

‡Number of children in each age group : Total number of children 630.

(Table 8 Cont'd ...)

The first three questions require information in answers^{and} show children of consecutive ages making steady gains in successful answers. The first two show children making considerable gains at nine, and again at eleven, while the third, which is much less successfully answered, show childrens' achievement rising most steeply at age ten. The conclusion here is that more is known of the activity of Parliament than of what elections are for.

Members of Parliament are regarded as a 'special' elite. Law expectations were shown of the possibility of joining this group, the youngest children, of seven, being the most optimistic in this respect, and these attitudes are also revealed in responses to the next question.

The "cleverness" of law-makers is assessed next; all groups felt the need for "people who make the laws to be very clever", if not more clever than most other people.

Some of the reasons and descriptions children gave at different ages, in response to these questions, are quoted below.

Childrens' Perceptions of What M.P.s and Parliament Do.

Age Seven - Girls:

Group round and discuss.

They make laws and biuld biuldings (sic).

Choose the govemnt (sic).

Group round and discuss the laws. People vote for them.

They make laws.

They do lots of work.

Voting.

Boys

They make ruls (sic).

They decide laws. They build houses.

Talk.

Age Eight - Girls:

They look after the country and make sure everybody believes in doing the law.

They make laws to keep the country under control.

Parliament is a big house and a place where important people live.

Boys:

They help the country and try to stop strikes.

They put prices on the food.

Yes, it is houses.

Age Nine - Girls:

They make decisions.

They talk.

They make the laws.

They govern the country and they lead parties.

They make laws and control the country.

They vote for people they want to be Prime Minister.

They talk.

They talk about England.

They get a high job and get picked.

They help us.

Boys:

Parliament is a group of men trying to help the country.

People decide if laws should be made or not.

They discuss British affairs.

They've been elected by other citizens.

They go up and up the ladder (to get there).

Parliament is a place where the Prime Minister works.

They belong to a party and try to be the political member of a town.

The members of Parliament make sure the government is in order.

Members of Parliament make speeches in Whitehall.

They get together and get a kind of team.

Talks about crises and things of the present.

He (an M.P.) discusses what the country is to be like in the future.

Age Nine - Boys: (Cont'd ...)

They help the Queen.

It is all the politicians who run the country.

They govern over us.

Control the country.

They govern the country and they lead parties.

They talk about tax and the price of food and things like that.

A Member of Parliament helps make laws.

They make decisions (decisions).

Talk politics.

Age Ten - Girls:

A member of Parliament is someone out of a group of people who help to run the country.

They tell us what will happen in the future.

The government are people who discuss the state of the country and help us.

The government rule the country and the Parliament make the laws.

The government is a group of intelligent people that make the laws.

They bring trouble to the Prime Minister.

They bring complaints to the Prime Minister and tell him what the people want.

Yes, Parliament is the organisation of which M.P.s belong to.

They discuss Britain's affairs and what they should do.

People voted for them to be there.

Members of Parliament govern Britain and pass laws to help us.

They make the rules and keep Britain in order.

They make decisions on what they think is best for the country.

They make decisions (several).

Boys:

There are three parties, when they win a general election they become the government.

The government makes laws.

People vote because they want a person to lead them.

They put their name in the district to a candidate (sic) and then get a lot of votes.

Age Ten - Boys: (Cont'd ...)

They get into Parliament.

They run the community.

To vote is to help a party.

Parliament decides wages, makes laws.

They put up pensions for old people.

They deal with current affairs.

Parliament is a place where M.P.s disguise matters of importance.

They make rules and represent their own parties.

Parliament is some people who talk about the government.

The government make the laws (several).

Have genrule (sic) meetings.

Make rules.

Govern over Britain.

Age Eleven - Girls:

He (an M.P.) brings problems to the Prime Minister.

Both rule the country and make laws to help everyone.

M.P.s keep law and order.

The government looks after the present state of the country.

They make the rules and laws.

They are the Queens advisers.

A government is a group of people who decide what should happen to prices and things.

They help England.

They help to make the country more organised.

They are able to rule the country.

Make decisions.

The government governs the country and members of Parliament make new laws.

Parliament is a place where the M.P.s work and pass the laws.

People come to be there by being elected by people who think (they) are good enough to cope with the problems.

Age Eleven - Boys:

Parliament makes new laws and acts to help us.

They (M.P.s) speak out and tell other members about their schemes to improve the country.

They get voted in by the people in their constituency.

They help the Prime Minister and they argue with the Prime Minister.

Improve our standard of living, make new laws, deal in foreign matters.

They make laws and try to settle strikes.

The government rules the country and a member of Parliament is a person that belongs to the House of Commons.

Look after the state and the nation.

They help (keep) the country a nice place.

They make decisions, laws like the Common Market.

Childrens' Attitudes to Government

The children questioned were found to be strongly committed to the idea of the benevolence of political figures and of the political culture generally. More required their M.P.s to be good than clever, and believed that this was indeed so; M.P.s must be, for most, at least "as good as" other people. There were very few subscribers to the Machievellian ethic.

Questions asked: "Do M.P.s need to be good?"

"Do they need to be as good as other people?"

Rationalisation here varied: For eight-year-olds - M.P.s need to be good.

Girls:

So they can give fair laws.

Because they might make bad laws.

Because they are ordinary people.

Because we might be unhappy and live with wicked people.

Boys:

Because if they're better than other people it's easy to do things and do them quick.

Because they will be lowering the country.

At this stage, the girls appeared more inclined to interpret the term 'good' morally, while boys preferred often to attach the meaning 'good at' to their responses.

At nine, some girls assumed particular qualities in the elected elite.

Girls:

They are good already.

Because they would not be one (an M.P.) if they were not.

To be kind to our country.

While others took a less sentimental viewpoint, typically:

Because they have responsible jobs, and it wouldn't be very good if they were bad.

Many boys, at this age, have no charisma attached to leadership:-

Boys:

They are just people.

Yes, they do, because they make laws and they have to keep them as well.

Yes, because you do not have to be clever to make a law.

Because if they are not, other people should get the chances.

The ten-year-olds introduced further thinking here:-

Girls:

Yes, because otherwise they might make silly decisions.

Because they are very important.

Boys:

Yes, otherwise they would make laws to suit themselves.

Because they have to understand people.

And one moral philosopher reminded:-

Nobody can be as good as somebody else.

At eleven-years, a developed attitude showed for both boys and girls:-

Girls:

If they wasn't good enough, they wouldn't be in Parliament.

Because they understand problems and know how to deal with them.

These comments encapsulate some of the girls willingness to project particular qualities upon leadership; 'importance' has its moral charisma, apparently, and, although this is not true of all girls' responses, it is an attitude that occurred with them much more frequently than with the boys, who appeared more conscious of moral imperatives here.

Boys:

They should show an example.

They have to be honest.

If they weren't good, they wouldn't be leaders, because they wouldn't be good enough to be them.

The 'goodness' requirement for Members of Parliament was the strongest positive response throughout the age range of children questioned, and across the different schools. Cleverness is not enough, according to most children; fairness demands that those who make the rules shall abide by them, and be seen to be morally capable of ruling. "If they were bad they would write bad laws" said both a seven-year-old and a ten-year-old. It is interesting to see that even at the early age of seven the possibility of a "bad" law is considered; at seven, the same expected tribulations appear to be attached to the possibility of bad or unfair laws as to the abolition of school rules, and for the same reasons. Security is based upon a rule governed society, benevolently administered.

Childrens' basic needs include security, and the minimisation of their feelings of vulnerability. For these reasons they need to project benevolent intentions and qualities upon those who govern them in day to day situations. This affective response is transferred to other types of authority, ultimately to government itself. Is this emotive response

one root of our 'deferential'¹ political culture? If so, the attitudes towards authority by early schooling would appear to make some contribution to the emergence of this trait.

1. Almond, G. A. & Verba, S. The Civic Culture (Princeton University Press, 1963) Ch. 14.

SECTION FOUR: Childrens Discussing PoliticsThe Seven-Year-Olds in Discussion.

Analysis of discussion with two groups of seven-year-old children. (Extracts are used here, the full transcripts of all discussions appear as Appendices.)

Penny (age 7.6) and Sandra (age 7.0)

Hunters Hall Junior School, Dagenham, October, 1974

This group, like the others, was a random sample in that the children were not 'chosen' in any sense from a school achievement point of view. The quality required was a general willingness to talk, and the choice left to the class teachers, who, as subsequent events showed, were not always accurate in that particular estimate. There was a tendency, in most discussion groups, for an initial interaction to delineate the roles of stronger and weaker members at a fairly early stage, and this tendency, though slight in some cases, was marked at the seven year's stage in the larger, mixed group.

The aspects of discussion of interest were:-

1. General level of information.
2. Quality of conceptualisation, i.e. ability to perceive relationships, purposes and causal sequences, understand the notion of alternatives, and the separate categories of examples and issues.
3. To discover any areas of special interest for the children.
4. To observe the 'generative' power of any word or other stimulus.

The initial stimulus was constant for all groups, i.e. the production of photographs of one or all of the leaders of the major parties.

Q. Do you know who Mr. Heath is? Do you know what he does?

Sandra. Well, Mr. Wilson is the Prime Minister - he's like him, but he isn't the Prime Minister.

Q. Why isn't Mr. Heath the Prime Minister?

Sandra. Because . . . he won the election?

Q. Who won at the election?

Sandra. Mr. Wilson.

Q. That's right. So what would have happened if Mr. Heath had won in the election?

Sandra. He would have been the Prime Minister?

Q. Do you think they like each other, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Heath?

Penny. No.

Sandra. Yes . . . Because they make laws together and they talk about things together.

Q. (To Penny) Do you think Mr. Wilson and Mr. Heath make laws together?

Penny. No . . . Because Mr. Wilson is Labour and Mr. Heath is Liberal.

Q. Are you sure about that?

Penny. Conservative.

Q. Good girl. We have one picture have we missing?

Penny. Jeremy Thorpe.

Q. Yes. Who's Jeremy Thorpe?

Penny. He's like, sort of, the team leader of the Liberals. They are in sort of parties and they have leaders.

Q. Yes. What's a party?

Penny. When they all get together and do things.

Q. Yes. What kind of things do they do?

Penny. They talk about laws.

Q. Do they talk about laws and agree about everything, do you think?

Penny. Not everything, some things.

Q. What kind of things do you think they might not agree about?

Sandra. A good law, and things like that.

Q. How do you know if a law is a good law, Sandra?

Sandra. Well, because it could help people.

Q. What kind of ways would a law help people?

Penny. Sometimes when they put prices down it would help, and things like that.

Sandra. They have to make sure that people in factories and things like that don't have to work too hard.

Q. Would you think a Prime Minister does all this? By himself? Or do you think somebody helps him?

Sandra. Somebody helps him because all the parties help him.

Q. Yes. How does the Prime Minister decide who's going to help him, do you know?

Sandra. 'cause, when people vote for him . . . and Labour got the most . . . say he got 300, well, he will have 300 people helping him to do all the rules.

- Q. Yes, that's quite true. But do you think all 300 could help at the same time?
- Sandra. No.
- Q. What would happen then?
- Sandra. Well, if they did everyone would be . . .
- Q. If you wanted 300 people to help you, would you ask them all at the same time?
- Sandra. I would just ask them all one at a time, not just one at a time, about five, the good ones that do things all together.
- Q. When a man gets to be Prime Minister, how do we know if he's a good Prime Minister? Penny?
- Penny. Because you've got to let him make one rule and see if he does a good rule, and if he don't do it properly, then they would know.
- Q. Yes, I see. What kind of things do you think a bad Prime Minister might do?
- Penny. If they kept all the prices high and things like that, and making things so no-one could play on them.
- Q. What do you think should happen to a man who's a bad Prime Minister, Sandra?
- Sandra. He would get voted out.
- Q. What do you think, Penny?
- Penny. I feel that if he was a bad Prime Minister no-one would like him and they wouldn't do nothing what he says. Like Sandra says, vote him out because nobody wants a bad Prime Minister because everybody wants the world to be nice.
- Q. Do you like Mr. Heath or Mr. Wilson, or one better than the other, Penny?
- Penny. I like Mr. Wilson . . . Because when Mr. Heath was Prime Minister he kept making prices high and my Mum never like him, or my Dad.
- Q. I see. And you don't like Mr. Heath?
- Penny. No.
- Sandra. My grandfather, he wanted the Conservatives to win.
- Q. He likes the Conservatives? Does he ever say why?
- Sandra. No.
- Penny. When we were on holiday, Jeremy Thorpe came on the beach on a hovercraft.
- Q. Did you like him?
- Penny. No, I thought he was horrible.
- Q. Why?
- Penny. Well, he keeps saying things where he's going, and he does it like he's always the leader in all the world.
- Q. I see. And you don't like that?

Penny. No.

Q. Are you interested in things like who wins the election, and who's the Prime Minister?

Penny. My Mum and Dad aren't, but I am.

Q. I wonder why you are, Penny, if your Mum and Dad aren't?

Penny. I don't know, because they are always doing other jobs. They don't watch the telly. Most of the time they don't know what's going on.

Q. Do you ever tell them what is going on?

Penny. Sometimes, because when they are in the garden I watch the telly, the news and things like that, and see what is happening . . .

Q. Penny, who runs the country?

Penny. Mr. Wilson . . . No, the Queen.

Q. Who is in charge? Is Mr. Wilson in charge of the Queen, or is she in charge of him, or are they both equal?

Sandra. The Queen's in charge over him, and she's in charge of Canada as well. (Sandra has lived in Canada recently.)

Q. Do you agree with that, Penny?

Penny. Yes, 'cause I think the Queen looks after all the country.

Sandra. Not just all the counties, all the country. And in Canada, because we don't have a Queen of our own.

Q. Penny, does the Queen do any work?

Penny. She visits people and writes things down on papers, and things like that.

Sandra. She visits other countries, and she signs things, and she's very busy.

Q. What things does she sign, Sandra?

Sandra. I don't really know.

Q. Does she make laws, Penny?

Penny. Well, does she have the power to make the laws?

Q. You don't think she makes them herself?

Penny. No, it's people like the Prime Minister.

Q. Does he tell people what to do?

Sandra. He makes the rules and tells people what to do . . . but if he keeps telling people to do naughty things, well then, no-one would do as he would say.

Q. So we could please ourselves whether we did what he told us or not?

Sandra. Well, if he was a good Prime Minister and everybody liked him, they would.

These little girls displayed surprising ease in joining in a political discussion for the first time. They were able to show some awareness of highly complex issues; the question for example of government by the consent of the governed, of the limitations of power, of the need for 'checks and balances', and for structure in government. They have formed opinions for example of the need 'to know what's going on'.

Interestingly, there appears to be the beginning of an ability to construct hypothetical examples of possible political behaviour from the experiences that have so far been available to them. In addition to their social experiences must be added two other factors, viz. the recent General Election campaign and the influence of television. Penny considered herself to be much better informed than her parents, and television was seen as the basic indispensable source of information.

The Queen emerges as a distant figure, the possessor of power and influence on a different plane than that of the Prime Minister; this charisma seems to be felt instinctively by both children, and they do not have sufficient information to be able to examine it.

Penny's countering of the question of whether the Queen makes law seems to be an intuitive leap, a bringing together of the notion of laws or rules with the concept of legitimate power to make them. If this was so, if, during this kind of discussion, the childrens' reflections or information and experience they have already assimilated brings them to a further stage in understanding, then this activity might be considered justifiable in educational, as well as research terms. It raises implicitly the question of the nature of political education.

Geraldine (age 7.3), Jane (age 7.4), Matthew (age 7.4) and Anthony (age 7.8)
St. Mary's Junior School, Eltham, July, 1975.

The boys were able quickly to embark on a discussion of what a Prime Minister does. There was perception of the law-making function attached to the roles of Prime Minister and Queen, but confusion when the children were asked for more explicit information than a simple denotive phrase. Examples derived from the media, as Anthony's category of activities that should be restrained by law.

Anthony. I read about it in the paper where a man was banned from driving because he had alcohol in his blood - from driving for a year!

Q. Yes, there should be laws about that shouldn't there?

Anthony. There is! And don't steal cars and don't do robberies and bank robberies and Pow-Pow and Boom-Booms like in America . . . in United States of America!

Opinions presented as facts were insecurely held; Anthony changed his mind when the question of the Queen's helping the Prime Minister to make laws was returned to; at first having maintained a separate law-making function for her and changing this to a 'helping' role.

What appeared to have happened was that the children had in fact absorbed such information as was readily available, and the connections made between discrete pieces of information were intuitive. This is not to say that they were necessarily vulnerable to suggestion; twice, leading questions, inserted for the purpose of assessing their general disposition to agree with untested statements, were rejected. This apparently, was not an acceptable method of assimilating fresh information, and it raises the further question of what are the sources of political information that are regarded as valid. In any such list, it appears the media will have a dominant position.

Television in particular was regarded as the basic political arena, in which the politician's gladiatorial performance merited the appropriate signal and fate, as was revealed from the discussion of a recent by-election, arising from us of the word 'vote'.

This proved an area of great interest and involvement on the childrens' part, especially on the subject of politicians' abilities to communicate.

Matthew. He signs things . . . vote for Bottomley! And some people wrote he's rotten and that gave me the idea. And when I saw him on T.V. - ugh - he's rotten!

Q. Just because you don't like the way he talks on television!

Anthony. No - because the way he talks about things.

Q. What do you mean, the way he talks about things?

Anthony. Well - he - because - mm - you know - say you were asked a question, like "What's the highest mountain in the world?" and you'd go - "er, I don't know, er - yeah, that - er - I don't know" like that. That's what he talks like.

Q. You mean he doesn't really say anything?

Anthony. He can, he can say it, but he sort of . . .

Matthew. He doesn't do it properly. He doesn't speak. I mean, he can talk properly, like we're talking, but - mm - he . . .

Anthony. He can't talk about it and . . .

Both boys tried to talk at once, ending in an irritable 'Oh shush!' from Anthony.

Q. Do you mean he doesn't answer the question?

Anthony. No, he does answer the question, but - mm - he sort of answers the - well - he answers it properly - well not properly - I mean - I can't explain it, but - it's just that . . . as I said before, he - he doesn't answer it properly. He could say "Mount Everest" but, er - and he could say other things about it, but he doesn't answer it properly!

Anthony's own struggle to communicate meaning here was uneven, but his clear and simple exemplification worked.

Different approaches between boys and girls were in evidence on the question of identifying a good Prime Minister. While Geraldine was satisfied to see him on television, Matthew and Anthony concerned themselves with a particular interpretation of charismatic leadership.

Q. I'm going to ask Jane first. How would we know if he was a good Prime Minister? Would we know?

Jane. Silence.

Q. Don't you think we would know, Jane?

Jane. I don't know.

Q. Do you know, Geraldine?

Geraldine. Yes.

Q. How do you think we'd know?

Geraldine. We might see him on T.V.

Q. Yes, we might see him on T.V. What does Matthew think? How would we know if he was a good Prime Minister?.

Matthew. I think I'd try him out on a commando run! (General giggles at Matthew's originality or daring.)

Anthony. I know what I'd do with him!

Q. What would you do?

Anthony. Make him jump out of a hundred foot plane.

Q. But that's not what Prime Ministers are supposed to do, is it?

Anthony. Yes it is! Just to test him to see if he's afraid or not . . . if he isn't afraid - without a parachute, this is - if he isn't afraid, he's a good Prime Minister!

Q. But if he jumped out of a plane a hundred feet high without a parachute, he wouldn't be a good Prime Minister very long, would he, because he'd be dead?

Anthony. No, no, no. He'd have a couple of thousand mattresses ready on the floor - air-filled!

Q. Are you saying you only want somebody who's really brave, and tough, and that's a good Prime Minister?

Matthew. No . . . Yes.

Anthony. Yes.

Notions of leadership are conceptually closely linked with notions of authority, and the boys' preference for a particular style of leadership, based on personal qualifications contains significant implications, even at the pre-conceptual stage.

It may be suggested that here is a tacit awareness of the difference between formal and actual authority, possibly acquired through interaction with authority in school, but certainly projected on to the outside world as a need for a 'hero-figure' as leader, whose actual authority derives from the charisma of super-performance.

Such figures, where they exist, fulfil traditional political needs; most nations, for example, have a utilitarian tradition of successful military leaders turned politicians, but this hardly seems to be the category under discussion here. The television 'hero-figure' would seem the likeliest model or symbol, for this is an example of symbolic thinking in Piagetian terms. It may be worth noting, however, that such symbolic thinking can be traced in adult political attitudes, apparently based on an assumption shared, and indeed illuminated by the childrens' thinking

here; that of transfer of ability or training.

Symbolic thinking is partially defined by its unclear boundary between fact and fantasy, i.e. an incomplete ability to categorise in these terms. The boys demonstrated this both in the passages quoted above and in their discussion of the Queen's activities later. In comparison with the responses of the seven-year-old girls at Dagenham, the boys ideas remained more intuitive. Contrast the following, in answer to the same question of how a 'good' Prime Minister can be identified:-

Penny (age 7.6)

Because you've got to let him make one rule and see if he does a good rule, and if he don't do it properly then they would know.

Intuitive thinking is in evidence only in the last four words of the answer. which in other respects represents a valid attempt at a political logic. Sandra was able to attempt such a logical approach.

Q. What do you think you could do if you wanted a law changed or if people round here wanted a law changed?

Sandra. They could write a letter about it.

Q. Do you think it would work, writing letters? Sandra?

Sandra. Well, if he were a good Prime Minister, yes.

Tacit assumptions appeared to exist here, of accessibility and responsiveness connected with the role, and of democratic procedures. Sandra knew more than she realised.

A 'good' Prime Minister, according to Penny, would be accorded loyalty.

Q. Does he tell people what to do?

Penny. Well, if he was a good Prime Minister, and everybody liked him, they would.

Which reveals perception of alternative courses of behaviour based on a particular rationale.

Both groups of children were aware of a law-making function of a co-operative, if unclear political relationship between Prime Minister and

Queen, and of an economic basic to politics. An interesting common element was the strength of the disaffection which the children felt for particular politicians, which appeared to be generated by particular styles of communication.

Penny. When we were on holiday Jeremy Thorpe came on the beach on a hovercraft.

Q. Did you like him?

Penny. No. I thought he was horrible.

Q. Did you? Why?

Penny. 'cause he keeps standing up and saying things that's horrible . . . he keeps saying things where he's going and he does it like he's always the leader in all the world.

Q. I see . . . and you don't like that?

Penny. No.

Comparing this with the Eltham boys' criticism of Peter Bottomley reveals some interesting similarities, notably the complete disaffection, even antagonism, to the individual concerned. Such feelings appeared to be considerably stronger than any feelings of affiliation at this stage.

Both groups were able to identify the names of political parties, although the Eltham children had no apparent referential information to connect with the names, one of the Dagenham girls, Penny, had an existing conceptual framework.

Q. Do you think Mr. Wilson and Mr. Heath make laws together?

Penny. No . . . Because Mr. Wilson is Labour and Mr. Heath is Liberal.

Q. Is he? Are you sure about that?

Penny. Conservative.

Q. Who is Jeremy Thorpe?

Penny. He's - er - like, sort of team leader of the Liberals.

Q. That's right - go on.

Penny. They are sort of in parties and they have leaders . . . when they all get together and do things.

Q. Yes. What kind of things do they do?

Penny. They talk about laws.

Perceptions of the Queen's role and activities differed between the two groups of children; differences were observed between both the two pairs of little girls, and between the girls and boys.

Penny and Sandra had the most developed concepts of the Queen's functions, and on being asked, were able to make decisions about which ideas to discard. These girls were able to present a fairly developed conceptual framework compared with the two Eltham girls, Jane and Geraldine.

Q. What does the Queen do, Jane?

Jane. Writes letters?

Q. What about?

Jane. Sometimes when they're a hundred?

Jane was able to present only one idea, formulated as a question. Geraldine's response to the question contributed two ideas:-

Geraldine. Well, she helps people and she wears precious jewels.

The two attributes are not logically connected, and apart from a later echoed agreement with Anthony's statement:- 'She takes the taxes from us for the Prime Minister', which may have made an addition to her basic 'set' of discrete ideas, this was the extent of Geraldine's contribution here.

The boys behaved rather differently; several influences dominate their dialogue at different points. The general impression is of the activities of a Robin Hood on Maundy Thursday, and the use of quaint expressions of 'the poor', 'her riches', show an assimilation of language outside the normal usage of school, peer group and home, (presumably childrens' television programmes were the source), by Anthony.

Anthony. She takes the taxes from us for the Prime Minister.

Q. Does she?

Matthew. And who does she give them to? Does she keep them for herself and spend them? In her riches?

Q. Do you think she does?

Matthew. No, no, no.

Anthony. I think she spends them on buildings and roads and gives some to the people that work. I think she gives her managers some, and twelve pounds a year to the poor.

Q. To the poor?

Anthony. Yes.

Q. Where does she find the poor?

Anthony. She goes round the country and sees . . . when she goes on her visits. She goes round the world and then she finds the poor - and she's got a couple of thousand pounds with her.

Geraldine. Yes, but . . .

Anthony. (Ignoring general attempts to interrupt him.) And, and . . . she gives £12 each to the poor . . . then they're not poor. But they spend some on an . . . a job . . . a different job. Then they're not poor any more.

Matthew. But what happens in some country like America and Australia? (Where they) have dollars, they don't have pounds?

Anthony. Oh, well . . . they use twelve dollars . . . or she brings forged . . .

Matthew. Yes, but where's she going to get it from?

Anthony. She goes to the bank, and she swops twelve dollars for twelve pounds.

Matthew. Yes, but she runs the bank, she can just . . .

Anthony. She swops English money for American dollars.

His contributions here reveal the pre-conceptual confusion between fact and fantasy; and an engaging example of pre-moral thinking ('or she brings forged . . .').

This little boy's ability to generate a structure for his ideas began as an attempt to rationalise the idea of taxation, demanded of him by Matthew; such an excursion illustrates the interaction of two slightly different levels of conceptualising (e.g. Matthew's attempt to insert logic and a link with reality, on reminding Anthony 'but she runs the bank, she can just . . .'), and his reminder of changing currencies in different countries.

'Politics' proved to be another example of a generative term for the two boys which was used to turn the discussion to economic matters:-

Q. Is Matthew going to tell me what Politics is?

Matthew. No, no, no - a bit I can - they're kind of M.P.s, and they work and they come and have talks with the Prime Minister about - rules and the budget. What they raise money, make it go round and other things.

And then to laws and law-breaking.

Q. Do the police make the laws?

Anthony by this time had organised his ideas.

Anthony. The Queen and the Prime Minister do that.

Several aspects of the childrens' development of political concepts are revealed by the conversations of these two groups of seven-year-olds, and by comparisons between them.

Different styles of questioning elicit different responses. The information-seeking questions that are to some extent 'closed' (i.e. specific answers are required and to a large extent these can be correct or incorrect) discover the awareness of facts, and reveal established attitudes. A more 'open-ended' type of question is more likely, from this evidence, to enable a questioner to draw both a child's interpretation of political matters, and any ability to generate further meaning. Allowing children to discuss with another on this level gives valuable information on cognitive styles, and abilities both to categorise and understand principles of classification. Dialogue tends at this stage to be carried on by means of statements rather than justifications, examples rather than reference to issues. A mixture of pre-conceptual, intuitive and operational thinking was revealed in the language used. This can be seen in the use of wide (and therefore vague) categories, and the use of 'things' for the object of actions, where purposes are not grasped but certain activities are understood to take place. However, there was also an awareness of structure in government, of co-operative relationships, the accountability of political figures and a spontaneous criticism of style of communication in politics.

Different levels of self-confidence were apparent between the groups; the conversation in the mixed group was dominated by the boys, who were quickly involved in new areas of discussion with considerable self-confidence. The little girls of the group, unable to match this, opted out at an early stage. By contrast, the Dagenham girls possessed considerably more information, and showed a readiness to express and extend ideas.

Considering all the material comprising the seven-year-olds' responses, written and verbal, many of the children appear to have some basic conceptualisation of politics, in terms of roles, functions, activities and content.

That their thinking is intuitive, symbolic, discrete and unstructured is to be expected; it is also likely to be function of a child's emergent cognitive style, of the ways in which he makes sense of the world around him, and selects and processes information from it. (An example of a different interpretation of the world around them occurred between the two groups of children, in that some indication of different interpretations of the verb "to work" appeared. These influenced their ideas on whether the Queen did any work, more of the Dagenham children deciding that she did not, as they conceived of work.)

The limits of pre-operational thinking, in Piaget's sense, are present, and derive from difficulties with the mental representation of a sequence of actions, and with serialisation. This limitation applied to political or social concepts will prevent a child's comprehending some relevant aspects; viz the principles of a hierarchical structures, or the application of relational terms. The difficulties some children have over ascribing more or less power to the Queen or Prime Minister are an application of these limitations, which were also illustrated by their attitudes to the Conservative candidate under discussion. Just as the child in the pre-operational stage does not understand the use of relational terms referring to properties such as darker, brighter, heavier, lighter, but tends to think absolutely, interpreting 'lighter', e.g. as meaning very light, not just lighter than some other object, so the reaction to Bottomley revealed a political application of this limitation. Absolute attributes ('he's rotten') were attributed, not relational ones.

What is considered to have been shown in this section is

(a) that children of seven have some cognitive contact with the political world; (b) that many children of seven years have achieved in terms of political information, awareness and interest, at least a cognitive base, presenting the necessary pre-conditions from which further development can take place.

In discussion, the eight-year-olds displayed positive views.

Clive (age 8.4) and Michael (age 8.8) on "How does a person get to be Prime Minister?"

Clive. Well, he says what is it on tele, and gets lots of votes that he wants, and then the most votes, then he wins. He's the one who gets the most votes wins. In other words, he fights you know, for it.

Q. What does a Prime Minister do, Michael? What's he there for?

Michael. Taking charge of the country.

Q. How does he take charge of the country?

Michael. Writes letters to other people.

Q. What do you think the letters might be about?

(No answer.)

Q. Michael, what might a bad Prime Minister do? Suppose he was a real terror, a real baddie, what might he do then?

Michael. Put up signs saying "Keep Britain messy!"

Q. Clive, what should happen to a bad Prime Minister?

Clive. They should send him away. Or chuck him out.

Q. Send him away? Where to?

Clive. To prison.

Q. How long for?

Clive. Five years.

Q. Five years?

Clive. Well, that's how long they spend for a Prime Minister.

. . .

Q. In this country, at the moment, do you think, from your watching the news, that we've got any problems? Anything we need the Prime Minister to sort out?

Michael. In our country there's been something happen because they won't give us no oil.

Q. Who wouldn't give our country oil?

Michael. Would it be the arabs?

Q. So do you think the Prime Minister's job might have something to do with sharing out oil?

Michael. Yes.

The boys are prepared to "chuck out" or imprison a "bad" Prime Minister, although it seems from their idea of "bad" behaviour on his part, that they find it difficult to accept such an idea, and play it down. Aggressive qualities are approved; the Prime Minister must "fight" for his office. For them, he must be a positive leadership figure, although they are by no means certain of the exact channels for these qualities.

Two little girls of this age also had a point of view.

Frances (age 8) and Linda (age 8) on Elections.

Q. Frances, what was the election all about?

Frances. About food (prices) going up.

Q. Yes, that's one of the things, but what were they voting for? What was the point of it all?

Frances. Because we wanted food to go down; it was going up.

Q. Can you help us there, Linda?

Linda. To see who is Prime Minister. The old Prime Minister gets chucked out the back door and the new one moves in. That's what my teacher said.

Q. Why do we change our Prime Minister?

Linda. 'cause other people aren't happy with the Prime Minister that already is Prime Minister.

Q. And so what happens?

Linda. They have another election.

Q. How does the Prime Minister get to be the Prime Minister?

Linda. They have a vote and he is the leader of the party.

Q. What's a party, Frances?

Frances. When people get together.

Q. What do they get together for? Do you know, Linda?

Linda. No.

Frances. To see if things (prices) go up or down.

Asked about what kind of things political parties might disagree about, Frances returned to prices:

Frances. Agree about things going up.

Q. Do you mean some people want prices to go up, and some people don't?

Frances. I want them to go down.

Q. What do you think, Linda?

Linda. Well, some parties, the Labour party usually, thinks about them going up, and the other two parties want them to go down.

Q. Why do you think that, Linda?

Linda. I don't know. I just do.

Questioned on what the Prime Minister does:-

Frances. He has talks at 10 Downing Street.

Q. Who does he talk to?

Frances. Talks to all the other Prime Ministers.

Q. All the past ones?

Frances. Yes.

Linda. He invites all the people that have helped him to get into 10 Downing Street and they all have a meeting.

Q. Supposing a man was a bad Prime Minister. How would we know? What kind of things do you think a bad Prime Minister would do?

Frances. Have arguments and put things (prices) up.

Q. Linda, who do you think runs the country?

Linda. The Prime Minister.

Q. What do you think the Queen does, Frances?

Frances. Sits on her backside.

Q. What do you think, Linda?

Linda. She goes round to different places and sees some people.

Q. Why?

Linda. Don't know.

Q. Do you think that's a useful thing for the Queen to do, to go around visiting?

Linda. Important people.

Q. So you think she has a job to do?

Linda. I think so.

Q. You don't see many ladies in the government, do you? You don't see a lady Prime Minister?

Linda. No.

Q. Do you think there are any reasons for this?

Linda. I think the Queen's Prime Minister.

Q. You think the Queen's Prime Minister - it's the same thing, is it?

Linda. Yes.

Q. I thought we said Mr. Wilson was Prime Minister?

Linda. Anybody can be the Prime Minister.

Q. Do you think the Queen could be?

Linda. Yes.

Q. Do you think anybody could be?

Linda. Anybody.

Q. Do you think you could be when you grow up?

Linda. Yes.

Q. Do you (Frances) think you could be?

Frances. No. Well, first you've got to get into a party, and the Prime Minister, he'd have to work down, and you'd have to work up the party to be the head of it, the head of the party.

Q. Did somebody vote for the Queen so she could be the Queen? How did she get that job?

Frances. She must have been taken up in the Royal Family.

Q. Linda, do you know? Haven't you ever wondered?

Linda. No. First she was a Princess. Then she gets to be the Queen.

Q. Linda, are you interested in what the Royal Family do?

Linda. Not really.

Q. Are you, Frances?

Frances. Only about three of them . . . Princess Anne, Captain Phillips and . . . (memory failed her).

It seemed that here, Frances had developed a conceptual framework for classifying some political processes - she knew how parts of the system work, e.g. her description of the process of becoming a Prime Minister. In contrast, Linda was still operating on an intuitive level. She was unable to construct a category of activities and attributes to assign specifically to either the Prime Minister or the Queen, and when questioned either reacted with an opinion unfounded on fact or real information, or sought security in a basic formula, viz insistence on "putting prices down".

Q. What do you think are the kind of things, Linda, that the government and the Prime Minister should do? Do you think they should come around the schools?

Linda. Yes, and they should put the prices down.

Q. Is this the most important thing at the moment, the prices?

Linda. Yes.

Q. Do you both think so?

Frances. Yes.

For these children, politics is about the economics of their real world, and neither of them appeared to have any great interest in, or loyalty towards, public figures. Most children of this age found some difficulty in differentiating between the activities of the Prime Minister and those of the Queen, and this appears to have been largely because they had no clear conception of the Queen's functions. While aware that she "helps the country" in some way, on being questioned they tended to assume that all her activities would necessarily have that effect; the general effect that came to the children appeared to be that of a presiding maternal presence.

The Eight-Year-Olds in Discussion. (cont.)

Three groups of eight-year-old children were involved:

Clive (age 8.4) and Michael (age 8.8)

Hunters Hall Junior School, Dagenham, October, 1974

Frances (age 8) and Linda (age 8)

Hunters Hall Junior School, Dagenham, October, 1974

Philip (age 8.9), Robert (age 8.6), Maria (age 8.9) and Grainne (age 8.7)

St. Mary's Junior School, Eltham, July, 1975

In the mixed eight-years-old group one of the boys, Philip, was able to attempt a sequential account of the stages in becoming Prime Minister:

Philip. Have to be quite clever - to be an M.P. and, to be an M.P. you have to go through a sort of thing - rules your life - and you have to run, and things like that.

This sequence was, however, incomplete at the final stage from lack of information, so lapsed into the symbolic structure of "and things like that". Robert's symbolic thinking was evident in his phrasing, when a "good Prime Minister" was seen as one who would "let the Common Market go down, or if he's not a good Prime Minister he would let the Common Market go up". This was extended by the explanation that he meant "make the food prices go up" and that being a "good Prime Minister" was related to controlling prices.

Philip had a more specific definition which he refused to weaken into a concern with prices, dealing instead with the larger issue:-

Philip. I think he should be a good Prime Minister because he'd be staying in the Common Market.

This choice from alternatives implies judgement, but its content is limited, the premise seen as self-evident and self-justifying.

Grainne's perception of a "good Prime Minister" was complex, and part of it was not accessible to her for further articulation:-

Grainne. Well, he should have imagination and he should be nice and talk to you.

The idea of a Prime Minister "having imagination" was acceptable to the group - Grainne's idea was validated, although its content was not examined for explicit meaning until Philip produced an interpretation.

Philip. He'd be writing books!

And he defended this under Grainne's gentle attack ("That would be funny!") by producing a categorical statement:-

Philip. Prime Ministers write books!

This is now presented as normal Prime Ministerial activity. Grainne was able to defend her position:-

Grainne. What if he works? (Writing books is not work.) If he did, it would be funny!

For Grainne, a "bad Prime Minister" "wouldn't be friendly and he wouldn't talk to you". And Philip, summarising the required qualities and accepting the premises of the other children, nevertheless clung to his own hypothesis:-

Philip. He'd let all the prices go up - then - if he'd talk to you, he wouldn't be friendly - and - he wouldn't write books!

Robert was now ready to present his own argument for Britain's joining the Common Market, opposition to which defined a "bad" Prime Minister:-

Robert. He wouldn't stay in the Common Market . . . So if we had - a shortage of salt - we wouldn't be able to help - we wouldn't be able to - do it by ourselves. We'd need help from other countries. If we wouldn't be in the Common Market, we wouldn't - get that salt, ourselves.

Not yet ready for dealing with issues as abstractions, he is yet able to approach principles through using a concrete object in exemplification, and is sufficiently motivated towards solving this problem to construct the technique for dealing with it.

Grainne's insistence on a "friendly" Prime Minister reveals her undeveloped ability to categorise - i.e. (a) to recognise a "set" of qualities that make a Prime Minister good as a Prime Minister - the role attributes, and (b) to separate ideas of a distant public figure from her experience of immediate relationships. Grainne's is, to some extent, the "benevolent Leader" image of childhood, which appears to be less prevalent in our own political system than in some others. In choosing the "friendly" image, she was not able to consider what the opportunities for such interaction might be, or its terms; and whether she was referring to personal encounters, or a style of communication via television, is not really clear, although her phrasing indicates an expectation of personal contact. Understanding of the question appears to be incomplete and there is a consequent re-interpretation of it hingeing on Grainne's restricted use of the word "good". (This provides an interesting link with the kind of difficulties children often have in dealing with early mathematical concepts in Piagetian terms, when they answer a question as they understand it, on the basis of limited concepts. This provides, not "wrong" answers as such, but valuable information for teaching purposes.)

Robert revealed a different kind of confusion in his answers to consecutive questions:-

Q. Who did you want to win the by-election? Do you remember?

Robert. Mr. Wilson.

Q. Do you mean you wanted the Labour Party to win? If there was an election tomorrow, which party would you want to win, Robert?

Robert. Liberal.

Harold Wilson had not in fact been a candidate at the by-election, so Robert was speaking in a symbolic sense, to signify the party he would have chosen at that point in time, although holding a different preference on the question of a future election. Reasons for affiliation were not yet accessible; for in spite of the unanimous Liberal support, none of the children was able to articulate its basis. On being questioned further,

Robert produced a personality-preference basis:

Q. Has liking a party got to do with liking the person who leads it, or is that something else?

Robert. It's the same. I would say it's because I like the person.

Neither little girl was able at this stage to construct a perception of aims or purposes in politics. Robert's construction was economic. Politics was about the "money situation"; it was also about the "price situation", which appeared to display an analytic ability not shared by at least one other member of the group, for Philip was not able to accept this:-

Philip. That's the same as the money situation!

