22nd November, 1958

CABINET

SOCIAL INVESTMENT: EDUCATION

Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Scotland

With his memorandum (C.(58) 239) the Minister of Education has circulated a draft White Paper setting out his proposals for educational advance in England and Wales during the next five years.

2. I now circulate a similar draft White Paper with corresponding proposals for Scotland. At one time we thought it might be desirable to have a single White Paper with separate sections for England and Wales and for Scotland. We found, however, that although the advances proposed in the two countries are based on the same principles the practical problems that have to be tackled differ in such a way that they can most conveniently be dealt with in separate documents.

3. There is only one material point of difference in presentation between the two drafts. I have included in paragraph 17 of the Scottish draft a reference to the decision, which the Minister of Labour is announcing on 26th November, to grant indefinite deferment to all trained teachers. The Minister of Education has made no corresponding reference in his draft. I trust that my colleagues will agree to the line I have taken on this in the Scottish Paper. It is on staffing that our proposals can be least precise and convincing, and inevitably it is on this aspect that criticisms of our educational policy will be concentrated. I feel strongly that our proposals will carry more conviction if the decision to extend deferment is presented as a major step in our efforts to tackle the problem of increasing our teaching resources, a problem which is particularly acute in Scotland.

4. The figure for capital expenditure in paragraph 21 is in accordance with the agreement reached with the Treasury on the amount of capital investment available for education in Scotland from 1960/61 onwards.

5. I should be glad to have the approval of my colleagues to the publication of the White Paper for Scotland along with that for England.

J.M.

Scottish Office, S.W.1.

21st November, 1958
Education in Scotland
The Next Step

Presented to Parliament by the Secretary of State for Scotland
by Command of Her Majesty
1958
EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND

THE NEXT STEP

1. Early in 1956 the Government announced their plans for the development of technical education, which involved in Scotland a programme of capital expenditure amounting to £12m. over the next five years largely on the provision by education authorities of new local technical colleges but also on extensions of the existing central institutions. Since then the Government have also announced proposals for a considerable expansion of the universities. If the fullest benefit is to be derived from these measures, it is essential that the pupils leaving our secondary schools should be adequately equipped to take full advantage of the extended facilities. During the next few years the increase in the number of pupils in our primary schools which has been a feature of recent years will fall off considerably, although rolls will again begin to rise in the late '60s. This easing off in numbers appears to the Government to provide a suitable occasion to review the position and to put in hand measures to stimulate further advance, particularly in secondary education. This Paper describes the measures that the Government propose to take in Scotland.

PROGRESS SINCE THE WAR

2. The principle first laid down in the 1945 Act that every child should receive education in accordance with age, ability and aptitude has proved of particular importance for secondary education. All courses for pupils of about the age of 12 and over had indeed been organised as secondary courses since 1939, but, so long as pupils could leave school at 14 and so long as many remained in the primary school well beyond the age of 12, the period of secondary education received by the great majority was so short as to deprive it of much of its value. The raising of the school leaving age to 15 in 1947, together with the acceptance of the principle that all pupils should be transferred from the primary to the secondary school by the age of 12 at latest, ensured that many more pupils received at least three years of secondary education than the small minority who had done so in the past. Whereas in 1947 less than a sixth of all pupils leaving school had completed at least three years of secondary education, in 1958 well over a half did so, and in some areas where pupils had been transferred timeously the proportion exceeded three-quarters.

3. Over the same period the number of pupils voluntarily remaining at school beyond the age of 15 has increased by nearly half. Within this group, the number of pupils of 17 years of age and over has risen from 5,250 in 1951 to 7,319 in 1958, an increase of about 40 per cent. These increases are reflected in the number of candidates in the Scottish Leaving Certificate examination, normally taken at the age of 17, which has risen from 10,286 in 1951 to 14,009 in 1958, an increase of 36 per cent. Over the same period the number presented in a group of subjects broadly equivalent to that required for university entrance increased by 14 per cent.

