

CONFIDENTIAL

**THIS DOCUMENT IS THE PROPERTY OF
HER BRITANNIC MAJESTY'S GOVERNMENT**

Printed for the Cabinet. January 1965

C. (65) 11

Copy No. 59

29th January, 1965

CABINET**THE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION**

**MEMORANDUM BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND
SCIENCE**

At their meetings on 7th December and 14th January my predecessor put before the Ministerial Committee on Social Services proposals that he should be authorised to announce:

- (i) that, bearing in mind that the 10 colleges of advanced technology are on the threshold of university status, it would not be necessary, with one possible exception, to create additional universities or to promote any further institutions to university status in the next 10 years;
- (ii) that the expansion and development of technological education at a high level will best be furthered by continuing the build-up of the three* specialised institutions named by the Robbins Committee by giving them priority in the provision of finance, both capital and current, and by encouraging the many promising developments in the technological departments of other universities;
- (iii) that we should therefore not follow the recommendation of the Robbins Committee that one of the colleges of advanced technology should be selected for designation as a special institution but that we would consider further the question of creating one completely new technological institution;
- (iv) that we should confirm that, like the previous Government, we accepted the objective of providing 390,000 places in higher education by 1973-74, of which 218,000 should be in universities;
- (v) that we now proposed to adopt the Robbins Committee's objective of making up the total of 390,000 places in England, Wales and Scotland by providing 122,000 in colleges of education and 50,000 in technical colleges.

* Imperial College, the Manchester College of Science and Technology, Strathclyde University.

CONFIDENTIAL

2. He said "with one possible exception" at (i) above because, while there does not appear to be a case purely on grounds of educational need for the creation of a new university institution, there may well be strong arguments for it in the interests of regional development. I should like to come back with further proposals on this after I have had time to study it further and discuss it with the First Secretary. My colleagues will of course recognise that if we were to decide to provide a major technological institution, say, on Tees-side, it would involve substantial investment over and above our present programme.

3. My predecessor emphasised the importance of a statement on the lines of (i), (ii) and (iii) as a means of putting to an end the great state of uncertainty in the higher education world, and the Committee approved these three proposals. He also urged that we should make an announcement on the lines of (iv) and (v), partly with the object of offsetting what might otherwise be regarded as a negative statement, and partly to allay the fears that (despite our announcement in The Queen's Speech that we were determined to give particular priority to increasing the supply of teachers) we have in fact no intention of increasing the target for the number of teachers in training. This was set, for England and Wales, at 80,000 by 1970 by the previous Government as long ago as January 1963, nearly a year before the Robbins Committee reported.

4. While my colleagues accepted that our statement must contain something positive, some of them demurred over our committing ourselves to anything beyond the general objective of 390,000 higher education places by 1973-74 accepted by the previous Government, and proposed that we should defer any statement on the expansion of the colleges of education until we had completed our study of public expenditure over the next five years.

5. It is known that we have long had the advice of the University Grants Committee and the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy on the points covered at (i), (ii) and (iii) above. Great uncertainty prevails about the Government's intentions. I do not feel that I can wait three or four months before making a statement on these points. But to make one in isolation would be unduly negative.

6. I do not see how we can avoid confirming the previous Government's undertaking to provide by 1973-74 390,000 higher education places, with 218,000 in universities, in Great Britain as a whole. Once we have done this we have committed ourselves to additional investment and the only question is how it should be distributed between teacher training and further education. University places cost most, training college places rather less, and technical college places less still. I am not asking to put up the university figure, but to allocate the 172,000 non-university places as Robbins proposed, with 122,000 to teacher training and 50,000 to further education. This will involve comparatively little fresh

investment before 1970 on the expansion of the training colleges in terms of work done, viz., at most :

						<i>£ million</i>
1967-68	...	...	...	...	...	2.0
1968-69	...	...	...	...	...	7.0
1969-70	...	...	...	...	...	10.5

Additional recurrent expenditure is estimated at £2.6 million in 1969-70.