The particular phrasing used reveals the influence of the media. Philip's ability to identify one problem led him to search for explanations which, however, eluded him at this stage in his thinking:-

Philip. We're running out of money, because the people who are printing the money - they think - we might as well not make some, because we've made such a lot as it is. Nowadays, people are losing quite a lot of money.

The child's attempt at explanation is interesting on two counts; first because in making it he was spontaneously extending the range of his thinking, as the lapse into fantasy indicates there to have been no previous correction made for him. A first attempt can be assumed here. Secondly, this appears to be an attempt to validate a particular idea by presenting it for comment. Robert's economic ideas were presented summarily:-

Robert. . . . There isn't much money in Britain and prices are going up.

Neither boy used the term "inflation", the nearest attempt being Robert's "rise"; the word generated an illustrative example from Grainne, who applied it to wages rather than prices, but shifted her uncertainly-held ground at once, under correction from Philip:-

Grainne. When the miners - they wanted one thousand pounds for their work - for their wages . . .

Philip. It's a hundred pounds!

Grainne. Oh, yes, a hundred pounds, yes!

The question "Have we got any other problems?" produced successful, if somewhat pessimistic responses from three of the children:-

Robert. There's lots of people on strike.

Philip. Petrol's going up . . . and now, it's about two pounds . . . They put it up. I think it's about seven - I think it's about five pounds for four gallons now!

Maria. And food is getting short!

On being asked about the Queen's activities, the girls evinced different conceptual structures from the boys, which, it is suggested, resulted from different constructions of the word "work".

Q. Grainne, what do you think the Queen does all the time?

Grainne. She sits around, and . . . sometimes she goes out to a party.

Q. Anything else? Do you think she does any work?

Grainne. No.

Q. Do you, Maria?

Maria. She has servants.

Q. Any different kind of work?

Maria. Yes.

Q. What kind of work does she do, do you think?

No response.

There was unanimous agreement that the Queen "is more important than the Prime Minister", and an ability to find terms on which to justify this conviction. For Maria it was:-

Maria. Oh, because the Queen sort of looks after the country.

For Robert:-

Robert. Because the Queen lives in a better place than the Prime Minister . . . because she's . . . better than him . . . and she's . . .

Grainne. (Prompting) In charge of the others!

Robert and Grainne successfully matched concepts here, agreeing:-
 "She's in charge of the British Isles."

Q. And the Prime Minister isn't?

Robert &
Grainne. No.

Q. What is he in charge of then?

Robert. He's in charge of the agreement market.

Q. Is he, Grainne?

Grainne. And he's in charge of all the prices.

Q. What's the difference between being in charge of the British Isles and being in charge of all the prices?

Grainne. The difference is the British Isles is bigger, and better than the prices.

This statement appeared to mark a stage in conceptual progress for Grainne; she had related two sets of activities, regarding one as dominant over the other. Whether she was able to regard "the prices" as a sub-set of activities implicit in "the British Isles" is not completely clear, but both generalised and specific aspects of power and control had emerged, conceptually. This achievement at this point in time may well have been due to the successful validation of some of her concepts with Robert's help, resulting in increased confidence in her own judgement.

Philip once more attempted a summing-up:-

Philip. The Queen looks after nearly the whole country - all the countries in the world, compared with the Prime Minister who just looks after England and tries - thinking whether England should stay in the Common Market.

Q. You think the Queen looks after all the countries in the world?

Philip. The Queen, she mostly travels, and while the Prime Minister, he doesn't travel very much, he usually stays in England quite a lot of the time.

Philip had succeeded here in producing criteria for judging the issue.

In conversation, the nine-year-olds appeared to have developed to some considerable extent from the seven/eight-years stage. Abilities to understand and use political terminology were now evident, as well as the ability to discuss political actions and situations critically, and with some feelings of involvement.

The question would seem to arise whether, in social and political concept building, there is a quicker pace in concept-formation or some telescoping of stages of thinking, particularly where children are stimulated by such factors as General Election campaigns. It might be suggested that these events enable children to draw together their existing ideas, indeed constrain them to do so, in order to relate to the event. A point of interest here is that no such effort to accommodate to events is required of children in any other area of their education. It is also to be remembered that the political nature of the event itself imposes great constraints on any attempts, outside the family group, to help them towards understanding.

The vital question of how the political concept-building process takes place may be answered by observation. What is to be observed is the process of a child's putting into words, (and finding the necessary images and examples from first-hand experience) his or her ideas about wider political arrangements. During this process a child's use of language expands in order to carry the flow of ideas.

Susan and Jeanette (both age 9) illustrate the connection between language and thinking in this area.

Q. Does the word 'politics' mean anything to you?

Susan. Politics? I have heard of the word but I never really knew what it meant.

Q. Can you work it out, Jeanette? What's a political party? Do you think that's got any connection with politics?

Jeanette. Don't think so.

Susan. Is it Labour?

Jeanette. Is it that word beginning with 'C'?

Q. Yes, can you work it out?

Jeanette. Conservative.

Q. You know what Labour and Conservative are? What are they?

Susan. They are people who want people in Britain to vote for them.

Q. Yes.

Susan. And another one is Liberal, Labour and Conservative.

Q. That's right.

The Nine-Year-Olds in Discussion.

Two groups of nine-year-old children were involved:

Susan (age 9) and Jeanette (age 9)

Hunters Hall Junior School, Dagenham, October, 1974

Marek (age 9.6), Paul (age 9.5), Sara (age 9.4) and Nicola (age 9.9)

St. Mary's Junior School, Eltham, July, 1975.

Q. What is having parties in politics all about, do you know, Jeanette?

Jeanette. Is it the people you vote for?

Q. Yes, but why are they split into different parties? You know, couldn't they all be in one party and just say 'vote for me, I'm just a person on my own'? Why do we have to bother with parties?

Jeanette. Because they are different from each other . . . and the person you vote for the most, becomes Prime Minister.

Q. One of that party?

Jeanette. One of that party does. The one who's got the most people voting for them.

Q. Who could decide if they wanted an election?

Susan. The Queen.

Q. Well, the Queen has to agree to it, doesn't she? But who would have to say 'I want an election'?

Susan. The people.

Q. The people could do what?

Susan. Go around holding bits of paper saying 'We want an election' or something.

Q. But who would have to say 'All right, I agree'?

Susan. The Queen.

Q. She's one of the people, who else?

Susan. Very important people.

Q. What position, though?

Susan. Her husband?

Q. No.

Susan. The Prime Minister.

The Queen is seen as having the ultimate power of decision-making, which, according to the information children possess and are able to handle at this stage, would be correct. Logically, the power of a permanent incumbent will be stronger than that of a temporary role occupant, for children; and they are aware of this basic difference between the two functions.

Asked to describe a "good" Prime Minister, Jeanette answered:-

Jeanette. They have a sort of list, you see, and they have to answer questions, and that. And they see all their brains.

Q. Do you mean before a party chooses who's going to be Prime Minister?

Jeanette. Yes.

Q. Supposing a man's got to be Prime Minister - you know, he's there, he's working. How would we know if he's a good Prime Minister? Susan?

Susan. Well, he pays good prices and puts up wages and then he puts down food prices.

Q. Anything else?

Susan. Well, he looks after the country well, and you give him about half a year to see if he's done any good for you.

Q. What kind of things do you have to do to look after the country well, Susan?

Susan. Well, we would have to make him give us more wages, and if, like my Mum's having a baby, and she had to go in (hospital), and my Dad had to be off work, well I think he gets about eight pounds a week - so it's really hard to look after us. Well, what I reckon, they should give up more, what a Prime Minister should do, he should give the men more money to live to pay for rent, and tax, and we get ever so much tax to pay, but I reckon we shouldn't get so much tax.

Q. Jeanette, how would we know if a man wasn't a good Prime Minister?

Jeanette. Each person would get less money.

Q. What should happen to him if he is a bad Prime Minister?

Jeanette. Get the sack.

Q. (To Susan) Do you agree with that?

Susan. No, I think he should be made to resign himself.

Q. What is the difference between getting the sack and being made to resign?

Susan. Well, you can't really sack a Prime Minister because people have got to say 'We want an election' or something like that, and the person has got to agree. And if at work you get the sack it's not quite like a Prime Minister.

Q. Jeanette, are you going to argue that one with her? You can't sack a Prime Minister?

Jeanette. It depends. You can sack a P.M., but when the next Labour and things come, the person who gets the highest amount of it can come to be the next P.M.

Q. He might get re-elected anyway? You might get him back? Is that what you mean?

Jeanette. Yes.

Susan showed that she found the economic definition of political activity unsatisfactory without some underpinning philosophies, and began spontaneously to develop a theme of her own:-

Susan. I think that this world should really . . . well, you shouldn't bother about money, you should share everything. If no, what I mean, no, down our church there's a tramp and he's been living there for a long time. Well, I feel very sorry for him because when the Boys' Brigade go there they throw lots of stones at him. I think people, educational people, should give him a home which is nice and warm and he should have plenty of food and I think it's ridiculous to pay money for tax. I think we should share everything, money and everything.

Q. Don't you think paying taxes is a way of sharing?

Susan. Oh, yes, it is really but, well, if, you can't give a person too much tax because once my Dad was given a lot of tax to pay and he didn't have the money. You can't have too much out of the people because if you ask them for some amount of money and they haven't got it they aren't going to have food, a home or anything. They have to start selling things. The poor people shouldn't have to pay tax. The people who haven't got any children should pay the most of the tax.

Q. Why is that?

Susan. Because the people with - the old age pensioners haven't got much money because the people have retired and the people with children have got to pay it all out their wage for their children and all the food - but the other people, all they have got to do is pay the money for them and their wife.

Q. You think it should be worked so that it is more fair, do you?

Susan. Yes.

Asked about acceptable ways of changing existing laws, she was quite ready to accept the implications of her definition of social justice, and acknowledged the contradictions in a pluralist society - ("so many people want different laws").

Q. Supposing you want a law changed, are you going to start kidnapping people or blowing people up? Is that the best way to go about getting what you want?

Susan. No. What I think is they should get all parties together and go near the one who is in charge or the Prime Minister and they should ask, they should have some loud voices or some paper, I think they should go and shout it out and then the Prime Minister or something should try and change their thoughts but the thing is that so many people want different laws so it's going to be quite a fight in this country from now on because, well, there's little amounts of one party and there's little amounts of the other and if them parties get together there's going to be lots of fights.

Susan's exposition was accepted by Jeanette who tried to resolve the social problem posed by applying a separatist philosophy:-

Q. Do you agree with that, Jeanette? So many people wanting so many different things?

Jeanette. Yes, I should think what they should do . . . live in groups and things like that and if they . . .

Q. You mean live separately?

Jeanette. Yes.

Susan, however, saw a conflict situation as temporary, and capable of resolution. This became a moral problem for her. The question of justification was neatly turned; her argument hinged on the necessity for 'being friends', as transferred from an individual to a group and collective situation, and it was the refusal of friendship and goodwill that required justification.

Q. I see. Did you mean that, Susan?

Susan. No. Well if they get together they will fight but I don't think they, I think they should all become friends and live happily together and not fight like anything. Like down our street there's lots of fights down there but me and my next door neighbour are very good friends and some people are . . . they are very good friends to each other and if, like, if my nonny wanted something left in our freezer, well, we let her and if she's run out of milk we lend her a pint of milk but she gives it to us back so why can't they just be friends?

Q. You mean why can't people in the world . . . ?

Susan. Live together.

Q. That's a very good question - I don't think we have got any real answer to that, have we? Do they, do they live like this?

Jeanette. Some people should stay friends like all the others, like Susan and I, we are best friends, they should stay friends like that so they can all get together but you can't do this because all they do is argue.

Q. Yes. Jeanette wants people to live separately . . . she thinks that's the solution. Is that right, Jeanette?

Jeanette. Yes.

Q. I see. And you think that this can be got over, Susan, that people . . . ?

Susan. Yes, I think people, that they shouldn't always live separately - like if me and my friend have an argument and say "Ooh, you've got fleas, I don't like you" - well, this is how grown-ups, adults, act sometimes - but I think it's stupid, fighting and all that. We should all be friends and lend each other things and we should all have a nice cosy house with a fire and bed and that, and well really, why has money got to get in it? Why do we really need money? If people got together, all the world, or just Britain, get together, they should really, money should be taken out of the world and then they can make us just live without paying anything and there should be provided, no, we should just pick up from the land what we want. It's like a farm, they have to do their own thing. Well, we can pick out our own things excepting if it's in a different country they can lend us some like there's something from every country isn't there? We've got coal.

Q. Yes, I can see that point of view. Do you think that when you grow up you might want to be a Member of Parliament?

Susan. No, I'd like to live in the countryside. I wouldn't like to actually get in these rough fights and that - I'd just let them get on with it and live my own way. But I would be concerned about it but I'd just keep out the way and let them carry on - if they want to be silly, they can be silly.

Q. So you don't want to be the Prime Minister then and make everybody live like that?

Susan. No, but the thing is if people would listen to it - first of all you have got to get people to listen. Some people don't - they just go around madly and do things wrong. Some people, it's like forest fires, some people mean to do it - they do it deliberately. Some people just want to live an easy life, like, most of the families in Britain or the other countries, they want to live an easy life.

Q. Well, I think you will have to wait and see won't you?

Susan. It's going to be a long time.

Q. Yes, it is.

Her refusal to accept a Hobbesian view of human nature led her to reject Jeanette's alternative, and, with all the instincts of a demagogue, she appeals to higher principles than the financial considerations upon which the early part of her thinking had been based. Susan was now in

the classic political philosopher's position; she was contrasting a view of human nature - not regarded as intractable - with a picture of the world as it could be. For the classic position, a theory of re-education is also required, and Susan instinctively reacted for this: ' . . . the thing is if people would listen to it - first of all you have got to get people to listen'. There appears to be an assumption here of a rational general will, that only needs to listen, in order to will its own best interests. She saw the Queen in a crucial role here.

Susan. . . . I think the Queen herself should choose the Prime Minister - and us, of course - but I think she really should convince the people. The trouble is the Queen is supposed to help us - she is helping us in a lot of ways now, but . . .

It seemed that during this interview both little girls consolidated some of their notions initially, eventually reaching a point where they were able to develop alternative social constructions. Susan's emotional involvement enabled her to reach a stage of thinking and self-expression not usually associated with nine-year-olds and politics. The source of this interest was the home and the mass media. ' . . . my Dad talks a lot to me about it and really I watch a lot of telly', but there appeared to be little doubt that Susan had developed her own conceptual framework and was not only building upon it, but prepared to hold and defend her ideas.

The question inevitably arises as to how representative Susan's thinking is of the nine to ten-year-olds.

The ability to consider the world as it is, and to see alternative social solutions, belongs to a further stage of thinking, according to Piaget. Susan, here appears to have achieved this ability in a particular way; her examples from immediate surroundings are used as a mental pivot, enabling her to remain securely anchored in reality, while exploring the theoretical possibilities that interest her. She brings formal theory under control through exemplifying, and the next stage, for her, will be the development of the ability to dispense with the need for this aid.

At nine, differences in quality of childrens' responses from those of the younger age-groups make both a quicker pace of discussion possible, and a larger area of subject-matter available. Responses demonstrate the childrens' willingness for involvement in political discussion, and

to carry the terms of it further than they were initially required to do. One example of this can be seen in the remark of one of the girls in the Dagenham group, on recognising a photograph:-

"We should know him! Mr. Wilson"

which appears to accept a responsibility for collecting information. Her continuation:-

"I've seen him on television and I want to do that again"

states an intention of contributing further information and ideas to the discussion. She also clarified her ideas of the "good things" she liked to watch:-

"Things that are working out for the people that we vote for"

This example, drawn from the conversations at Dagenham, can be compared with a similar technique used by one of the Eltham boys - the making of an initial bald statement requiring elaboration, which was readily accessible.

Marek gave the beginning of discussion a humorous twist:-

Q. Who is Harold Wilson?

Marek. He's the Prime Minister, who smokes a pipe, and sometimes smokes out all the M.P.s over at the House of Commons!

Marek was well-informed, which was the point he wished to establish early in the proceedings, and was able to do so.

Q. Marek, how does a man get to be Prime Minister?

Marek. Oh, first of all he becomes the leader of a party, and if they get - if in a General Election they get a lot of people in their party who've been elected, that party wins, and the leader of that party becomes Prime Minister.

He showed an accurate knowledge, correcting his own clarity of explanation as he went along, of the components of a particular process, and their internal sequential relationships. Marek, it is suggested on this evidence, was very securely established in the Piagetian stage of concrete operations. He had achieved a mental structure of a complicated

procedure, involving the use of ideas of conservation and reversability.

It was one of which he had no previous personal "concrete" experience, for he had never seen this process worked through in its entirety, or participated in it. This is, of course, true of all the concepts children build of the "out there" political world. To a considerable extent, they are in this area operating independently of physical, concrete or direct sensory experience. There are no educationally-sequenced sets of apparatus in the shape of blocks, rods or counters to manipulate at the infant stage, that could provide a "concrete" basis for internalising information. Some of the children had voted for something, at some point in their school lives, and this was the limit of such "structured" experience.

It would therefore seem reasonable to suggest that the construction of political concepts, although based to a very large extent on early social interactions, nevertheless owes something to a child's interpreting and reflecting upon ideas that arise from his observation of events in the political world at large. In other words, some ideas that have no personal basis of "concrete operations" in physical action, are assimilated into thought during a developmental period when thinking is, theoretically, rooted firmly in experience of this nature.

Marek's father had told him of some political matters; educators and developmental psychologists alike hold to the viewpoint that such "telling" is not a sufficient condition for concept-formation to take place. If we are to ask, as seems logical, exactly what is to count as "usable experience" in this sense, it may be that the answer will involve, at least so far as the development of political thinking is concerned, accepting a much wider conception of such usable experience in the building of concepts, at the concrete-operational stage, than present interpretation of Piagetian theory accepts. On the basis of the childrens' discussions as collected for this study, it is suggested that in the concrete-operational stage of thinking they not only possess political knowledge, but also reflect upon abstract political ideas, in some cases.

Marek produced a particular theory of his own acquisition of political knowledge:-

Marek. My Dad's a civil servant, and he tells me quite a lot about politics, for if I don't understand things. And - I think I was born with most of it, really!

The boy's attempt here was to explain that he had 'knowledge' that was not due to his father's explanations, and his difficulty was to account for this conviction.

While Marek's views can hardly be considered to contribute to the innatist/behaviourist positions, yet the child's ability to think in terms that approximate, however simplistically, to particular viewpoints, is of interest for its illustration of particular mental processes. He had proposed solutions to questions which, however tacitly, had been internally posed and reflected upon. It is possible that such reflection took place rapidly, after the question had been put, in order to answer it. It is also possible that putting the question caused a particular conviction to become explicit, and therefore capable of articulation.

The terms of Marek's admiration for Churchill were different from those of the other children; although the two girls shared his feelings to some extent, the basis of their respect was in one case highly subjective, and in the other had an objectified reality.

Paul, Marek and Sara, in response to a question: "What happens in Parliament? Has anybody any ideas about what actually goes on?" generated a discussion on the concept of expert elites. The children participated in justifying the existence of political parties, in which the core of the discussion concerned amount of disagreements within a party.

Nicola. . . . Sometimes they could agree - like, we're going to have some more supermarkets, but about half could agree, and a quarter couldn't agree because they couldn't make up their minds, and the other quarter could agree (presumably to disagree!) and so they would - they'd choose, actually, between themselves which was the most . . .

This, however, is an example of a 'raw' idea that is different to assess for meaning owing to its imperfect articulation. Nicola needed further information to work with. However, her handling of numbers and alternatives related to an ultimate majority within the proportions understood, shows her ability to use the Piagetian principle of conservation in a particular way.

Marek's re-invention of the classical concept of direct democracy was also of interest as an alternative hypothesis to political parties:-

Marek. I think they (parties) must disagree on some things.

Q. Yes. Or there wouldn't be any point in having them, would there?

Marek. No. We'd be able to govern ourselves, if they agreed with everything one person said . . . If one man said "Who agrees with this?" and everybody shot their hands up, in the Houses of Parliament, there'd be no use having a party, really. Just a few men.

The group's discussion on democracy stemmed from Sara's definition:-

Sara. It (democracy) means that - well, it's not like a communist country where you have the people above everybody else saying exactly what it's going to do. The people are free to - do what they like - and, just see - which, sort of, feeling what to do which comes out. And feel they want to do it!

Her emphasis on the affective aspect having gained unanimous support, some analysis of its principles was attempted under questioning.

Q. What's good about democracy?

Paul. Because you're free.

Q. Are you free to do anything you like, in a democracy?

Paul. No. There's some rules.

Q. What are the rules for? Are rules a good idea?

Paul. To keep - er - the work - Britain - going, and, er, it doesn't go wrong.

Paul's faith in the rule of law was as yet undifferentiated into reasons for commitments, but not so Sara:-

Sara. Well, we need it to keep the people in order, because if everybody did what they liked, we'd be rather a rotten country, and we wouldn't get anywhere, and money would just sort of be wasted, and - we'd end up living like sluts, you know - wouldn't, you know, we just wouldn't be organised.

Sara here appeared to be conceptually feeling her way towards notions of economic organisation, supported by the group.

A characteristic of this group was the balance of discussion, which contributed very much to its pace; as topics changed, all the childrens' interests were able to re-focus on the new aspect of discussion, thus reinforcing interest. There were stronger members of the group, in discussion, but no persistent dominance by the boys, as had occurred in the younger mixed groups. On the contrary, these nine-year-olds showed

considerable courtesy in debate; disagreement was rationalised, interruptions very few, and support enthusiastic, e.g. Marek's agreement with Sara:-

Marek. She's put it - she's taken it all out of my mouth!

The children listened to each other, and this in itself reveals a developing capacity to consider other viewpoints, and to accept the possibility of alternative solutions to particular problems, which are characteristic of the stage of formal operations, or abstract thinking. Support for the suggestion that formal thinking in social and political terms can take place as early as nine-years is also contained in the discussion of the Dagenham girls, Susan and Jeanette, who were able to hypothesise and compare alternative life-styles to our own pluralist concept of society, which has been discussed in an earlier section of this work at some length.

These conclusions support those already drawn from considering the earlier discussions with children at Dagenham: that the nine-year-old stage is a period of consolidation and expansion into conceptual frameworks, of discrete ideas that have already been acquired in some form. So as a result of more information having accumulated, more efficient interpretation of the political world is possible. Where this interpretation is insecure or illogical, it is often the case that basic information is not available to the children (e.g. of the precise nature of the Monarch's functions, or the formal procedures of the passage of a bill through Parliament). There seems to be little justification for such factual information not being included in the Primary curriculum in schools at present.

Some children, it appears from their ability to interact in discussion, are developing by this age an ability to rationally hypothesise in political matters. This, it is suggested, is the distinctive achievement of the nine-years stage.

The Ten-Year-Olds in Discussion.

Three groups of ten-year-old children were involved:

John (age 10.11) and David (age 10.4)

Hunters Hall Junior School, Dagenham, October, 1974.

Susan (age 10.6) and Sally (11.1)

Hunters Hall Junior School, Dagenham, October, 1974

(Sally was included, although eleven, with the ten-year-old children, as there was no other eleven-year-old girl to pair her with available)

Gary (age 10.7), Darren (age 10.3), Tina (age 10.6) and Linda (age 10.1)

St. Mary's Junior School, Eltham, July, 1975

In conversation, the two Dagenham boys, John and David, handled the basic concepts with ease and interest. Messrs. Wilson, Heath and Thorpe were quickly identified as party leaders, and John's explanation of political parties was concise:-

John. Because if some people get elected and they're not so good, people might want a change. But if they haven't got another political party they wouldn't be able to change, and they'd still have the same man to carry on for them.

David saw inter-party disagreement as valuable and purposeful:-

David. . . . So that they can get some policies that they can put through Parliament.

Questioned "Have you any idea of how policies get put through Parliament?", John found some difficulty in articulating his meaning through lack of the vocabulary needed. In 'a certain person is made for a certain job' he had to use 'made for' when he needed 'appointed to', nevertheless he pursued his meaning with the words that were available to him. He was on firmer ground with political vocabulary in his next sentence:-

John. And it has to be approved by the Queen and only then can it be made the law.

John was able to identify the processes of law-making.

Q. If people want to change the law, could they?

John. No, not people, unless they could go to someone and tell them that this is their idea, and if the person likes it, and if he's an M.P., he'd try and put it through Parliament.

The Queen is seen as the ultimate rational authority, the upholder of justice. Questioned on violence as a political method, the boys turned to the present conflict in Ireland.

Q. Is there a better way? (of changing a situation)

John. Yes. If you go and talk to the people about why the army should be there. If you don't want them there, ask them to go, and give them the reasons, and the Queen might think it's right. . .

Q. Do you think that this is important, that people should understand the right reasons?

John. Yes.

Q. Do you think that if people do know the right reasons, then they would act on them?

John. Yes.

Q. Do you think so, David?

David. Yes.

Q. It's just a question of people understanding what the right reasons are?

David. Yes.

The positive viewpoint on rationality was not to be shaken.

For both, a good Prime Minister will keep down prices of food and homes; a really bad Prime Minister would allow the whole country to suffer rather than give in on a strike issue.

John. It's like a few miners, when the miner's strike was on, because they weren't getting paid enough because they do dangerous jobs.

The concrete example provides the particular case from which the general principle is inferred; it cannot as yet be dispensed with. Nevertheless, principles are, recognisably, under discussion.

The Commonwealth principle is also recognised, as is the structure of government.

Q. The government of this country, does it just run this country?

David. It doesn't run just this one. It runs Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, as well.

Q. What about other countries outside Great Britain?

David. It doesn't control them.

Q. Can you help us on that one, John?

John. Yes. They don't control the other countries. It's the Queen and she has Prime Ministers there, but she actually belongs, she's actually the Queen of the countries of the Commonwealth . . . that's why they have Prime Ministers.

Q. Prime Ministers of different countries, you mean?

John. Yes, because they haven't got a Queen in any of the Commonwealth countries.

This discussion was in some contrast with a similar interview with girls from the same age-group, Sally (age 11.1) and Susan (age 10.6). Initially, Susan failed to recognise a picture of Edward Heath, identifying it as Harold Wilson until Sally corrected her. Sally knew the Prime Minister's name, but when asked:-

Q. Do you just vote for Harold Wilson to be Prime Minister in an election, or do you vote for something else?

Sally. No, you vote for the person.

Q. Do you know what a political party is?

Sally. No.

Susan thought a Prime Minister helped to make laws in the Houses of Parliament, and Sally thought he had help with this, but was unable to specify from whom. Sally's 'good' Prime Minister would 'put the prices of food down instead of up', and Susan's would 'give people more wages', while the 'bad' Prime Minister would 'do all the opposites'.

Deciding that a bad Prime Minister should be replaced, Sally said: 'They should get another man to vote for'.

Q. How would we go about that?

Sally. Don't know.

The area of likeliest disagreement between the political parties was identified by Sally.

Sally. Some people think the food prices should go up and some people think they should go down, and some people think they should stay where they are.

Q. Which kind of people might think that food prices should go up, do you think?

Susan. People who run shops want more money.

This was the only unsuccessful interview, in that the girls were completely uninterested in the subject under discussion; there was neither involvement in issues, nor evidence of particular observation, and only minimal awareness of processes from the two girls. They were pleasant, polite, obviously not of less than average intelligence or abilities, but the subject for them was a boring one, and in discussion there was no spontaneous interaction, volunteering of information or opinion.

The question raised by this interview was of the role of motivation in the development of political concepts, and the variable sources of such motivation. The eldest group, the two girls, had passed through the same experiences as the younger, in the school context. There was a difference in personality types between them and younger groups. Sally and Susan, close friends, were the quietest, most self-contained, apparently the most introvert pair interviewed. To say that they had passed through the same school situations does not, obviously, mean that they had had identical experiences, or assimilated the same concepts or information

from such experiences as other children. Neither of these girls was in the habit of watching television news; neither was interested. Neither knew, nor would guess, what 'politics' might be about, or had ever voted for anything.

If these two girls represent the future 'don't knows', the apathetic voters, then it may be of some interest to note that the only issues which appeared to them to be relevant were the immediate ones of food prices.

The problem of presenting political notions as worth-while interests to those whose initial response is poor, is one with which future developments in schools' curriculum innovation may well be concerned. Political education as a concept tends at present to arouse controversy, but one lesson to be learned from such meetings with children as the above is that innovations in this area are likely to meet with a mixed reception; for some, apathy may be a considerable stumbling-block. It must also be noted, however, that by far the greater majority of children interviewed displayed a positive and lively interest in political matters.

At the outset of the discussion with the Eltham ten-year-olds, the two girls demonstrated their dominant encoding system of visual imagery, recognising Mrs. Thatcher from a photograph where only a fraction of her was visible.

Q. How can you tell from a tiny bit of her?

Both Girls. Her hair style! The way her hair's done. And then there's the blue coat.

Q. How can you tell it's a blue coat from a newspaper?

Both Girls. She always wears that coat.

As the children hesitated when being asked, after recognising Mr. Wilson, how long he had been Prime Minister, their readiness to agree with a suggested answer was tested; first Gary echoed the information of 'about a year?', followed by the rest of the group. 'Suggestible' is too strong a term, but there seemed to be a certain timidity, a willingness to wait for cues, with this group. The basic interaction proved to be between Gary and Darren, Gary neatly encapsulating the process of an individual's becoming Prime Minister.

Gary. Oh, well . . . there's a number of parties and they have an election and all the people vote and the party that gets the most, then their leader, he's Prime Minister.

Darren thought this happened once a year, but perceived some reasons for change; however, this idea was not well-established:-

Darren. When the old Prime Minister . . . when one of the Prime Ministers . . . say Mr. Wilson, he might start lacking - you know, not doing well, and they decide to change him.

Q. Who decides to change him?

Darren. Parties!

Q. Parties?

Darren. The House of Lords.

There was some perception of processes here, but the information was not secure, and was abandoned when not immediately validated. Under pressure, there was a relapse into intuitive thinking and a loss of the logic of the process. A question about the characteristics of a good Prime Minister generated a consideration of qualities necessary for leadership. Tina's statement:-

Tina. Got to have faith in yourself.

was in contrast to Darren's development of his first premise:-

Darren. You've got to know that you've got . . . mm . . . co-operation with other people in the party.

Gary. (Interrupting - usefully, as it happened, as this provided Darren with the validation he needed at this point.) Yes, you've got to be . . . (failing to find a word).

Darren. You've got to have good co-operation with the managements - you know - Fords, and things like that.

Q. (To try to get him to persevere with working this out further.) Co-operation with the management. Why do you need to be a co-operative person?

Darren. If you ain't a co-op - co-op - co-operative person there'd be no agreement. You know, you'd have arguments and you won't be able to say . . . tell them anything.

which was an adequate early construction of the democratic principle of accommodation of interests between groups.

The concept of democracy itself was not available to any member of the group. Given considerable cueing, and an eventual choice between two solutions, they began to attempt an analysis. Darren breaking down the idea of the 'rule of the people' into particular examples of authority and responsibility, from the general to the particular.

Darren. Yes, people do some ruling . . . they do ruling in management you know, in companies and, like, the manager of the water boards . . . and . . . the manager of a garage.

Which provided, in its use of different applications, an illustration of the "conservation" principle at work in political terms.

An interesting construction of a model of political relationships was provided by the co-operative effort of the two girls and Darren, generated by the question to Linda:-

Q. Have you any feelings about the Queen?

Linda. Mm . . . let me think!

Tina. Sometimes.

Q. What kind of feelings? That she's a good person?

Tina. Mm . . .

Q. Do you think she helps the country?

Tina. Mm . . .

Q. What about you, Linda? Have you any feelings about the Queen?

Linda. Well, I haven't got any feelings about the Queen - but she isn't a person. She's a person but not an ordinary person like us - you know, she's high up.

Tina. A higher person than us.

Darren. I think . . . little bits are left out, you know, lower bits.

Both
Girls. Like a jigsaw!

Q. And which piece of the jigsaw would the Queen be?

Tina. High!

Darren. Ch, she'd be up high!

Linda. She'd probably be the frame! Yes, she'd be the frame. You make the frame first and then you collect them on to the frame to work, you know.

Q. If she was in a jigsaw, would she be the biggest person in the jigsaw?

All. (Murmurs of 'No'.)

Q. Who would be?

Darren. God!

This ability to contribute to discussion and to build a joint concept by adding something new to someone else's contribution, and accepting their imagery, represents rejection of an egocentric world view. It is to accept another person's viewpoint and thereby to be free thinking from reliance on subjective sense-data. The children, in building this model, make an original variation on the familiar 'pyramid' construct, of a hierarchy, and provide an example of group problem solving.

Supporting this group effort, and making it possible, is a shared notion of formal authority and of role-relationships, terminated by Darren's invoking of the ultimate authority "God", by which he changed the terms of the discussion.

The particular use of the image of the jigsaw and the frame holds certain difficulties for interpretation; questions that might well be asked are of whether the children have regressed here to symbolic thinking, or whether they have made a mental leap to much greater levels of sophistication, in their use of analogy. As they are comparing two sets of relationships rather than playing imaginary games, or 'acting-out' some aspect of reality, the latter interpretation appears more correct.

Party affiliations appeared to centre around curiosity about Mrs. Thatcher's potential Prime Ministerial abilities.

Gary. I used to like Mr. Heath, not Mrs. Thatcher. Forgot all about Mr. Heath, you know! Mrs. Thatcher, I reckon she's a bit higher than Mr. Wilson. She can get in!

Q. I wonder why there haven't been any lady Prime Ministers?

Gary had the question under conceptual control:-

Gary. Oh, because they haven't been top of the party . . . It depends on the party . . . it does, depends on the party.

The question of what politics is about produced different reactions, Linda's choice of 'the Common Market' generating an argument on basic pros and cons which gave Darren a chance to analyse his own use of

the terms 'imports' and 'exports'.

Darren. We wouldn't get imports from other countries. We wouldn't be able to do business with other countries, and you know, get exports. We wouldn't be able to get money from them.

Q. Don't you think so, Darren?

Darren. No . . . because, well, they don't give us imports - we don't pay them, we give them exports . . . they don't pay us.

Gary's first choice of political subject-matter was the local by-election, followed by - "Management and workers. And Britain. That's what I think".

A strain of latent imperialism was perhaps emerging in Gary's political identity; the question of "What happens outside Britain?" provided the reassuring answer:-

Gary. Well, we've got soldiers stationed here, there and everywhere!

The laughter this provoked from the rest of the group was a response of some interest; its basis was not accessible but it appeared to signify the presence of values and beliefs that make the idea of the use of armed forces appear over-simplistic.

Further political concepts that emerged were the democratic principle of legitimate alternatives existing, as constructed by Gary as the justification for political parties. He used the concept of impermanent tenure of office as axiomatic, exemplified it by the Prime Minister's position, then extended the idea:-

Gary. You know . . . it's . . . the Prime Minister. If he goes down then we change him. It's like the . . . if parties start failing and not doing well at their job then we change the party.

The limitations of the childrens' factual knowledge were apparent in the group's handling of the questions on the composition of Parliament.

Darren. Well, we all know about the House of Commons.

Q. You do? Good.

Darren. Yes, all about that, the House of Commons, Houses of Parliament and House of Lords.

Q. Well, do you know what they do, in the House of Commons, Houses of Parliament and House of Lords?

Darren. That's a good question!

Q. Anybody know?

Silence.

While children cannot be expected to analyse what it means to know 'all about' something, their own knowledge claims demonstrably need to be tested. Within his own limits of meaning, Darren was speaking truthfully, because to him 'knowing all about' the subject of Parliament was a very limited concept, and in having heard of it, knowing the geographical location and being able to recognise photographs, the possibilities were exhausted. The question of constructing relationships between Parliament and the recent local by-election did not arise for him. The availability of relevant information may well have not coincided with any feelings of interest or curiosity arising. His interest was aroused through the one piece of historic factual information he did possess.

Q. Well, how do we get laws in this country?

Darren. Well, through the Kings, through the . . . er . . . ages we got laws.

Q. Yes, but that was in the old days . . . that was in history wasn't it?

Darren. Yes, Henry VII, he made the jury of the twelve, didn't he?

Q. Well, how could we get a law this week, or next week? We could do it that way, now, could we?

Darren. Discuss it in one of the - Houses, would we? It would be the - House of Lords?

His willingness to go on was based on the possession and validation of information, the content of which dictated his intuitive approach to new questions. His logic was based on the notion of law-giving as a royal function, which idea influenced his choice of 'House of Lords' over 'House of Commons' as the law-making Assembly, and created expectations of laws being granted from the wisdom of the rulers.

Gary's idea of the emergence of a law was as a possible response to demands from the ruled. On restoration of capital punishment:-

Q. What kind of laws do you think we need in this country? Any new laws that you would like to make if you could?

Tina. No bombing and killing.

Q. Well, there are already laws about that, aren't there?

Gary. They should make a law, you know, all doing in protest - like bring back hanging. I think they should because then they'll stop killing and bombing. And, you know, then take it off again. If it starts again, make it and keep it.

A logic of contingent law-making, on the demand of the majority in order to more strongly implement particular principles, was generated by what was apparently a tacit conviction on the part of both children that existing sanctions were not sufficient. These children were asked if they would like to learn more about politics at school:

Darren. Well, yes. We've got more . . . er . . . important things than politics in school, haven't you? You've got your job. You've got your education. And now, you know, in third years now, like this year . . . what we're doing now will . . . we'll really know what secondary school we'll go to.

He was confused and unsure about the processes of selection, but aware of the significance of work and curriculum priorities.

Q. I see. So that's more important than learning about politics?

Gary. Yes!

Gary had of course made a fundamental political choice, which he was at that stage unable to recognise. An attitude had been accepted as a response to circumstances, in this case selection for secondary education at 11+ presenting ten-year-old children with the need for organising their priorities.

Comparison between this discussion and those of the other ten-year-olds reveal some common elements. The ten-year-old children appeared quiet - even self-contained-in comparison with the out-going self-confidence of the nine-year-olds. The reason for this may well be that the ten-year-olds, to some extent, leave the stage of using considerable amounts of subjective experience as material for exemplification (i.e. to bring under control principles intuitively, perceived as it were from a distance), which was characteristic of the nine-year-olds.

Some ten-year-olds were able to put forward particular points of view and to defend them consistently, and to return to particular themes or

interests to illustrate points required for various types of questioning. A more secure conceptual control was in evidence, and in some cases an ability to construct a hierarchy of concepts on the basis of what constituted relevant issues in politics.

Stronger contact with realities of politics showed in some discussions, with considerably less attempt at speculation than children in the previous stage had shown. In contrast, there were many attempts by the children at rational justification, or of spontaneous classification of answers, in order, it appeared, to strengthen their personal systems of classification.

The Eleven-Year-Clds in Discussion.

One group of children was involved:

Clive (age 11.0), Kevin (age 11.2), Maria T. (age 11.8)
and Maria P. (age 11.6)
St. Mary's Junior School, Eltham, July, 1975

In discussion, there was quick recognition of the Prime Minister's photograph, and more information volunteered than had been requested.

Clive. He's Prime Minister. Prime Minister of the Labour Party.

Clive was able to attempt a definition of the Labour Party:-

Clive. It's a party . . . of the working-class. They believe that everybody should be equal.

Q. Do they? Can you tell me any more about it?

Clive. They believe in - equality.

There followed an extension of ideas, in which the notion of equality was analysed, under the single encouragement of 'Yes?'.

Clive. They think people should be given the same opportunities - they think people should all be the same - within reason. They believe - they just fight for the working-class that are underpaid.

The boy had here attempted to unite principles of social action into a belief-system, and in this he appeared to have a perception of ideologies. The attempt to make this explicit, signified by the progression from 'They think' repeated, to 'They believe' being unsuccessful, he relapsed into a descriptive mode of interpreting: 'They must fight'.

Clive showed his command of principles of conservation applied to politics and economics, after referring to the 'inflation rate':-

Q. Do you know what inflation is?

Clive. Devaluation of the pound.

Q. What effects does it have? Do you know?

Clive. It's the cost of using money . . . mm . . . prices going up, and more wages being needed for some people, so the pound gets less than it's worth - about seventy-two pence now.

The attempt to extend Clive's concept of equality by presenting the idea of distributive justice was not successful, as he did not understand the terms of the proposition; instead, he answered the question that he decided had been asked - the question he could understand.