4. In the field of further education the principal development has been the increase in the number of part-time day students released from employment from 5,000 to 31,000 over the last ten years, a rate of progress which must, however, be greatly exceeded in the years ahead. There has also been a notable rise from 2,000 to 5,000 in the number of students pursuing full-time pre-vocational courses, covering a variety of occupations, e.g. engineering, building and nursing. At the more advanced levels of further education,
including the universities, the number of students in Scotland had always been relatively very high, and increases have been on a relatively more modest scale. Nevertheless, the total number of students in the central institutions and the universities is now more than a third above the pre-war figure.

5. The advances in our schools described above have been achieved at a time when rolls have been inflated as a result of the higher post-war birth rate and when numerous additional schools have had to be provided to serve the extensive new housing areas. These factors have given rise to heavy demands for new buildings and additional staff. New school accommodation has been provided amounting to 288,000 places, corresponding to nearly one-third of the whole school population. Although it has so far been necessary to defer the replacement of existing buildings which fall short of modern standards, the Government have been able to allow education authorities in Scotland to proceed without delay with every building project required to meet the needs arising from higher school rolls and from new housing areas. Moreover, the school buildings of today, while planned more economically than a decade ago, are better designed for their purpose and afford pleasant working conditions which have proved stimulating to both teachers and pupils.

6. Since the war there has been a steady demand for additional teachers arising from the increased number of pupils, due first to the raising of the leaving age (which created a special demand for secondary teachers) and then to the higher birth-rate since the war, and from the wider choice of subjects offered in secondary schools. The number of certificated teachers in public and grant-aided schools in Scotland has been raised from 28,500 in 1947 to 35,000 in 1957, an increase of nearly a quarter. At the same time the average number of pupils to each certificated teacher has fallen from 26-0 to 24-3. In spite of the high standards of academic and professional training long established in Scotland—a university degree for men teachers and three years of training for all non-graduate women teachers—the number of teachers is increasing year by year and continues to receive a useful augmentation through the Special Recruitment Scheme designed to attract recruits from other walks of life. Nevertheless, many more teachers are needed in order to keep pace with rising secondary rolls, to staff the new technical colleges, and to effect such necessary improvements as reducing the size of classes and replacing teachers who are not certificated or are past retiring age.

7. The advances made in our schools cannot be adequately measured in terms of numbers alone. In the primary school, in spite of such adverse conditions as large classes and buildings that often fall short of modern standards, there has been a welcome development in the use of progressive techniques of teaching, including group and individual methods. Now that the secondary schools have, for the first time, to provide for all and not for a selected few, much has been done to foster a broader conception of secondary education which recognises the diversity of talents and needs and the physical and aesthetic as well as the intellectual aspects of personality. Such subjects as handwork, homecraft, drama, art and music now have a much more assured place in the school, and there has been a remarkable development of school societies and other activities that complement the work of the classroom and make for a vigorous corporate life. Much attention and experiment have been devoted to the special problems of junior secondary education, where considerable progress has been made in developing distinctive aims and methods related to the needs of the pupils, both as young people with their own present interests and as the citizens, workers and parents of the future.
THE TASKS AHEAD

8. Looking ahead to what is still to be done, the Government have come to the conclusion that, if every pupil is to be able to pursue to the limit of his capacity an education suited to his individual needs, the most urgent requirement is to make available to all the widest possible range of second courses, adequately staffed by suitably qualified teachers and with buildings and equipment that satisfy modern standards. On the side of organisation, this does not call for a complete recasting of Scottish secondary education but rather for certain adjustments designed to ensure that the system is really fulfilling its accepted aims and, in particular, that it is properly co-ordinated with further education.

