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CABINET

TEACHERS : SUPPLY IN THE 1960s

MEMORANDUM BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

The Educational Policy Committee have invited me to submit to the Cabinet my proposals for increasing the number of training college places along with my proposals for a drive in education (C. (58) 148). It was felt that there would be advantage in their being considered together, though I must emphasise that more training college places are needed whether or not we have a forward drive. The Committee also thought that the Cabinet should consider the timing of an announcement about the expansion of the training colleges.

2. A year ago we decided that the course in the teachers' training colleges should be lengthened from two to three years, beginning with the intake in September 1960. At the time we calculated that, even without enlarging the training colleges, we should get enough teachers to make a start with reducing the size of classes. We then envisaged a teacher force of 285-290,000 in 1964.

3. Three factors have combined to upset this calculation—increased retirements, especially among married women teachers, another rise in the birthrate, and an unexpectedly large increase in the number of pupils staying on at school after 15. The result is that even on the most optimistic assumptions we shall be in 1968 not less than 30,000 short of the number needed to eliminate over-large classes, without allowing anything for such reforms as the raising of the school leaving age to 16.

4. Steps have already been taken to increase the number of students in the training colleges this year and next, mainly by crowding up in existing buildings. But this can make only a small contribution. Some permanent expansion is, therefore, essential. I have already announced a first instalment of 2,500 additional places and I now propose a second instalment of 9,500.

5. The National Advisory Council on the Training and Supply of Teachers will be recommending an even larger expansion, 16,000 in all, but I do not consider that it would be feasible to do so much work in the time, and expansion on this scale would mean extending small colleges which would have no eventual place in a rationalised system of training colleges.

6. I realise that even the programme I am suggesting makes a considerable demand on the Exchequer and that account will have to be taken of this in the investment review. The Educational Policy Committee have therefore considered whether it would be feasible to abandon or defer the introduction of the three year course or introduce it by stages.

7. The conclusion we have come to is that none of these alternatives is feasible, that we should adhere to our declared intention of introducing three year training in 1960, and expand the training colleges by a minimum of 12,000 places. This will not produce more than 285,000 teachers in 1964, and, although the teacher force will grow faster in the later 1960's than we had in mind last year, we shall still do no more than keep in step with the larger number of children we now know will be in the schools.

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8. My colleagues on the Educational Policy Committee thought that there might be advantage in delaying an announcement until the early autumn. My own view is that it would be unwise to wait so long. Besides the need to get on with the building quickly if it is to be finished in time and take advantage of the sense of urgency which at present exists, an immediate announcement would gain us the maximum credit and make it easier for us to rebut the charge that we are not only doing less than is required but also doing it too late. At any time we are likely to be pressed to show our hand and the longer we delay the more likely we are to lose the initiative we now have.

9. To sum up, I ask the Cabinet to agree—

- (i) to a second instalment of permanent expansion of the training colleges of 9,500 places (making 12,000 in all), at a capital cost of £12·5 millions spread over the period 1959–62, to be put in hand at once. Of this, assuming the present distribution between rates and taxes, and also a higher rate of grant for the voluntary training colleges, £8 millions will fall on the Exchequer, £3·5 millions on the local authorities and £1 million on the voluntary bodies. (The additional running costs will rise by 1962–63 by about £5 millions, of which about £3·5 millions will, on the basis of the present grant formula, fall on the Exchequer);
- (ii) to an immediate announcement.

G. L.

*Ministry of Education, W. 1,
11th July, 1958.*