Kevin interpreted equality in different vocabulary.

Q. What do you think equality means, Kevin?

Kevin. Equal rights for everybody.

Q. Equal rights. What's a right?

Kevin. Everybody's got . . . if somebody's got something, somebody else has. It's fair to have somebody else having the same - and you know - having working for it to . . .

Having attempted a generalisation 'Everybody's got . . . ' and not succeeding, a particular instance was produced, but Kevin was not ready conceptually to develop this theme.

Ideas on equality, rights and fairness were taken up in a militant manner by the girls, and the heated discussion on equal pay and rights which followed was illustrated by examples. The right to work was considered as important as the right to equal pay, and a vigorous attack on discrimination pursued by the girls, who identified strongly with their own mothers' situations.

Clive's ideological support for the Labour party did not prevent him from strongly criticising its financial policies:-

Clive. I think that taxes should be brought down and rates taken down,

The children attempted to connect the information they had on law-making procedures:-

Q. How would he (the Prime Minister) go about making a new law?

Clive. Well, he could get the Cabinet. And then . . . if the Cabinet agrees, then I suppose, it comes to the lower end.

Kevin contributed:-

Kevin. It (a law) has to be confirmed first.

Q. When?

Kevin. In er . . . House of Lords.

Q. Then what happens?

Kevin. It . . . er . . . I'm not sure what they do next, but . . .

Q. Have you ever heard of 'giving readings' to a bill, before it becomes law?

Kevin. Yes. In Parliament.

There was rather more perception of the Queen's activities by children of this age, than by the younger ones, and all contributed to a construction of her political role. Some perceptions, as yet indefinite, of the necessity for constitutional law appeared to support some of the thinking at this point in discussion.

Some difficulty was encountered in articulating the meaning of the word 'democracy'. When a definition was presented, the children were familiar with the notion and its implications, and produced examples of the workings of democracy, comparing this country's system with possible undemocratic ones. This was not an area where the children were in possession of any real conceptual framework, but there was some attempt at articulation.

Clive put together carefully certain terms which were already available to him, in a new experimental relationship:-

Clive. I think England is democratic because the Common Market is done by peoples . . . and the people decide who - are candidates - who they want to - represent them.

Kevin, becoming extremely confused, adopted the politician's gambit of turning from argument to rhetoric. After some unconscious linguistic humour:-

Kevin. My Dad said that if - when - England do go in the Common Market, as they are, if they . . . pulled up their socks - and - stood on their feet, and they could be the head country of . . . mm . . . 'cause then, they're not - some people regard us as a silly little island up in the Atlantic - or somewhere - and they think - just because we're that little island we're not that powerful . . . But, why are we called Great Britain? That's what I think!

Maria produced a particular logic:-

Maria. The Queen didn't decide the government. We all put a vote towards
(T) it, who we want.

While Maria P. added a reminder that one result of lack of
democracy is eventual anarchy.

Maria. In a lot of countries, people are just put in, to govern, by Kings
(P) or Queens, and the . . . mm . . . the people in the country, they
just don't like people when they go against them, and that country
just goes barmy.

At home, the group had positive political affiliations, which they
were willing to justify, seeing the only real choice as between the
Conservative and Labour parties.

Kevin and Clive had ideas on the relationships of the two parties'
policies, and Clive on Labour's internal politics.

Q. You're Labour, are you Kevin? The other three are Conservatives?

Children. Yes.

Q. Have you got any idea why? Who'd like to tell me why?

Maria. Well . . .
(P)

Q. Maria - start then.

Maria. Labour, some of them are Communist. Liberal just don't get in, ever,
(P) and they're not strong enough. 'Cause Thorpe never does anything.

Maria. (Interrupting) They got no seats . . .
(T)

Maria. (Interrupting) Mm . . . and I think if - if - Thatcher gets in,
(P) and they give her a chance of being Prime Minister, I think we'll do
well. If she's not any good, we can always go back.

Q. Because that's a democracy isn't it - you can change people?

Maria. Yes.
(P)

Q. What about Maria - why are you a Conservative?

Maria. Well, Liberal - I never think of Liberal - aren't nearly strong
(T) enough, they haven't got nearly enough seats. And they couldn't
rule the country. And Labour, they've got Communists and everything
in them, I don't like Labour.

Q. Why?

María. I don't know really.
(T)

Q. What about Kevin? Why do you like Labour, Kevin?

Kevin. I think - Conservative and Labour are doing a good thing, they're fighting for rights for other people. And Labour confirming them - you know. They take Conservatives' ideas and put them into other ways, for the people.

Q. I see. Can you give us an example of that, do you think?

Kevin. No, not really.

Q. Clive?

Clive. I believe in Conservatives, mainly because I don't like the Labour Party. They're going to, sometime, in the near future, they're going to go Communist. They got too strong a left wing.

Q. What do you think is the difference between the Labour Party and the Communist Party?

Clive. There's hardly any difference . . . mm . . . perhaps the Labour Party aren't as strict as Communists, and the Communists fight more - a lot more - for their party and . . . mm . . . the Labour Party, they have got some right wing, which you know, believe a bit in Conservative ways, like Harold Wilson. I think he's going just like a Conservative at the moment, apart from all this nationalisation and things. I think he's going - he's leaning - towards the Conservatives. It showed in the Common Market referendum. He was - his campaign was a lot - with the Tories.

The children here were making attempts to deal with the relationships between political ideas; as each made an attempt to construct an argument involving their analysis, it became necessary to relate the initial propositions to more complex ideas. They showed varying abilities to sustain this line of thinking, the most successful effort coming from Clive.

The concept of a political party, only loosely united ideologically, containing 'too strong a left wing' with a Prime Minister 'leaning towards the Conservatives' is a sophisticated one for an eleven-year-old, as is the style of argument employed. Clive showed an ability to construct a rational hypothesis in his last three sentences, producing evidence to support his statement, and explaining its relevance. The fact that his explanation was incomplete is less surprising than his ability to think in these terms, particularly in spontaneous discussion.

There was no difficulty with this group in having topics for discussion generated from open-ended questioning.

Q. Are there any particular things that you think the government ought to do?

This produced a discussion on crime and punishment, initiated by Maria T., which shed some interesting light on the childrens' ideas on the nature of punishment and violence.

For Maria P., the purpose of punishment was retributive and deterrent - crudely utilitarian; a strong insistence on the desirability of restoring capital punishment could not allow for the view of punishment as reformatory. By this time she accepts the need for justification of a point of view, and uses the Amin-Hill situation in order to underline the necessity for justice ('they should have a real fair trial and if they're positively guilty, they should . . . and it's a bad charge - they should be hanged').

Maria T.'s concept of punishment allowed for a reformatory aspect.

Marie. I think, if they do a bad crime they should be put in gaol nearly
(T) all their life, because as soon as they come out again, it doesn't teach them anything, they just go and do something wrong.

A sentence must be long enough for the offender to be taught something - which is a different model of utilitarianism. A further one was produced by Clive, who argued that institutionalised violence produces further violence, resulting in ultimately unacceptable preventive measures.

That Clive did in fact have a well-developed ability to formally classify was revealed by his handling of a further question:-

Q. Clive, what do you think this country needs at the moment? Do you think we have any problems?

Clive. Yes, I think inflation should be brought down by - I think, there should be a wage freeze that should be in for about two years, and then, the government should just restrict wages after that. I think the country should just suffer the prices for a while. I think it'd be worth it for their children, for their future.

Sophisticated classification shows here, in differentiating between wage freeze and wage restriction, and also a concept of long-term objectives. It might be suggested that Clive had added a further dimension to his model of utilitarianism - the ability to perceive and evaluate the prospect of future happiness against present benefit.

From ends to means. Supporting the existence of the Prime Minister's role, Clive had suggestions for clarifying it:-

Clive. I think there should be one Prime Minister, but I don't think he should make all the decisions. I think his ministers should make certain decisions unless the Prime Minister really does disagree.

The child possessed little information with which to compare this construct, but he intuitively clung to one central concept, that of ultimate responsibility, although this is not articulated explicitly.

Kevin's description of the need for concerted action in politics, identified as 'coalition' by Clive, led this group to an exchange on the coalition of World War II and Churchill, the basic contribution coming from Clive:-

Clive. But it (the coalition) was pretty well dominated by the Conservatives - because it was Churchill who was Conservative, and it was pretty well dominated by them.

The two girls, digressing briefly on to the subject of consumer manipulation:-

Maria. I don't think they should bring in these new foods like Wombles
(T) jellies. I mean, they're just wasting sugar.

Maria. Yes, I mean there's ordinary jellies. Just because Wombles jellies
(P) are in a different packet, it doesn't mean anything, they're just wasting more - more sugar, more everything.

Maria. And new washing powders. We could do without them before, and look
(T) at the new sweets, and everything. It's just making everything, you know, you're buying more, when you see new stuff come out.

Maria. I think that, you know, other countries, they have the film
(T) cameras in the - No. 10, or where the Prime Minister who is there, talks. And they won't let the cameras, T.V. cameras, come in. I think they should because then - then the country knows what ideas have been put. If they think it's good, and - Harold Wilson - just leaves it . . . just puts it to the side . . . then the country can bring it back up again, and take their way.

The point was made of the desirability of more open (televised) government, and its democratic purpose.

The last section of the discussion reveals an interesting development in logical coherence. Asked:-

Q. Supposing you could say one thing for the country, to do for it, that the government ought to do. What would you choose?

Kevin introduced a positive but somewhat confused excursion into the notion of federalism, the logic of which was developed by Clive into a concept of federalism based on industrial assets.

Kevin. I think they should - cut the country up, and they should look over that country - over that part of the country. Like cut them into states and then excavate (investigate?) it into - find out about it, and then see what's happened in the last past - decade - in the last ten years. And I think that's the only way we can find out more about our country.

Clive. I agree with Kevin. I think we should get a certain part of the country or a certain industry, and get that perfect, or as perfect as we can get it and then go on to another industry. I know it would be a slow process, but it would be probably the only way it could be done. 'Cause if you do it all in one go, it'd be a hopeless task.

Maria P., took up the theme and developed its political implications:-

Maria. (P) I think they should cut all country into about five parts or so many parts, and then get certain leaders that are strong and a few people behind him, and they should put a person, and a few other people, in charge of each part of the country and they should run it like we run England. Then our policemen wouldn't have such a job trying to get all over, quickly, and the Prime Minister would still be in charge of our country as well.

Maria T.'s contribution on a specific area - East London - linked with questions of housing and control of road construction, was taken on into aspects of environment and conservation, accurately illustrated geographically and geologically. (See transcript.) Economic justifications were produced; the children were able to move beyond mere description and to see that arguments required relevant justification.

The arguments, while not profound (e.g. Clive's ignoring of industrial relationships generally) yet showed internal coherence, and the contribution of each child provided a logical further stage in the general coherence of the discussion. Kevin's use of the word 'excavate' for 'investigate' was unimportant in the context, for the word was accepted on his terms,

and endowed with his meaning and purpose - an example of the 'exchange value' of the 'coinage' of language in action.

This last section, it is suggested, is of great significance for the case presented in this work; for it provides an active moment in childrens' development in political understanding. Motivated by the perception of alternative possible futures, they were able to focus together on one construction. In organising their information into a particular conceptual framework, and presenting ideas as aspects of a total theme, they achieved a community of political imagination. Different cognitive styles did not prevent this. Clive's dawning academic ability to think within the logic of a discipline underpinned Kevin's original creative leap. Maria P.'s focus on organised aspects and Fabian retention of the traditional power-base ('and the Prime Minister would still be in charge of our country as well'), and Maria T.'s subjective approach (a sign that she was not yet as ready as the others, in their different ways, to deal with abstractions), added further dimensions. Politics, throughout this wide-ranging discussion, was not departed from, but given a wide interpretation.

It is suggested that this section of the discussion marks the optimum point in the childrens' development of political concepts. It came at the end of a session which may well have provided opportunities for development during its course by setting up 'problem-solving' situations, to which the children responded with great interest.

Without this element of motivation, it is possible for a discussion with children of this age to take a very different form and atmosphere, in which responses are minimal, as was the case with the two eleven-year-old girls at Hunters Hall Junior School. In that case politics was not accepted as a worthwhile discussion topic, and little motivation was generated.

Is either the enthusiasm of the Eltham children, or the apathy of the Dagenham girls, a typical response?

The external political circumstances were not dissimilar - a General Election had recently taken place when the Dagenham work was done, and a by-election in the Eltham constituency. The possibility exists that the Dagenham childrens' ability to interest themselves in politics had reached

saturation point and flagged during the coverage of the General Election campaign. However, considering all the children who participated in discussion groups, interest and willingness - or eagerness - to participate were more typical responses.

SECTION FIVE: Childrens' Political Language.

In some of the discussions with children, it was obvious that some words were being used publicly for the first time, and this led to the conclusion that the children were in possession of a latent political vocabulary, consisting either of political terms, or of other words used for the first time in particular relationships.

From the beginning, the children themselves introduced some basic political terms into the conversation, 'team-leader of the Liberals', parties, 'making laws', vote, 'voted out', Government, strike. The basic political verbs, at this stage were 'help', 'look after', 'talk', 'write' and 'win' which appeared for these children to summarise political activity.

Political vocabulary appears to begin with single nouns or verbs, to which the appropriate qualification is soon attached. 'Leader' or 'rules' in answer to question of what a Prime Minister does, can be transformed to 'make rules', and also 'rules our country'. The idea of ruling at this stage is an extension of 'helping'; there is perception of what might be included in ruling, rather than any developed concept of what it is to rule. To have an exhaustive concept of a verb used in a political sense is beyond the cognitive level of Primary children; what they do appear to have is a relative grasp of meaning which obviously is still in a stage of development.

At seven, most children have some concept of the roles of both Prime Minister and Monarch, in very broad and general terms. They are seen as "helping", benevolent figures who give unspecified 'help' to country, Parliament, each other and 'us'. The children construct these ideas from a limited political vocabulary, consisting of nouns and a few verbs; the nouns are the party names, 'party', 'Government', 'strike', 'speech', 'vote', 'laws', or 'rules', 'Leader', 'Queen', 'Prime Minister'. Nearly all the nouns exemplify political vocabulary and fall into that category. The verbs - 'look after', 'help', 'talk', 'write', 'win', form a different category, with the exception of 'to rule'; they are examples of transfer from personal social interactions, moved over, as it were, to the political sphere. Of these, the two most commonly used, 'helping' and 'looking after', are worked very hard by children in a

political context, and although the majority discard them in favour of more specific and differentiated verbs, some children at eleven are still using 'help', and 'look after' to describe political activity.

By about eight-years of age there has been decided progress for many children, who are using political phrases with accuracy. By nine-years of age, they are not only aware of voting, but of voting against, and voting out; governments do not simply arrive as a result of an election, they are 'formed', and by ten-years of age some children could differentiate between Government and Parliament, and place discussion in the present, while locating its objectives in the future. Even by nine, children relate to the larger political spectrum; they are aware of negotiating activities, of different aspects of power, of what it is to rule. Crises need to be 'helped', inflation 'controlled' or 'curbed'; the country is organised and controlled and the 'state of the country' is an object of concern.

At nine-years of age there is an awareness of 'problems of the world', not just of their own country; there is a relationship with the 'Common Market'. Some expressions used by this age-group reveal particular expectations; e.g. M.P.s must be 'responsible' - 'loyal'.

It can be suggested that the nine-year-old stage is a point at which much of the political terminology that will be used in adult life has been acquired. After nine, the children expound some perceptions, as of the relationship between Monarch and Parliament, and awareness of current events.

The acquisition of political vocabulary and concepts appears to make rapid progress between the ages of about nine and ten, by which time much of the vocabulary is assimilated and can be used to organise other, generalised speech into political terms. It seems that after this age a plateau is reached and comparatively little further progress at the Primary School stage takes place.

This might be compared with learning to read, once the skill has become fluent, there is then a need to extend and to practice it by further, wider reading, if progress is to continue. Reading is seen then,

increasingly, by the learner, as a tool rather than an end.

The comparison of schools is possible only in general terms, but some tentative conclusions are possible. First, the difference between childrens' spoken and written responses in one school seem to indicate that there might well be some difference between all childrens' responses, if it had been possible to interview them all. With this reservation, comparison can be made to some extent between written responses to questions in different schools.

The best informed children appeared to be from the most structured school, which also happened to be the most consistently middle-class. The emphasis on verbal skills here was obviously a contributory factor, as the children were able to express what ideas they had. Home background as a source of information is revealed as a further important factor, although only one child was in the position of knowing about voting - 'because my mother is sometimes Conservative candidate' !

In many areas of understanding, or basic skills, childhood is regarded as optimum time for acquisition of the necessary conceptual frameworks or expertise. Many subjects on the schools' curricula owe their place there to the fact that full understanding of them is not likely to be acquired in later life, if neglected at school.

It is suggested that political understanding is such an area. That children acquire political vocabulary is not in doubt. By eleven, many of them have as good a working vocabulary for politics as many adults, and a conceptual framework which, if developed no further, will enable them to understand the facts of current affairs, and to make their choices at General Elections. The surprising element is that they are left to acquire it for themselves, at what may well be an optimum and critical time for such conceptual development.

PART FOUR

PART FOURThe Nature of the Childrens' Understanding of
Politics and Some Influences on the Development
of Their Concepts

In order to evaluate some of the factors which influence childrens' political ideas, it is useful first to consider the nature of their achievements at different ages and stages of thinking.

SECTION ONE: The Childrens' Achievements

The seven-year-old stage revealed thinking that was intuitive, symbolic, and ideas that were discrete and unstructured. However, it is also considered to have been shown that the seven-year-olds have made cognitive contact with the political world, and that some children of this age have achieved, in terms of information, awareness, interest and working vocabulary, a conceptual base from which further development can take place. In the mixed group the boys dominated the discussion, and the girls accepted this.

The eight-year-old stage. Greater competence in using language to describe political events was shown, and more attempts to do this were made. A longer concentration-span was in evidence, and improved memory functions. Thinking was intuitive, showing awareness of relationships which the children were unable as yet to understand. There was some effective description of election campaigns which gave the opportunity to use political vocabulary. As with the seven-year-olds, the boys of the mixed group took the lead in discussion.

The nine-year-old stage. A characteristic of this group was the balance of discussion, which contributed very much to its pace. As topics changed, all the children were able to focus their attention on the new aspect of discussion, thus re-inforcing interest. There were stronger members of the group, but no persistent dominance by the boys, as had occurred in the younger mixed groups. There was evidence of strong

commitment to social ideals, from some children.

The ten-year-old stage. These children were moving away from the nine-year-olds' interest in speculation and extended examples, to an awareness of reality, and the attempt to relate to it. Judgements were made by some on a basis of consistently held views, and there appeared to be some evaluation taking place of what was relevant to the subject under discussion. Individual styles of discussion were more in evidence, and greater variations in motivation and willingness to articulate ideas.

The eleven-year-old stage. This stage represents considerable achievement in the development of political concepts. Further linguistic development gave an ease and confidence to discussion and competence in using political concepts extended to fluency of ideas. The ability to relate sets of ideas led to linking politics not only with roles, structures and policies, but with topics such as conservation, womens' rights and an economic re-organisation of the country. Cognitive contact had been made not only with the political world but with questions that were understood to be capable of analysis. Questions basic to democratic processes were accepted for discussion, and the political knowledge children had in their possession was to some extent articulated. The concept of accountability of government was one such area, linked with a strong sense of the moral imperatives laid upon government.

During and after the nine-year-old stage, the quality of interaction in discussion was sound, giving a mature flavour of reasoned discussion to what was being said. Differences in cognitive styles were very apparent, also differences in range of perception, the more subjective material being used by the girls, which illustrated to some extent the wide interpretations of the concepts we describe as 'political'.

The distinguishing feature of political concepts is that they are ultimately concerned with actions in accordance with principles. They may therefore be approached through the analysis of actions. That such political concepts will be, in the first place, approached intuitively, is inevitable; much adult thinking on some political issues is hardly more advanced than this. It would be very surprising, if even the majority of the voting population had developed conceptual frameworks capable of working through questions such as of the nature of ideology, the role of

Parliamentary Opposition, or the relationship between politics and education. Such concepts are grasped, initially, intuitively, by understanding of some part of what is implied, and its relation to previous experience. They are further comprehended by the understanding of examples. Only after these stages are traversed does the sophisticated concept become operational, and can be used to gain further understanding.

Childrens' written responses were required either to present information, give some kind of judgement, or a reason for an answer of "Yes" or "No". Asking children for information also serves to present ideas to them; the interaction is not a static "exchange" situation, but has a dynamic element, a possibility for growth. For example, asking children whether they know the Prime Minister's name introduces the ideas of (i) the existence of the political role as distinct from its successive occupants, and (ii) of institutionalised, as against personal power. That children should be able to develop such understanding by a transfer of concepts from their immediate experience appears logical, and hardly surprising. The next, cumulative, stage in childrens' thinking about politics is the perception of political structure, through awareness of some of its major roles and the relationship between them.

Asking children what they know about what the Prime Minister and Queen actually do, intends, firstly, that they shall explicitly organise any information they have into these two categories of activities. Secondly, that these categories then become available to children in future thinking on politics, in terms of forming ideas of what is appropriate behaviour.

The answers obtained across the age-range seven-eleven in answer to the question: "What is the Prime Minister's name?" show that a large majority of children of all these ages, and both sexes, possess this information, and their numbers rise, as might be expected, with the childrens' ages. This is also the case with the questions on the Prime Minister's and Queen's activities, which require some articulation of the childrens' developing concepts.

The changing style of written responses to the questions, from children between the ages of seven and eleven, illustrates Piaget's model of cognitive growth.

Coherence of the Collected Data with Piagetian Theory

Piaget's model describes certain characteristics of childrens' thinking during the "intuitive" stage and the "concrete operational" stage as follows:-

Intuitive Thinking: (age approx. 4-7 years)

1. Children cannot make comparisons mentally.
2. Can attend to only one aspect of an object (or person) at a time, so may adopt contradictory opinions successively.
3. Cannot imagine an ordered sequence of events, therefore, use of juxtaposition and syncretism.
4. Cannot compensate relations, or see relations between relations.
5. Thinking egocentric - cannot differentiate between own feelings and imposed rules.
6. Rules are absolute and permanent.

This provides an accurate description of the kind of responses, written and verbal, obtained at the seven-year-old stage.

The limitations of their thinking became obvious when children were asked to describe their conception of the Queen's activities. The ways in which they approached this problem revealed the ability to use limited knowledge, and to relate it to perceived general laws.

The youngest childrens' contribution: 'The Queen does housework', attempted a logical premise. In the absence of any particular information, they turned to classification: the Queen is a woman; women do housework; therefore the Queen does housework. This is an operation different from basic observation such as 'she rides in a carriage', or 'she goes to a football match', where recall of a remembered image is the basic mental act.

The intuitive 'she helps us' is an attempt to classify by function. Children in an intuitive stage of thinking are unable to break this down into specific 'helping' functions, because they are unable to see the relationships between (a) the sub-classes, and (b) the related classes, for example, the needs for which such help might be required.

Development from this level, in Piaget's terms, involves progress to "concrete-operational" thought. At this stage, children will understand (1) that two distinct classes of activity may be combined into a single class. For example, in politics, they will become able to use terms such as "rule", "govern" or "help", as classifications for other activities, which can be specified.

(2) Changes are reversible (i.e. two classes combined can be separated). In politics, children will become able to understand changes in government, that laws can be changed, some role-occupants replaced.

(3) Results can be obtained in different ways. Children begin to understand that adjustment of prices, or incomes, can lead to a particular result.

(4) Ideas of proportionality, or relations between relations can be understood. Children become able then to discuss ideas of conflicts of rights, degrees of obligations, and the possibility of different types of social organisation.

(5) The principle of conservation (of given amounts of a substance remaining constant, although its appearance, shape, etc., can be caused to change). This kind of understanding is linked with (2) above and enables certain kinds of political understanding to take shape, connected with the relationships between stability and change.

On this basis it is possible to understand what is happening, cognitively, when at different stages in their development of political concepts, children are able to perceive:-

1. The existence of an idea to which is attached a certain name.
2. One aspect of the idea.
3. That the idea has more than one aspect and that different emphases and interpretations of it are possible.
4. That certain results accrue from acting on the basis of particular emphases or interpretations of the idea.
5. That some results are considered by some people as more desirable than others, and the reasons for these preferences.

On this analysis there is a "family resemblance" between political and moral concepts, and the ways in which their meanings can be grasped, and developed, by children. For Piaget, the development of moral rationality is the same stage-by-stage process through which rationality in general develops. It proceeds by the interaction of thought and experience, based upon childrens' relationships with their peers and with adults. The first

morality, that of constraint, is replaced eventually by that of co-operation.

The childrens' responses to questions concerning support for rules reveals a strong support for a morality of constraint, or a readiness to rationalise this support. This was done at first intuitively, in terms of vague fears of chaos only kept at bay by the rules of school. With development, morality was in terms of co-operation within the school, and the desire for the school to present a good image to the world. Children were willing to promote the common interests, and preferred, generally, to do this as team-work than to be given personal authority or power. For some of the older children, a rational morality was projected on to the world at large, in the assumption that people will act on "right reasons" when these are known.

The differences in the moral outlook of the children involved in the study, at different ages, can also be expressed in terms of the stages used by Kohlberg¹. The morality of conventional role-conformity, in which children desire approval from others, and act in "authority-maintaining" ways, was strongly in evidence, although some older children showed a more developed awareness, in understanding the possibility of moral choices.

Evidence for these stages was drawn from the conversation with children, and their written responses concerning the "goodness" of ruling groups. Moral imperatives were used freely after the age of nine, relating to convictions of the duties of rulers to promote the general best interests. Little difficulty was expected in identifying such best interests - which is a reminder that children, developing ideas, can often see a situation partially in terms of its own logic, but partially also in terms of sweeping generalisations.

1. L. Kohlberg. "Stages of Moral Development as a Basis for Moral Education" in C. M. Beck, B. S. Crittenden and E. V. Sullivan Moral Education Interdisciplinary Approaches (New York, Newman Press, 1971)

While the existence of stages of moral thinking, such as Kohlberg suggests, appears to be confirmed in the childrens' responses, no evidence was found of any separate process of moral development. This appears to be a function of cognitive growth. It refers to improved understanding of what is involved in a moral situation or moral questions, and of the ability to make rational judgements. Indeed it is not clear how children would progress from one stage to the next in moral development, unless this is seen as an aspect of cognitive growth.

Many political questions can also be regarded as moral ones; cognitive growth in politics and moral development can therefore be expected to proceed together, rooted in the same experiences.

The development of formal thinking in politics can be recognised in a child's developing abilities to deal with certain cognitive tasks. The question of "What can he do in the formal operational stage that he can't do in the concrete-operational?" may be answered by suggesting that formal reasoning in politics, as in morality, would correspond to the appearance of a coherent perspective. This would comprise the appreciation of long-term social consequences, the ability to reason and hypothesise from premises, and to use analytic modes of thought. These attributes of cognition appeared to be present to some extent in eleven-year-old children, and could also be recognised as developing in the thinking of some nine-year-olds.

SECTION TWO: Influences on the Development of Childrens' Political Concepts.

1. Social Class, Language and Political Understanding

To bring the relationship of language to social class into direct relevance for political cognition, as influencing the type of thinking developed, a particular set of questions needs to be considered. First, whether ordinary language and terminology conveys different meanings for different socio-economic groups. Secondly, whether the children of any particular identifiable group could be said to be linguistically deficient, in terms of either vocabulary or syntax, in ways likely to inhibit political cognition. Thirdly, whether political language and information are available in greater or lesser degree to any particular identifiable group.

As an exhaustive or definitive study of any of these topics might be regarded as a major undertaking, it is intended to examine the questions in the context of the data collected for the purposes of this study.

The question of whether ordinary language used in a political context conveys different meaning for different social groups, can be best answered by reference to childrens' speech. It has already been noted that the word "work" had different connotations for different children who applied it to the Queen's activities. So much might be said of any word where, for a real description of the activity involved, the sub-skills used must be made the point of reference, and the concept analysed in terms of intentions and techniques. The choice of one facet of a wide activity for definitive attention provides one way of interpreting the world. Another is to adopt the contrary approach, and to make one word do the work of many, with the result that differentiation of related meanings becomes unclear, and the concept inaccessible to analysis. The verb "to fight", (for votes, position, etc.), as used by some of the Dagenham children, provides such an example of one word's "standing in" for a related vocabulary. By contrast, that larger specific vocabulary was more easily accessible to the Eltham children, who used the terms "elect", "disagree", "consult", with greater ease, where appropriate.

Some words appear to carry emotional overtones more strongly for one group than for another. The emotive response of the Dagenham nine-year-olds to the words "tax" and "taxes" was not shared by the Eltham children.

Concern with rising prices constituted an organising concept for children from both areas, and an interesting aspect of this discussion was the different ways in which it was developed. The Dagenham girls at seven, eight, nine and ten all stressed the importance of prices, to the point of making this the basis of all political activity, while the Eltham children were noticeably less affected, or emotionally involved, in this issue, preferring to regard it as one among many. Accordingly, they used a wider range of language.

The factor of emotional involvement in issues needs to be considered for its effects on the language children use. In one case of obvious strong commitment to ideas, the child concerned (age nine from the working-class group) adopted a rhetorical stance. This appeared due, not only to eagerness to persuade, but to a lack of language structures capable of organising and objectively presenting the motivating ideas.

Commitment motivated her to express her ideas, by the use of extended examples from personal experiences. These enabled her eventually to transcend the "here-and-now," and work in the future tense, reaching for causal effects and principles. This child was the agent of her own development, and achieved a sophisticated level of thought at nine-years of age.

However, her discussion also illustrates a crucial point for the relating of language and political thinking; political activity exists on a time-space continuum, so thinking that is tied conceptually or structurally, to the "here-and-now" of present tenses or immediate concerns, is not likely to develop beyond a certain point. Limited structures of language and thought can absorb attitudes and values, accept facts and use the pronouns of solidarity. What such thought will be unable to do will be to examine critically its own origins and presuppositions, explore the relationship between facts and values, or the basis of group solidarity. In other words, it will not progress, in terms of political cognition, fully into the formal operational stage until complex syntax develops.

It is apparent that, after the age of nine-plus, some children show greater facility in using increasingly complex language structures, and have more differentiated vocabulary available to them than others. As these factors are central to organising political thinking, the result is that such children are at an advantage. In addition to language, and complementing it, opportunities to acquire a wide range of information, and the means of satisfying curiosity when it was aroused, appeared to be more readily available in some homes than others, and to be attached generally to a middle-class environment.

2. Language and the Family Group

Much of the early literature^{1.} on political socialisation has stressed the central and dominant role of the family in the transmission of political attitudes, emphasis being placed strongly on direct, inter-generational influences. While family habits are undoubtedly a factor here, and this study provides supportive evidence for this in terms of political thinking, it is also argued that a model of political socialisation which constructs the family's role as definitive by virtue of direct transmission of facts, values and affiliations must be regarded as having serious deficiencies. It implies a passive and receptive role for children, seriously undervaluing the widely interactive processes of individual cognitive growth. It also undervalues the individual child's personality traits, interests and abilities which result in his "qualitative use of mind" in Riesman's^{2.} phrase.

Support for the view that cognitive processes in politics develop to a considerable extent independently of family influence is provided by particular studies. Jaros and Kolson's^{3.} American study of the contrasting

1. Herbert Hyman, Political Socialisation, (Glencoe, The Free Press, 1959)
See for a review of this literature.

2. *Ibid*, p. 65.

3. Jaros, Dean & Kolson, Kenneth L., "The Multifarious Leader: Political Socialisation of Amish, "Yanks, Black" in Nicmi, R. G. (ed) The Politics of Future Citizens, (London, Jossey Bass, 1974)

views of Amish, black and white children living in the same areas, on political authority figures, concluded that general environment was more influential than the specific environment of family. Sigel and Brookes (1974)¹. provided congruent conclusions here in illustrating how young childrens' attitudes are influenced by government performance.

One specific question emerges intially; of whether the political system becomes the "family writ large". This classical hypothesis, supported in the American context, for example by Hess and Torney (1961)², appears to depend to a large extent upon cultural variables. Prominent among these are the strength of political socialisation influences in the educational system, and - perhaps consequent - charisma of certain authority roles, notably the American Presidency.

Studies such as those referred to present questions on the role of the family in political socialisation which, it is suggested, crystallise into the conclusion reached by Kent Jennings and Richard Niemi (1968)³ that "any model of socialisation which rests on the assumption of pervasive currents of parent-child value transmissions is in serious need of modification".

Some analysis of these "pervasive currents" is of interest, in terms of investigating exactly what is transmitted. The inference generally is of a direct transfer of attitudes, orientations and ideological thinking. It is suggested on the basis of data collected during this study, and of some of the work cited, that the direct impact of events also affects childrens ideas, that some political activity is directly perceived, and that this forms a category of experience.

1. R. S. Sigel & M. Brookes, "Becoming Critical About Politics" in Richard Niemi (ed) The Politics of Future Citizens.
2. Hess & Torney, Development of Political Attitudes in Children pp. 95-101.
3. K. Jennings & R. Niemi, "The Transmission of Political Values from Parent to Child" in American Political Science Review, Vol. 62, 1968

It appears, from the evidence of childrens' responses, that the family influence on political thinking lies not so much in the ideological sphere directly, as in the transmission of language structures, through which family groups interpret collectively information and events from the outside world.

This is not to categorise families, nor attempt to allocate particular speech variants to any group. Such an undertaking is outside the scope of this work; and although there is some coherence with Bernstein's¹ developed work in this area, which is noted with interest, proofs were not pursued.

What is suggested is that a child is provided with a set of cognitive tools from the "language and thinking" environment within the family structure of communication, and that this contribution to the growth of political understanding is one which has been insufficiently emphasised in the past.

3. The Influence of Early Schooling

In this country children receive no overt political socialisation directly through the educational system; nor do they have a Presidential figure as a focus of loyalty or affection, perceived in the same way as Wolfenstein and Kliman (1965)² revealed American childrens' perceptions of Kennedy. Neither the Prime Minister nor the Queen fill this role, on the evidence of childrens' responses during this study, both in questionnaires and in conversation. There is little evidence of transfer of loyalty or affection, but rather of expectation of certain standards and results, particularly from the Prime Minister.

The specific contribution of early schooling to political socialisation is to create, from childrens' biological needs for a secure and stable environment, a strong attachment to the idea of law and order as expressed in rule-keeping. This attitude is successfully established by an early age. It is then subject to further development, first into a desire for the approval of authority, and later into the desire to contribute to the structures of stability and authority by "helping" or "looking after" some aspect of school or class activities.

1. See Michael Stubbs, Language Schools and Classrooms (London, Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1976) pp. 42-50 for discussion of Bernstein's more recent work.

2. Wolfenstein & Kliman, Children and the Death of a President.

From the evidence of the childrens' responses, these habits and attitudes are firmly established, as a conscious basis for actions, by the age of seven for many of them. This is a version of the process described by Hess and Torney¹ (1967):

"The values of the adult society are transmitted through child-rearing and other practices to children who, when they become adults, reinforce and help to maintain the culture in which they live."

This process of system-maintenance appears to begin, for children in our schools, at a very early age; for it can not only be observed in children of seven and eight, but articulated by that age. That is to say that more than socialisation on a habit-forming basis has taken place; some rational perspective appears in childrens' explanations and justifications. They know why they want to help in school, or hold an office, or wish to obey the rules, and reject what they consider to be excessive freedom. Learning has taken place, concepts exist and can be related to each other. The concepts often take the form of conclusions drawn from intuitive thinking, for the youngest children, but they are nevertheless based on some experience.

Different ideas were seen to be developed by children in different schools, in the discussion groups, but their attitudes to authority, freedom and rule-keeping revealed a very similar direction of conceptual development. The common factor influencing this appeared to be the organisation of the school itself. As childrens' experience of social organisation, and their concept of group membership is constructed there, it is likely that the experience of early schooling will continue to influence future expectations and attitudes.

This kind of learning is not "mainstream" material in schools, nor taught directly; it is incidental to, but inseparable from, the purposes of schooling. As it is connected with the content, purposes and context of education, there is considerable, and continuing, reinforcement.

1. Hess and Torney, Development of Political Attitudes in Children. p.7.

4. Is There a Sex-Linked Style of Cognition in Politics?

A proliferation of studies^{1.} & 2. have investigated the psychological possibilities of sex-linked differences in perception, and some aspects of this appear to be of interest in connection with political learning. Research^{3.} on incidental learning concludes that there is no difference between the sexes' abilities to use incidental material, or to inhibit it when necessary.

The memory processes are also of significance for political, as any other, learning. Questions of whether boys or girls have 'better memories' leads to asking - better memories for what? Content of learning is of basic importance, linking as it does with individual variables in levels of interest and existing knowledge, as well as aptitudes and abilities.

There is evidence^{4.} that girls show rather better memory for verbal content, particularly after the age of seven. However, an advantage in a memory task containing verbal content does not substantiate the notion of girls having superior memory capacities, or more efficient abilities to store and retrieve information.

There appears to be considerable support for the conclusion "that there is no difference in how the two sexes learn. Whether there is a difference in what they find easier to learn is a different question"^{5.}

Accepting the above, it is yet postulated as a distinct possibility that there may be differences in what the two sexes learn, or perceive, of politics, on the basis of different styles of apparent sex-linked responses collected from the children concerned in this study.

1. Terman & Tyler, op. cit.
2. Eleanor E. Maccoby & Carol N. Jacklin, The Psychology of Sex Differences (London, Oxford University Press, 1975)
3. Ibid, pp. 43-51.
4. Ibid, pp. 56-59.
5. Ibid, p. 62 and Chapter 2.

Fluency and Quality of Responses in Discussion, Compared between Sex-Groups.

Under this heading are included abilities to present information, provide examples or illustrations of points made, and link discrete items of knowledge into a sequence.

Seven-year-olds. In the mixed group, boys' responses outnumbered those of the girls, information and ideas beyond the specific requirements of the question being provided, while the girls showed no such abilities, or readiness to be extended. These girls were able to illustrate only slightly, in the course of their answers concerning the Queen, which were based on remembered isolated facts. No attempts were made to connect ideas, or to experiment to any extent with language or meanings as was attempted by the boys, for example in order to account for the known actions of the Queen and place them into a context.

Eight-year-olds. The boys in the mixed group also took the lead in this discussion, presenting more ideas and information, in generally longer responses than the girls. Often, the girls and one boy appeared satisfied with a monosyllabic answer, making no effort to extend responses. The fourth boy, however, made consistent attempts at fluency and verbal extension.

One response illustrating different selection of information between the sexes concerns the concept of the Queen's role and activities. This revealed a more limited view on the part of the girls, while the boys showed some ability to attend to more than one aspect of a situation. Both sets of responses were concerned with the social interactions of the Queen's role, but attention was directed to different aspects of these.

Up to the age of nine, verbal fluency and willingness to participate in discussion constituted the most obvious difference between the sexes, in mixed groups. This might be interpreted in a variety of ways; as differences in motivation and personality traits, or as a manifestation of aggressive behaviour on the part of the boys, withdrawal on the part of the girls. It might be seen as an acceptance of sex-role typing based on these perceived attributes of sex-type models (as, for example, the characteristic relationship between opposite-sex children as encountered

in fiction). It can also be argued that here is an example of the characteristically different ways of thinking postulated by Erikson¹, who emphasises childrens' ways of organising the sub-skills involved in solving problems into right procedures for dealing with them.

Applying this construction to children dealing with ideas, it might be considered that the girls produced ideas, and regarded them as finished, while boys, more attracted to the experimental role, were more likely to use ideas and to explore their potential.

This suggestion can be illustrated from the conversation of the eight-year-olds: Grainne's suggestion that a Prime Minister should "have imagination" was static, in the sense of being an intuition that she could not extend, Robert did extend to the proposal that a Prime Minister would demonstrate his imagination: "He'd be writing books".

A further example of differences in abilities to extend ideas occurred at the end of this conversation: Grainne's contention that the difference between the tasks of being 'in charge of the British Isles' and 'in charge of all the prices' was that 'the British Isles is bigger and better than the prices' was specifically enlarged upon by Philip, who, unprompted, evidently felt the need to clarify. The attempt was not completely successful, as his information was inadequate, but the point to be made here concerns the type of thinking involved, which for Philip was explorative rather than denotive or attempting definition.