7. We shall be challenged to say what we are doing to reduce the size of classes and the Opposition know well that even the increase I am proposing will not enable us to get classes down to a reasonable size by 1970 let alone eliminate primary classes over 30. Moreover, the National Advisory Council for the Training and Supply of Teachers are about to advise me publicly that the Robbins target of 111,000 training college places in England and Wales by 1973-74 is quite inadequate, that it should be reached much earlier, and replaced by a new target of 120,000 in England and Wales alone by that date. I can hold the position only if I can show that we are not going to do worse than our predecessors and I repeat that I am suggesting we do no more than fill out the outlines of the policy to which, together with the investment involved, they had committed themselves. I therefore ask for authority to make a Statement after Questions in terms of the draft annexed.

8. There are problems also in Scotland, but I understand from the Secretary of State for Scotland that he would be content to see matters rest for the time being on the basis indicated in the Statement.

A. C.

*Department of Education and Science, W.1,
28th January, 1965.*

DRAFT STATEMENT ON HIGHER EDUCATION

Q. To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Science whether he has any statement to make about the development of higher education.

A. Yes, Sir.

The Government have now considered the recommendations of the Robbins Committee for the expansion of teacher training places, the creation of additional universities, and the designation of Special Institutions for Scientific and Technological Education and Research.

The Robbins Committee recommended a 10-year programme designed to provide by 1973-74 390,000 full-time higher education places in universities, colleges of education and technical colleges in Great Britain.

The last Government accepted this objective and promised to provide the necessary resources.

The Government confirm that they accept the objective of 390,000 places in higher education by 1973-74, and that of this total 218,000 places should be in universities.

The Government now propose to adopt the Robbins Committee's further objective that 122,000 of the remaining places should be in colleges of education.

This will double the number of students now in the colleges. It will also leave room for a large increase in the number of students in further education institutions.

These measures will not only contribute significantly to the widening of educational opportunity which was promised in the Gracious Speech; they will also secure a further large increase in the output of teachers for our schools.

I shall keep the whole subject of teacher-supply under close review and I look forward to receiving shortly the next report of my National Advisory Council on the Training and Supply of Teachers.

On the question of new universities, the Government have considered the advice given by the University Grants Committee, and it is now clear that the target of 218,000 university places in 1973-74 is well within the capacity of existing universities and other institutions of university status.

As the House knows, the Colleges of Advanced Technology and the Central Institutions in Scotland are all being given university status and will be brought fully within the ambit of the University Grants Committee on 1st April next.

The Government have, therefore, decided that no additional universities or accessions to university status will be needed for about 10 years, with one exception. They are actively considering the possibility of creating within that period a completely new technological university institution in the North-East.

CONFIDENTIAL

5

The Government will of course examine well before the 10 years are up the possibility that more universities may be needed thereafter.

The Government have also considered, with the advice of the University Grants Committee and the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy, the important recommendation of the Robbins Committee that five institutions should be developed and designated as a category of superior institutions to be known as Special Institutions for Scientific and Technological Education and Research.

They wholly accept the principle of selective development and expansion of technological education at a high level. They consider, however, that this will be best achieved not by creating a separate category within institutions of university status, but by continuing the build-up of the three specialised institutions named by the Robbins Committee (Imperial College, London, the Manchester College of Science and Technology, and Strathclyde University). These will be given priority in the provision of finance, both capital and current; and, as I have said, the creation of a new technological university in the North-East is being urgently examined.

But the Government do not accept the recommendation to select one out of the 10 Colleges of Advanced Technology for special treatment; and they have decided, on balance, against giving any institutions a special designation as "S.I.S.T.E.Rs."

The House will see that the Government accept the substance of the Robbins Committee's proposals on this matter. But, as to method, they prefer to encourage and expand the many promising developments in the technological departments of other universities, including colleges of advanced technology and they wish to prevent the false impression arising that a first-class technological education is only available in a small handful of institutions.

The Government will keep the whole development of higher education under review.

CONFIDENTIAL