The organisation of secondary education

9. Secondary education is required by the Act of 1946 to be appropriate to the age, ability and aptitude of the pupils and to the period for which they may be expected to remain at school. Accordingly, secondary schools, while aiming at providing a general education, include a wide range of courses varied in content to suit different needs. Courses differ also in duration: junior secondary courses, designed for pupils leaving school at 15, extend normally to three years; and senior secondary courses, intended for pupils remaining at school until 17 or 18, to five or six years. These two kinds of course are provided sometimes separately in junior secondary and in senior secondary schools, and sometimes together in schools organised on comprehensive lines. Comprehensive schools are no novelty in Scotland; they have for long been the normal type in communities of moderate size and have also been provided in some more populous centres. But with the wide differences in geographical conditions and distribution of population found in Scotland, the precise pattern of educational organisation differs from area to area, and sometimes even within the same area, and it will continue to be the policy of the Government that each education authority should be free to adopt the form of organisation which it considers best suited to the particular needs of its area.

SELECTION

10. The allocation of pupils to secondary courses has generally been based on primary teachers' scaled estimates of ability, together with, in most areas, the results of intelligence and attainment tests, and with special consideration for any exceptional circumstances. Parents must be consulted before allocations are made, and authorities have been advised that a pupil should be allowed to embark on the course desired by the parents unless the pupil is manifestly quite unfitted for it. If a parent disputes the education authority's view that his child is not capable of profiting from a particular course, he has the right to appeal to the Secretary of State, but very few parents have felt it necessary to do so. As there is no shortage of places in senior secondary courses, it has in general been possible to admit to these courses all pupils who are likely to profit from them, amounting over the country as a whole to over a third of the total secondary intake. A pupil may be transferred later to another course if his progress in the secondary school justifies it.

11. While selection for secondary courses has not been the subject of widespread controversy in Scotland, there is a general desire that in a matter of such moment to both pupils and parents the method of allocation should be as simple and should bear as lightly on the pupils as is consistent with efficient assessment, and that transference between courses should be possible wherever appropriate. With these ends in view several authorities have experimented with simpler selection techniques and with more flexible forms of secondary
organisation designed to make it easier to meet the needs of pupils as these emerge more clearly during the secondary course. In the eleven years that have elapsed since the Advisory Council on Education in Scotland submitted the recommendations on which the present procedure is based, much practical experience of the problems involved has been gained. The time has now come when a further review of the subject would be profitable, and the Secretary of State accordingly proposes soon to ask the Advisory Council to consider the organisation of secondary courses and the methods of selection for them.

DIVERSIFICATION OF COURSES

12. Even the best arrangements for allocating pupils to secondary courses will be of little avail unless the greatest possible variety of both junior secondary and senior secondary courses is provided in order to match the widely varying abilities and needs found among the pupils. The high proportion of pupils at present admitted to senior secondary courses includes many who find courses of the traditional academic type too exacting and leave school prematurely. Indeed, the problem corresponding to that which has arisen in the secondary modern school in England of making suitable provision for the best of the pupils who have just failed to gain admission to a grammar school arises in Scotland not so much in the junior secondary courses—although it exists there too—as among the less able of the pupils admitted to senior secondary courses. Education authorities and other managers of schools providing such courses will be asked to ensure that the schools make a fresh assessment of their pupils' needs and do all they can to provide courses that really meet these needs.

FOURTH YEAR CERTIFICATE

13. Besides this lack of suitable courses, investigations have suggested that many pupils following senior secondary courses who at present leave school when they reach the age of fifteen do so because they feel that the Scottish Leaving Certificate, for which they cannot at present be presented until the fifth year of the course when they are about 17, is too remote and uncertain a goal. Many of these pupils would probably stay at school if it were possible for them to obtain a Certificate in the fourth year at the age of 16 or so, and at least some, having done so, might be encouraged to remain for a further year and obtain additional passes, some of them possibly on the higher grade. The conditions for the award of the Scottish Leaving Certificate are accordingly being amended to make it possible for a pupil in the fourth year of a secondary course to obtain the Certificate with passes on the lower grade in as many subjects as he is capable of attempting successfully. It is intended to introduce this new lower grade—or ordinary grade, as it will in future be called—in 1961, the earliest date which will give the schools a reasonable period of notice.