Philip. The Queen looks after nearly the whole country . . . all the countries in the world, compared with the Prime Minister who just looks after England and tries - thinking whether England should stay in the Common Market.

Philip's syntactic sophistication is interesting here, for it enabled him to clarify his thinking on a complex set of relationships - illustrating in political terms the crucial interdependence of language and thought. He further elaborated his own suggestion:-

Philip. The Queen, she mostly travels, and, while the Prime Minister, he doesn't travel very much, he usually stays in England quite a lot of the time.

1. E. H. Erikson, Childhood and Society (New York, Norton & Co., 1950)

This need to elaborate or justify or explain a statement was shown, throughout the conversations, to be more typical of the boys' thinking than the girls.

From the age of nine to eleven, there appeared to be developing an ability to think within political parameters - to stay to a considerable extent within the conceptual area of the discipline. It was found that the boys were rather more consistent than the girls in this ability, in that the girls displayed a stronger subjective basis to thinking. An illustration of this difference in approach can be found in Marek's discussion of Churchill's leadership, which was translated into personal terms by Sara on the coincidence of her own surname (Churchill). Marek's direct thinking on political structures as such produced Sara's generalised contribution, which was to some extent a re-working of his thinking:-

Q. How do you think the Prime Minister decides who's going to help him?

Marek. He decides by getting out - the Chancellor of the Exchequer and - he's got a special name but I can't remember it. He's got the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Foreign Minister and - the - people who look after the Education. And they all....

Q. Yes? Special people for special jobs?

Marek. Special people for special jobs - that are - in charge of a place. In charge of a certain building holding certain people who do certain jobs, for different things.

Q. What were you going to say, Sara?

Sara. He would get them all together, and he would have a few people that he thought might be good for it, and then perhaps they'd have a little vote, just to see who they thought might be best, and then he could choose himself, out of a certain number of people.

Sara was, however, possibly in this group the one whose thinking showed most progress during the discussion, in the sense of appreciating causal effects in politics, and the justification of processes. The explorative nature of her final thoughts, on the need for public discussion of issues, was more similar to that of the boys than to that of most of the girls.

Some of the differences between the children in this discussion concerned interest in, and identification with, a public figure. Marek's orientation towards Churchill supports and reflects conclusions summarised by Hyman¹, concerning sex differences in ideals which apparently motivate boys towards politics at an early age. No similar strength of attachment, or identification, was shown at any stage by any of the girls towards either male or female public figures, notably not the Queen, nor to the present leader of the Conservative party, Margaret Thatcher. In contrast, Marek's attachment was able to span the distance between his own present and his object of identification, which state of mind he was able to articulate explicitly.

The ten-year-old stage showed a widening discrepancy in the quantity of childrens' responses, after the near-equality of the nine-year-olds. The boys were able to take, generally, a stronger position on most topics than the girls, both in terms of producing ideas and defending them, for example, in defining the priority of school learning over political education. A particular malleability was observed in the ten-year-old girls, not quite suggestibility in any strong sense, but rather a wish to agree and conform in interaction, and some dependence cues. In the absence of such cues, except those which could be picked up from the boys' responses, the girls tended to take a non-committal line, choosing on occasions to echo the wording of some of the questions by way of an answer, in preference to making a positive response.

This style of responding was characteristic of the ten-year-old girls in both the Eltham and Dagenham groups.

In the case of all the boys, the typical response of the ten-year-old stage emerged as an attempt to deal specifically with the question at issue, rather than to extend it. The desire to focus attention and to concentrate on limited areas appeared to be developing. This represents a point of divergence in cognitive styles between the sexes. The boys were struggling to some extent towards development of analytic capacities,

1. Hyman, Political Socialisation. p. 22

while the girls' reliance on intuitive understanding limited their capacities to deal with unfamiliar subject-matter.

The sex-linked differences that showed in the eleven-year-olds' responses were still linked to fluency; more were made by the boys than by the girls.

Both sexes used examples from experience to illustrate their responses. The boys, however, used a considerably wider range of material here, and made connections for relevance in fairly lengthy digressions, as for example, Kevin, on conservation of natural landscape. This was a particularly interesting example, dealing as it did with remote distance; the girls' awareness of distance referred to a different part of London, a nearer-home illustration.

It was apparent that the boys' thinking, in ranging more widely than the girls' in perception of relevance and relationships, and in being freer from the need to exemplify subjectively, represented, by the age of eleven, the strengthening and consolidation of a basic sex-linked difference in political cognition.

This difference in performance, it is suggested, arises from different sex-linked perceptions of spatial relationships. This leads, in infancy, to different uses of space and therefore to different personal and social patterns of action in relation to available space and territory.

Early organisation of play illustrates this point. Differences here between the sexes concern boys' apparent drive to utilise available territory, to explore and therefore internalise its nature and boundaries, either alone or in a group. In contrast, the characteristic activities of girls in early childhood appear to be much more concerned with the consolidation of personal space, which then limits the form and amount of social interaction.

As concrete actions become internalised, on Piaget's hypothesis, mental structures are formed. The nature of actions, therefore, and the ways in which patterns of actions are organised will in its turn produce sets of pre-suppositions for dealing with problems. In other words, not only the task approached in childhood as the 'concrete operation' but the child's characteristic way of tackling it - taking it off into a corner, sharing

with one friend, or a group, choosing the largest table in the classroom, being free to choose at all - will be internalised as pre-conditions for action, and pre-suppositions when attached to the idea of action.

If these ways of approaching tasks are consistently found to differ between the sexes, as is suggested, then ultimately, different types of pre-supposition will be internalised, concerning the nature of a task. These may well remain inaccessible to analysis, but apparent in actions. Such influence will only be apparent in areas where large-scale comparison between the same activities performed by different sexes, is possible, e.g. voting behaviour.

Some writers¹ have suggested a direct influence by the schools, of socialisation into sex-role typing, through the content of early and continuing education, as a source of such differences of behaviour. The two theories are compatible, and capable of strongly reinforcing each other.

5. Political Learning and Television

At all ages, the children questioned verbally revealed, in their answers or spontaneous discussion, the influence of the media, and particularly that of television; at seven, the larger-than-life hero-figure - the television superman - was seen as the ideal Prime Ministerial model; asked if she knew the names of political parties, a seven-year-old girl replied:-

'I don't know what it means but they do put it on a desk with writing on it - and a man speaking to you'.

Some confusion occurs: having seen an M.P. who was deaf on television one seven-year-old boy decided:-

'A Parliament party . . . they help people who are deaf'.

1. See articles by Lobban, G., 'Sex-roles in Reading Schemes' and Byrne, E. M., 'Inequality in Education-Discriminal Resource-allocation in Schools' in *Educational Review* (Summer 1975), also Wolpe, A. M., 'The Official Ideology of Further Education for Girls', Flude, M. & Ahier, J. (eds.) Educability, Schools and Ideology (Croom Helm, London, 1974).

Criticism of communication-styles by this age-group's boys was based on television political broadcasts. The criteria for criticism also emanated from that source, it appeared; for the expectations were of clarity and information, in the form of clear answers to questions, and the M.P. criticised fell below this expected standard. At seven, some children watch television news with interest.

Eight-year-old's references to the 'money situation' and 'price situation' revealed idiomatic television language. Particular information acquired at this age showed direct links with television news reporting, as of knowledge of the Queen's travels, which are usually reported. Television does not generate, apparently, personal feelings about individual public figures - the ones who were liked or not liked by even the youngest children were those who had been personally seen.

The nine-year-olds were aware of television as a source of information, which often needed to be extended in discussion with parents, but which they were also capable of personally evaluating. These children possessed an impressive amount of information, but when items were discrete, or a key idea missing, as for example in matters of the structure of government, they were unable to make connections. There is a need for structured information, rather than mere reception of facts on a contingent basis.

For the ten-year-old girls, the 'image' reception was strong, and their interests - in Margaret Thatcher's appearance, in violence in Northern Ireland - revealed a reliance on visual memory. For the eleven-year-olds this was receding, as an increasing ability to discuss issues emerged - based on information and language which had obvious origins in television reporting. The only other likely general source of political and economic language and information, the schools, did not contribute to this accumulation of ideas and terminology, except on very minimal occasions.

Seen as a basic source of political information, television acquires a distinctive role in the development of childrens' political concepts.

Dennis' reminder^{1.} that:-

'While the media are often listed as socialisation agents alongside parents, schools and peers, there has been little evidence for mass communication as a causal element in a child's development of political cognitions and behaviours'.

leads to the question of what influences or contribution television can offer. In terms of political socialisation, considered as attitude formation or reinforcement, there appears to be little scope, for political orientations can hardly be reinforced, as Dawson and Previtt^{2.} suggest, where none exist. Also, as Connell^{3.} has pointed out, an impressive array of detail is culled, but not depth; and there are strong individual differences between what information children collect and process from this source, cognitively and affectively.

However, the stimulation of curiosity, interest, the presentation of starting-points for further discussion within the family, and the learning of particular vocabulary and language-structures appear to be a basic contribution of television. Insofar as any of this happens, it is suggested that television is a factor in the growth of political cognition.

It remains to draw general conclusions from the evidence of the childrens' achievements, and the factors which appear to most strongly influence their development.

1. Dennis, J. (ed.), Socialisation to Politics (John Wiley & Sons Inc., New York, 1974) p. 391.
2. Ibid, p. 392.
3. Connell, R. W., The Child's Construction of Politics, pp. 153-154.

CONCLUSIONS

CONCLUSIONS

This study postulates a two-fold hypothesis:

- (1) that children, from approximately seven years of age, acquire ideas and perceptions, amounting to cognition, of the political world.
- (2) That their thinking about politics develops, quantitatively and qualitatively, between the ages of seven and eleven, in ways which reflect Piaget's model of cognitive growth by consecutive, cumulative stages.

It was accepted that, in developing the thesis, it would be necessary to raise complex questions which, while highly relevant to the central theme, could not be pursued to their limits in one study. Included in this category were:

- (i) the role of language in political learning;
- (ii) the influence of family, and of social class, on this language and its development;
- (iii) the experience of early schooling as a source of ideas from which political concepts develop;
- (iv) the question of whether any differences between boys' and girls' thinking might exist at these ages.

It is submitted that the study demonstrates the following conclusions.

1. Written answers to questionnaires revealed childrens' possession of some basic political information and vocabulary, from the age of seven. Between the ages of seven and eleven, written responses became progressively more specific and more differentiated. In these terms, positive and recognisable progress was made between the ages of seven and nine, by which age many children had achieved confidence in dealing with political subject matter. By the age of eleven, concepts of political processes, activities and purposes were in evidence, implying that mental structures already existed for these children.

In discussion, children of seven were able to take part coherently in political exchanges, to present limited but relevant information and express ideas on political matters. These were presented in terms showing some appreciation of the nature and scope of political activity, although the ideas were often intuitive and pre-conceptual. The nine-year-old children showed development from this stage in their increased ability to sustain and contribute to discussion, and in the topics generated for discussion. Concepts of democracy, leadership and accountability of government were accessible, and some analysis of these ideas was attempted, while some children produced ideas of alternative social arrangements, and justified them. The ten-eleven year olds produced discussions based on ideologies and economics; issues were clearly differentiated from personalities, and were of greater interest. By eleven, party affiliations were rationalised on a basis of the different parties' likelihood of succeeding at the polls; no identification with, or enthusiasm for any living public figure was apparent.

Piaget's stages of thinking were illustrated by childrens' development of particular concepts at different ages. For example, the idea of leadership was constructed differently, and progressively, by children of seven, nine and eleven. For the seven-year-old boys, leadership meant physical toughness; a Prime Minister should be able to perform superhuman feats. Their ideas were based on fictional symbols, but there was an attempt made to match and validate this against reality. The nine-year-olds chose a personification of leadership, which illustrates the "concrete-operational" approach. Winston Churchill became the means for expressing ideas that could not, as yet, be produced as abstractions. The eleven-year-olds, however, were capable of hypothesising on leadership, and of using Churchill as a starting-point for constructing perspectives in politics and history.

The stages in this discussion illustrate intuitive, symbolic, concrete and formal or abstract thought on one political topic. The transcriptions of childrens' conversations provide many more examples of thinking which is coherent with Piaget's model of cognitive development. The conclusion is that this model is confirmed and illustrated by the development of childrens' political concepts in its construct of consecutive and cumulative stages of

thinking. However, there appear to be aspects of childrens' political concepts, on the evidence of this study, not accounted for by Piaget's model.

2. Some children, at the age of nine, were able to construct the possibility of alternative social and political arrangements to their present ways of life, and to justify these alternatives according to certain principles. The ability to formulate and justify such ideas is usually connected with the stage of formal operations, or abstract thought. The question therefore arises of whether, in terms of the development of social or political understanding, the stages either contract to some extent, or overlap more than in other areas. Piaget would deny that childrens' progress through the different stages can be speeded up in any way, for example by teaching. Nevertheless this point of divergence appeared to exist. It must therefore be concluded that the development of political cognition may be a special case, in which some contraction or unusually wide overlapping of the stages is possible. Further research here appears to be justifiable.

3. The age of approximately nine years appears, from the data collected, to be significant in the development of political concepts. A spurt in understanding, interest, and the ability to articulate ideas appears to take place for many children, around this age. Many of them appear to arrive on a cognitive plateau, where further, less dramatic gains, and consolidation are achieved during the next two years. This finding is well-documented in the study. Its particular implication is that the consolidation process might well be assisted by appropriate education at the Junior School stage. Between nine and ten years of age would appear, on these conclusions, to be the optimum time for a start to political education.

4. The central role of language in the development of political concepts is stressed throughout this work. Influences upon language and language-structures have also, it is concluded, mediating effects on political thinking. These influences include the home and the school, considered as sources of language and therefore of cognitive styles.

The most important source of childrens' political vocabulary was found to be television, and the majority of children involved in the study were familiar with news and current affairs programmes. From these, children gain assorted items of information which they are seldom able to place into any context of knowledge. They do not acquire affiliations from watching television; it appears to be a "cold" medium in a very real sense for children. Personal feelings only come into play when personal contacts are involved. Language and vocabulary, therefore, remain as its basic contribution to childrens' political ideas - a strong contribution, in which language and images extend and reinforce each other.

Childrens' political vocabulary itself does not consist simply of a list of words; the ability to organise normal, everyday language in order to describe political behaviour or ideas is highly relevant. This makes meanings accessible, and questions possible, so that a child is able to work towards making the relevant concepts his own. At a certain point in this process, use of more specific vocabulary arises, as the child feels the need for it. Many children appear to have a dormant political vocabulary; they appear capable of "living with" tacit political ideas. If these are to become explicit, the stimulus of verbal interaction appears to be both necessary and highly effective. This was concluded as a result of the discussions with the children.

This conclusion relates to a further one; that Bernstein's work on language codes and their effect on cognitive style is supported by evidence found in this study. Different uses of language, in the sense of different linguistic performance, were found to exist between different social groupings. These appeared to reflect different pre-suppositions and emphases in politics, together with some differences in the ways in which ideas were developed in discussion. A rigorous investigation here was beyond the scope of the present study. However, there appears to be scope for further research into any direct links between language "codes" and the development of political concepts

5. The school, considered both as authority-structure and source of aspirations and relationships, makes, it is concluded, a pervasive contribution to early political learning. As a result of organised experiences and formalised relationships, early ideas take shape for children. These provide the basis for future development of social and political concepts. The fundamental ideas, and the situations which engender and contribute to them, are discussed and exemplified in the body of this work.

The conclusion is of a child's constructing his political concepts, initially, through relating his "here and now" world to the "out there" political world, and of finding important parts of it reflected there. In this way he brings external events under conceptual control. He also forms patterns of expectations from early schooling, which become transferred to other situations. This is the generalised process of political learning and socialisation carried by our own system, at the Primary stage of education.

6. Education as an agency of sex-role typing appears particularly to affect girls' ideas and expectations, producing attitudes which influence their development of political concepts. It is concluded, from the data collected, that girls and boys bring different, characteristic ways of thinking, and relating, to political ideas, and that these differences in perceptions appear to be rooted in different early experiences of play and group interaction. It was observed that girls, in single-sex groups, tended to be more self-confident and articulate in discussion, than when placed in mixed groups, while boys showed no such reactions. Further, that girls appear to work from a narrower, more subjective world-view than that of boys, and that this mediates their styles of developing political ideas.

To establish these conclusions generally is outside the scope of the present study. What it has shown, on the subject of sex-linked differences in political cognition, is that in this sample of childrens' responses there appear some consistent differences in thinking between the two sexes, throughout the age-range of seven to eleven years.

7. The idea of childrens' development of political concepts implies the need for re-consideration of what is meant by "political socialisation," and acceptance of a Piagetian model raises particular questions for traditional accounts of the political socialisation process. The interactionist view of development emphasises childrens' construction of concepts, and the qualities of their thinking. Any ideas of a child's developing political mind resembling a "tabula rasa" is wholly rejected.

It is concluded that the existence of such developing thinking makes the question of political education an immediate one; for to ignore, educationally, a developing capacity for rationality in any area of knowledge constitutes an ideological stance per se. Children do acquire political information from various sources in their general environment; it is this that enables their localised, personal understanding to expand, and this is particularly the case during periods of heightened political activity. General election campaigns are very effective in stimulating childrens' interest in, and criticism of, political affairs and personalities, although little information about Parliamentary processes is available to them. It appears necessary to raise the question of whether we would allow children to gain information and ideas in other areas of activity or knowledge, in ways contingent upon events.

The pre-conditions for political education at the Junior school stage appear to exist, in the demonstrated development of childrens' political concepts presented here.

It is submitted that the lack of information concerning this development presented the need for a pioneer study to be made, within our own educational system, in order to open this field for consideration, and the possibility of further research. Some possible lines for further research have been indicated. In addition it is suggested that political education might appropriately begin with

future teachers in training, as a skilled and specialised study. This aspect of teacher education is, however, yet to be defined.

The hypothesis that childrens' political concepts do develop, in accordance with Piaget's interactionist model of cognitive growth, admitting of the possibility of some contraction of his stages when applied to political and social concepts has, it is submitted, been established. Its establishment is based on conclusions drawn from childrens' responses to written and verbal questioning, and from their interactions in group discussions. These were accurately quoted from verbatim transcriptions of recordings, and logically interpreted, with relevant reference to established and contemporary work in related fields.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

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Transcription of Recorded Discussion with Children
at School in Dagenham, Essex, October 1974

PENNY, 7.6. and SANDRA, 7.0.

Q. Do you know who that's a picture of?

P. That's Mr. Heath.

Q. Good girl. And who's that? Hello, Sandra (to the other child, who came to join the conversation).

P. Mr. Wilson.

Q. Yes, that's quite right. We are going to talk about some of these questions on these pieces of paper. Do you know who that is? It's a picture of someone.

S. No.

Q. Don't you? I wonder if you know on Penny's picture. Do you know anybody there?

S. Don't think so.

Q. You don't think you know anybody there. Do you know anybody on that one, Penny?

P. No.

Q. You haven't seen anybody's picture on television that's there?

P. No.

Q. No, but you knew the others didn't you? Who's that one again?

P. Mr. Heath.

Q. That's right. Do you know who Mr. Heath is? Do you know what he does?

P. Well, Mr. Wilson is the Prime Minister - he's like him but he ain't the Prime Minister.

Q. Why isn't Mr. Heath the Prime Minister? Have you got any idea about that?

S. Because . . .

Q. Yes, Sandra?

S. He won at the election.

Q. That's right. Who won in the election?

S. Mr. Wilson.

Q. That's right. So what would have happened if Mr. Heath had won in the election?

S. He would have been the Prime Minister.

Q. Yes, that's quite right. Good. Do you know anybody on that picture? You're laughing Penny. Do you think that's a funny picture?

P. Yes.

Q. Yes, it's called a cartoon, isn't it? I wonder why people draw pictures like that. You know who it is in there, don't you? Tell me.

P. That's Mr. Wilson.

Q. That's right. And who's that outside the window?

P. Is it Mr. Heath?

Q. Yes, it is isn't it? What's he got on his back, can you see?

P. He's got all knives.

Q. That's not very nice, is it?

P. No.

Q. Why do you think people draw funny pictures like that of them?

P. Because they don't like them a lot.

Q. Do you think they like each other, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Heath?

P. No.

S. Yes.

Q. You think they do, do you Sandra? Why do you think they do like each other?

S. Because they make laws together and they talk about things together.

Q. Oh, you think they make laws together, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Heath?

S. Yes.

Q. I see. Well, that's a good idea, isn't it? Do you think Mr. Wilson and Mr. Heath make laws together? (To Penny.)

P. No.

Q. Well, what do you think they do?

P. Because Mr. Wilson is Labour and Mr. Heath is Liberal.

Q. Is he? You sure about that?

P. Conservative.

Q. Good girl. So, you said Liberal. We have got one picture missing this morning haven't we? Whose picture have we got missing?

P. Jeremy Thorpe.

Q. Yes. Who's Jeremy Thorpe?

P. He's, er, like sort of the team leader of the Liberals.

Q. That's right. Go on.

P. They are sort of in parties and they have leaders.

Q. Yes. What's a party? You got the word right there, didn't you? You said they have parties. Quite right.

- P. When they all get together and do things.
- Q. Yes, what kind of things do they do?
- S. They talk about laws.
- Q. Talk about laws?
- S. Yes.
- Q. Oh. Do they talk about laws and agree about everything do you think?
- P. Not everything, some things.
- Q. Some things? What kind of things do you think they might not agree about . . . well, what kind of things would they agree about?
- S. A good law and things like that.
- Q. Sandra says a good law. How do you know if a law is a good law, Sandra?
- S. Well . . . (Sandra began to whisper here and was encouraged to speak more loudly.)
- Q. Can you tell me why a law is a good law?
- S. Well, because it could help people.
- Q. What kind of ways would a law help people?
- P. Sometimes when they put prices down it would help and things like that.
- Q. That's right Penny. Sandra?
- S. To see that people don't drive so fast, because they could get killed . . .
- P. They have to make sure that people in factories and things like that don't have to work too hard.
- Q. Yes, true, that's another good one isn't it?
- P. Yes.

- Q. Would you think a Prime Minister does all this by himself? Or do you think somebody helps him?
- P. Somebody helps him because all the parties help him.
- Q. Yes. How does the Prime Minister decide who's going to help him, do you know?
- P. 'Cos when people vote for him, if he's got about . . . 'cos, say that he's got ll and Labour got the most, so then he'll, then Labour, say he got 300, well he will have 300 people helping him to do all the rules.
- Q. Yes, that's quite true. But do you think all 300 could help at the same time?
- S. No.
- Q. What would happen then?
- S. Well, if they did then everyone would be . . . in a big muddle.
- Q. Yes I think you are right there Sandra. So what do you think he would have to do? If you wanted 300 people to help you, would you ask them all at the same time?
- S. No.
- Q. What would you do? (No answer.)
- P. I would just ask them all one at a time, not just one at a time, about five, the good ones that, er, do things all together.
- Q. Yes, that's a good point, isn't it? They would have to agree to do things all together. They would have to be able to work together, wouldn't they? Now girls, would you like to tell me your full names and how old you are? Penny, what's your last name?
- P. My name's Penny Emma Parkins.
- Q. Penny Emma Parkins. I see. I am going to write that down. And how old are you, Penny?

P. Seven and a half.

Q. Do you live near school?

P. Yes. 'Cos you know that field over there?

Q. Yes.

P. Well, in that fence there's a little gate and there's some chickens there and that's where I live and I come to school through the gate.

Q. Oh, that's easy to remember, isn't it? Sandra, what's your last name?

S. Briggs.

Q. Spell it for me, can you?

S. B R I G G S.

Q. How old are you?

S. Seven.

Q. You're seven. You've lived in Canada, haven't you?

S. Yes.

Q. How long have you been back here?

S. About three or four weeks.

Q. Oh, I see. So you came back really just when we were all in the middle of this election we have been having, didn't you? What do you think an election is, Sandra?

S. Oh, that's where some people vote and in Canada our Prime Minister was voted out, the Government I mean.

Q. Yes. Do you know what a Government is?

S. Like here, it makes laws and puts prices up.

Q. Yes. Do you know what the Houses of Parliament are?

S. Yes.

Q. Can you tell me?

S. Yes, it's where they all go and make laws and things like that.

Q. Yes, and you know about making laws, don't you? How do they make laws?

S. By sitting and talking about things for a while.

Q. Do you think they argue very much?

S. Maybe one doesn't agree about this thing . . . and they try and make the one . . . about that same thing . . . just a bit different.

Q. Yes, I see. Do you agree with all that Penny, or have you got any other ideas? Do you know what a Government is?

P. Yes. I agree about that. This Government is - someone - a Prime Minister. And they all talk about things and the one that's got most votes can look after the most countries.

Q. The most countries? Oh, do you think our Government looks after a lot of countries or just this one?

P. A lot of countries.

Q. Which ones do you think our Government looks after? Just other countries?

P. Not every other country because if someone got 11 countries, 11 votes, would they have 11 countries to look after?

Q. Yes, I see what you mean. Well, don't you think that each country has it's own Government, you know, does one Government belong to one country, or does one Government run an awful lot of countries? Sandra?

S. It's like one Government over in this city here . . . and other people from another Parliament would run another country and do that.

Q. Well, what does the British Government look after? Does it look after Canada, Sandra?

S. No.

Q. You know that, don't you? What does the British Government look after, Penny?

P. Does it look after counties in Britain?

Q. Yes, it does. All of Britain, doesn't it? Does it look after France, do you think, or Holland or Germany?

P. No.

Q. Do you think they have their own Governments?

P. Yes.

Q. And do you think they vote like we do and have elections?

P. Yes.

Q. Have you heard about elections in Canada?

S. Yes.

Q. Do you know anything about them?

S. I know - in Canada - first they have the Canadian elections and then they have the English elections, so they don't get anything on our mind.

Q. Yes, I see.

P. And if they didn't have elections, everybody would keep arguing, because they want to be Prime Minister and look after all the counties.

S. And another thing, if there was nobody to run the country everybody would (say) "I don't want to do this" and they'd just leave, and then nothing would get done and things like that and nobody would get paid. Prices would just be going up because the Government want it to go up, they wanted to have days off.

Q. That would be terrible wouldn't it?

S. Yes.

Q. So we need a Government do we?

S. Yes.

Q. I see. Do you think when you grow up you might like to be a person who helps to run the country? What do you think Sandra?

S. No I don't really. I don't think I want to . . .

Q. What about you Penny?

P. I'd like to be someone who looks after everybody in the country.

Q. Would you? You would like to be Prime Minister then perhaps? Do you think you could if you wanted to be?

P. No.

Q. Why?

P. I couldn't just go up and say to them "Can I be Prime Minister?" because they wouldn't do that. You can't just do it if you want to.

Q. What do you think you have to do?

P. I think they would have an election and see who wins.

Q. Yes, but you would have to be somebody in a party, you know about that don't you?

S. Yes, you would have to, - , join a Labour or Conservative Parliament.

Q. Have you ever heard of this word 'politics'? Politics. Have you any idea what it means Penny?

P. No.

Q. Sandra?

S. No.

Q. No, neither of you know that one? Your Mummy and Daddy vote for people don't they in an election?

S. Well, my mother didn't vote this time because they wasn't here long enough but my grandmother and grandfather couldn't vote because they wasn't on the voting list because the people didn't come round.

P. My Mum and Dad didn't vote either.

Q. Did they talk much about the election at home?

P. No.

Q. Did you have it on television?

P. Well, if a lot of it was on we used to turn it off.

Q. Yes, I see. Did they talk to you much at school about it?

P. Yes. 'Cos we had a sort of election like who's going to be class leader, and I was class leader and we had to do a little speech.

Q. Oh, I see. So you know what it is to vote?

S. Well I voted for Jill, she's another girl in my class.

Q. I see.

S. There's only one thing I'm really glad about - is that the girl sitting next to me was class leader.

P. We had to vote for ourselves, me, Pauline and Jill.

Q. Did you vote for yourselves? That's not a bad idea, is it?

S. And Pauline, she had 10, Jill had 8 and Penny had 11.

Q. So who won?

S. Penny.

Q. When a man gets to be Prime Minister, how do we know, you tell me this first Penny, then I'll ask Sandra, how do we know if he's a good Prime Minister?

- P. Because you've got to let him make one rule and see if he does a good rule and if he don't do it properly then they would know. Everybody would know.
- Q. Yes I see. Well what kind of things do you think a bad Prime Minister might do?
- S. He might, say there were some papers and - they were going to do work to them in a few days - but instead he said "OK you can go home and get them".
- Q. I see.
- P. And if they keep all the prices high and things like that and make things so no-one could play on them.
- Q. And making things so no-one could play on them? I think that would be a very bad Prime Minister if he kept doing things like that, wouldn't you?
- P. Mm.
- Q. What do you think should happen to a man who's a bad Prime Minister? You tell me Sandra.
- S. He would get voted out.
- Q. What do you think Penny?
- P. I feel that if he was a bad Prime Minister no-one would like him and they wouldn't do nothing what he says.
- Q. I see. Well, what should happen to him if he is a bad Prime Minister, do you think then?
- P. Like Sandra says, vote him out because nobody wants a bad Prime Minister because everybody wants the world to be nice.
- Q. Yes, that's true. Do you like Mr. Heath or Mr. Wilson or one better than the other? Penny?
- P. I like Mr. Wilson.

Q. Why?

P. Because I think he's got the most strength. Because when Mr. Heath was Prime Minister he kept making prices high and my Mum never liked him, or my Dad.

Q. I see. And you don't like Mr. Heath.

P. No.

S. My grandfather, he wanted the Conservatives to win.

Q. Did he, Sandra?

S. Yes.

Q. He likes the Conservatives. Does he ever say why?

S. No.

P. When we were on holiday Jeremy Thorpe came on the beach on a hovercraft.

Q. Did he?

P. That was in . . . Devon.

Q. Did you like him?

P. No. I thought he was horrible.

Q. Did you? Why?

P. 'Cos he keeps standing up and saying things that's horrible.

Q. Oh, don't you like him when he stands up and says things, Penny? What things don't you like that he says?

P. Well, he keeps saying things where he's going and he does it like he's always the leader in all the world.

Q. Oh, I see. And you don't like that?

P. No.

Q. Do you watch television very much Penny?

P. Sometimes.

Q. Do you ever see things like bombs and fires - you know, explosions in the streets?

P. Yes.

Q. Did you hear about the bomb that was in the Tower of London?

S. Um, like I heard of it when my mother told me about it.

Q. Did you Sandra? What did you think of it? Sandra first.

S. Well, it wasn't very nice.

Q. Well, why do you think people do things like that?

S. Well, their brain isn't working properly and that's what makes them do it.

Q. Their brain isn't working properly? What do you think Penny?

P. They want to do it because no-one wants them to be Prime Minister and things like that . . . so they do naughty things - they think they can be.

Q. Do you think that's a good way to get what you want Penny?

P. No.

S. No; then they won't let them in more and more, that way.

P. Then they keep breaking things up and nothing can look nice.

Q. Yes, that's true. What do the police do when people do things like that?

S. They try to get them, like when they tried to capture Princess Anne.

Q. Yes, that's right Sandra. Penny, what do you think the police should do?

- S. Think they should try and find him.
- Q. Yes, and what do you think Penny?
- P. I think they can find him and if they do find him they should put him in prison for ever . . .
- Q. When you see people walking through the streets, you know, on a Sunday, and having meetings, is that the same kind of thing? What are they trying to do then, do you know? You see that on television sometimes, don't you?
- P. Well, sometimes they go along the streets because they are on strike somewhere and other times they want people to be things, and they don't want to be it, so they march along the streets.
- Q. Is that a good way to get what you want?
- P. No.
- S. Well, it's a bit better than trying to blow up things with bombs, it's a bit better way.
- Q. That's true Sandra, but is it a good way to get a law changed? You know, if people want a law changed, is that the right way to go about it, blowing up things with bombs?
- S. No.
- Q. Are there better ways than that?
- S. Yes.
- Q. What do you think you could do if you wanted a law changed or if people round here wanted a law changed?
- S. They could write a letter about it.
- P. Sending letters about it - that would be better than blowing things up.
- Q. Yes. Do you think it would work, writing letters? Sandra?
- S. Well, if he were a good Prime Minister, yes.

Q. He'd listen? You think so Penny?

P. Yes.

Q. Good. Are you interested in things like who wins the election and who's the Prime Minister?

P. My Mum and Dad aren't but I am.

Q. Are you? I wonder why you are, Penny, if your Mum and Dad aren't?

P. I don't know because they are always doing other jobs. They don't watch the tele. Most of the time they don't know what's going on.

Q. I see - and you perhaps do know what's going on if you have time to watch the television? You think you know more about what's going on than your Mum and Dad?

P. I don't know.

Q. Do you ever tell them about what is going on?

P. Sometimes because when they are in the garden I watch the tele, the news and things like that, and see what is happening while they're out in the garden doing other things.

Q. Oh, I see. Do you keep up with what is happening, Sandra?

S. Well, like at Canada . . . once there was a horror film on TV but I didn't see it because I was just getting out of the bath-tub.

Q. What do you think are the things that are in the country now, you know, the things that are happening now that are important? Do you think there are any important things at the moment? Sandra first because you have been quiet, haven't you?

S. I don't really know.

Q. Well, perhaps you haven't been here long enough to find out. What about Penny? Perhaps she can help us on this.

- P. Well, if things are really important and they need something to do, I think someone would help it. But if something's not really important they don't help it. But if it's a bad government he won't help none of them.
- Q. Have we got any problems that need helping at the moment in this country?
- P. Yes.
- Q. Such as what?
- P. Because everybody keeps . . . no-one can buy anything because my Mum, when we was on holiday and she went in a shop to get something, she got four rolls and it nearly cost about one pound.
- Q. Yes, I see. So you think prices are the most important thing. Is there anything else that's important?
- S. In Canada, like, my mother used to work down the dress shop and these chocolate buns were only five cents, and now they are about twenty-five cents.
- Q. So it's the same in Canada, is it?
- S. Yes.
- Q. I see. Coming back to these two parties that we have, we have got as far as that they do things differently. Do you think the two parties, the one that Mr. Wilson has and the one that Mr. Heath has, do you think they want different things for the country?
- S. Yes.
- Q. You tell me how you think that, Sandra.
- S. Well, they want something done to change the law that they have made but, do they think it's a good law, and things like that.
- Q. Yes. Penny?
- P. If, I don't think they do things together like that because everybody wants different things and they start arguing about it.

- Q. I wonder where people get the ideas about wanting different things from? What kind of different things? Sandra?
- S. Well, prices. They might want a different Prime Minister because they think that last time he was there he was a very good Prime Minister, but there again everything has been rushing up . . . but they said they'd kept the prices . . . but things do go up.
- Q. What do you think, Penny? Where do you think people get the ideas about wanting different things from? How do you decide about different things?
- P. Well, when people go to places, if something's wrong, like if they go to a field and there's loads of paper on the ground, then they tell someone and then they start putting bins round for everybody and things like that.
- Q. Oh, I see. And you mean one party might want some bins put round and the other party might not want some bins put round so they wouldn't agree about that? You said that people, Sandra, remembered how a Prime Minister had been before, if he had been all right. Do you think that people do work like that, they think "Well, perhaps we had him before and he was good so we will have him again"?
- P. Well, maybe some are like that . . . like Harold Wilson . . . some people did. He won again because some people thought that he was a very good Prime Minister and some didn't.
- Q. Yes, I see. Penny, who runs the country?
- P. Mr. Wilson . . . No, the Queen.
- Q. The Queen. I see. Now, who is in charge? Is Mr. Wilson in charge or the Queen, or is she in charge of him or are they equal?
- S. Er, the Queen's in charge over him and she's in charge of Canada as well.
- Q. I see. Do you agree with that Penny?
- P. Yes, 'cos I think the Queen is, er, looks after all the country.

Q. Yes.

P. Not just all the counties, all the country.

Q. I see.

S. And in Canada, because in Canada, we don't have like a Queen of our own.

Q. What's the name of the Prime Minister of Canada?

S. I don't know because we wasn't there long enough. Just before we went the Prime Minister was Mr. Wilson.

Q. I mean the Prime Minister of Canada. Is he the Prime Minister of Canada, Mr. Wilson?

S. Oh, I forget his name.

Q. I see. Coming back to the Queen. Penny, does the Queen do any work?

P. Yes.

Q. What kinds of things does she do?

P. Oh, she visits people and writes things down on papers and things like that.

Q. I see.

S. She visits other countries and she has to give signs things, and she's very busy.

Q. What things does she sign, Sandra?

S. Well, I don't really know.

Q. Does she make the laws? Penny?

P. Well, does she have power to make the laws?

Q. You don't think she makes them herself?

S. No. It's people like the Prime Minister and things like that.

Q. Yes, I see. Coming back to the Prime Minister. Does he tell people what to do? Sandra?

S. No.

Q. Penny then?

P. No. He makes the rules and tells people what to do, but he can tell them what to do, but if he does all the time tell them what to do, and if he keeps telling people to do naughty things, well then no-one would do as he would say.

Q. I see. So we could please ourselves whether we did or not, whether we did what he told us or not?

P. Well, if he was a good Prime Minister and everybody liked him, sometimes they would do as he said, sometimes not.

Q. I see. Who did you want to win at the last election?

P. Mr. Wilson.

Q. Oh, you wanted Mr. Wilson to win?

S. Well, I think - like - I don't know . . . I asked my granny.

Transcription of Recorded Discussion with Children
at School in Dagenham, Essex, October 1974
FRANCIS, 8.11. and LINDA, 8.8.

Q. How old are you, Frances?

F. Eight.

Q. Eight, are you? What's your name, love?

L. Linda Bullock.

Q. How old are you?

L. Eight.

Q. You are eight, are you? Do you both live near school?
Do you, Frances? No?

F. I live in Prison Road.

Q. Oh, is that a long way from here?

F. No.

Q. What about you, Linda, do you live near School?

L. No.

Q. Don't you? Do you live a long way from here?

L. Well, I live down Greenwood Avenue.

Q. Oh, I see. I've got some pictures here. Do you know anybody on those pictures? Can I ask you one at a time? And I'll say your names then we know who it is talking when the tape plays back, you see. Frances, do you know anybody in that picture?

F. Mr. Wilson.

Q. Show it to Linda. Who do you know on that picture?

L. Mr. Heath.

Q. Yes, that's right.

L. Don't know anybody else.

Q. No. That's his mother and father. Do you know who that one is, Frances?

F. Mr. Heath.

Q. That's right. Is that him again, Linda?

L. Yes.

Q. Do you know anybody on that one? Let's ask Linda first this time.

L. No.

Q. Anybody there? Do you know anybody there, Frances?

F. Mr. Parker.

L. Oh, I know him.

Q. Yes, who is he?

L. Mr. Powell.

Q. That's right Linda, yes. Do you know anything about him?

L. No.

F. He is Prime Minister.

Q. Is he? What about that one - what's that? It's not a photograph, is it? (indicating a newspaper cartoon)

F. Do you want to know who they are?

Q. Yes please.

F. Mr. Wilson and Mr. Heath.

Q. What do you think about that picture? Do you think it's funny?

L. Yes. Got the Union Jack on the side.

Q. Yes. Why do you think it's funny, Linda?

L. They are joining in funny cartoons.

Q. Yes, that's right. What are they saying really in cartoons?
Are cartoons really funny or are they saying something special?

L. Don't think they are that special.

Q. Are they saying that Mr. Heath and Mr. Wilson like each other do
you think, or that they don't like each other?

L. They don't like each other 'cos he's got swords in his back.

Q. It looks rather like that doesn't it? Do you think they like
each other?

L. No, not very much.

F. They are just fighting.

Q. Fighting? What have they been fighting about lately?

F. Who's going to win.

Q. Who's going to win what, Frances?

F. The election.

Q. That's right.

F. Who's going to get more votes.

Q. Now let's have a talk one at a time about the election. Can we
start with Frances then? Frances, what was the election all about?

F. About food going up.

Q. Yes, that's one of the things but what were they voting for - you
know what was the point of it all? Why bother? What was it all
on about?

- F. Because we wanted food to go down. It was going up.
- Q. Yes, well, that's one of the things we wanted, but what is the election for? Can you help us out there, Linda?
- L. To see who is Prime Minister.
- Q. That's right.
- F. The old Prime Minister gets chucked out the back door and the new one moves in. That's what my teacher said.
- Q. Oh, "Chucked out"? Yes, well, is it quite like that?
- L. Not "chucked out" the back door.
- Q. Not quite is it? What happens when we have a change of Prime Minister? Why do we change over Prime Ministers? Can you start this time Linda?
- L. 'Cos other people aren't happy with the Prime Minister that already is Prime Minister.
- Q. I see. And so what happens?
- L. They have another election.
- Q. How does the Prime Minister get to be the Prime Minister?
- L. Well, they have a vote and he is the leader of the party.
- Q. That's the bit I am interested in. Can you go on with that one Frances? What's a party then, Frances?
- F. When people get together.
- Q. What do they get together for? Do you know Linda?
- L. No.
- F. To see if things go up or go down.
- Q. Do you think the parties, the two different parties, and you know their names, don't you? Come on quickly, what are their names?

F. What, all three parties?

Q. Yes.

F. Liberal, Conservative and Labour.

Q. That's right. Now, there was one picture missing. I showed you those two pictures, didn't I?

F. Jeremy Thorpe.

Q. That's right. And what is Mr. Thorpe? Who is he? What does he do?

F. He is Conservative.

Q. Is he?

L. He is Liberal.

Q. That's right. Why do you think there are parties?

L. Don't know.

Q. Why do you think there are parties, Frances? Do you think it's because people agree with all the kind of things that should happen in the country or because people don't agree?

F. They don't agree.

Q. I wonder what kind of things, Frances, they wouldn't agree about. Any idea?

F. Agree about things going up.

Q. Anything else? Do you mean some people want prices to go up, and some people don't.

F. I want them to go down.

Q. I think most of us do. Is that a thing that they would not agree about, whether prices should go up or down?

F. Well, agree about them going up.

- Q. What do you think there, Linda?
- L. Well, some parties, the Labour party usually thinks about them going up and the other two parties want them to go down.
- Q. Do they? I see. Why do you think that, Linda?
- L. I don't know.
- Q. You just do?
- L. Yes. I just do.
- Q. Are there any other things that the two parties, or the three parties, there are some little ones as well, aren't there? Anything else that they might not agree about?
- L. Putting houses up.
- Q. Mm. What kind of things about putting houses up?
- F. Got to pay a lot of money for it.
- Q. That's true, Frances. So you think they might not agree about how much houses should cost?
- F. I agree about that; they would want the houses to go up.
- Q. Yes, they would want the houses to go up. Supposing that one party wanted something and the other didn't. What do you think would happen?
- F. They would fight.
- Q. What, you mean really fight?
- F. No, argue.
- Q. Well, how do you think that the Prime Minister runs the country? Can you tell me anything about that, Linda? We've had an election and we've got a Prime Minister. What's he going to do?
- F. He has talks at 10 Downing Street.

- Q. Frances is keen on that one. Go on, tell me about these talks at 10 Downing Street, Frances. He does - you're quite right. Who does he talk to?
- F. Talks to all the Prime Ministers.
- Q. All the past ones?
- F. Yes.
- Q. That's a good idea. What do you think about that, Linda?
- L. He invites all the people that have helped him to get in to 10 Downing Street and they all have a meeting.
- Q. Yes, yes I see. Supposing a man was a bad Prime Minister. How would we know?
- L. They would probably have another election.
- Q. Yes. What kind of things do you think a bad Prime Minister would do?
- F. Have arguments and make things go up.
- Q. So we'd know if he was a bad Prime Minister because prices would go up and what else would happen? And what should happen to him then, Frances, if he's a bad Prime Minister - what do you think should happen?
- F. He would get chucked out and another Prime Minister would move in.
- Q. I see. Do you agree with that one, Linda?
- L. Yes. He should get the sack.
- Q. He should get the sack. You know sometimes when people want something they march through the streets - you know - on a Sunday afternoon . . .
- L. Yes, with great big banners.
- Q. Yes, that's right. Why do you think people do that, Linda?

- L. If they want more pay for their jobs.
- Q. Yes. Any other reasons, Frances?
- F. Might be on strike.
- Q. Mm.
- L. Strikes . . . Miners.
- Q. Yes. What do the police do?
- F. They stop 'em.
- L. Try to stop the fights.
- Q. What do you think the police should do?
- L. Put them in prison.
- Q. Do you? What, just for walking through the streets? Or do they have to wait until they start fighting?
- F. Wait till they start fighting. I love fights.
- Q. Do you.
- L. I don't.
- Q. Do you know what the House of Commons is, Linda?
- F. Is it near Big Ben?
- Q. Yes, Frances, it is near Big Ben. It's part of the Houses of Parliament. What do you think happens there?
- F. Pardon?
- Q. What happens there? Do you know, Linda?
- L. They have all big meetings.
- Q. Yes. What do they do at the big meetings?
- L. They have talks and arguments.

Q. Yes. What are the arguments about?

L. About food and wages.

Q. Yes. You know these people who have been blowing up things in the streets a lot lately? Do you remember the Tower of London and the bomb there?

L. Yes.

Q. What did you think about that? Linda first. (No reply)

F. About 100 people died.

Q. Well, a lot, didn't they? Linda, what do you think about that? What did you think about when you heard it?

L. Terrible.

F. They killed hundreds of people, didn't they, with that bomb?

Q. I don't know if it was hundreds but certainly they killed some.

F. About 100, 70 or 100.

Q. I don't know, Frances. What did you think when you heard it?

F. I was terrified.

Q. Were you?

F. I went upstairs.

Q. Did you? What did you do upstairs?

F. Played with toys.

Q. Oh, I see. You soon forgot about it then.

F. When terrible things come on the television I go upstairs and play with toys.

Q. Do you?

L. What if they come on in the middle of your tea?

F. I don't worry. I still go upstairs. I take it upstairs with me.

Q. Do you?

F. I got a table beside my bed.

Q. Oh. Is that just on the news or do you mean if you were watching something like "The Six Million Dollar Man" and something frightening happened there - would it be the same kind of thing - would you still be scared?

F. No.

Q. Would you?

L. No.

Q. Why?

F. I like scarey things.

Q. When they are stories?

F. Yes.

Q. Yes. Not when they are real. Why do you think people blow up things and set buses on fire? You know, the kind of things you see on television news, the kind of things you run upstairs to your room when you see. Why do you think people do things like that? Frances?

F. Want their wages to go up.

Q. Because they want something? Have you any ideas about that one, Linda?

L. They just like killing people or something.

Q. You think there are people like that who just like doing that?

L. Yes.

Q. I see. What do you think should happen to them?

F. Be put in prison.

Q. Frances thinks they should be put in prison. What do you think, Linda?

L. Yes, they should be.

Q. Do you think it's a good way to get what you want? Do they usually get what they want when they blow things up?

F. No.

L. No.

Q. No, they don't do they? Well, supposing that they want to change a law. Is that the right way to go about trying to change a law?

L. No.

Q. What do you think would be the right way to go about changing the law?

L. Don't know but they shouldn't blow up buses or anything like that just to try and change the law.

Q. You think there are other ways, better ways?

L. Yes.

Q. Have you any idea what the better ways might be, Frances?

F. Going to court, have arguments.

Q. In the courts? How would they get there?

F. Try to do something wrong.

Q. Oh, I see.

F. Have a case on there.

Q. So they do something wrong and get taken to court and then they can say what their argument is. Is that what you think?

F. Yes.

- Q. Oh, I see. Supposing you wanted to change a law and you wrote a letter to the Prime Minister, Frances. Do you think that would work just as well as doing something . . . ?
- F. No.
- Q. No, you don't? What do you think, Linda?
- L. It might work out better than blowing up buses.
- Q. Yes, it might mightn't it? It would be less trouble for everybody, wouldn't it?
- L. Yes.
- Q. Who do you think, Linda, who do you think runs the country?
- L. The Prime Minister.
- Q. Do you agree with that one, Frances? What do you think the Queen does? Frances?
- F. Sit on her backside.
- Q. Is that all? What do you think Linda? Do you agree with that?
- L. No.
- Q. What do you think she does?
- L. She goes round to different places and sees some people.
- Q. Why?
- L. Don't know.
- Q. Do you think it's a useful thing to do?
- F. I wish I was out of this school.
- Q. Do you think that's a useful thing to do, for the Queen to go round visiting?
- L. Important people.

Q. So you think she has a job to do?

L. I think so.

Q. Oh, I see. You know this last election, did you watch the television much, Frances? Did you see much of it on tele?

F. I don't see much on television.

Q. Don't you? Do you Linda?

F. I usually go out with my boyfriend.

Q. Do you? Have you got a boyfriend?

F. Got three of them.

Q. Have you? Are they eight as well as you? Eight years old?

F. Some.

Q. Oh, I see, so you are too busy to watch television are you? What about you, Linda? Did you watch the television much?

L. Yes.

Q. And were you interested in what was happening?

L. Mm.

Q. Do you know what it is to vote, Linda?

L. Well, there's candidates standing for each party in Dagenham, Barking, and like that, and people have to vote for which ever party they like and they put a cross in the box.

Q. That's right . . . go on Linda.

F. (Got to be 18.)

Q. Let her finish and then you can tell us the extra bits you know . . . go on Linda.

L. Where was I?

- Q. The candidates in Barking . . . ?
- L. Oh, people vote for Liberals, Labour, Conservative or other parties and whoever party gets the most votes, they get one seat in Parliament.
- Q. That's right. Yes, you do know about that don't you? How would you think, Linda, people know who to vote for?
- L. Well, it's got a name there and it's got a little sign next to it saying "Lab" or "Con" or "Lib".
- Q. That's right. Now, how do you think people make up their minds who to vote for? How do they decide who to vote for? How do they choose?
- L. Don't know.
- Q. How do you think people choose who to vote for Frances?
- F. I don't know.
- Q. Did you want to say anything else about voting round here? Go on then.
- F. Got to put a cross in which one you want and you got to be eighteen.
- Q. That's right. Would you like to vote? Because people can please themselves can't they, whether they vote or not?
- F. I think I won't want to vote.
- Q. Do you think when you are eighteen you will want to vote? You don't? She's shaking her head. What do you think, Linda?
- L. About voting?
- Q. When you are eighteen - will you want to vote?
- L. Yes.
- Q. Why?
- L. Just like to vote.

- Q. Well, you would like to help choose I expect, wouldn't you?
- L. Yes.
- F. Somebody puts a cross in each box, these boxes, they they do it up.
- Q. Yes, they do, don't they? How do you know that?
- F. Because my teacher told me.
- Q. Did she? When did she tell you? When the election was on? Because that spoils your paper doesn't it? Who did you think would win at the last election, Frances? Did you think about it much?
- F. I thought Labour would win.
- Q. Well, they did win, didn't they? And did you think they would? Did you think they would? (Linda)
- L. I thought Labour or Conservative would win.
- Q. Didn't you think the Liberals would win?
- L. No.
- Q. Why?
- L. I don't know.
- Q. Oh, What kind of problems have we got in this country at present? Can I start with Frances there? Do you think we have got any problems Frances in the country?
- F. Yes.
- Q. What kind of problems? Linda, help her out.
- L. Got a lot.
- Q. I know. Can you say some of them?
- L. Well, prices are too high.
- Q. Yes, that's one, isn't it.

L. And we got a shortage of sugar.

Q. Mm. We have.

L. Salt.

Q. Salt. Anything else?

L. Don't know.

Q. Do you think there is much for the two parties to disagree about really?

L. No.

Q. If a person wanted to become a Prime Minister or a Member of Parliament, would they have to be very specially good at anything or do you think anybody could do it? Frances?

F. Anybody could do it.

Q. You don't think you need to have any special ability? To be specially good at something?

F. You got to have some special ability.

Q. Such as?

F. Know what is going on, and . . .

Q. What do you think about that, Linda? Do you think anybody could be or just some special people?

L. Just some special people.

Q. What would be special about them?

L. They have got to be very clever.

Q. Have they?

L. I think they have.

Q. Cleverer than other people?

L. Usually, yes.

Q. Do you think that, Frances? Do you agree with that?

F. No.

Q. You don't think they need to be cleverer than other people?
Do you think they need to be good? Linda?

L. Yes.

Q. Do you Frances? Do you think they should be better than other people?

F. No.

Q. Do you Linda?

L. Yes, they should be a bit better.

Q. Why is that?

L. Don't know.

Q. You just think they need to be?

L. Yes, a bit.

Q. You don't see many ladies in the Government, do you? You don't see a lady Prime Minister?

L. No.

Q. Do you think there are any reasons for this?

F. I think the Queen's Prime Minister.

Q. You think the Queen's the Prime Minister? It's the same thing, is it?

F. Yes.

Q. I thought we said Mr. Wilson was the Prime Minister.

F. Anybody can be the Prime Minister.

Q. Do you think the Queen could be?

F. Yes.

Q. Oh. Do you think anybody could be?

F. Anybody.

Q. Do you think you could be when you grow up?

F. I don't want to be.

Q. No, but if you wanted to be, do you think you could?

F. Yes.

Q. Do you think you could (To Linda)?

L. No.

Q. Why?

L. Well, first you've got to get into a party and the Prime Minister he'd have to work down and you would have to work up the party to be the head of it, the head of the party.

Q. I see. Yes, so you'd know how to go about it then, if you wanted to be? Why do you think there are more men than ladies that do this and are candidates? Any ideas, Linda?

L. No.

Q. What do you think, Frances?

F. I don't know really.

Q. So, we have different parties and they want different things and we know who decides them, Mr. Heath decides them when he is Prime Minister and Mr. Wilson decides them when he is Prime Minister. I wonder who helps them decide all these things. What do you think about that one, Frances? Who helps the Prime Minister? Linda?

L. All the people in their parties.

Q. Mm. All of them?

L. Well, quite a lot of them.

Q. Yes, I see. When we talk about the Government - have you any idea what that means? The Government. Because there's the Prime Minister, isn't there, and there's the Government. Now you often hear people say "The Government's doing this and the Government's doing that". Well, what is this Government? Linda?

L. Don't know.

Q. You don't know.

F. The law.

Q. Well, they make the laws don't they? The law - when you say the law - what do you mean by the law?

F. I don't know.

Q. You don't know? What do you think, Linda?

L. I don't know.

Q. You don't know about the Government very much.

L. No.

Q. I see. Do you think if you were Prime Minister, or whoever is Prime Minister, how would you decide who was going to help you?

L. Get the best people from your party.

Q. Get the best people from your party?

L. Yes.

Q. Do you agree with that one, Frances?

F. Yes.

- Q. You would get the best people from your party. What do you think are the kind of things, Linda, that the Government and the Prime Minister should do? Do you think they should come round the schools and visit the children in their schools?
- L. Yes, and they should put the prices down.
- Q. Everybody seems very interested in this. Is this the most important thing at the moment - the prices?
- L. Yes.
- Q. You both think so?
- F. Yes.
- Q. Is there anything else that's important?
- F. The oil.
- Q. The oil. Oh, yes. Tell me about the oil, Frances. Do you know very much about that? You must know something - tell me what you do know because you said it, didn't you?
- F. You need it for cars.
- Q. Oh, yes, you need it for cars - you don't put oil in cars though, do you? You put petrol in cars. Were you thinking about the oil in the North Sea? You know, when people dig huge holes down under the North Sea because there are oil-fields down underneath the sea, and get it out? Is that the kind of thing the Government ought to care about? I can see she's nodding her head again - what do you think Linda?
- L. Yes, they should.
- Q. I see. What do you think "politics" means, Linda? It's a word, isn't it? Have you come across it - politics?
- L. Yes, I don't know what it means.
- Q. Don't you? Do you know what it means, Frances? Politics.

- F. It's some kind of job.
- Q. It's some kind of job. Is it anything else, other than a kind of job.
- F. I don't know.
- Q. You don't know?
- F. No.
- Q. When we have a Government in this country and a Prime Minister (this one's for you, Linda) - do they just run this country or do they run other countries?
- L. They just run this country.
- Q. Do you agree with that, Frances?
- F. They run some other countries.
- Q. Which ones? No idea? Or does every country have its own Government?
- F. Think every country has its own Government.
- Q. Do you think that's a better way? What do you think Linda?
- L. Don't know.
- Q. You knew at first didn't you? When you said they just run this country.
- L. Yes.
- Q. Have you changed your mind or do you still think that?
- L. Still think they just run this country.
- Q. Do you know what the name of the American President is? Linda?
- L. No.
- F. It was Mr. Nixon, wasn't it?
- Q. Yes, that's right, it was Mr. Nixon. What happened to him, do you know?

F. He got the sack.

Q. Yes. Do you know the name of the man who's President now?

F. Someone by the name of Mr. Healey, or something like that.

Q. No, Mr. Healey's English isn't he? Have you any ideas, Linda, or would it be guessing?

L. Mr. Parker.

Q. No. It's Ford, isn't it? I expect you have seen his picture. You know a Prime Minister gets to be Prime Minister because people vote for him - we've worked that one out, haven't we? How does the Queen get to be the Queen? Linda? Frances? Did somebody vote for her?

F. Pardon?

Q. Did somebody vote for the Queen so she could be Queen? How did she get that job?

F. She must have been taken up in the Royal Family.

Q. I see. So you have got to be in the Royal Family to be Queen. How did she get to be Queen, Linda, do you know? Haven't you ever wondered?

L. No. First she was a Princess. Then she gets to be the Queen.

Q. Yes. How many children has she got then?

L. Don't know.

Q. Do you know, Frances?

F. Andrew, Edward, Philip, no, Anne and . . .

Q. One more to go. Who's Prince Philip, Linda? (No answer.)

F. A little kiddie.

Q. No, he's not a little kiddie, is he?

F. Her husband.

- Q. That's right. And we've still got one of her children to go, haven't we? How many did we get - Andrew, Edward, Anne - who's the other one?
- L. Charles.
- F. Margaret.
- Q. That's right.
- F. I thought it was Margaret.
- Q. What are they all members of?
- F. The Royal Family.
- Q. That's right. What's the Royal Family?
- F. Kings and Queens.
- Q. And Princes and Princesses. What do they do?
- F. Don't know.
- Q. You don't know?
- L. Some of them ride on horses.
- Q. Yes.
- L. Some go to school.
- Q. Do you hear much about them - are you interested in what they do? Linda, are you interested in what the Royal Family do?
- L. Not really.
- Q. Not really. Are you, Frances?
- F. Only about three of them.
- Q. Which three?
- F. Princess Anne, Captain Phillips and . . .

- Q. And who else? Can't you think? Oh, never mind. Let's leave that one. You know what a law is, do you know Frances?
- F. A rule.
- Q. A rule, yes. Is it the same kind of rule that you have at school?
- L. No.
- Q. Why?
- L. Don't know. It's not the same rule though.
- Q. No. Is it the same kind of thing?
- F. Yes. Not allowed to talk down the corridors, not allowed to run down the corridors, not allowed to do handstands, not allowed to do cartwheels . . .
- Q. What about the rules that you have when you are in games? Are they the same kind of things as a school rule or as a law?
- L. No.
- Q. No? What's the difference? Tell me, Frances?
- F. You might run along the streets.
- Q. Yes, but what about the rules that you make when you are playing a game? Do you still need rules for games, Frances?
- F. Yes.
- Q. Are they all right, those kind of rules? Are they better than the rules at School? She's nodding her head again. Why are they? Why are they, Linda?
- L. Don't know.
- Q. I think you do know if you thought for a minute. Who helps to make the rules for games? Linda, you tell me; if you are playing a game and you are making the game up, who makes the rules, who helps to make them?

L. The one that discovered it.

Q. The one that discovered the game? Is that it?

F. The inventor.

Q. I see. Do you ever make the rules for games yourselves?

F. I do.

Q. You do?

F. When I'm playing frustration I would get one man out in two runs or else it would be crowded.

Q. And did you make those rules up? I don't think I understand it very well, but then I have never played that game. Are those rules all right then, Frances? Why?

F. Because it's my game.

Q. Ah. Yes. Is that right, Linda, do you agree with that?

L. Why?

Q. That some rules are better than others. Is that what we're saying. Frances? I think Frances is saying that the rules are all right if she's made them; is that right, Frances?

F. Yes.

Q. Is that what you're saying, that rules are fine if you've helped to make them and that's better than just having somebody else's rules?

F. Yes.

Q. What do you think about that, Linda?

L. Yes, I think it would be better.

Transcription of Recorded Discussion with Children
at School in Dagenham, Essex, October 1974
JEANETTE, 9.11. and SUSAN, 9.11.

Q. One at a time, what's your name?

J. Jeanette Ball.

S. Susan O'Hara.

Q. Susan O'Hara and Jeanette Ball. Right. How old are you Susan?

S. I'm nine now and I'm nearly ten in November.

Q. Ten in November?

J. Oh, I'll be ten tomorrow.

Q. You'll be ten tomorrow? Oh, smashing, many happy returns of tomorrow.

J. Thank you.

Q. Do you know who that's a picture of?

Both. Ted Heath.

Q. That's right. Did you both say that together? You both knew that didn't you? Both Susan and Jeanette knew. Susan - who is that a picture of?

S. Enoch Powell.

Q. That's right. You don't know the other one?

S. No.

Q. Jeanette, who is that a picture of?

J. That one there?

Q. That's right.

J. Is it Mr. Heath?

S. No.

Q. Have another think. Him. That one in the cartoon. Jeanette knows?

S. You should know him. Mr. Wilson.

Q. Yes, that's right. Where have you seen more pictures of him?

S. I've seen him on television. I watch the news every day.

Q. Do you?

S. Yes, because my Dad he likes to hear about what's happening and I always sit there and watch it.

Q. Oh, do you both?

J. I don't very often watch the news.

Q. You don't watch the news. Don't you like watching the news very much?

J. Well, sometimes.

Q. Don't you like watching the news very much?

S. I think it's interesting.

Q. Do you? Why? What kinds of things do you like to watch on the news?

S. Well, I like to hear good things. Things that are working out for the people that we vote for.

Q. I see. Does the word "politics" mean anything to you?

S. Politics? I have heard of the word but I never really knew what it meant.

Q. Can you work it out with that one, Jeanette? Do you know what politics means? What's it about, do you think? What's a political party? Do you think that's got any connection with politics?

J. Don't think so.

Q. You don't think so.

S. Is it Labour?

Q. She's warm, isn't she?

S. Is it that one beginning with "C"?

Q. Yes, can you work it out?

Both. Conservatives.

Q. That's it. I think you both got that together didn't you?
You know what Labour and Conservative are. What are they then?

S. They are people who want people in Britain to vote for them.

Q. Yes.

S. And another one is Liberal, Labour and Conservative.

Q. Good girl, Susan. Now I am going to ask some for Jeanette.
Jeanette, I showed you some pictures of some people. Well, if you think of them as a set there was one missing. Do you know who it was? There was Harold Wilson, Edward Heath . . . (silence from Jeanette)

S. Ted Heath.

Q. Well, Ted's short for Edward, isn't it? We'll call him Ted for now.
Who's missing? Can Susan help us with that?

S. Yes, Liberal.

Q. Who does he look like?

S. Mr. Thorpe.

Q. That's right. Now, why do you have political parties? Let's see if Jeanette can help us with this one. What is having parties in politics all about Jeanette, do you know?

J. Is it the people you vote for?

Q. Yes, but why are they split into different parties? You know, couldn't they all be in one party and just say "Vote for me, I'm just a person on my own"? Why do we have to bother with parties?

J. Because they are different from each other. Only they are . . . and the person you vote for the most . . .

Q. Help her out Susan.

S. He becomes Prime Minister.

Q. Well, one of that party.

S. One of that party does.

J. Whoever's got the most people voting for them.

Q. That's right. And so the person who was doing what for that party becomes Prime Minister?

J. Last year it was Labour.

Q. Yes.

S. But now, I think it's five years because they can't vote now, I don't think, for five years.

Q. Well, that's the usual time isn't it? But who could decide if they wanted an election?

J. The Lord.

S. The Queen.

Q. Well, the Queen has to agree to it, doesn't she? But who would have to say "I want an election, I'm fed up with this . . . "?

J. The people.

Q. The people could do what?

- J. Choose one person.
- S. Come around holding bits of paper saying "We want an election" or something.
- Q. Yes they could. But who would have to say "All right, I agree"?
- S. The Queen.
- Q. She's one of the people. Who else?
- S. Very important people.
- Q. What particular person?
- J. Her husband.
- Q. No.
- S. The Prime Minister.
- Q. That's right. Good girl. You got there. How do we know, once a man gets to be Prime Minister, how do we know if he is any good as Prime Minister? One at a time please. Jeanette, tell me about a good Prime Minister.
- S. They have a sort of list thing, and they have to answer questions and that, and they see who is the brainiest out of that.
- Q. Do you mean before a party chooses who's going to be Prime Minister? That's a good idea isn't it? That would mean that the person who is Prime Minister would need to be cleverer than anybody else. Do you think that's fair? You do. Say yes because the tape recorder doesn't know what to do if you just shake.
- S. Yes.
- Q. All right, then. Supposing a man's got to be Prime Minister - you know, he's there, he's working. How would we know if he's a good Prime Minister? Susan?
- S. Well, he pays good prices and puts up wages and then he puts down food prices.

- Q. Oh, I see, so it comes back to prices and wages, does it? The idea of a good Prime Minister? Anything else?
- S. Well, he looks after the country well and you give him about half a year to see if he's done any good for you.
- Q. Yes, I see. Well that sounds fair, doesn't it? What kind of things do you have to do to look after the country well do you think, Susan?
- S. Well, we would have to make him give us more wages and if, like my Mum's having a baby and she had to go in hospital and my Dad had to be off work. Well I think he gets about £8 a week so it's really hard to look after us. Well, what I reckon, they should give up more. What a Prime Minister should do, he should give the men more money to live to pay for rent and tax and we get ever so much tax to pay, I reckon we shouldn't get so much tax.
- Q. Mm. So it comes back to what you actually get, you know, it comes back to money really doesn't it, wages and prices, your idea of a good Prime Minister? How would we know if a Prime Minister wasn't any good at it, if he wasn't a good Prime Minister?
- J. Each person would get less money.
- Q. I see. And that would be about it, would it? Anything else?
- J. What was the question?
- Q. How would we know if a Prime Minister wasn't a good Prime Minister? If he was a bad Prime Minister, what kind of things would he do?
- J. If a person was getting less money than they would and the houses and that, they were getting their own house and they had to pay more money on it, things like that.
- Q. I see. And what do you think, Jeanette, should happen to him if he is a bad Prime Minister? What should happen to him?
- J. Get the sack.
- Q. Do you agree with that? (To Susan)

- S. No, I think he should be made to resign himself.
- Q. Oh, I see. What is the difference between getting the sack and being made to resign?
- S. Well, you can't really sack a Prime Minister because people have got to say "We want an election" or something like that and the person has got to agree and at work you get the sack, it's not quite like a Prime Minister.
- Q. Right. What were you going to say Jeanette? Are you going to argue that one with her?
- J. I forgot what I was going to say, now.
- Q. Go on, if you think she's wrong tell her. You can't sack a Prime Minister?
- J. It depends. You can sack a Prime Minister but when the next Labour and things come, the person who gets the highest amount of it can come to be the Prime Minister.
- Q. Yes, I see. Are you saying then that OK you can sack a Prime Minister, no matter how you do it? But he might get re-elected anyway. You might get him back? Is that what you mean? Something like that was it?
- J. Yes.
- Q. Well that's what happens really isn't it? Who is it who votes? Who can vote, Susan?
- Both. Adults. People over eighteen.
- Q. Do you want to vote when you are eighteen?
- S. Yes. I'd like to vote for the Prime Minister - I'd like to let each Prime Minister have a chance to see who was the best but some people would be annoyed because if the one that they voted for doesn't be Prime Minister then it's quite annoying for them.

- Q. Yes, I see. What do you think about that, Jeanette?
- J. Well, the people that vote and they don't win. I don't think they would vote any more until a couple of years gone by.
- Q. No, well, they couldn't really, could they? Until there was another election.
- J. Yes, when the election comes another year's going to go by.
- Q. Yes, then they'll get their chance to get their person in, won't they? Who did you think was going to win the last election? Jeanette, who did you think was going to win?
- J. Conservation - no.
- Q. Conservative? Did you think the Conservatives were going to win?
- S. Well, I did because of Ted Heath. He talks when the election's on. He says he'll cut prices and pay more wages but if people vote for him and he becomes Prime Minister then he will take them all down again - no, he will put prices up and less wages.
- Q. Yes, I see. You know while there's an election on the Prime Ministers and the people from different parties say quite rude things about each other sometimes, don't they? Do they mean it?
- S. Yes.
- Q. Do you think they mean it? (To Jeanette)
- J. Well no.
- Q. Jeanette doesn't. Why don't you?
- J. It's not fair. Because if somebody wins and others don't they don't need to argue. It's not their fault, is it?
- Q. No, it isn't. What do you think about that one, Susan?
- S. Well, I think they should try to keep their temper a bit. I would be annoyed, like my Dad would be annoyed, if he worked so hard and he didn't become Prime Minister. But, well, nobody can help losing their temper really can they? But they should try

- S. (Cont'd ...) to hold their temper. I think they shouldn't lose their temper with one another. They should all be friends.
- Q. How do you think they make laws after they've got into Parliament? Do you know what Parliament is?
- S. Yes. It's the houses where the Prime Minister . . .
- Q. Jeanette?
- J. Is it the place where the . . . came and blew the Parliament up.
- Q. You mean Guy Fawkes?
- J. Yes.
- Q. That's the place isn't it, the Houses of Parliament? What happens there?
- J. They have lots of meetings there. Special meetings of what they are going to do with the wages and prices and what they are going to do with the tax and all those kind of things.
- Q. Do you think they argue much when they are making laws?
- S. Yes, they shout a lot. They don't really shout a lot at each other, but they say things like "You should vote for Labour" or something like that or "Liberal" or "Conservative" and they really shout out because one day I saw it on tele and all the Prime Ministers were there. Well, it wasn't all of them there, really, but they were having one each time, and they were complaining about each other. But Ted Heath was complaining about Labour and Mr. Wilson wasn't complaining about anybody really - he was just telling them that he would put the prices down, he wasn't making any trouble or arguing or anything.
- Q. I see. Do you watch television news very much about anything that has happened in Ireland?
- S. Yes, because I am Irish, but I am not all Irish.
- Q. Are you?

S. Not all Irish.

Q. A bit Irish?

S. A bit Irish. Well I heard about all Britain goes down to Ireland to help them fight the country. I don't know what one it is. They fight a lot and they . . .

Q. You heard there's fighting going on?

S. Yes . . . They kill a lot of, well some of them, kill English people.

Q. Why do you think the army is there?

S. To help them fight.

Q. What do you think about that Jeanette?

J. To help.

Q. To help who fight? Don't you think it's to stop them from fighting? You don't think it's to stop them from fighting, you think it's to help them? I see. Sometimes in London (this one for Jeanette) a lot of people march through the streets, you see it on television news sometimes, and have meetings. Do you know why people do this?

J. It's because the Queen's palace is opening. Sometimes people want to . . .

Q. Yes, I see. You know sometimes when people are marching and carrying banners and leaflets.

J. Yes.

Q. Well, Jeanette, do you know why they do that, why they have their meetings at Hyde Park Corner and places like this, Marble Arch? Susan?

S. Is it when people hold up them sticks with paper on it like I mentioned earlier?

- Q. That's right.
- S. Well they have it to tell people that they ought to vote for one of the, what's the word?
- Q. Parties?
- S. One of the election parties. Some people talk that they should vote for Labour, Liberal or Conservative.
- Q. Mm. Sometimes people march through the streets. What kind of things happen when you get a lot of people marching through the streets and meeting in the Squares?
- J. Well, it gets crowded.
- Q. Yes, that's right, Jeanette. Anything else? Crowded. What do the police do?
- J. They try to stop it.
- Q. Stop what?
- J. The people they are pushing and that.
- Q. Yes, Susan?
- S. They, some people, fight over what parties to vote for.
- Q. Do you think it's always over parties?
- J. No, I don't.
- S. No, not really, I think it's over shortages or something like that - they want to get their own way.
- Q. Do you think it's the same kind of reason why people blow things up sometimes? You know, like the bomb in the Tower of London.
- S. Yes, we passed there when it happened. We was going to Portsmouth for a holiday where we used to live and we were just about there . . . and it was about half an hour before it happened . . . so my next door neighbour, she said "It may have been us". We might have wanted to drop in and see things. She said we was dead lucky. She said it should stop.

Q. What did you think about when you heard that somebody had blown up the Tower of London?

S. I felt sorry for those people from the other country. With that little boy, I think it was two or three little boys, or was it the little girl?

Q. It was a little boy wasn't it, who had one of his legs blown off?

S. Yes.

Q. From New Zealand. What did you think about, Jeanette, when you heard about that?

J. I thought that they should check the people when they go in there.

Q. Yes. They do sometimes, don't they? Sometimes you have to open your handbag when you go in a public building.

S. Or empty your pockets out.

Q. That's right.

S. Another thing. I think that this world should really . . . well, you shouldn't bother about money, you should share everything. If - no - what I mean - if - money - that we can buy - Down our church there's a tramp and he's been living there for a long time. Well, I feel very sorry for him because some of the Boys' Brigade that go there, they throw lots of stones at him. I think people should - education, I think it is - be given at home which is nice and warm and should have plenty of food. And I think it's ridiculous to pay money for tax. I think we should share everything, money and everything.

Q. Don't you think paying taxes is a way of sharing?

S. Yes, it is really but, well, if you can't give a person too much tax. My Dad, once he was given a lot of tax to pay and he didn't have the money. You can't have too much out of the people because if you ask them for some amount of money and they haven't got it they aren't going to have food, a home or anything. They have to start selling things.

- J. The poor people shouldn't have to pay tax. The people who haven't got any children should pay the most of the tax.
- Q. Yes? Why is that?
- J. Because the people with, the old age pensioners haven't got much money because the people have retired and the people with children have got to pay it all out their wage for their children and all the food but the other people, all they have got to do is pay the money for them and their wife.
- Q. Yes, you think it should be worked so that it is more fair, do you?
- J. Yes.
- Q. You know that I was talking just now about people blowing buildings up and rioting in the streets?
- S. Yes.
- Q. Why do you think people do things like that?
- J. Because they are jealous.
- Q. Jeanette, Yes? Jealous of what?
- J. Jealous of the famous (?) in there.
- Q. What do you think about that one, Susan?
- S. I think if there were certain persons going there on that day . . . I think it was more like because of those New Zealand people.
- Q. Why do you think people do that kind of thing?
- S. I think because they have got something against that country?
- Q. But they didn't know those New Zealand people were going there that day, did they? That was a coincidence, wasn't it?
- J. My friend's going to New Zealand for six months.

- Q. Do you think people do these kind of things like making explosions because they want some kind of law changed?
- S. I think that they, it's when they steal someone, or they kidnap them, and they ask for some money, they want more.
- Q. Yes, there's a word for that isn't there? Do you know what it is?
- S. Stealing.
- J. Kidnap.
- Q. No, blackmail. Have you heard of blackmail, Susan?
- S. Yes, like sometimes . . .
- Q. Supposing you want a law changed, are you going to start kidnapping people or blowing people up? Is that the best way to go about getting what you want?
- S. No. What I think they should gather a party together, go near the one who is in charge or the Prime Minister, and they should ask, they should have some loud voices or some papers. I think they should go and shout it out and then the Prime Minister or someone should try and change their thoughts. But the thing is that so many people want different laws. So it's going to be quite a fight in this country from now on because, well, there's little amounts of one party and there's little amounts of the other. If them parties get together there's going to be lots of fights.
- Q. Do you agree with that, Jeanette? So many people wanting so many different things? That's what Susan's saying, isn't it?
- J. Yes, I should think that they should do what Susan said, live in groups, and things like that. And if they go together they would fight, and so it's best to get them in little groups.
- Q. You mean live separately?
- J. Yes.
- Q. I see. Did you mean that, Susan?

- S. No. If they get together they will fight but I don't think they, I think they should all become friends and live happily together and not fight like anything. Like down our street there's lots of fights down there. But me and my next door neighbour are very good friends and some people along our road, they are very good friends to each other and if, like, if my Nanny wants something left in our freezer, well, we let her and if she's run out of milk we lend her a pint of milk. But she gives it to us back. So why can't they just be friends?
- Q. You mean why can't people in the world . . .
- S. Live together.
- Q. That's a very good question - I don't think we have got any real answer to that, have we? Do they, do they live like this? Do most people want to?
- J. Some people should stay friends like all the others, like Susan and I, we are best friends, they should stay friends like that, then all put together. But you can't do it because all they do is argue. I think it's stupid to fight.
- Q. Yes. Jeanette wants people to live separately - she thinks that's the solution. Is that right, Jeanette?
- J. Yes.
- Q. I see. And you think that^t this can be got over, Susan, that people . . .
- S. Yes, I think people, that they shouldn't always live separately - like if me and my friend have an argument and say "Ooh, you've got fleas, I don't like you" - well, this is how grown-ups, adults act sometimes - But I think it's stupid fighting and all that. We should all be friends and lend each other things and we should all have a nice cosy house with a fire and a bed, and that. And, well really, why has money got to get in it? Why do we really need money? If people get together, all the world, or just Britain, get together, they should really, money should be taken out of the world and then we can just live without paying anything and there should be pro-

- S. (Cont'd ...) vided, no, we should just pick up from the land what we want. It's like a farm, they have to do their own things. Well, we can pick out our own things excepting if it's in a different country, they can lend us some, like there's something from every country isn't there? We've got coal, and there's coal from nearly every country, isn't there? .
- Q. Well, a lot of coal, yes, but not all countries have coal. Some countries have different things which might be just as valuable.
- J. Like Miss Baker said, if we fight we'd have to stay away from each other otherwise the fight would be getting bigger and bigger.
- Q. Yes, I can see that point of view. Do you think that when you grow up you might want to be a Member of Parliament?
- J. No, I don't. There'd be a lot of trouble there.
- S. No, I'd like to live in the countryside. I wouldn't like to actually get in these rough fights and that - I'd just let them get on with it and live my own way. But I would be concerned about it but I'd just keep out the way and let them carry on - if they want to be silly, they can be silly.
- Q. Don't you think you could influence them - don't you think that by standing up and saying these things that might have some effect on them?
- J. & S. No, but the thing is . . . (both children talking at once)
- Q. So you don't want to be the Prime Minister then and make everybody live like that?
- S. No, but the thing is if people would listen to you. First of all you have got to get people to listen. Some people don't - they just go around madly and do things wrong. Some people, it's like forest fires, some people mean to do it - they do it deliberately. Some people just want to live an easy life like most of the families in Britain or the other countries, they want to live an easy life.

- Q. Yes, I see that Susan. Susan, you've got a lot of ideas haven't you? Where do you get them from?
- S. Well, my Dad talks a lot to me about it. And really I watch lots of tele and that and I like to see it and that. Well, I see these cars coming round saying "Vote Liberal", "Vote Labour" or "Conservative" or something like that and some I say "Lot of rubbish" and some I say "Well, not so bad" and some I say "Terrible" or "I will vote for you" or something like that. Well people, I think - they should - the Queen herself should choose the Prime Minister. And us of course, but I think she really should - sort of - like - convince the people. The trouble is the Queen is supposed to help us - she is helping us in a lot of ways now but . . .
- Q. Just a minute, Susan, how did she get to be Queen? Did we vote for her?
- S. No, she was a Princess and well, it's like next . . .
- J. One day well in the olden days, somebody voted for her Mum and then she married this man, and then they had children, and it was going on and on and on until it came to her.
- Q. Yes, so that's a different thing from getting to be Prime Minister?
- S. Miles different, because, well, like you can't have a King and Queen together in this country, I don't think in any other country. Queen Elizabeth's husband isn't the King, he's just her husband. Well, the thing is, well, what we do, like the next is going to be a King is Prince Philip but I think, is there going to be another King after that?
- Q. Well I think you will have to wait and see, won't you?
- S. It's going to be a long time.
- Q. Yes it is. Jeanette, right at the end you are going to tell me what you think politics is about, aren't you?

- J. Well, politics is things like when they have parties and with all the groups and things they are sort of politics, aren't they?
- Q. Yes.
- J. The Labour, the Conservative and Liberal are the others. Well, they have parties and that but sometimes they are fighting and that and um . . .
- Q. What, really fighting?
- J. Arguing and that and . . .
- Q. Is it a useful thing to argue? Does something come out at the end of the argument? Is it important to argue?
- J. No.
- S. No.
- Q. You just think arguing's a waste of time, do you?
- J. Yes.
- Q. Thank you Jeanette.

Transcription of Recorded Discussion with Children
at School in Dagenham, Essex, October 1974
SALLY, 11.0. and SUSAN, 10.9

Q. Can I have your names please? What's your name?

Sally. Sally Beckham.

Q. Sally Beckham. How old are you Sally?

Sally. Eleven.

Q. And What's your name?

Susan. Susan Pudney.

Q. Susan Pudney. And how old are you Susan?

Susan. Ten.

Q. When will you be eleven?

Susan. January.

Q. I see. Thank you. Do you know who these pictures are of?

Susan. Harold Wilson.

Q. Is that right Sally?

Sally. No. Ted Heath.

Q. Do you think they look alike? Who is that a picture of Sally?

Sally. Harold Wilson.

Q. That's right. Does anybody recognise anyone on there? Do you recognise anybody in that cartoon?

Susan. Yes, both of them.

Q. What do you think that's about, the cartoon? Do you think they look very friendly on there or do you think they don't?

Both. No.

Sally. No they look . . . pretending.

Q. Do you think that's true, Sally?

Sally. I don't really know.

Q. What about you, Susan?

Susan. Don't know either.

Q. Do you think once the election's over that they will forget all the rude things they said about each other, Susan, and be friends again?

Susan. I doubt it.

Q. You doubt it. What do you think Sally?

Sally. Yes, I think they'll forget all about it.

Q. You're probably right. What's the name of the Prime Minister, Sally? Who won the election?

Sally. Harold Wilson.

Q. How did he get to be Prime Minister, do you know? Do you Susan? How does anybody get to be Prime Minister?

Susan. Well, being voted for.

Q. Yes. Voted for themselves as Prime Minister or in some other way? Anybody know?

Susan. What do you mean? Other people . . . ?

Q. I mean, do you just vote for Harold Wilson or Edward Heath to be Prime Minister in an election, or do you vote for something else?

Susan. No, you vote for the person.

Q. You vote for the person. What about the Political party? Do you know what a political party is, Sally? Do you Susan? Ever heard of it?

Susan. No.

Q. Oh. Well, if I said to you "Conservative, Labour and Liberal", what would you think I was talking about? Susan?

Susan. The parties, different parties . . .

Q. Well, that sort of party, they are called political parties, did you know that?

Susan. No.

Q. It's the Labour party, the Conservative party and the Liberal party. I've shown you pictures of Edward Heath (Ted Heath) and Harold Wilson. Is there anybody missing Sally? If that were a set and I have got Edward Heath in it and Harold Wilson, who is missing?

Sally. Jeremy Thorpe.

Q. Yes, why is he missing?

Sally. He is one of the men that they vote for, all three of them.

Q. What is he, apart from being a man that they vote for?

Sally. Don't know.

Q. He is the leader of the Liberal party, isn't he? Did you know that? Do you know what a Prime Minister does, Susan?

Susan. No.

Q. Do you Sally?

Sally. I think they help to make laws and . . .

Q. Where do they help to make the laws?

Susan. In the Houses of Parliament.

Q. That's right, Susan. Now, Sally, do you think the Prime Minister makes the laws all by himself, or do you think someone helps him?

Sally. Think someone helps him.

Q. Who?

Sally. Don't know.

Q. You don't know. Well, do you think he decides who is going to help him or somebody else decides who is going to help him?

Susan. Think someone else might decide.

Q. I see. Susan, supposing a man is Prime Minister and we are all wondering, you know, if he is a good Prime Minister or not. How would we know if he were a good Prime Minister? How would we know? Would we know by the things he did? What do you think, Sally? Could we tell if a man were a good Prime Minister?

Sally. I think so.

Q. How? What things do you think a good Prime Minister would do?

Sally. Put the prices of food down instead of up.

Q. Fair enough. What do you think about that, Susan? Anything else a good Prime Minister might do?

Susan. And, give people more wages.

Q. So how would we know then if a man were a bad Prime Minister?

Susan. He'd do all the opposites.

Q. He'd do all the opposites would he? Do you agree with that? and what do you think should happen to a man (this is for Sally) if he were a bad Prime Minister?

Sally. I think people shouldn't vote for them. They should get another man to vote for.

Q. How would we go about that?

Sally. Don't know.

Q. Do you, Susan?

Susan. No.

Q. Well, what do you think should happen to a man if he were a bad Prime Minister?

Susan. Vote for other people, the other two, or whoever it is, and so they won't get so many votes as them and then they could be Prime Minister.

Q. I see. Do you mean he should carry on doing his job until the next election came round - we should put up with him until then, and then vote for somebody else? Or do we get rid of him quicker than that? What do you think we should do?

Susan. Should have another election.

Q. A quicker one than we would have done?

Susan. Yes.

Q. I see. You know, sometimes when you look at the news, the television news, and you see people marching through streets, and having meetings, what do you think all that kind of activity's about? Susan? Any ideas why people do these things? Have you, Sally?

Sally. No.

Q. What do you think the police are there for? Sometimes you see pictures of the police don't you? Any idea why the police are there?

Sally. To try to stop them.

Q. Stop them from what? Just marching around?

Sally. Yes.

Q. I see. Sometimes people blow up public buildings - you know, when there was a bomb in the Tower of London don't you? Well, Susan, why do you think anybody did that? What is the reason? Have you any ideas, Sally?

Sally. No.

Q. Do you think it might be to try to get a law changed in some way?
To try and get something for themselves?

Sally. It could be.

Q. Do you think it works? Do you think that is a good way to try
and get your own way?

Both. No.

Q. Supposing you wanted a law changed or you knew someone who did.
What do you think would be the right way to go about it? Any ideas.

Both. No.

Q. No, I see. Sally, the word "politics" - What do you think it's about?

Sally. I don't know.

Q. Do you know, Susan. What politics is about?

Susan. No.

Q. Do you watch much news on television?

Susan. No.

Q. Do you Sally?

Sally. No, I don't watch it.

Q. You don't?

Sally. No.

Q. So you don't know what's going on in the world?

Sally. I do because sometimes my Dad talks about it afterwards to my Mum . . .

Q. Are you interested, Sally?

Sally. Not really.

Q. No, are there lots of other things that you are much more interested in than that?

Sally. Yes.

Q. What about you, Susan? Does that apply to you as well, that you don't really care about what is happening? I wonder why? Is it because it seems a long way from you - doesn't affect you much - is that why, or is it just boring? Is there something more interesting on the other channel?

Susan. Yes. Boring.

Q. I see. What is it to vote, Sally? Have you ever voted for anything?

Sally. No.

Q. Have you, Susan?

Susan. No.

Q. Not voted for anything in school?

Both. No.

Q. When you grow up do you think you would like to vote?

Susan. Pardon?

Q. When you grow up, when you are old enough to vote, Susan, do you think you would like to vote? People don't have to, do they? they do as they wish. Do you think you would like to vote when you grow up?

Susan. Don't really know.

Q. What about you, Sally?

Sally. Yes. See when I get there.

Q. Yes, you will won't you? Do you think people who become Members of Parliament are cleverer than other people? Do you have to be very special to be able to do that? What do you think, Sally?

Sally. Don't know really.

Q. What about you, Susan?

Susan. People don't have to be special.

Q. Specially clever?

Susan. They have to be specially clever but . . .

Q. Well, what is it about them that makes them Members of Parliament? Why are some people Members of Parliament, some people ask you to vote for them? Do you think it's because they've got lots of ideas about how the country ought to be run, Susan? Have we got any problems at the moment in this country that you can think of?

Susan. Mm.

Sally. No, I don't think so.

Q. No, what about you Susan? Can you think of any problems?

Susan. No.

Q. Nothing for these parties, these Labour and Conservative people, to disagree about? Do you think they always agree about everything, Sally?

Sally. No.

Q. No? What kind of things don't they agree about?

Sally. Well, they all have different opinions really.

Q. Where do they get their opinions from? Each other? What kind of things do they have different opinions about?

Susan. Some people think the food prices should go up and some people think they should go down and some people think they should stay where they are.

Q. Some people think they should go up? Which kind of people might think that food prices should go up do you think?

Sally. Don't know.

Q. Have you any ideas about that one, Susan?

Susan. People who run shops want more money.

Transcription of Recorded Discussion with Childrenat School in Dagenham, Essex, October 1974CLIVE, 8.4 and MICHAEL, 8.8.

- Q. Now, first I am going to ask you if you know who the people are on some of these pictures. Clive, we'll ask first, do you know who that is, Clive?
- C. Mr. Wilson.
- Q. Is it? Who is that, then?
- M. I know who it is! I know who it is!
- C. Looks like Mr. Heath.
- Q. That's right. Now, what about Michael. Michael, do you agree with what Clive said there? Who are all those? Now you tell us who you think they are.
- M. That's Mr. Heath. That's Mr. Heath and that's Mr. Heath.
- Q. They are all Mr. Heath are they? Haven't we got Mr. Wilson there?
- M. That's Mr. Wilson.
- Q. That's right. Who are the people in that one?
- M. Mr. Heath.
- Q. That's right Michael. Who is that one, Clive? Do you know?
- C. Mr. Wilson.
- Q. Yes, that's right, Mr. Wilson. Now, we've had Mr. Heath and Mr. Wilson. Now, if I said that's a set and there's one missing - any idea who the third one would be that I need?
- M. Be Mr. Thorpe, will it?
- Q. There's a good boy. Yes, it would be Mr. Thorpe. Now, why? What would it be a set of? Those three people.

C. Prime Ministers.

Q. You're getting warm, aren't you? It would be a set of people who wanted to be Prime Minister, wouldn't it - at the last election? Which one of those is Prime Minister?

M. That one.

Q. Do you know his name?

M. Mr. Wilson.

Q. That's right. Prime Minister. Now, how does a person get to be Prime Minister, Clive?

C. Well, he says what is it on tele and gets lots of votes he wants, and then the most votes, he wins. The one who gets the most votes wins.

M. In other words, he fights, you know, for it . . . The one who gets the most.

C. He tries to push 'em, to get . . .

Q. If you wanted to be Prime Minister, how would you go about it? Have you got any ideas about that one, Clive? Have you, Michael? Do you think you might want to be Prime Minister one day? (Shaking heads) You don't? No? You seem quite sure about that. Don't you think much about that for a job? You don't? What does a Prime Minister do, Michael? Do you know, Clive? What he does? What's he there for? What's the use of it?

C. Taking charge of the country.

Q. Taking charge of the country? That's a fair description isn't it? How does he take charge of the country? What does he do all day? He's got to do something all day, hasn't he?

C. Write letters to other people.

- Q. Yes, I suppose he might spend a lot of time writing letters.
Michael, what do you think the letters might be about? Any ideas?
Have you, Clive? You don't know? Put it another way. Supposing we
have got a Prime Minister and we think he's a good Prime Minister.
How would we know? What kind of things would a man do the show he
was a good Prime Minister? I can see you thinking hard Clive. Can
you think of anything a good Prime Minister might do, for the country?
Can you, Michael? What might a bad Prime Minister do? Suppose he
was a real terror, he was a real baddie. What do you think he might
do then?
- C. Put signs up saying "Keep Britain messy".
- Q. Put signs up saying "Keep Britain messy" instead of "Keep Britain tidy".
Do you agree with that, Michael? Do you think that's the worst
thing a Prime Minister could do, Clive? Is it? Do you think that's
the worst thing a Prime Minister could do? Supposing he was a real
bad Prime Minister. This one is for Michael. What do you think ought
to happen to him? Nothing? Or should we just put up with him?
- M. I wouldn't know.
- Q. You wouldn't know. Well, you tell me then Clive. What should happen
to a bad Prime Minister?
- C. They should send him away.
- M. Or chuck him out.
- Q. Send him away? Where to?
- C. Prison.
- Q. Prison? How long for?
- M. Five years.
- Q. Five years?
- M. Well that's how long they spend for a Prime Minister.

Q. Ah, yes, that's quite true isn't it? So instead of having five years as Prime Minister, he should go to gaol for five years? Well that seems fair enough.

When we find that this man's being Prime Minister, he's going to need somepeople to help him, isn't he? Or can he take charge of the country all by himself? What do you think about that one Michael? Clive?

C. He would need some people to help him.

Q. How do you think he would choose?

C. By telephone or by going and telling them, or send some men?

Q. Yes, I know how he's do it, Clive. But how would he decide, who he would have? Who? Do you think he'd have his friends, Michael?

(Silence from Michael)

Q. If somebody wants to be Prime Minister - what kind of person do you think he'd have to be? Can you tell me that one, Clive?

C. Nice.

Q. Nice?

M. Or brainy - brainy, mostly.

Q. Which? Both? A Prime Minister should be both?

M. Yes.

Q. Michael says both. Do you think anybody, if they wanted to, could be Prime Minister?

M. No.

Q. Michael doesn't. Does Clive? Do you think anybody could be Prime Minister?

C. No.

Q. Why don't you think anybody could be?

- C. 'Cos there'd be too many people coming and saying "I want to be Prime Minister" and all that.
- Q. So we'd have to decide, wouldn't we? Somebody would have to decide. What things would you have to know to be Prime Minister? Michael, what things do you have to know to be Prime Minister? Or have to do, or have to be . . . ? Do you think you'd have to be cleverer than anybody else?
- M. Yes. Quite clever.
- Q. Do you think they'd have to be good? Clive?
- C. Mm . . . No.
- Q. You don't? Better than most People?
- M. Yes.
- Q. Yes?
- C. No, not very much better, but quite better.
- Q. Michael thinks better, and you think a bit better. I see. How do we know if laws are good laws? Michael? Do you know what a law is, by the way? I should have asked you that first, shouldn't I? What's a law, can you tell me?
- M. It's a rule, sort of thing.
- Q. Do you think all laws are good laws, or do you think some are better than others?
- M. I think all laws are best.
- Q. You think they're all very good? What are laws for? Clive, do you know?
- M. I know. To keep people from what they're going to do.
- Q. Clive?

- C. To keep people away and send them to prison if - what is it - there's a fire, the police can come and sort it out.
- M. If they climb up lamp-posts and smash the glass and that - breaking in - windows, burglars, things like that.
- Q. I see. You think they should be kept from climbing lamp-posts and breaking in. And Michael said it was from keeping people from doing things they wanted to do. Do you think most people would like to break the law? Michael, you don't? (Shakes head) I see. You think rules are for keeping people from doing what they want to do?
- M. Yes.
- Q. Just ordinary rules? What about those you have in games, when you play a game? Is that the same kind of thing?
- M. No.
- Q. You don't think it is, Michael? Why not?
- M. Not really like a law . . .
- Q. No. What about you, Clive?
- C. It is a rule and it's the same sort of thing . . . If they're . . . what is it . . . not doing the rule . . . some people say don't play with them like . . . if people have been bad.
- Q. So you don't play with people like that?
- C. No.
- Q. In this country, at the moment - do you think, from your watching of the news, that we've got any problems? Have we got anything we ought to be worried about? Anything we need the Prime Minister to sort out? What do you think about that, Clive?
- C. No.
- Q. What do you think, Michael?

- M. In our country there's been something happen because they won't give us no oil.
- Q. Oil?
- C. Oil's not our country, like.
- M. They wouldn't give our country oil.
- Q. Who wouldn't give our country oil, Michael?
- M. Would it be the Arabs?
- Q. Do you know much about the Arabs and their oil? What do you know?
- M. We do know quite a bit . . . did it with Mr. Roberts.
- Q. You know that the Arabs have got oil, and that we need it - to do what?
- M. If you want to get from place to place by car, you need oil to put in it.
- Q. So do you think that the Prime Minister's job might have something to do with sharing out things like oil?

(No answers were forthcoming here.)

Transcription of Recorded Discussion with Children
at School in Dagenham, Essex, October 1974
RUSSELL, 10.2. and PHILIP, 10.0.

- Q. The first thing I have got to show you is some pictures - not quite a guessing game but you ought to know them. Now, Russell, who is that? Do you know?
- R. Harold Wilson?
- Q. Is it?
- P. No.
- Q. Pass it to Philip.
- P. It's Mr. Heath.
- Q. That's right. Let's try him again. Who's that, Russell? That one.
- R. Er . . .
- Q. Well, let's give you two, look! There are two different people there - can you tell me who they both are? Let Russell have a go first, then Philip - all right?
- R. Ted Heath.
- Q. And who is that?
- R. Harold Wilson.
- Q. Is he right there, Philip? Do you agree with him?
- P. Mm . . . Only he's got Ted down there.
- Q. Is he right?
- P. Mm . . .
- Q. Well, Philip, you tell me who those two are supposed to be. They are from a photograph album, a cartoon from a newspaper. Who are they supposed to be?

P. Harold Wilson and Edward Heath.

Q. That's right. Do you recognise any of those from there?

P. No.

Q. Right, well we'll put that one back then. Now, suppose I said to you who is missing from Ted Heath and Harold Wilson? Is there anybody missing? If that's a set, you know, there would be Harold Wilson, Ted Heath . . . who else?

P. Jeremy Thorpe.

Q. Why?

P. Mm . . .

Q. Do you know why he was right, Russell? Can you tell then? Has it got something to do with elections?

R. Yes.

Q. What has it got to do with elections?

R. Oh, he's in one of the parties.

Q. That's right. Do you know which man belongs to which party?

P. Yes, Harold Wilson with Labour, Edward Heath with Liberal and Jeremy Thorpe with Conservatives.

Q. You are quite sure, Philip, about the last two?

R. No, Ted Heath's the Conservative.

Q. That's right, Russell. So what does that make Jeremy Thorpe?

Both. Liberal.

Q. That's right. You got there in the end, didn't you?

Both. Mm.

Q. Now, what's all this political parties thing? Can you tell me, Philip, what a political party is? What do you think it is? What about you, Russell?

R. . . . I don't know how to explain it.

Q. Do you know what it is, inside you?

R. Mm . . .

Q. Is it like a team?

R. Yes.

Q. Russell thinks it's like a team. Well, what is a political party about? You know, why do we have them, do we need them? What do you think, Philip?

P. Yes, we do.

Q. Any idea why?

P. Because if we didn't we wouldn't have a Prime Minister.

Q. Do you agree with that, Russell?

R. Yes.

Q. If we didn't have political parties we wouldn't have a Prime Minister. You mean that if you have political parties you have got somebody to vote for? Is that it?

R. Yes.

Q. Is that what we vote for, a political party? Or do we vote for a Prime Minister? What do you think Philip?

P. We vote for a Prime Minister.

Q. Do you agree, Russell?

R. Yes.

Q. We vote for a Prime Minister. Well, what about the party then - because, you know, the Prime Minister isn't your local candidate is he? Do you know what a candidate is?

R. No.

Q. Well, a candidate is the man who asks you to vote for him. Didn't you know that?

R. No.

Q. Well you know now, don't you? Right, so we have political parties so that we can have a Prime Minister. Now what does a Prime Minister do when he has got to be Prime Minister, Russell? Have you got any ideas what Prime Ministers are for?

R. To help other people with problems. To help the King and Queen and things like that.

Q. I see. What about you, Philip, what are Prime Ministers for?

P. They lead the country . . . and . . .

Q. Lead the country. How do they lead the country? What do they do all day long?

P. Work.

Q. At what?

P. Helping out the country.

Q. Well, what do they do to help the country? You know, do they go around helping people? Are they likely to come in here this afternoon and say "Can I help you?" No, that's not the way they help, is it?

P. No, they . . .

Q. Has it got anything to do with laws, Russell?

R. Yes.

Q. What has it got to do with laws?

R. I suppose they are like policemen really.

Q. Are they? Do you think they are like policemen, Philip?

R. They know a lot about laws.

P. A bit, yes.

Q. I see. Supposing a man, when he is Prime Minister, supposing he was a good Prime Minister, all right? What do we know, you know, ordinary people, could we tell if he was a good Prime Minister? Could we tell, Russell?

R. Er, I think so.

Q. What kind of things would a good Prime Minister do?

R. Most probably put food down and do things like that.

Q. Food down. What do you think, Philip, that a good Prime Minister might do? Well, put it another way, what do you think a bad Prime Minister might do? Let Philip go on this one first . . . Go on, Philip, have a go? (Philip could not respond here.) Russell, what do you think a bad Prime Minister might do?

R. He would put prices up a lot, and wouldn't bother with other people's problems, and do things like that.

Q. I see. So you think a Prime Minister ought to help people then - that's what he's there for?

R. Help get rid of problems like this one we have got at the moment.

Q. Which one particularly?

R. The . . . er . . .

Q. How many problems? We have got a lot of problems, have we, in this country just now?

R. I think so.

Q. Can you think of any you can count up? Can you think of any problems we have got, Philip? No? Well, Russell thinks we have problems but I am not quite sure what they are. Was it about the food, do you think, Russell?

- R. Yes, the food. The prices of food and other things which have gone up a lot. It should go down; and there's the other things.
- Q. Well, let's have a look at about how the Prime Minister does his work. Do you think he decides things all by himself or does he have people to help him?
- R. Mm . . .
- Q. You are not sure?
- R. No, not very sure on that one.
- Q. Do you know what the House of Commons is? Russell? Do you, Philip? Know what the House of Commons is?
- P. No.
- Q. Do you know what a Member of Parliament is? I don't think Philip knows. Does Russell know? Have you ever heard of the House of Lords?
- R. No. Only when I hear it on tele, and things like that.
- Q. What do you watch on tele - mostly, Russell?
- R. The news and comedies and films.
- Q. Do you watch a lot of the news?
- R. Most of it, yes.
- Q. Do you watch it every day?
- R. We watch it about three times a week on the news, but sometimes I listen to it on my wireless when Mum hasn't got tele on.
- Q. Do you like the news?
- R. Yes, I like listening in to what's happening.
- Q. Why?
- R. I don't know, I just like listening.

- Q. What about you, Philip? Do you like the news on tele?
- P. Yes, when I watch it, yes.
- Q. Don't you watch it much?
- P. No, not much. Not when there's something on the other channel.
- R. He most probably watches Westerns.
- Q. Well, I expect he does. Do you watch Westerns?
- R. Sometimes, when the news isn't on.
- Q. Oh, you would rather watch the news than watch Westerns, would you.
- R. No, I'd rather listen to it on my wireless.
- Q. Would you? What kind of things have you heard on the news lately, Russell?
- R. Mm . . . How the people are voting, and . . .
- Q. What about people blowing up things? You know, like the bomb in the Tower of London, and buildings getting burned? Have you heard much about that lately?
- R. Can't remember last time I heard it. Last bombings were in a different place from here.
- Q. Why do you think people do these bombings? Have you got any ideas about that? What about Philip? Why do people blow up things?
- P. Suppose to get their own back on people who did it.
- Q. Who did what?
- P. Started putting prices up . . . and things like that.
- Q. Oh, I see. So it's for something, is it, all this blowing up?
- P. Or for money.

Q. What do the police do when somebody blows something up?

R. They go and inspect.

Q. Russell, tells you they go and inspect it. What should the police do, do you think?

P. Well, if they get there in time to catch them, well, the first thing they do is arrest them, isn't it?

Q. Yess. Do you think that's one of the jobs the Prime Minister ought to be concerned about - you know - law and order and making sure bombings don't happen? Isn't that the Prime Minister's job?

R. Mm . . . the laws are, yes, but I'm not sure about the bombings.

Q. Aren't you, Russell?

R. No.

Q. What about when people march through the streets, you know, and have meetings and the police are called out? What do you think all that's about, Russell?

R. They are trying to get more money on their wages and things like that; otherwise they go on strike.

Q. Do you agree with that, Philip?

P. Yes.

Q. That's what it's about, is it? Is that the right way to go about getting more money or whatever it is that you want, to march through the streets and have meetings and fights? Do you think it's a good way to get what you want?

Both. No.

Q. You don't? Do you think it works?

R. Not all the time.

- Q. No. Can you think of any better ways of trying to get laws changed and to get what you want? Can Philip think of any better way? Can you, Russell?
- R. Not any other way, no.
- Q. Do you think if the people wrote a letter to the Prime Minister that might help?
- R. It might be a bit of good.
- Q. You don't sound very sure.
- R. No.
- Q. You're not, are you?
- R. No.
- Q. Philip, does the Queen do any work?
- P. Yes.
- Q. What does she do?
- P. She looks after the country.
- Q. Does she, Russell?
- R. Mm . . . and . . .
- Q. How do you think she looks after the country, Russell?
- R. Oh, I don't know how to explain it.
- Q. Does she do the same kind of job as the Prime Minister does, do you think?
- R. Kind of, yes.
- Q. Do you think she is more important than the Prime Minister, Philip, or do you think the Prime Minister's more important than the Queen?

P. The Queen is more important than the Prime Minister.

Q. Why? . . . Aren't you sure?

R. Well, she looks after the country more than the Prime Minister. He only takes over a few problems, but she goes round the world doing everything.

Q. I see, Russell. Do you know how she got to be Queen?

R. No.

Q. Do you think somebody voted for her?

R. Mm . . .

Q. You don't know? Do you know, Philip?

P. No.

Q. What do you think politics is about? Have you got any ideas about that, Russell? Ever heard that word?

R. Politics?

Q. Politics.

R. I've heard about it, yes. On the news, a lot, yes.

Q. What do they talk about when they talk about politics?

R. It's a problem - hard to explain it.

Q. Have a go. Put it this way - does everybody in the country agree about the kinds of things that ought to be done? What do you think about that, Russell?

R. Not everybody, no.

Q. Do you think some ways are better than others or do you think they are just different?

R. Think some ways are better than others.

- Q. What about you, Philip? Do you think everybody in the country agrees about things that we ought to do?
- P. Some might and some might not.
- Q. Is it a useful thing when people don't agree? You know, if people argue about things. Is there any good in that?
- R. Er . . .
- Q. You aren't sure?
- R. No.
- Q. Supposing the Prime Minister wasn't very much good at his job. What do you think should happen to him?
- R. Mm, be put in gaol.
- Q. You think he should be put in gaol, do you Russell?
- R. Yes.
- Q. What do you think, Philip?
- P. Don't think he would get put in gaol. Think he wouldn't become Prime Minister any more.
- Q. Just that? He wouldn't be Prime Minister again, that they wouldn't want him any more?
- P. No.
- Q. I see.
- P. Well, people wouldn't like him.
- Q. No, they wouldn't, would they?
- P. No.

Transcription of Recorded Discussion with Children
at School in Dagenham, Essex, October 1974
JOHN, 10.11. and DAVID, 10.4.

- Q. Here's an easy thing first of all, I want to ask John to have a look at that picture and tell me who that is.
- J. Mr. Heath.
- Q. That's right. Now David, who's this?
- D. Mr. Wilson.
- Q. That's right. Now suppose I said I was making a set. I've got two out of three in my set, and Mr. Heath and Mr. Wilson are the two. Who do I want for the third?
- J. Mrs. Heath.
- Q. That was a guess, wasn't it John? Who do you think, David?
- D. Mr. Thorpe.
- Q. Mr. Thorpe. Why?
- D. Because he's a party leader.
- Q. That's right. Do you know much about parties?
- D. No, not really.
- Q. You knew that though, didn't you? If I say 'political party' what does that mean?
- J. Parties that goes in for campaigns for to be elected.
- Q. That's right, John. And who are they? How many are there?
- J. There's Scottish Nationalists, there's some from Ulster, and Independent, Labour, Conservative and Liberal.
- Q. Good. Why do we have political parties, John?

- J. In case, if some people get elected and they're not so good, people might want a change. But if they haven't got another political party they won't be able to change, and they'd still have the same man to carry on for them.
- Q. Thank you, John. David, John said about a Prime Minister being part of a political party. What does this political party do, what's it for? Do they all agree with each other? Do they have the same kind of ideas?
- D. No, they don't have the same sort of ideas. They have different ideas.
- Q. About what?
- D. The country, and what to do with it.
- Q. Where do they get these ideas from, do you think?
- J. From the mistakes the other parties made. They might think they might improve on them because . . . last time, one party made a mistake . . . so this time they won't make a mistake . . . and they'd do something better than that. What they should have done, they'd do now.
- Q. I see. Who did you want to win the election, David?
- D. No-one.
- J. Mr. Heath.
- Q. Who did win?
- J. Labour.
- Q. Do you think it's a good idea to have political parties?
- J. Yes.
- Q. You like them, do you?
- J. Yes.
- Q. You don't mind them arguing?

- J. No, I don't mind.
- Q. Do you think it's a good idea that they should argue?
- J. Yes, so that they can . . . get some policies that they can put through Parliament.
- Q. Policies they can put through Parliament?
- J. Yes . . . and if they interview someone on television so they can tell what they're going to do for the country, and if their way of thinking is right or wrong.
- Q. So they have different policies that they get put through Parliament. Have you any idea of how policies get put through Parliament, John?
- J. A man tells someone about . . . a certain person is made for a certain job, and he tells some people about what he's going to do to the country, and they vote for Parliament. And it has to be approved by the Queen, and then only after that can it be made the law.
- Q. David, what kinds of policies about what kinds of things do you think this country needs at present? That's a roundabout way of saying what kind of problems have we got? Do you think we've got any problems in this country?
- D. Yes, the price of food and oil, and coal.
- Q. Can you think of any problems for us, John?
- J. Yes. Some people don't get paid enough, so they'd be given higher wages so they can buy a bit of food. And put the prices of food down, and other things.
- Q. If people want to change the law, could they? Could they go about this, do you think?
- J. No, not people, unless they could go to someone and tell them that this is their idea, and if the person likes it, and if he's an M.P., he'd try and put it through Parliament.

- Q. Thank you, John. David, you know that sometimes we hear about people blowing things up? Why do you think people do that kind of thing?
- D. 'Cos . . . mm . . . they don't like people.
- Q. Do you agree with that, John?
- J. No, I think that the people from Ireland, they don't want the army there, so they think they'll blow up some things, some things that are precious to England, so that the army come out. And so they do bombs in Ireland as well, just to frighten the army.
- Q. Is this a good way of getting your own way, do you think, John?
- J. No.
- Q. Is there a better way?
- J. Yes. If you go and talk to the people about why the army should be there. If you don't want them there, ask them to go, and give them the reasons and the Queen might think it's right. So if the reasons are right to let the army come out of Ireland, so they can just tell the army to come out of Ireland.
- Q. Thank you, John. Right reasons. Do you think that this is important, that people should understand the right reasons?
- J. Yes.
- Q. Do you think that if people do know the right reasons, then they would act on them?
- J. Yes.
- Q. Do you think so, David?
- D. Yes.
- Q. It's just a question of people understanding what the right reasons are?
- D. Yes.

- Q. I see. Suppose we have a Prime Minister, and he's a good Prime Minister. How do we know that he's a good Prime Minister, David, how can we tell if a man's a good Prime Minister?
- D. How he puts up the price of food, and things like that.
- Q. Can you think of anything else to add to that?
- D. Yes. If he's a good Prime Minister he'll put the mortgages down, and he'll put the prices on houses down a bit, the young people who haven't got enough money to buy a house have more chance of buying houses.
- Q. Suppose you have a bad Prime Minister, you know, a real baddie, how would we know? What kind of things would he do, David?
- D. He'd put up the prices and he wouldn't give good wages.
- Q. Do you think he could do that all by himself?
- D. No, not all by himself.
- Q. What about you, John? How would we know if a man were a really bad Prime Minister?
- J. He would put up prices and everything, and wouldn't raise wages for people. And if they were on strike and he wouldn't give them money then the whole country would suffer. It's like a few miners, when the minders, strike was on, because they weren't getting paid enough because they do dangerous jobs.
- Q. I see. Suppose a person wants to become a member of Parliament. You know what that is?
- J. Yes.
- Q. Do you think he'd have to have anything special about him? Could anybody be an M.P.? What do you think about that, David?
- D. No. Not anybody could be an M.P.
- Q. Why? John?

- J. I don't think anyone could be an M.P., because they've got to know everything about politics, and they've got to have quite a good brain so they can think up ideas to make the country better.
- Q. I see. What do we mean by 'politics', John?
- J. Politics. Well, he has to know all about politics. About people. To know about what the state of the thing is . . . to know that, and he has to know something about politics and the rising prices and things. He has to go into the past of what the other parties have done, to show that he wants to do this thing that the other parties didn't. He wants to make it right.
- Q. What does 'politics' mean as a word? Do you know, David?
- D. No, I don't.
- Q. If someone says 'I'm going to talk about politics' what would you expect them to talk about?
- D. The state of the country.
- Q. Would you expect them to talk about that, John?
- J. Yes.
- Q. Anything else? Anything special?
- J. To talk about things overseas.
- Q. Yes?
- J. You know, if there's a shortage of sugar, they'd talk about that, and if there's too many bombs in Ireland, they'd talk about that.
- Q. The government in this country, does it just run this country - David, to start with - or does it run a lot of other countries?
- D. It doesn't run just this one. It runs Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland as well.
- Q. That's Great Britain, isn't it?

D. Yes.

Q. What about other countries outside Great Britain?

D. It doesn't control them.

Q. Thank you. Can you help us on that one, John?

J. Yes. They don't control the other countries. It's the Queen and she has Prime Ministers there, but she actually belongs, she's actually the Queen, of the countries of the Commonwealth.

Q. Yes, I see. Thank you very much.

J. That's why they have Prime Ministers.

Q. Prime Ministers of different countries, you mean?

J. Yes, because they haven't got a Queen in any of the Commonwealth countries.

APPENDIX 2

APPENDIX 2

Transcription of Recorded Discussion with Children
at School in Eltham, London, SE9, July, 1975

GERALDINE, 7.3. MATTHEW, 7.4. JANE, 7.4. ANTHONY, 7.8.

Q. First of all, I'm going to ask Jane - and don't anybody else tell me if she can't, because you know, I think she can. Jane, do you know who that is? Who's it a picture of?

Whisper ('I know') Silence from Jane.

Q. Let's see if Jane knows. Who is it, Jane?

J. Prime Minister.

Q. What's his name?

J. Mr. Wilson.

Q. Do you know what his first name is?

J. Mm. Not Ted Heath, is it?

A. That was last year's!

Q. Anthony?

A. Harold Wilson.

Q. Now, he's the - what?

A. &
Others. Prime Minister.

Q. We all know he's the Prime Minister, don't we? Anthony, what's a Prime Minister?

A. Person who - mm - makes the law.

Q. All by himself?

A. No, with the Labour Party.

M. Queen helps him! The Queen tells him to do things.

G. No, with the Labour Party.

Q. Now, Matthew thinks the Queen helps him, and Geraldine thinks the Labour (Party). Let's have another talk about that, then. Now, you think the Queen helps him?

A. The Queen don't - impossible.

Q. Why?

A. She makes the law about some things.

Q. The Queen makes the laws about some things? What things do you think she might make the rules about?

A. Driving when you've got alcohol in your blood.

Q. You think the Queen might do that?

A. Yes.

Q. Why do you think the Queen might do that, Matthew, and not the Prime Minister?

M. He's Anthony!

Q. Anthony, sorry!

A. I don't know.

Q. You're just guessing are you?

A. Yes. I read about it in the paper where a man was banned from driving because he had alcohol in his blood. From driving for a year!

Q. Yes, there should be laws about that, shouldn't there?

A. There is! (This little boy took up the theme with enthusiasm) And don't steal cars and don't do robberies and bank robberies and Pow-Pow and Boom-Booms, like in America . . . in United States of America!

Q. Yes, I see. What do you think the Queen does, Geraldine?

G. (Hesitates to answer)

Q. Do you think she does much at all? What about Jane? What do you think the Queen does, Jane? You don't know? Matthew, who makes the laws, then?

M. Prime Minister.

Q. Who helps him, Anthony?

A. Er . . . Queen.

Q. The Queen? Who else?

A. Er . . . Labour Party.

Q. The Labour Party? Why the Labour Party?

M. I was going to say the Labour Party.

A. Well, the leader of the Labour Party.

M. Margaret Thatcher.

Q. And the leader of the Labour Party is - who?

A. Er . . . Mrs. Thatcher - Margaret Thatcher.

Q. Now, what's Margaret Thatcher, the leader of?

A. The Labour Party.

M. M.P.s

Q. I thought we said that Mr. Wilson was the leader of the Labour Party?

M. No!

A. No, Mr. Wilson's Prime Minister.

Q. Which party does Mr. Wilson belong to? Do you know, Geraldine?

M. M.P.s

G. (No answer)

Q. Does Jane know?

J. (No answer)

Q. M.P.s What does 'M.P.S' mean?

A. I dunno!

Q. You don't know! Well, it means Members of Parliament!

M. I was going to say that!

Q. Were you? Do you know what an election is?

M. & A. Yes.

A. Yes, when people vote for Prime Minister.

M. I'll vote for Mrs. Thatcher.

G. Is it recording?

Q. Yes, it's recording every word you say.

A. What was it?

Q. What is an election about?

- A. Ch, it's when someone votes, when some people vote for a certain person to - mm - be Prime Minister.
- Q. I see. Do we all vote for a Prime Minister, or do we vote for anybody else?
- G. Yes - to see who - gets the most votes.
- Q. The Prime Minister - does he come round here? Do you vote for the Prime Minister?
- M. I vote for the Prime Minister.
- A. I bet the girls would vote for Margaret Thatcher!
- Q. You want to vote for Margaret Thatcher, Anthony?
- A. No, them!
- Q. You think the girls would vote for Margaret Thatcher?
- A. Mm.
- J. We won't . . . Harold Wilson!
- Q. Just because she's a lady and Harold Wilson's a man? Is that it?
- A. Yes.
- Q. To girls - Well, what about Margaret Thatcher, then? Would you vote for Margaret Thatcher (if you were grown up and voting) just because she's a lady?
- G. & J. No, no.
- Q. Why do you think people vote for anybody?
- J. I don't know.
- M. (Matthew began to sing at this stage in order to signify boredom with that topic, and attract attention to himself. There was obviously nothing further to be gained from pursuing this aspect further.)
- Q. What's a political party? Does Anthony know what a political party is?
- A. Well . . .
- Q. Ever heard of it?
- A. Yes. But I don't know what it is . . . a Parliament party?
- Q. Yes. He's getting warm, isn't he? What do they do, do you think?
- A. Oh, they help people who are deaf.

- Q. Do you think the Conservatives (realised the pre-supposition wasn't tenable and correct to) Do you know the names?
- J. I don't know what it means but they do put it on a desk with writing on it - and - a man speaking to you.
- A. An M.P. He was deaf as well, the man that was doing the programme.
- Q. Do you know what Conservative and Labour are?
- A. Conservative? I don't know what Labour is. Oh, yes, does Labour mean votes, of the poll?
- Q. Yes, Labour's the name of a party isn't it?
- G. & A. Yes.
- Q. Geraldine knows. Conservative's the name of a party too, and they both want you to vote for them. Did you know that?
- M. There's one thing I do know. I don't want to vote for Bottomley.
- Q. Why?
- M. Why? He won the vote on Tuesday!
- Chorus of general groans.
- M. He's disgusting.
- Q. Don't you like him?
- M. My Mum's voted for him - ugh - my Dad won't!
- Q. Why don't you like him, then?
- M. He's rotten.
- A. Peter Bottomley, he's rotten!
- Q. Why?
- M. He's no good. He's no good at it! He won!
- Q. Why?
- M. Because he isn't!
- A. But most people voted for him.
- M. He signs things . . . vote for Bottomley! And some people wrote he's rotten and that gave me the idea. When I saw him on T.V. - ugh - he's rotten!
- Q. You mean you didn't like the look of him on T.V.?

A. Yeah - and the sort of way he talked about the Labour Party, and things like that.

Q. I see. And you didn't like him either? (To Matthew.)

M. No, no, no. Nor Mr. Heath.

A. Just the same thing.

Q. Just because you don't like the way he talks on television?

A. No - because the way he talks about things.

Q. What do you mean, the way he talks about things?

A. Well - he - because - mm - you know - say you were asked a question, like: "What's the highest mountain in the world?" and you'd go - "Er - I don't know - er - yeah, that - er - I don't know" like that. That's what he talks like.

Q. You mean, he doesn't really say anything?

A. He can, he can say it, but he sort of . . .

M. He doesn't do it properly, he doesn't speak. I mean, he can talk properly, like we're talking, but - mm - he . . .

A. He can't talk about it and . . .

Both boys tried to talk at once, ending in an irritable 'Oh, shush!' from Anthony.

Q. Do you mean he doesn't answer the question?

A. No, he does answer the question, but - mm - he sort of answers the - well - he answers it properly - well not properly - I mean - I can't explain it, but - it's just that . . . as I said before, he - he doesn't answer it properly. He could say "Mount Everest", but er - and he could say other things about it, but he doesn't answer it properly!

Q. I see. He goes round and round, in other words?

A. Yes.

Others indicated agreement.

Q. I get you. Listen, if a man was a Prime Minister. Think of one who's got to be Prime Minister.

M. Me!

Q. How would we know (I'm going to ask you all in turn). I'm going to ask Jane first. How would we know if he was a good Prime Minister? Would we know?

J. Silence.

Q. Don't you think we would know, Jane?

J. I don't know.

Q. Do you know, Geraldine?

G. Yes.

Q. How do you think we'd know?

G. We might see him on T.V.

Q. Yes, we might see him on T.V. What does Matthew think? How would we know if he was a good Prime Minister?

M. I think I'd try him out on a commando run! (General giggles at Matthew's originality or daring.)

A. I know what I'd do with him!

Q. What would you do?

A. Make him jump out of a hundred foot plane.

Q. But that's not what Prime Ministers are supposed to do, is it?

A. Yes it is! Just to test him to see if he's afraid or not . . . if he isn't afraid - without a parachute, this is - if he isn't afraid, he's a good Prime Minister!

Q. But if he jumped out of a plane a hundred feet high without a parachute, he wouldn't be a good Prime Minister very long, would he, because he'd be dead?

A. No, no, no. He'd have a couple of thousand mattresses ready on the floor - air-filled!

Q. Are you saying you only want somebody who's really brave, and tough, and that's a good Prime Minister?

M. No . . . Yes.

A. Yes.

A. Got to do sums.

Picked out from general talking all together.

Q. Matthew says he's brave and tough - Anthony says he's got to be able to do sums. One at a time - this machine can only take one voice at a time, so who's going to talk?

M. Me!

Q. Go on then. Tell me about a good Prime Minister! What would he do? If he was really good?

M. Well, Anthony says he's got to jump out of an aeroplane ten thousand feet high . . .

Q. He didn't mean it - he meant he's got to be brave and tough. What kind of things do you think you would like him to do for you? Is there anything you think the government ought to do?

M. A law - a law.

Q. A law for Matthew?

Matthew ran out of ideas at this point.

Q. Anthony, is there a law that you'd like the Prime Minister to do?

A. Yes - no smoking. No smoking unless you're under eighteen! Then I could have cigarettes and see what they taste like! And no drinking beer under . . . no drinking beer under . . .

Fourteen?

A. No . . . no drinking beer under half a year!

Q. I see. Now can we ask the girls some questions about the Queen. Because little girls sometimes know more about the Queen than little boys do. I wonder why that is?

A. (In a loud whisper.) I know about the Queen!

Q. Well, we'll see if you do in a minute. We're going to see what Jane knows about the Queen. What does the Queen do, Jane?

J. Writes Letters?

Q. What about?

J. Sometimes when they're a hundred?

Q. Yes, that's quite right. What does she do, Geraldine?

G. Well she helps people and she wears precious jewels.

Q. Anything else? Let's ask the boys then, Matthew, what does the Queen do?

M. Mm . . .

Q. Do you know? (To Anthony.)

A. Well in the olden days they used to fill in lots and lots of forms - but now they have lots of people to fill them in. And she rules over the country.

- Q. She rules over the country?
- A. She takes the taxes from us for the Prime Minister.
- G. Oh, yes.
- Q. Does she?
- M. And who does she give them to? Does she keep them for herself and spend them? In her riches?
- Q. Do you think she does?
- M. No, no, no.
- A. I think she spends them on buildings and roads and gives some to the people that work. I think she gives her managers some, and twelve pounds a year to the poor.
- Q. To the poor?
- A. Yes.
- Q. Where does she find the poor?
- A. She goes round the country and sees . . . when she goes on her visits. She goes round the world and then she finds the poor, and she's got a couple of thousand pounds with her.
- G. Yes, but . . .
- A. (Ignoring general attempts to interrupt him.) And, and - she gives £12 each to the poor - then they're not poor. But they spend some on an - a job - a different job. Then they're not poor any more.
- M. But what happens in some country like America and Australia? (Where they) have dollars, they don't have pounds?
- A. Oh, well . . . they use twelve dollars - or she brings forged . . .
- M. Yes, but where's she going to get it from?
- A. She goes to the bank, and she swops twelve dollars for twelve pounds.
- M. Yes, but she runs the bank, she can just . . .
- A. She swops English money for American dollars.
- Q. Can I ask you one at a time, and I'll ask Geraldine first. Have you ever heard of a word called 'politics'?
- G. No.
- Q. Does Jane know?

J. No.

Q. I see. Is Matthew going to tell me what 'politics' is?

M. No, no, no. A bit I can - they're kind of M.P.s. And they work and they come and have talks with the Prime Minister about - rules and the budget. What they raise money, make it go round and other things.

Q. That's very good. Do you know any more about that?

M. Budget? Well, I only saw a little bit of it last time, this year's one, and - mm - the petrol went up - twice - it's gone up during this year. And in one garage I saw it had gone down, I saw the price had gone down - it was only 4p.

Q. And that's to do with the Budget, is it?

M. I know what the Budget is 'cause when I went . . . but . . . you see . . . the Budget's about how - we don't want 10p a gallon. On this garage, you see . . . it didn't have the proper . . .

Q. The proper brands?

M. Mm . . .

Q. Now, Anthony. Can you tell me anything about the Budget, or about the government, or about Parliament? Do you know what Parliament is?

A. What - do you mean . . . ? Ummm . . .

Q. About ruling the country. Who rules the country?

A. The Queen rules the Country?

Q. The Queen rules the country?

A. Yes.

Q. What about the Members of Parliament that we vote for at elections?

A. Oh, they don't . . . they just help, and say "Mm . . . "

Q. What's a law?

A. Well, a law is something you mustn't . . .

M. Break! It's a law.

A. Yes, I know it's a law, but it's something that . . .

G. Must be kept! It's things you mustn't do. It's about things you mustn't do! And these things you mustn't break.

M. And if a robber or a smuggler or something like that breaks it, well, the police just phone up and a couple of detectives, the detectives phone up a couple of investigators, they come along, get the police on the job, then they get the detectives on the job, so then the detectives join the work and . . .

Q. I see. Do the police make the laws?

All. Oh, no, no.

A. The Queen and the Prime Minister do that . . .

M. I heard something about the King.

Q. Will you tell me about the King then? What King is this?

M. I can't tell because he's dead!

Q. Well, that's nothing to tell then, is it?

A. King Charles, he's going to - reign, after the Queen.

Q. Is he?

A. Yes. King Charles. Oh, well, he's a relation of the Queen - I remember at the Cinema.

Transcription of Recorded Discussion with Children

at School in Eltham, London SE9, July 1975

PHILIP, 8.9. MARIA, 8.9. ROBERT, 8.6. and GRAINNE, 8.7

Q. First of all, I'd like to ask you if you know who that is -
(producing a picture of Harold Wilson)

All. Yes!

Q. Well who is it? Maria, you tell me who it is.

M. Mr. Heath.

Q. Is it? Is she right, Grainne?

G. Yes.

Q. Mr. Heath? Is she right?

G. No.

Q. Who is it, then?

M. Harold Wilson!

Q. That's better! And who's Harold Wilson? Philip, can you tell us
who Harold Wilson is?

P. Prime Minister.

Q. The Prime Minister, isn't he? Now, can you go on with this one,
Philip, for me? How does a person get to be Prime Minister, do
you know?

P. Have to be quite clever, to be an M.P., and, to be an M.P. you have
to go through a sort of thing - rules your life . . . and you have
to run and things like that.

Q. I see. Robert, do you think we can tell if a man's a good Prime
Minister?

R. Yes.

Q. Why? What kind of things would he do?

R. Because he would be a good Prime Minister if he let the Common Market
go down or, if he's not a good Prime Minister he would let the Common
Market go up.

Q. What do you mean 'go up'?

R. Er . . . make the food prices go up.

- Q. Oh, I see. So it's got to do with food prices, has it, being a good Prime Minister?
- R. Yes.
- Q. Do you agree with that?
- P. I think he should be a good Prime Minister because he'd be staying in the Common Market.
- Q. And so you think he'd have made that particular decision, do you?
- P. Yes.
- Q. And how do you think - let me ask Maria this one - how do you think you would know a good Prime Minister from a bad one, Maria? What kind of things would you expect him to do?
- H. Silence.
- Q. Can't you think? What about Grainne?
- G. Well, he should have imagination - and - he should be nice - and talk to you.
- Q. Good with people?
- G. Yes.
- Q. How would you know if he had imagination? Any ideas?
- G. Silent - could not extend at this stage.
- Q. Just think he ought to have it? What about you, Robert?
- R. I think he should have it.
- Q. You think he should have imagination. How would we know if he had imagination? Anybody?
- P. He'd be writing books.
- Q. He'd be writing books?
- P. Yes.
- Q. Would he? I see. So you think a Prime Minister should write books?
- P. Yes.
- G. That would be funny!
- P. Prime Ministers write books - a lot of 'em - Prime Ministers - write books!

- G. What, if he works? If he did - it would be funny!
- Q. Well, perhaps he couldn't write them while he was a Prime Minister. Perhaps he'd have more time after he'd finished being a Prime Minister!
- P. He might have had time after he was gone to bed!
- Q. Grainne, how would we know a bad Prime Minister? What kind of things would he do?
- G. Well, he wouldn't be friendly, and he wouldn't talk to you.
- Q. Maria? Robert - half a minute, Maria's thought of something - No she hasn't! Philip, then.
- P. He'd let all the prices go up - then - if he'd talk to you, he wouldn't be friendly - and . . . he wouldn't write books!
- Q. He wouldn't write books?
- P. No.
- R. He wouldn't stay in the Common Market.
- Q. He wouldn't stay in the Common Market?
- R. So if we had - a shortage of salt - we wouldn't be able to help - we wouldn't be able to - do it by ourselves. We'd need help from other countries. If we wouldn't be in the Common Market, we wouldn't - get that salt, ourselves.
- Q. That's true. Have you ever heard this country called a democracy? Have you ever heard that word?
- R. No.
- Q. No one's heard it?
- No response.
- Q. Then it's no good me saying "Do you know what it means?" A democracy, we say we're 'democratic'. Have you ever heard that?
- R. Go to talk? A sort of speech?
- Q. Well, it's got to do with the way people are treated in a country, hasn't it? Who did you want to win the by-election? Do you remember?
- R. Mr. Wilson.
- Q. Do you mean you wanted the Labour Party to win? If there was an election tomorrow, which party would you want to win? Robert?
- R. Liberal.

Q. Would you? You want the Liberals to win? Grainne?

G. Liberal.

Q. Liberals. What about you? (Maria)

M. Liberal.

Q. Are you all Liberals here?

P. Yes.

Q. I see. Why do you want the Liberals to win?

P. I don't know, really!

Q. Do you know, Robert?

R. No.

Q. Do you know, Maria?

M. No.

Q. Do you know, Grainne?

G. No response.

Q. I don't think you do, do you? Is it because you like Jeremy Thorpe?
Do you like Jeremy Thorpe?

G. No.

R. I like Peter Bottomley!

Q. Peter Bottomley? I see. Has liking a party got to do with liking
the person who leads it, or is that something else?

R. It's the same. I would say it's because I like the person.

Q. It's because you like the person?

R. Mm.

Q. I see. Supposing I said to you I'm going to talk about politics.
Can I start with Maria for this one? What would you expect us to talk
about, if we were going to talk about politics, Maria?

No response.

Q. Grainne?

No response.

Q. Robert?

R. The money situation.

Q. That's one of the things, isn't it? Anything else it's about?

R. Price situation.

P. That's the same as the money situation!

Q. Yes, it's part of it, isn't it? Do you think this country's got any problems at present?

P. Yes.

Q. What do you think they are?

P. We're running out of money, because the people who are printing the money, they think - we might as well not make some because we've made such a lot as it is. Nowadays, people are losing quite a lot of money.

Q. I see. What about you, Robert?

R. What?

Q. What problems have we got?

R. Petrol! There isn't much petrol in Britain. There isn't much money in Britain and - prices are going up . . .

Q. Do you know the word for that, when prices are going up?

R. Rise.

Q. Yes - but there's another word, a longer word? Can you tell me anything about that, Grainne?

G. When the miners - they want one thousand pounds for their work - for their wages.

P. It's a hundred pounds!

Q. Philip, thinks it's a hundred pounds. What do you think?

G. Oh, yes, a hundred, yes.

Q. That's the problem, is it?

G. Yes.

Q. Do you think that's a problem, Maria?

M. (Whisper) Yes.

Q. Have you got any other problems?

R. I know - I know one!

Q. Right, Robert?

R. There's lots of people on strike.

Q. Yes?

P. Petrol's going up . . . and now, it's about two pounds!

Q. I don't think it's quite as much as that, is it?

P. They put it up, I think it's about seven - I think it's about five pounds for four gallons now.

Q. I don't think it's quite as much as that, but it's very expensive, isn't it?

M. And food is getting short!.

Q. Is it? It is getting expensive, but we still have some, haven't we?

M. Yes.

Q. Yes. I think we've got enough to keep us going, haven't we - for a while, anyway.

M. Yes.

Q. Grainne, what do you think the Queen does all the time?

G. She sits around, and . . . sometimes . . . she goes out to a party . . . and . . .

Q. Anything else? Do you think she does any work?

G. No.

Q. Do you, Maria?

M. She has servants.

Q. Any different kind of work?

M. Yes.

Q. What kind of work does she do, do you think?

No response.

Q. Boys?

R. She goes out of Buckingham Palace, and looks at all the people and sometimes she goes on a holiday to Scotland, and other countries.

P. She works quite a lot and she always makes a speech at Christmas . . . she's got quite a lot of staying places in Britain and in Scotland, and I'm not sure about other countries.

Q. Is it a useful thing to have a Queen?

P. Yes . . . because otherwise . . . we wouldn't be in such a . . . we wouldn't be like we are now.

Q. Don't you think so? What difference do you think it would make?

P. If there was a King?

Q. To the country?

P. I don't know.

Q. Is there a King?

P. No.

G. Everyone would squabble about who brings in the money.

Q. And you think the Queen stops them from squabbling, do you Grainne?

G. Yes.

Q. Do you think so as well, Maria?

M. Yes.

Q. What about you, Robert?

R. Well . . .

Q. Who do you think is the most important, Robert? The Queen or the Prime Minister?

R. The Queen.

P. The Queen.

G. The Queen

M. The Queen.

Q. You all think the Queen's more important than the Prime Minister?

G. Yes!

Q. Why?

M. I know, I know why it is!

Q. Maria?

M. Oh, because the Queen sort of looks after the country.

R. Because the Queen lives in a better place than the Prime Minister . . .
Because she's . . . better than him . . . and she's . . .

Q. Why?

G. (Prompting) In charge of the others!

Q. She's in charge of the others, is she?

R. She's in charge of - the British Isles!

Q. I see. And the Prime Minister isn't?

R. & G. No.

Q. What's he in charge of, then?

R. He's in charge of the agreement market.

Q. Is he, Grainne?

G. And he's in charge of all the prices.

Q. What's the difference between being in charge of the British Isles
and being in charge of all the prices?

G. The difference is the British Isles is bigger, and better than the
prices.

P. The Queen looks after nearly the whole country . . . all the
countries in the world, compared with the Prime Minister who just
looks after England and tries - thinking whether England should
stay in the Common Market.

Q. You think the Queen looks after all the countries of the world?

P. The Queen - she mostly travels, and while the Prime Minister, he
doesn't travel very much, he usually stays in England quite a lot
of the time.

Transcription of Recorded Discussion with Children
at School in Eltham, London, SE9, July 1975
MAREK, 9.6 PAUL, 9.5 SARA 9.4 and NICOLA, 9.2

- Q. We're going to see how much you know about politics - show picture of Harold Wilson.
- Q. Is there, first of all, anyone who does not know who that is? Right, will you tell me who it is? Marek?
- M. Harold Wilson.
- Q. That's right. Who is Harold Wilson?
- M. He's the Prime Minister, who smokes a pipe, and sometimes smokes out all the M.P.s over at the Houses of Commons!
- Q. Marek, how does a man get to be Prime Minister?
- M. Oh, first of all he becomes the leader of a party and if they get - if in a General Election they get a lot of - mm - people in their party who've been elected, that party wins, and, the leader of that party becomes Prime Minister.
- Q. Yes, I see. And supposing that people don't want that party any more, what happens to the Prime Minister then?
- M. They vote against him. (Whispers - 'They sack him' from other children.)
- Q. So it can be put the other way again can't it? We can dispose of the Prime Ministers we don't want? Can we?
- M. Yes.
- Q. Now, Paul, how would we know, when a man's a Prime Minister, how would we know if he was a good Prime Minister?
- P. We'd know by the things he does?
- Q. What kind of things do you think he would do if he was not a good Prime Minister?
- P. He might let Communism in.
- Q. Do you think he might?
- P. Yes.
- Q. Would that be a bad thing?
- P. Yes.

Q. Why?

P. Because Communism hasn't got any religion, and - mm -

Q. Go on - anything else about it?

P. No.

Q. Just that?

N. I know!

Q. Tell me then.

N. Well, he makes the taxes go down, and he doesn't make some items so dear. He makes them go less - cheap!

Q. Would that be a good Prime Minister or a bad Prime Minister?

N. That's what he - it - should really be, because he can care for his country better.

Q. That would be a good Prime Minister.

N. Yes.

Q. Anything else a good Prime Minister would do? What do you think a good Prime Minister would do, Sara?

S. Well, he'd think more about his country, what he could do for the people, than about what he could do for himself, and how to get on. He'd think about what other people could do, and how they could get on in the world.

N. He would increase wages a little, a little more, so they would be able to live in a little more comfort.

Q. Sara?

S. He'd try and stop strikes.

Q. Now, we talk about what he'd do, and the idea is that he can do all these things, that he has the power to do it - now, I wonder how much power a Prime Minister really has? Have any of you got any ideas about this one?

Girls. Not really.

M. He's just got a little less power than the Queen but a bit more than Prince Consort, or something like that. He's got - he's in between - he's just below the level of the Queen - second in command - in command of the country.

Q. Do you agree with that one, Paul?

P. No.

Q. What do you think?

P. I think the government's the Head - leaders of the country.

Q. The government?

P. Yes.

Q. How many people do you think there are in the government?

P. Oh, do you mean one party, or all parties?

Q. All parties.

P. I think it would come out at about 150.

Q. What do you think, Marek?

M. Well in the General Election on the programme on the last General Election the - it couldn't be 150 - because the Labour Party got 356 votes for certain people - they got 356 people into the party. So there couldn't really be 150 people in one party, so there must be around - a thousand people in the House of Commons.

Q. I don't think there are quite so many as that. Do the girls know? Have you any idea, Sara, how many people in the House of Commons?

S. Mm - I reckon - about 850, something like that.

Q. I think she's the nearest so far. Now what about Nicola?

N. I would say about - nine hundred.

Q. It's about six hundred and some. Now how many people there do you think help make the laws. Because that's what they do in Parliament, isn't it? Make the laws. What happens in Parliament? Have anybody any ideas about what actually goes on? Who's going to start? Shall we let Paul start this time?

P. They have conferences and they speak and they have discussions and see which should be right.

Q. Who has discussions?

P. The Prime Minister and his M.P.s

Q. And - do some of the M.P.s help the Prime Minister.

P. Yes.

Q. I wonder how he'd choose the people who he wants to help him?

P. He'd - it depends what things it was on. If it was on, something like money, he'd have the M.P. who does the money.

- Q. The people who are - experts?
- M. That's the Chancellor of the Exchequer, isn't it?
- Q. Yes, that's right. Well how do you think the Prime Minister decides who's going to help him?
- M. He decides by getting out - the Chancellor of the Exchequer and - he's got a special name but I can't remember. He's got the Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Foreign Minister and - the - people who look after the Education. And they all . . .
- Q. Yes? Special people for special jobs?
- M. Special people for special jobs - that are - in charge of a place. In charge of a certain building holding certain people who do certain jobs, for different things.
- Q. What were you going to say, Sara?
- S. He would get them all together, and he would have a few people that he thought might be good for it, and then perhaps they'd have a little vote, just to see who they thought might be best, and then he could choose himself, out of a certain number of people.
- Q. They'd get it down to a certain number, then he should do the final choice?
- S. Yes.
- Q. Nicola, have you any ideas about what might go on in Parliament - about the Prime Minister choosing who's going to help?
- N. No, not really.
- Q. Why do we have political parties, Nicola? Why do we need political parties? Do we need them?
- N. I suppose we do really. Because they can also help the Prime Minister with his - mm - suggestions.
- Q. Have you got any ideas about that one, Sara? Why do we have political parties?
- S. Well, I think we have them because then the people can choose, really, who they want to be - who they want to govern and who they think would be best. And then you must count up and see who's won. I think it's fairer that way than having somebody - just having the upper government, the people who are governing just to say - "Right, this person's going to govern". You know - I think it's fairer that way.
- Q. Have you any ideas about that one Paul? Why do we have political parties?
- P. So - if one political party disagreed with the other people, they would try and - make it - their way.

Q. I see. Marek?

M. Well, if we had just one party, we'd have the same government, and if we had the same government, it might go a bit mad and increase the - decrease the wages, and increase the income tax and mortgages. And so we'll need a new government - so we have another vote, and find out another - a better government. So we really do need political parties.

Q. And they - disagree about a lot of things. What kind of things do you think they might disagree about?

S. About - who's going to govern, and about who they think would do, and about what they're going to do if they get the chance to put their leader in the place of the Prime Minister. And - well, they disagree about most things, really.

Q. About most things? Do you agree with that, Nicola?

N. Well, not really, no. Because sometimes they could agree - like - we're going to have some more supermarkets, but about half could agree, and a quarter couldn't agree because they couldn't make up their minds, and the other quarter could agree. And so they would - they'd choose, actually, between themselves which was the most. But I don't really agree with the answer that Sara gave.

Q. Why not?

N. Well, it's different, really, because when I've seen the programmes on the political broadcasts - they never - they nearly always agree. Because I've seen them agreeing, some of them.

Q. You didn't know particular things they might disagree about?

N. Well, taxes, they might disagree about, but I don't really know much else.

Q. You know when we have things that different parties don't agree about - we say they have 'different something - or other'. Do you know what the word is - they have different ----- ?

No response.

Q. Ever head the word 'policies'?

S. & N. Yes, oh yes.

Q. What do you think it means? Yes, Sara?

S. Different ideas on how to govern the country.

Q. Yes. But it means a bit more than that, doesn't it? It means different ideas about - well, about what? Not just governing - governing's a part of it. Yes, Marek?

M. Taxes? Mortgages?

- Q. Well, they've different ideas about what life should be like, really, don't they?
- M. Yes, about ———.
- N. The country.
- M. About - how much spending we must do, and making - if car parks are not good enough, some of them, etc., and things like that.
- Q. Big things and small things?
- M. Yes. Mostly they worry about the big things first, and small things second - afterwards.
- Q. About the big things and the small things. Do you think they would agree about what are the important things and what are not important? Or do we all agree about these things?
- M. Well, I think they must disagree on some things.
- Q. Yes, or there wouldn't be any point in having them, would there?
- M. No. We'd be able to govern ourselves, if they agreed with everything one person said. All the Houses of Parliament. If one man said "Who agrees with this?" and everybody shot their hands up, in the Houses of Parliament - everybody shot their hands up, there'd be no use having a party, really. Just a few men.
- Q. People did live like that once. But what would you have to be to live like that, where everybody could vote?
- No response.
- Q. You'd have to be very small, (Group) - wouldn't you?
- M. Chance, really.
- Q. You'd only got a chance if you were very small, wouldn't you - if it was a tiny place with only a few people in it. You know that sometimes this country's called a particular well, political system? Do you know what it's called? We say 'This country is a ——— .' Can anyone think of it?
- N. Oh . . .
- S. I've got an idea.
- Q. It begins with 'D'.
- M. I know it but I can't think of it - it's at the back of my mind . . .
- S. Does it begin with 'D'?
- Q. Yes.

Several voices: Democracy!

Q. Good. Yes. Do you know what it means, Sara?

S. It means that - well, it's not like a communist country, where you have the people above everybody else saying exactly what it's going to do. The people are free to - do what they think - and - just see - which - sort of feeling what to do, which comes out. And feel they want to do it.

Q. What were you going to say, Marek, about democracy?

M. Well, the same really as Sara.

Q. Anything to add?

M. Not really. She's put it - she's taken it all out of my mouth!

Q. Nicola - what do you feel about democracy?

N. I don't really know. I just agree with it, really!

Q. Paul?

P. I suppose I agree with it as well!

Q. Yes, well, what's good about democracy?

P. Because your free.

Q. Are you free to do anything you like, in a democracy?

P. No. There's some rules.

Q. Some rules. What are the rules for? Are rules a good idea?

P. To keep er - the work - Britain - going, and - er - it doesn't go wrong.

Q. I see. Yes, Sara? Why do we need rules?

S. Well, we need it to keep the people in order, because if everybody did what they liked, we'd be rather a rotten country, and we wouldn't get anywhere, and money would just sort of be wasted and - we'd end up living like sluts, you know - wouldn't, you know, we just wouldn't be organised.

Q. So rules are to organise?

S. Yes, I think so. Keep things in order, and stop people doing what they like.

Q. What about you, Nicola? Do you agree with all that?

- N. Exactly! Yes, I was going to say that!
- Q. Exactly? So we need laws to keep us all in order?
- N. Yes.
- Q. In other words, we need rules so that we can go on being free, do we?
- N. I suppose so.
- S. Yes.
- Q. We do, really, don't we?
If we didn't have any rules, what would happen, do you think?
- N. Well, that would be the end of things.
- S. Yes, the whole country would be in a shambles.
- Q. Why would it be? Why would it get into a shambles?
- M. People - just throwing litter all over the place - no "Keep Britain Tidy"! With rules, or something like that - £100 fine for litter! It would be all in a big shambles - cows roaming all over the place. And you might even get packs of wild dogs coming into the towns, and killing all the people off!
- Q. That sounds horrible, doesn't it?
- M. And foxes!.
- Q. You four seem to know quite a lot about politics. Where do you learn it all from? Nicola?
- N. I find it from the telly and the radio, that I mostly listen to when I come home from school. There's usually a political broadcast on, on the radio, and I usually listen to it, and Mummy explains it to me, and she tells me what it all means, and things like that. That's why.
- Q. Are you interested?
- N. Yes, really.
- Q. What about you, Sara?
- S. Well, I learn it mainly because Faddy's on a committee, and we have meetings. But, also you see, I'm rather ixquisitive (sic - for inquisitive) about it, and I keep on asking, and it gets on to very many things - explanations. And you find out, why the government rules, and the Queen doesn't just do it all by herself, and - mm - things like that. And I think that's mainly why I know. And sometimes I listen to things on the news and they have bits - from things. Or sometimes I just listen to - this - programme, and then decide to switch off and do something else.

- Q. You're interested in politics too, are you?
- S. Yes.
- Q. Boys, what about Paul. Are you interested in politics?
- P. . . . Yes. I learn most of it from the television, and asking questions from my Mum and Dad.
- Q. What about you, Marek?
- M. Well, my Dad's a civil servant, and he tells me quite a lot about politics, for if I don't understand things. And - he - I think I was born with most of it, really! (Laughing, but he obviously felt this was so.)
- Q. Do you think so? Born with most of your political knowledge, were you?
- M. Yes. This was one of the - one of the - when I were born, one of the greatest men in English history had just died, in October.
- Q. Who was that?
- M. Sir Winston Churchill. One of the greatest men of British politics.
- Q. Do you like Winston Churchill?
- M. I think he was a great man. If we didn't have him - I don't think we - Britain - would survive, would have survived, through the wars without him.
- Q. I think you could be right. Have you learned much about him at school?
- P. (Background.) No.
- M. Not really, but I read books. I like reading history books. I read a lot about history, and mostly, some of it's quite a lot about him.
- Q. Does that apply to all of you? Do you as well, Paul?
- P. Yes (doubtfully).
- Q. An admirer of Churchill, are you?
- P. No, not really.
- S. I am.
- Q. You are?
- S. Because my name's Churchill! (Very proudly, to the good-humoured laughter of the other children.)
- Q. You're not a relative, are you, Sara?

- S. Well . . . very far away - ninety-nine so-and-so's removed - and all the rest of it! But - sort of - Daddy does look - it is said that Dad does look a bit like Churchill.
- N. He does, he does!
- Q. You're not related to him, are you, Nicola?
- N. No! (Which disclaimer brought a burst of laughter from the group.)
- Q. You're an admirer as well, are you?
- N. Yes, I suppose I am. He was quite a good man actually! I've been to see - I have actually been to the - round to Parl . . . the Houses of Parliament, and I've seen his statue around there, as well. And it looks quite good, and he was a good man, as well.
- Q. Do you know much about what goes on in Parliament? Who'd like to tell me? Anybody know how a law gets through Parliament? Marek, do you?
- M. Well, first of all the House of Lords decides - er - they consult each other and they decide, er, "Would this law be good enough?". And then they take it through to the Prime Minister, and see if he decides.
- Q. Do you mean the House of Lords?
- M. Yes. And then they take it through to the Houses of Parliament for the Prime Minister. Or Number 10 or somewhere. And they - he decides if it's good, he decides which he thinks is the best - if it's good enough. And then, on a - permanent meeting - he, in one of his speeches, he asks - he comes in a certain place and he asks everybody in the House of Commons for a vote to see if - who - which has got through, the Noes or the Yeses, for that certain law.
- Q. Do you all agree with that?
- S. Mm . . . Well, I've got a bit to add to it. I think that if it's going to be - something that is - going to be for the good of the country and it's really rather - very - important, I think that it ought to be - just - sort of - the Prime Minister ought to make a speech to the people, and ask them, and let them have a vote, with everybody else, and then - see if . . . they pass it.
- Q. You mean you want a referendum?
- S. Yes.
- Q. I sec. I'm going to have to stop you there if you're to have any playtime at all.

Transcription of Recorded Discussion with Children
at School in Eltham, London SE9, July 1975
DARREN, 10.3. GARY, 10.7. TINA, 10.6. and LINDA, 10.1.

- Q. First of all - is there anybody who doesn't know who that is?
 (Newspaper photograph of group included Margaret Thatcher - or
 part of her - produced.)

Chorus of 'Ah' in recognition. 'That's Margaret Thatcher.'

- Q. How can you tell from a tiny bit of her?

Two Girls. Her hair style! The way her hair's done. And then there's the
 blue coat.

- Q. How can you tell it's a blue coat from a newspaper?

Two Girls. She always wears that coat!

Second picture produced.

- Q. You know who that is, don't you? Anybody not know?

All. Mr. Wilson.

- Q. Who's Mr. Wilson?

D. The Prime Minister.

All. The Prime Minister of England.

- Q. How long has he been Prime Minister? About a year? Does anybody
 know?

G. Oh, about a year.

All. 'A year.'

- Q. Who can tell me about - Gary, can you tell me about a Prime Minister?
 What a Prime Minister is and how he gets to be a Prime Minister?

G. Oh, well . . . there's a number of parties and they have an election
 and all the people vote and the party that gets the most, then their
 leader, he's Prime Minister.

- Q. So it's really very simple, isn't it? Can you tell me how often
 there's a new Prime Minister in this country?

D. Oh, about . . . usually a year.

- Q. How do you think we get a new Prime Minister?
- D. When the old Prime Minister . . . when one of the Prime Ministers . . . say, Mr. Wilson . . . he might start lacking - you know, not doing too well - and they decide to change him.
- Q. Who decides to change him?
- D. Parties.
- Q. Parties?
- D. The House of Lords.
- Q. The House of Lords - you think? How would we know if a man wasn't a good Prime Minister? How would you tell?
- D. Well, he might not . . . like in the miners' monies . . . they wanted one hundred pound a raise didn't they? Now, you know, if he wasn't very good, you know, he might not put up a fight for it, you know.
- Q. Do you think he should put up a fight for it.
- D. Yes. 'Cause, you know, he showed . . .
- Q. I see. So, that's just one instance. Now, are there any sort of rules about being a good Prime Minister? About what things you ought to do and what you ought not to do?
- L. You've got to have good qualities for the leader.
- Q. What do you think those might be?
- L. Mm . . .
- Q. Tina, can you try to help?
- T. Got to have faith in yourself.
- Q. Yes, I should think that's very important, wouldn't you? Anything else?
- D. You've got to know that you've got . . . mm . . . co-operation with other people in the party.
- G. (Interrupting) Yes, you've got to be . . .
- D. You've got to have good co-operation with the managements - you know - Fords, and things like that.
- Q. Co-operation with the management. Why do you need to be a co-operative person?

- D. If you ain't a co-op . . . co-op . . . co-operative person (amused giggling from the group as he wrestled with this) there'd be no agreement. You know, you'd have arguments and you won't be able to say . . . tell them anything.
- Q. I see. So - Tina - if a man was a bad Prime Minister, how would we know?
- T. Not doing his job properly.
- Q. Mm . . . and could we all tell? Could we, Linda?
- L. Yes.
- Q. You all think we could tell?
- All chorus 'Yes'.
- Q. I see. And what do you think should happen, Darren, when there's a man who's a bad Prime Minister?
- D. Well, he should be lifted off the book (laughter). He should be lifted off the book and there should be another election.
- Q. What's 'lifted off the book'? What does he mean by 'lifted off the book'? Gary?
- G. Taken off the job.
- T. (Echoing) Taken off the job.
- Q. I see . . . so we can dismiss him, can we?
- Mutters of agreement.
- Q. Sometimes, we hear this country described in a particular way; you know, our political system. We hear people say 'Britain is a . . .'. Can you give me the word?
- G. Er . . .
- Q. It begins with 'D'.
- No answer forthcoming.
- Q. Democracy.
- T. Democracy.
- Q. Have you heard that word?
- T. Yes (echoed by others).
- Q. Have you any idea what it means?
- D. It means er . . . er . . .

- Q. If you say something is democratic.
- D. Democratic . . . yes.
- Q. Does that help a bit?
- D. That's the word I was . . .
- Q. What do you think it means Darren? Guess if you don't know! Well, if you say something is undemocratic, what then? You've nearly got there, haven't you? Can't you get it out? (Darren was struggling to articulate an explanation.)
- Q. Well, what kind of a country do we think this is?
- G. An island, it's a kind of island.
- Q. Yes, well, is democracy anything to do with our geography? Or has it got to do with the ways we treat people? If they're well-treated.
- L. The ways we treat people. It's the ways we treat people.
- Q. You think so Linda. Any particular ways of treating people in a democracy?
- G. It's . . . like . . . mm . . . well in other countries they, you know, slay people and things like this.
- Q. Go on . . . you're getting there. What do we do here, instead?
- G. Well, we . . . er . . . treat people . . .
- Q. Differently?
- G. Differently, yes.
- Q. How do we treat people?
- G. By giving them a job they like, and . . . er . . . what they want.
- D. Giving them the money they want . . . the way it (the country) votes is money . . . in between what they want and what they don't want.
- Q. So do you think that being a democracy has got something to do with fairness and letting people choose for themselves? Or don't you know? What do you think? Do you think it's something to do with voting? If I said to you that democracy has got something to do with people ruling the country . . . the rule of the people . . . do you think that describes what we do in this country? Do you think the people do any ruling? Ordinary people?
- D. Yes, people do do some ruling . . . they do ruling in management, you know, in companies and like, the manager of the Water Boards - and - the manager of a garage.

- Q. Yes, that's to do with a person's job, isn't it? Linda, do you think ordinary people can influence very much what the government does? What do you think, Tina?
- T. They could try?
- Q. They could try; and how do you think they might go about it?
- D. Well, he asks . . . er . . . fellowship men. You know, he's got a party and he's got people in it. He asks them for advice and they ask him for advice.
- Q. Who asks?
- D. Well, usually the Prime Minister. 'Cause that's what they are there for.
- Q. What is he there for?
- G. He asks . . . you know, ask by voting in the election for the seat in Parliament.
- Q. I see. Gary, what is the Prime Minister there for? What does he do? I know he's the Prime Minister, but what does he actually do?
- G. He looks after the country.
- Q. How? Yes, Darren?
- D. By getting the goods that we can't grow here, from other countries, and exporting goods from England.
- G. He goes round countries and gets more exports.
- Q. The Prime Minister does that does he?
- D. No, he doesn't actually do that, but he makes plans for it . . . ships and things.
- Q. Do you think that the Prime Minister does the same kind of things that the Queen does?
- T. I don't think he does.
- G. No.
- T. The Queen, just travels round the country.
- G. She does work though, she does work.
- D. Yes, she does . . . to see how they're getting on.
- T. Have talks and that.

Q. Do you ever think about whether you like the Queen, or admire the Queen? Do you ever have any feelings about the Queen?

L. Mm . . . let me think!

T. Sometimes.

Q. What kind of feelings? That she's a good person?

T. Mm . . .

Q. Do you think she helps the country?

T. Mm . . .

Q. What about you, Linda? Have you any feelings about the Queen?

L. Well, I haven't got any feelings about the Queen. But she isn't a person. She's a person but not an ordinary person like us - you know, she's high up.

T. A higher person than us.

D. I think . . . little bits are left out, you know, lower bits.

Girls. Like a jigsaw!

Q. And which piece of the jigsaw would the Queen be?

T. High!

D. Oh, she'd be up high!

L. She'd probably be the frame! Yes, she'd be the frame. You make the frame first and then you select them on to the frame to work, you know.

Q. If she was a jigsaw, would she be the biggest person in the jigsaw?

All. (Murmurs of 'No'.)

Q. Who would be?

D. God!

Q. Who do you think helps the Prime Minister when he decides to . . .

L. The Queen.

T. Only sometimes.

G. Well, the Party does doesn't it?

D. The Party and the Queen.

Q. What does the Queen actually do, do you think, to help the Prime Minister?

Silence.

- Q. That's a hard one, isn't it? Well, let's have a think about the Prime Minister. Mr. Wilson, we decided that, didn't we? We know he is. How do you feel about Mr. Wilson?
- G. I think he's good.
- D. (Signified agreement)
- Q. You think he's good? Gary thinks he's good, and Darren thinks he's good. What about the girls? Linda, do you like Mr. Wilson?
- L. Yes, I think he's . . .
- Q. You don't seem too sure! What about you, Tina?
- T. I prefer Mr. Heath and Mr. Wilson.
- Q. Do you? Who do you like best in Mr. Heath and Mr. Wilson, Gary?
- G. Half and Half. I don't like every person.
- L. (Interrupting) Some things I don't agree with.
- G. When I'm watching the news . . . sometimes . . . gets to fail . . . and I don't agree with him sometimes. Mr. Heath is my decision. I agree with him (decisively) . . . that's how it reaches up with me.
- Q. I see. What kind of things would you not agree with Mr. Wilson about, Darren?
- D. (Did not answer immediately.)
- Q. Anybody else, while he's thinking?
- L. If he links us up . . . about the Common Market . . . and . . . (Dan. Yes!) it's not really the right thing to do . . . and Mr. Heath thinks of something that is right.
- Q. Yes, I see. Supposing I said to you - which party would you like to win if there was an election soon? Have you any ideas about that?
- G. Yes, Conservatives. 'Cause we don't ever know what Mrs. Thatcher's like, do we?
- Q. That's true, Gary.
- G. I used to like Mr. Heath, now Mrs. Thatcher. Forgot all about Mr. Heath, you know! Mrs. Thatcher, I reckon she's a bit higher than Mr. Wilson . . . she can get in!
- Q. You think she'd win, do you?

- G. Yes, she should win. I bet she'd be the first lady Prime Minister. And the people would want to see what ladies are like at Prime Minister . . . at Prime Minister.
- L. The Conservatives have got in anyway (reference to a local by-election result).
- G. She's the first lady to have a chance.
- Q. And you think we ought to give her a chance?
- G. Yes, we should. Other ladies come up in the parties, but we don't know what they'd be like if they became Prime Minister.
- Q. I wonder why there haven't been any lady Prime Ministers?
- G. Oh, because they haven't been top of the party . . . it depends on the party . . . it does . . . depends on the party.
- Q. You think she should have a chance?
- G. Yes, she should have a chance.
- Q. Why?
- G. Well, she should have a chance, she should have a chance.
- Q. Would you like to see a lady Prime Minister?
- All. Yes!
- Q. Supposing I said to you - now this one is for Tina - we haven't started with Tina for a while - supposing I said to you Tina, we're going to talk about politics. What would you expect us to talk about?
- T. Silence. (Linda made obvious signs of wanting to talk.)
- Q. Shall I come back to you then, Tina, if you don't know?
- L. Please, Miss!
- Q. Then, let's ask Linda first.
- L. The Common Market.
- Q. You think of the Common Market? Linda, why?
- L. Well, that's the thing that's being . . .
- Q. You think that's very important? Do you want us to go into the Common Market, or stay outside? Wouldn't you mind?
- L. I don't really know.

- T. I want us to stay out.
- Q. Why?
- T. Well, when we wasn't in the Common Market the prices of food was much lower, but now they've risen much higher.
- G. So's the wages. So's the wages.
- D. Yes, but if we went out now, if we went out now . . .
- G. (Interrupting) If we left the world in the lurch they wouldn't be too pleased.
- D. (Continuing his argument determinedly) We shouldn't get imports from other countries. We wouldn't be able to do business with other countries, and you know, get exports. We wouldn't be able to get money from them.
- Q. Don't you think so, Darren?
- D. No, because well, they don't give us imports - we don't pay them - we give them exports - they don't pay us.
- Q. And you think all that would stop if we stayed outside the Common Market?
- D. Yes. Sure enough that would.
- Q. Now, what do you think politics is mostly about, Gary? All right Darren (who had not finished), we'll let him finish his bit then.
- D. There'd be no trouble with transport and on the sea there'd be no trouble with passports and things like that.
- Darren clinched his argument for staying in the Common Market.
- Q. I see. Well, Gary, you were going to tell us what you think politics is about.
- G. The first thing that came into my mind was about the election for the seat in Parliament and in that week - you know - I went home and seen this Beefeater (an election publicity gimmick) . . . that's the first thing that came into my mind.
- Q. Oh, I see. And he was walking up and down, wasn't he?
- G. Yes. And when my Mum went to work - she works in Lewisham - and there's a traffic jam going right up the Eltham Hill, and it's caused by him - he was on the road and waving his flag and saying 'Vote for Hansford-Miller'.
- Q. And do you think that would help people to decide to vote for him?
- Laughter and chorus of 'Yes'.

Q. Making them late for work? Don't you think that might make them not vote for him, if he made them late for work?

D. They wouldn't be late for work, they'd be on their job!

(Which was received as a considerable witticism by the children.)

Q. What do you think politics is about, Gary?

G. Well, management and workers. And Britain, that's what I think.

Q. I see. But just in Britain? Inside Britain, but what happens outside Britain?

G. Well, we've got soldiers stationed here, there and everywhere.

(Roars of laughter from the group.)

Q. And they take care of that, do they?

G. Yeah, they take . . . well, they don't actually take care of it, they've got like parties . . . and they take care of things there.

Q. What kind of problems do you think this country's got at the moment, Gary? Have we got any problems?

G. Bombs.

Q. What about bombs?

G. Well, there's been a lot of bombs, and a lot of people died. Especially in the pubs. There was one down at Woolwich, at the Kings Arms.

Q. That's right. Do you think that's a good way for people to get what they want - to throw bombs around?

G. & L. No.

G. It would take longer - in the talk it would take . . .

D. Not as long!

G. Yes, that's right . . . there wouldn't be so many people killed.

D. There wouldn't be nobody killed.

L. They might be killing people who want their way.

(Considerable interruption here, children were obviously emotionally involved.)

Q. Yes, that's quite true. What were you going to say, Tina?

T. I was going to say all the killing and bombing especially in the north part (N. Ireland)

Q. And that's our biggest problem, you think, at the moment?

Girls. (Gravely) Mm . . . Yes.

Q. Do you all agree with that one?

All. Yes.

Q. Do you think these two parties - or three parties we've got - because we've got to count the Liberals, haven't we?

G. Four. There's the National Front!

Q. Yes, there are. Any more? Why do we have different parties, Gary?

G. You know . . . it's . . . the Prime Minister. If he goes down then we change him. It's like the . . . if parties starts failing and not doing well at their job then we change the party.

Q. I see. Now what kind of things do you think the parties might agree or not agree about. First of all, Darren, do you agree about everything?

D. No. Not everything.

Q. What kind of things do they not agree about?

D. Common Market things (prompted in a whisper by Linda who appeared engrossed in the subject). Well, about the management, and money being paid, and all this . . . about some work.

Q. What about you Linda, what do you think they might disagree about?

L. Same as Darren, the Common Market!

Q. I see. And when they work together, in Parliament, do you think they get on well? Do you think they co-operate or . . . what?

L. Sometimes, probably.

G. (Interrupting) Well, not a lot.

D. You know, they co-operate with each other (Accompanied by Gary's insistent interruptions 'They argue about the porters . . . the meat porters . . .')

Q. What were you going to say, Gary?

G. You hear about the - folks - going on for such a long time they must be arguing and everything, mustn't they?

- Q. Otherwise they'd finish quicker? That's a point, isn't it?
- G. Yes.
- Q. Darren, doesn't agree!
- D. They've got loads of things to talk about.
- Q. That's true.
- D. In that room . . . about six hours.
- Q. Gary - now, Houses of Parliament. What's the Houses of Parliament made up of, do you know?
- G. No.
- Q. We've got the House of something, and the House of something else?
- D. House of Parliament and House of Lords.
- G. House of Parliament and House of Lords, yes.
- Q. We've got the Houses of Parliament, O.K.? Two houses of Parliament. And one of them's called the House of Lords. What's the other one called?
- G. House of Parliament.
- Q. Ever heard of the House of Commons?
- G. Oh, yes.
- Q. All right, Darren, you were going to tell me?
- D. Well, we all know about the House of Commons.
- Q. You do? good.
- D. Yes . . . all about that, the House of Commons, Houses of Parliament and House of Lords.
- Q. Well, do you know what they do, in the House of Commons and the House of Lords? What are they for? Why do we have them?
- D. That's a good question!
- Q. Anybody else?
- Silence.
- Q. Well, how do we get laws in this country?

- D. Well, through the Kings, through the . . . er . . . ages we got laws.
- Q. Through the - what?
- D. Kings.
- Q. Yes, but that was in the old days - that was in history, wasn't it?
- D. Yes, Henry VII, he made the jury of the twelve, didn't he?
- Q. Well, how would we get a law this week, or next week? We couldn't do it that way now, could we?
- D. Discuss it in one of the - Houses, wouldn't we?
- Q. Yes, we would, wouldn't we?
- D. It would be - the House of Lords?
- Q. Well, the House of Commons first, then it would go to the House of Lords.
- D. Go to the House of Lords, then the Houses of Parliament.
- Q. Then who has to sign it, before it becomes the law?
- D. The Prime Minister.
- D. & L. And the Queen.
- Q. And then we've got a law. What kind of laws do you think we need in this country? Any new laws that you would like to make if you could?
- T. No bombings or killing.
- Q. Well, there are already laws about that, aren't there?
- G. They should make a law, you know, all doing in protest - like bring back hanging. I think they should because then they'll stop killing and bombing. And, you know, then take it off again. If it starts again, make it and keep it.
- Q. I see. All this bombing and killing comes because some people want one thing and some people want another thing. Are there any ways of getting over that in a big country?
- G. Well, if, like, in Belfast, they, you know, they talked with the IRA leaders - not the leaders, because they'd probably . . . (explicit sounds and gestures).
- Q. All right, Gary. Do you think we should try to solve our problems and all live together? Some of the children thought that when people want different things, the people who want one thing should live in one place, and the people who want something else should live in another place.

- G. No! That isn't right!
- Q. You don't think so?
- L. The people who want another thing will stay in the same place because they might not like it at the other place when they'd have gone.
- Q. Well, that's quite true, they might not like it if they go somewhere else.
- D. If you . . . put them apart like that - they'd become bored - and it's wrong to move the people here would be able to get up - you know, past the people over there, and . . . they'd have to forget about that part and come and use this - you know, forget about it, say "That's not very good, this is better. This is where you ought to live, where you have to live".
- Q. So you have to work out your differences?
- D. I guess so.
- Q. Yes, I see. Are you (to all four children) interested in politics?
- All affirmed.
- Q. Can we start this end and go round? Why are you interested in politics, Tina?
- T. I like to see . . . mm . . . discussing things, and arguing about things. When I grow up, I'll understand it more.
- Q. What about you, Linda?
- L. I agree with Tina. I just agree with her!
- Q. You're interested now so that you'll understand more about it when you grow up? So you must think it's important to understand it now, then you have more of a chance to understand it more.
- D. Yes.
- Q. Yes, I see, Gary and Dan. Yes, you think, if you understand it as children, you'll understand more when you grow up?
- D. & G. Yes.
- Q. Would you like to learn more about it at school?
- D. Well - yes. We've got more . . . er . . . important things than politics in school, haven't you? You've got your job.

G. You've got your education. And now, you know, in third years now, like this year, what we're doing now, like this year, what we're doing now will . . . we'll really know what secondary school we'll go to. (Confused and unsure about the process of selection, but aware of the significance of work and curriculum priorities.)

Q. I see, Gary, so that's more important than learning about politics?

G. Yes!

Q. What do you like best to do in school?

Girls. English.

Boys. (Not sure) Whisper 'Maths'

Q. Supposing I said to you - people who make the laws in this country - what kind of things do you think they ought to know about?

D. Don't need to know about Maths. (Confusing argument here)

L. They've got to know about English as well.

G. Plans.

Q. Anything else? Just Maths and English?

D. Different kinds of scripture.

G. You've got to learn a - language - as well.

Q. I see. When you grow up do you think you'd like to be a member of Parliament? Would you, Tina?

T. Yes!

Q. Linda?

L. Yes (hesitant).

Q. Would you, Gary?

G. Don't really know.

Q. Well, perhaps the Prime Minister?

Silence.

Q. Supposing you wanted to be an M.P., Darren? How would you go about it. What would you have to do, do you think?

(Darren was also uncommunicative on this one.)

Transcription of Recorded Discussion with Childrenat School in Eltham, London, SE9, July 1975CLIVE, 11.0. KEVIN, 11.2. MARIA P., 11.8. and MARIA T., 11.6.

- Q. Maria, who is that a picture of?
- M. Harold Wilson.
(P)
- Q. Do you agree, Kevin?
- K. Yes.
- Q. Who's Harold Wilson, then (to Clive)?
- C. He's Prime Minister - Prime Minister of the Labour Party.
- Q. Yes. What's the Labour Party, Clive?
- C. It's a party . . . of the working class. They believe that everybody should be equal.
- Q. Do they? Can you tell me any more about it?
- C. They believe in - equality.
- Q. Yes?
- C. They think people should be given the same opportunities - they think people should all be the same - within reason. They believe - they just fight for the working class that are underpaid.
- Q. Yes, I see. You know an awful lot about that. Where did you find out?
- C. I'm quite interested in politics.
- Q. Are you? How did you get interested in politics?
- C. Well, it started from the class election. From then I've really been interested in (it) - I've been following the Conservatives around Woolwich West.
- Q. Is that the by-election the other week?
- C. Yes.
- Q. You wanted them to win, did you?
- C. Yes.
- Q. Do you like Mrs. Thatcher?

- C. I don't think she's got the drive . . . Men, they've got more drive in them. She's a bit too soft with people. She's got to be like Heath. Got to be tough against inflation. If people had been strong enough to fight against the miners, we would have been . . . the inflation rate would have gone down considerably, but the Labour Party just give in 'cause they would lose their votes if they didn't give the right point increase.
- Q. Do you know what inflation is? Do you know what it means?
- C. De-valuation of the pound.
- Q. Well, what effects does it have? Do you know?
- C. It's the cost of using money . . . mm . . . prices going up - and more wages being needed, for some people, so the pound gets less than it's worth - about seventy-two pence now.
- Q. Thank you, Clive. Can I ask you one more thing? You used the word 'equality'. What's 'equality'?
- C. Mm . . . it is . . . the same - people being the same and everybody - nobody's above anybody else.
- Q. Do you think that's possible?
- C. No. Because it would be dull . . . life would be dull if there were no difference . . . in . . . qualities.
- Q. Yes. But do you think equality could ever mean people not being the same. Or do you think it could be fair for people not to be the same.
- C. I suppose . . . I think it would be fair . . . but I think everybody would prefer slight differences in qualities . . . trouble is, you see, life is ever so dull. It would be as well - just like life in Russia is . . . the same kind of clothes that they wear . . . and it's all . . . based upon equality.
- Q. Yes, I see. Well, what about the rest of you . . . do you want - anybody want to argue with him on this one? Who does? Maria does, don't you?
- But from trying to interrupt, Maria had turned shy.
- Q. Well, what about equality then. What do you think equality means, Kevin?
- K. Equal rights for everybody.
- Q. Equal rights. What's a right?
- K. Everybody's got . . . if somebody's got something, somebody else has . . . it's fair to have someone else having the same . . . and . . . you know . . . having working for it to . . .

- Q. You mean like equal shares?
- K. Yes.
- Q. Yes, I see. Now can you let these girls come back, about women (the two girls had obviously wanted to come in at the earlier point made by Clive on the question of 'drive' linked with sex, but they had contented themselves with grimaces at that point) - and politics and Mrs. Thatcher. Now, which Maria?
- M. I think that the way men always get twice as much money than the ladies get . . . and I think the ladies should be paid less . . . I mean more . . . and I think Mrs. Thatcher would be a good Prime Minister.
- M. (Interrupting) Well, she knows about housework, she knows about prices of food . . . men don't . . . What about Shirley Williams and all those other people. They all know about food.
- C. They don't . . .
- M. How do you know that they don't?
- (P)
- C. They don't - they have people to find out for them. About the wages, for the same job, it's been changed now.
- M. (Interrupting) It takes it's time, doesn't it?
- (P)
- C. (Continuing his theme) A man, a man at Crown Woods, gets the same as a woman would, working as say a cook or something like that. They get the same amount of money.
- M. If you were in a factory, and the lady was doing the same job as a man, you wouldn't, you wouldn't find the man was getting the least.
- (T)
- M. Supposing the man's working for how . . . the woman's working for how many . . . say . . . er, they're in a glass factory, how many . . . mm . . . glasses she . . . she produces . . . yes! She gets money for it - and, the man just gets paid. If she does about a hundred a day she'll probably get more money than the man.
- (P)
- C. Well, Margaret Thatcher, about the prices of food. What about all the taxes. . . the men have got. And . . . (pause to think).
- Q. Come on Maria . . . tell him about it!
- M. Well, I personally, I think women and men should have equal rights because when the ladies get home they've got to do everything, while the men just sit down, or go to the pub, or something. And they've got to look after the children, and half of them just don't get the chance to go to work. And if they do, they get less than everyone else. And men get more, usually.
- (P)

- M. (T) It's like my Mum. She can't get a job. You know, she's so damn(!) bored at home. She goes mad with us about - because - she tried everywhere to get a job. My . . . my Dad thinks she should go to his . . . but she won't agree, 'cause she won't get half as much money as he will.
- K. Well, my Mum, she only works part-time, and she gets as much pay, as what a full-time . . . she gets nearly as much pay as what a full-time secretary has because in the time she has, from half-past nine to half-past three, she . . . mm . . . she does about as much work as what some ordinary secretaries would do, and she gets just as much as what they do.
- M. (P) Yes, how much does your Mum get, though? My . . . my Dad gets . . .
- Q. (Interrupting) No, you mustn't tell. No, no secrets! (children laughed - they were quite uninhibited about finances, and prepared to use family examples to illustrate their points. Maria was obviously about to build her argument on the relative pay of men and women, while Kevin appeared to have missed her point.)
- Q. Listen, coming back to this fairness thing. You might say this - that a man has really got to pay, you know, for the food, and for the mortgage and support everybody - so men would say that they've got to work, and so it's fair they should have more. And they can say that women can stay at home if they want to. What about that?
- M. (P) It's not fair to the women, then. They just get bored at home doing everything at the same time every day.
- M. (T) Supposing they like it, though? Supposing they enjoy it?
- M. (P) My Mum don't!
- C. A lot of women do like it.
- M. (P) Mine don't!
- C. When my Mum, didn't used to work at Crown Woods, she said it was a bliss working at home with your feet up on the table . . . (Indignant interruption from both girls, the words of which were lost but the reaction unmistakable.)
- Q. Let's come back to politics then. Maria's going to tell us about the state of the country.
- M. (P) Yes, the country's in such a stage that women have to try to go to work or get a job to pay for all the - all the prices, that are going up, and all inflation.
- Q. Yes, we're back to inflation again now, aren't we?

M. Yes.
(P)

Q. What do you think that people who rule the country, you know, like the Prime Minister, should do about these problems? Has anybody got any ideas about that one?

M. They should keep rules.
(P)

K. They should cut down on, er . . . taxes, and things like that. We'd have more money to spend on other things except for bills and things like that.

Q. Yes. Now whose job is it to do these things? Anybody know?

C. I think it's the Prime Minister's. I think that taxes should be brought down and rates taken down, and cut down building roads, because the Labour government, they don't really know what they're doing with our money. 'Cause it's our money; they - they say it's theirs, but it's our money they're spending. There's . . . building racing stands with the money . . . that's done by the Council sometimes. You know, we ought to be doing something useful to the country, not entertainment. I think we should get the country back on it's feet, and then get the entertainment right.

Q. Yes, I see. You think the Labour party spends too much money, unnecessarily?

C. Yes.

K. On . . . they spend it.

Q. You all think that, do you? (Chorus of proffered examples of 'over-spending' which were not clearly linked with public sector.)

M. On cars, on cars!
(P)

Q. Maria?

M. My Dad's got two cars, and one of them just sits there - my Mum's learning to drive, but . . .
(P)

Q. But the Labour Party didn't give them to him, did they?

M. I know, but they should cut - they should ration their cars.
(P)

Q. Do you mean they should stop your Dad from having two cars?

M. Yes.
(P)

C. Yes.

- M. They should ration cars, now, so that there's only a certain amount
(P) sold a year, so that, I mean, say, one person gets one in - five years. Like my Dad, last year, before that he got two in two years. He's got another one now.
- Q. Anyone else got any ideas about this. Maria? The other Maria?
- M. I agree as well. Because if you cut down on cars, then people
(T) will have more money to spend on other things. It's a bit stupid having two cars in one family.
- Q. I see.
- C. I think that cars - you know, the industry of cars, should be cut down, because there's loads of cars just standing in their workshops.
- Q. And you think it's the Prime Minister's job to do this kind of thing? Well, could he do it all by himself? Clive?
- C. I think, I think, perhaps no . . . he has aides, and all the government; I think, you know, the Minister for Industry . . . he should be . . . they should cut down on the industry itself. I know there'd be a higher unemployment. That's inevitable. Unemployment's going up all the time.
- Q. Do you know anything about the way government works, Clive?
- C. (Hesitated.)
- Q. Do you know anything about the way government is organised and the way government works? Do you, Kevin?
- K. Well, the Prime Minister has got people to . . . in charge of, things and they get ideas - about how to make this country a better place, and - tell it, to the Prime Minister and he does - as much as possible, to make it possible, to make the country a better place; but half the time he gets all the ideas, and they're just pushed to one side, and things like the Common Market come first and . . . we've got to think about our own country before we think about doing anything for Europe - and - things like that.
- Q. I see. When you say he does as much as possible - do you know what that 'doing as much as possible' consists of? What would the Prime Minister do if people give him good ideas, do you know, Clive?
- C. Ideas - about mining and industry . . .
- Q. Yes, but what would he do?
- C. Well, I think he's got all these aides to help him do what . . . he could get all the other people - they're quite easily contacted, and he could get them to do these industries, that could be done, you know . . .
- Q. Would he have to make some new laws, before he could do some of these things? How would he go about making a new law?

- C. Well, he could get the Cabinet. And then . . . if the cabinet agrees, then I suppose, it comes to the lower end.
- Q. Well, do you know what happens when a law goes into the Houses of Parliament; it starts from the House of Commons. Do you know what happens then?
- K. It has to be confirmed first.
- Q. When?
- K. In . . . er . . . House of Lords.
- Q. Then what happens?
- K. It . . . er . . . I'm not sure what they do next, but . . .
- Q. Have you ever heard of 'giving readings' to a bill, before it becomes law?
- K. Yes. In Parliament.
- Q. Yes. What about the Queen? What does the Queen do in all this? Anybody know?
- C. She's only there as a tourist attraction. But I think she should . . . there should . . . be a Queen. Or a King.
- Q. Why?
- C. 'Cause . . . it builds up the tourist trade . . . 'cause all these Yankees . . . they just come to see the Queen. That's their main thing in London. They come and see the Queen in all her glory.
- Q. You don't think she does any work, Clive?
- M. Yes!
- (P)
- C. She does quite a good job, diplomatically, with social relations, and things like that. I think she does a good job there. She doesn't really do much help though - politic-wise. Apart from signing papers and things like that.
- Q. Is it important she should sign papers?
- M. Yes.
- (T)
- C. Yes, I think so.
- Q. Why do you think she has to sign papers.
- C. Because she's Head of State. It's - signed by England, put it that way - it's signed by - common (law?).

- Q. Yes. What about you, Kevin? Do you think she does any work, or anything useful?
- K. I think . . . er . . . she's kind of . . . foreign secretary, like Mr. Callaghan. She goes to other countries. You know - to make - she's - in a way, she travels with England and she'd go to other countries to . . . make friends with them, so, you know - they'd communicate with each other, and they'd be more help . . . we'd be more help to them, they'd be more help . . . we'd be more help to them, they'd be more help to us . . . I think that's what - the way she - does it.
- Q. You think that's a good job?
- C. Yes.
- Q. What about you, Maria?
- M. Well, I think that Kevin's right in saying that, that she does a good job by travelling around the countries, and getting up our trade, but - well - take, in Queen Victoria's time, she ruled the country, she governed it - the governors just took her ideas. No - you know - the Queen isn't any part. She just sends - sem - seminaries? She just - just lies there dumb . . . or something. . .
- Q. What about you, Maria?
- M. I think the Queen's very important because if she didn't sign the things then nobody could - the government couldn't really do it, because the government changes every now and again, and there'd be all different signatures and, the way she travels to other countries, you can't, you know, they could make war or something. When she travels to them if they're friendly, they're not likely to make war with us or anything.
- Q. Yes, I see. That's very important, isn't it? Do you know what we call this country's form of government? We say "It's a something-or-other"? Do you remember the word?
- No response.
- Q. We say "Britain is a "?
- M. Economical?
- (T)
- Q. No - a democracy. Have you ever heard that word, democracy?
- (Children look doubtful.)
- Q. Has anybody got any idea what it means?
- K. What's the word?
- Q. Democracy.

K. Mm . . . democratic?

Q. Yes? We describe things as being democratic?

C. Well, they're . . . mm . . . well done.

Q. Well done?

C. Like the Queen. That's what I'm thinking of. We are very traditional, with our ways. We have these - traditions.

Q. Is Russia democratic?

K. I think so. With their - heads of State, and their - big country.

Q. If I said to you that "democratic" is a word that means rule by the people?

K. I think it is.

C. I think England is democratic, because the Common Market is done by peoples . . . and the people decide who - are candidates - who they want to - represent them.

K. My Dad said that if - when - England do go in, the Common Market, as they are, if they . . . mm . . . pulled up their socks - and - stood on their feet, and they could be the head country of . . . mm . . . 'cause then, they're not - some people regard us as a silly little island up in the Atlantic - or somewhere - and they think - just because we're that little island we're not that powerful . . . But, why are we called Great Britain? That's what I think!

Q. Thank you, Kevin. What about you girls? Do you think this country's democratic?

M. It is - the Queen didn't decide the government. We all put a vote
(T) towards it, who we want - if we want, if there's a by-election, or something, we decide - the people coming to rule, by putting their vote in whoever they want to be in charge.

Q. Yes, Maria?

M. I think the same as well. In a lot of countries, people are
(P) just put in, by Kings or Queens, and the . . . mm . . . the people in the country, they just don't like people when they go against them, and that country just goes barney.

Q. I see. Have you got any political leanings? You know, are you Labour or Conservative or Liberal, or anything?

C. &
Girls. Conservative!

K. Labour!

Q. You're Labour, are you Kevin? The other three are Conservatives.

All. Yes.

Q. Have you got any idea why? Who'd like to tell me why?

M. Well . . .
(P)

Q. Maria - start then.

M. Labour, some of them are Communist. Liberal just don't get in ever,
(P) and they're not strong enough. 'Cause Thorpe never does anything.

M. (Interrupting) They got no seats . . .
(T)

M. (Interrupting) Mm . . . and I think if - if - Thatcher gets in, and
(P) they give her a chance of being Prime Minister, I think we'll do well. If she's not any good, we can always go back.

Q. Because that's a democracy isn't it - you can change people?

M. Yes.
(P)

Q. What about Maria - why are you a Conservative?

M. Well, Liberal - I never think of Liberal aren't nearly strong
(T) enough, they haven't got nearly enough seats. And they couldn't rule the country. And Labour, they've got Communists and everything in them, I don't like Labour.

Q. Why?

M. I don't know really.
(T)

Q. What about Kevin? Why do you like Labour, Kevin?

K. I think - Conservative and Labour are doing a good thing, they're
fighting for rights for other people. And Labour confirming them -
you know. They take Conservatives' ideas and put them into other ways,
for the people.

Q. I see. Can you give us an example of that, do you think?

K. No, not really.

Q. Clive?

C. I believe in Conservatives, mainly because I don't like the Labour Party.
They're going to, sometime, in the near future, they're going to go
Communist. They got too strong a left wing.

Q. What do you think is the difference between the Labour Party and the Communist Party?

C. There's hardly any difference . . . mm . . . perhaps the Labour Party aren't as strict as Communists, and the Communists fight more - a lot more, for their party and . . . mm . . . the Labour Party, they have got some right wing, which you know, believe in Conservative ways a bit, like Harold Wilson. I think he's going just like a Conservative at the moment, apart from all this nationalisation and things. I think he's going - he's leaning - towards the Conservatives. It showed in the Common Market referendum. He was - his campaign was a lot - with the Tories.

Q. Yes, I see. What is it about politics that interests you, Clive?

C. Well, it's mainly the elections . . . I find quite interesting - you know, I'm usually, when there's an election going on, I'm usually up about 5 o'clock in the morning.

Q. Are you? Can you all do that?

K. &
Girls. No.

M. I think before it . . . they really . . . you know . . . they go mad,
(P) trying to get people to vote for them.

M. It's interesting hearing them talk, and fight for their - rights and
(T) things like that . . . and the way these women go into Parliament and, you know, start to kick up a row . . . about rights.

M. I think, things like political viewcasts (broadcasts) where they have
(P) a certain party, they just do no good, because each week they have a different person. And - everybody knows who they are - everybody knows what they do and yet sit there on telly and show what they can do. All they do is sit behind a desk just nattering on. And it's barny.

Q. Do you believe what they say?

M. No!
(P)

M. In the by-elections, the only time you see people is when there's
(T) going to be an election, like Peter Bottomley came down our road and came to our house about two days before the election. He'd never come before. And then there was Labour and Liberal leaders coming down to people's houses. You know, just to get them to vote for them.

Q. Yes, I see . . . What do you think the Government ought to do, at present. You know, are there any particular things that you think Government ought to do?

M. Clean up our country - make it a better place!
(T)

- Q. What do you mean "clean it up"? Could we literally clean it up - go round picking up litter?
- M. Mm . . . you know. Have stricter rules on crime and things like
(T) that - you know - things like going round doing things that - no-one really ought . . .
- M. I think that . . . that . . . hanging should come back.
(P)
- Q. Do you?
- M. Yes, because - no; I think they should have a real fair trial, and
(P) if they're positively guilty, they should - and it's a bad charge - they should be hanged. Because, they're just getting away with murder. As soon as they go in, they come out again, and they just start all over again - it's no good for you.
- Q. Why do you think this, Maria? Where have you got those views from?
- M. In . . . mm . . . when General Amin, he thinks he's going to hang
(P) Hill, but he can't say he's guilty. He hasn't done a big crime, just because he's . . . mm . . . storing things like that . . .
- M. (Interrupting) No, that was . . .
(T)
- M. Well, whatever his name, and it's just making the country look (in)
(P) a state. And unemployment is so high. If there were more jobs then people would be able to pay for council houses and things like that. There should be more council houses. (I think they should housing people. There's lots of tramps round the streets.)
- M. Yes, I think that the age of leaving school should go up again.
(T) Because my brother is so - anxious - to get out of school (my Mum won't let him) because the level - unemployment - has gone right up.
- Q. I see. So you're concerned with housing and unemployment, and this Maria's concerned with keeping young people in school so they don't add to the unemployment figures. Is that right?
- M. Yes.
(P)
- Q. And Kevin wants rules to be tightened up generally, and hanging to be - well, do three of you want hanging to be brought back?
- M. Yes, I do.
(P)
- M. Well, not particularly hanging, but I think if they do a bad crime
(T) they should be put in gaol nearly all their life, because as soon as they come out again, it doesn't teach them anything, they just go and do something wrong.

K. I think, if we don't have hanging again, people - like this Black Panther - he's going to keep doing it and doing it and doing it. And he's going to keep getting away with it - like when he murdered that Lesley Whittle. And they should have - look, if they had caught him they should have hanged him.

Q. Well, they haven't caught him yet, have they?

K. When they do catch him they should hang him . . . because . . . he isn't a good person.

Q. But - if you start hanging people for murder then do you think people should be hanged for other things?

K. &
Girls. Oh - no!

M. Yes! I think - not hanging, but the firing squad, 'cause it's not
(T) so - you know -

K. Their necks break when they hang.

M. Because people just cheer when they go - when there was a hanging.
(T)

Q. But, we don't have public execution in this country, do we?

M. No, no. When they're brought back I think the firing squad should . . .
(P)

M. I think if they've done an awful crime, they should be - killed, some
(T) way, but not hung.

C. I don't think hanging should be brought back, because most of these murderers, they do belong to reprisal groups you know, some group. You know, they've found out this Black Panther does belong to a group, and the Jackal does. So if they're hung, all their groups, they'll just kill more and more people. I think they should just be given a life sentence, and I don't think the reprisals would be as bad as they would be if there was hanging - if the death penalty was brought back.

Q. Yes, I see. You think that violence would get more and more?

C. If there was hanging, there would be more armed robberies. I don't think the police should be - should carry around guns, because in America, where they carry around guns, there's a high standard of armed robbery.

Q. Yes, that's true. Clive, what do you think that this country needs at the moment? Do you think we have any problems?

C. Yes, I think inflation should be brought down by - I think - there should be a wage freeze that should be in for about two years and then, the government should just restrict wages after that.

Q. Do you think everybody should stay as they are?

C. I think the country should just suffer the prices for a while. I think it'd be worth it for their children - for their future.

Q. Do you think the government we have now, and the way we run the country now is the best way we could, or do you think there are, you know other ideas?

(General attempts to answer this question all at once.)

Q. Can we have one at a time? Who wants to start?

C. Me. I think that there should be a government that fights for themselves and fights for the country. I think the Labour party are fighting for themselves with the miners, because they can't say they want more money. And they shouldn't do, because they only give it for their own votes, the Labour party. For their own votes, which is to fight inflation, so they say - the prices are just going up and up. And the wages are going up and up.

Q. Do you think the way we run the country is the best way we could run it, or are there any other ideas that you'd like to see in the government - you know, different? Perhaps not a Prime Minister, perhaps two or three people?

C. No. I think there should be one Prime Minister, but I don't think he should make all the decisions. I think his Ministers should make certain decisions unless the Prime Minister really does disagree with them.

Q. Does he make all the decisions, do you think?

C. Well, the Ministers have to have his con . . . have his - permission, virtually always.

Q. Do you think the Queen should play a bigger part?

C. Yes.

K. Yes.

C. I think she's capable of doing a good job.

K. I think these people who are - high, in power - like all the judges, and the Prime Minister, and the M.P.s and the Queen. They should act together, and they shouldn't really have Labour Party and Conservative Party and Liberal Party. I think they should all work together. I think that would make the world a better place.

Q. Do you know what that's called, when people drop their party labels and work together?

C. Coalition!

Q. That's right.

C. They had that during the war.

Q. Yes?

C. But it was pretty well dominated by the Conservatives - because it was Churchill who was Conservative, and it was pretty well dominated by them.

Q. He was a strong leader, wasn't he? Do you think it's important to have a strong leader?

C. Yes, very good.

K. Yes.

M. Yes.

(P)

M. Sir Winston Churchill was our Prime Minister (changes subject). I don't think they should bring in these new foods like Womble jellies. I mean, they're just wasting sugar.

M. Yes, I mean there's ordinary jellies. Just because Wombles jellies are in a different packet, it doesn't mean anything, they're just wasting more - more sugar, more everything.

M. And new washing powders. We could do without them before, and look at the new sweets, and everything. It's just making everything - you know, you're buying more, when you see new stuff come out.

Q. Yes?

M. I think so. Because the Cabinet puts a lot of ideas, I think that, you know, other countries, they have the film cameras in the - No. 10, or where the Prime Minister who is there, talks. And they won't let the cameras, T.V. cameras, come in. I think they should because then - then the country knows what ideas have been put. They think it's good, and - Harold Wilson - just leaves it . . . just puts it to the side, then the country can bring it back up again, and take their way.

Q. Yes, that makes them accountable to the country, doesn't it. And would you say that's more democratic?

M. Yes.

(T)

Q. I see. Does somebody want to say something about leaders? Kevin?

K. I think - Mr. Heath - you know, goes round - individual - I think he should do more things for politics because he isn't a stupid leader. He was a good leader, and if Mr. Heath, Mrs. Thatcher and . . . mm

K. (Cont'd ...) Mr. Wilson work together, I think, we'd have a stronger country.

Q. Yes, I see. You all mentioned Winston Churchill. Do you know much about Winston Churchill?

All wanted to.

Q. Maria, tell me first.

M. He was a good leader. He put the country on their feet and he had
(P) special ways of getting to people and telling them what's happening when the war was on.

Q. Now Maria T.

M. About ten years before the war between Germany and England, he went over
(T) to Germany and told the people that they were going to fight against us. Nobody would believe him so they chucked him out. Then ten years later the war did come and they all depended on him. And he doesn't - he didn't - he never wanted us to be in the Common Market.

Q. How do you know all this?

M. Before the Common Market, by-election - was on - it was on (T.V.)
(T) about the Common Market. He didn't want us to be in the Common Market.

Q. I see. So you've heard that one from a television broadcast?

M. Mm...
(T)

C. Churchill, if he was alive now, he would have voted to stay in the Common Market, because it would have been for the good of the country, and I think he would have said 'Yes'. Because he boosts people's morale. During the war he was always encouraging people. He said - you know - for the good of their country and their children, just fight on and never surrender.

Q. Yes, I see. And you like Winston Churchill as well, do you, Kevin?

K. Yes. He was a good fighter. I think that's how we got our name Great Britain. And that's how it - this country, ever since the war, has been a powerful country. But since he's died, they've just slacked, and they've just fallen to pieces. We haven't had any really powerful men like - or a woman - like him. We need better - someone like him. There have been other women in his time. They've been trying to be powerful.

Q. Women?

K. Yes. That's Emily Pankhurst and all these women who just flung themselves in front of cars and horses, and things like that.

K. (Cont'd ...) They think that's the way to get power, but I don't think that's right. I think they should do it in a different way.

Q. Yes, I see. When you say "get power" - who does it belong to? What is power? Who knows what power is?

C. Dominating the country. That's what I think the Labour Party are doing. They're just dominating the country. I know they gave us the vote for the E.E.C., but, they're just too strong. And . . .

Q. We'll come back if you've forgotten that bit. Would you like another election soon?

C. Yes.

Q. Who wouldn't?

M. I wouldn't.
(P)

M. Well, I think that we - we've got some old people who are really getting on in the government. I think we should have new people in, young people, who know about the country, and know what state it's in. They know what to do. But old people can't - they just can't do anything!

Q. But Winston Churchill was old, and you liked him!

M. Ah, but he started being Prime Minister when he was young - about twenty-six!
(P)

Q. Do you think so?

M. Well, he started as a general or something.
(T)

K. An M.P., and he worked his way up there.

M. But you know people like Harold Wilson, they've just suddenly come in.
(T)

Q. I think he's been around quite a time. Tell me this, would you like to be M.P.s when you grow up?

C. & M. No.
(P)

Q. You wouldn't, Clive? Even though you're interested in politics?

C. No. I'd like to have a fairly highly paid job, but I just couldn't stand up to the criticism you'd get. That's the only thing I admire all these M.P.s for, is the criticism they take.

Q. Yes, what about you, Kevin?

- K. I wouldn't like to be one. Because of the newspapers. They put - you say something, like last night, I saw these . . . mm . . . journalists, writing down. There was one man, he was just writing down all the important parts. He was probably writing down things that Mr. Callaghan had never said. That's what I think's wrong with newspapers.
- C. I think there's too much intrusion into M.P.s lives - private lives.
- Q. Do you think so?
- C. Mm . . . I think religions got a lot to do with it - in most of our - political parts. I think religion - the Church of England and the Queen - has got a lot to do with the politics. I don't think the country's too religious. I think it should be a bit more religious than what it is.
- Q. I see. What about the girls, now? Would you like to be an M.P. when you grow up, Maria?
- M. No.
(T)
- Q. Why?
- M. Because Margaret Thatcher was saying on telly that she'd had everyone putting different things in the newspaper . . . and I just wouldn't like it - everybody getting mad at you and they'd hate you.
(T)
- Q. Yes, I see. What about you, Maria?
- M. I'd hate to be an M.P. because you've got no private life at all.
(P) Wherever you go, there's newspaper reporters there - then every day there'd be something about you in the newspaper, and some of the stuff they write about you isn't true!
- Q. Supposing you could say one thing for the country, to do for it, that the government ought to do. What would you choose?
- K. I think they should - cut the country up, and they should look over that country - over that part of the country. Like cut them into states and then excavate (investigate?) into it - find out about it, and then see what's happened in the last past - decade - in the last ten years, and I think that's the only way we can find out more about our country.
- C. I agree with Kevin. I think we should get a certain part of the country or a certain industry, and get that perfect, or as perfect as we can get it and then go on to another industry. I know it would be a slow process, but it would be probably the only way it could be done. 'Cause if you do it all in one go, it'd be a hopeless task.
- Q. So you want more specialisation, then?

- C. Yes.
- K. They should excavate it all at once - all at once!
- M.
(P) I think they should cut all country into about five parts or so many parts, and then get certain leaders that are strong and a few people behind him, and they should put a person, and a few other people, in charge of each part of the country and then they should run it like we run England. Then our policemen wouldn't have such a job trying to get all over, quickly, and the Prime Minister would still be in charge of our country as well.
- Q. What about you, Maria? Do you agree with this?
- M.
(T) I think we should start with East London first, because that's a terrible part of England. Everywhere you go there's litter all over and there's not many people - housed or anything. Then they should go to London and other parts like that, you know, where there's not too many people housed. And I think instead of making roads, and everything, they should have more greenery around, because it makes it look nicer.
- K. You know how beautiful the Lake District is? Well, that's got copper, tin, iron ore. It's got some gold and silver. It's got all the things we need. But, you know, the government are so greedy, they just want to wipe out all England's beauty and things like that. And take away all these forests, with iron and things being brought out of it. I think we've got enough iron as it is, from other parts, like Wales, and the slate-mines there where they find iron and things like that. But we don't need to burst into the Lake District where most of it is. It's uninhabited, most of it. I think if you did that, you wouldn't get tourists in England, and England wouldn't have as much money as what they would . . . because they'd need money to - investigate - it and, you know, take the iron and the copper . . .
- Q. Invest - that's invest, it's a different thing, isn't it?
- K. Mm . . .
- Q. Do you know the difference between investigate and invest? Does anybody?
- C. Invest means to buy!
- Q. Yes, it means to buy shares in something, doesn't it? And then help to control it, and then you get money out when that industry's making a profit. And to investigate it means that you go and examine it, and you find out the best ways of making it run. They're very similar words but they mean different things, don't they? Well, thank you very much, you've been very helpful. Is there anything else you'd like to say, before we finish, about politics and the country? Anything special?

The group felt they had said everything they wanted to.

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