CO-ORDINATION WITH FURTHER EDUCATION

14. Secondary education cannot be treated as something complete in itself: properly conceived, it should be regarded as leading on to the various forms of further education. Some education authorities have already made interesting experiments designed to give pupils in the latter years of the junior secondary stage a greater sense of purpose by relating their studies to courses in further education either directly or through school certificates awarded on a local basis, the possession of which entitles the holder to exemption from the first stages of such courses. The Government attach the greatest importance to the closer co-ordination of all kinds of secondary and further education and it will be one of their aims to achieve it in conjunction with the education authorities and other bodies concerned.
ADVANCED STUDIES

15. Important as it is that suitable courses should be provided for secondary pupils of ordinary capacity, it is certainly no less important that the minority of high ability should receive every opportunity and encouragement, both in their own interest and in that of the community, to develop their talents to the utmost. Since the Scottish Leaving Certificate has been awarded on a subject instead of on a group basis, there has been a tendency for many pupils who would formerly have attempted a group of subjects in their fifth year to take only some of these in the fifth year and the remainder in the sixth year. Thus, the sixth year, which was formerly regarded mainly as a “post-certificate year” in which pupils pursued selected studies at a higher level, has come to serve the double purpose of enabling some pupils to add to the number of their higher grade passes and of providing for others the more advanced studies traditionally appropriate to the sixth year. Consultation with educational bodies some years ago on a proposal to introduce a new grade in the Certificate of a more exacting standard than the present higher grade which would normally be taken in the sixth year after a period of more intensive study of selected subjects, revealed considerable divergence of opinion. The matter was not pursued further at that time, but the question still remains whether Scotland can afford to have no national examination of a standard beyond that of the present higher grade, at a time when it is more than ever necessary to carry the secondary education of our young people to the highest possible level. The Secretary of State considers that the matter is of sufficient importance to justify remitting to the Advisory Council on Education the question of the organisation of secondary education beyond the level of the new ordinary grade of the Scottish Leaving Certificate.

Staffing

16. In some areas the size of primary classes is already falling and the decrease in primary numbers in the next few years should afford further relief. The effects of the Government’s measures to improve the supply of teachers are apparent in the increase in the number of graduates entering the training colleges from 695 in session 1957-58 to 805 in session 1958-59, and also in the considerable increase in the non-graduate intake. If the improvement in the supply of primary teachers is maintained, the number of large primary classes will steadily decrease and the Government believe that by the mid-sixties those with more than 40 pupils will have greatly diminished in number.

17. Nevertheless, the passage of the “bulge” into the secondary school and the possible repercussions on staffing of some of the developments proposed in this Paper will mean an increased demand for secondary teachers. It is with this in mind that the Government have decided to grant indefinite deferment from National Service to all trained teachers, a step which will provide a substantial early increase in numbers. They will also consider most carefully the Report of the Advisory Council on Education on the supply of secondary teachers which is expected shortly. A supply of well-qualified teachers is a necessary condition of any educational advance, and the Government intend to maintain and intensify their efforts to obtain more teachers by all practicable means.

A new building programme

18. A basic condition of any further educational advance is that those who work in our schools should be provided with satisfactory physical conditions and with the kind of accommodation and equipment they need
in order to perform their duties efficiently. Two tasks require to be put in hand at once: the modernisation or replacement of out-of-date school buildings, and the improvement of facilities in secondary schools to permit the development of the widest possible range of courses.

MODERNISATION OF OBSOLETE BUILDINGS

19. With regard to the first of these tasks, as education authorities overtake the need for new schools to meet the growing school rolls and movements of population, they will be asked to put work in hand as rapidly as possible on the modernisation or replacement of schools, whether primary or secondary, that are out-of-date and unsuitable for modern requirements. Hitherto they have had to concentrate on the provision of urgently required additional accommodation. In consequence, while some teachers have been able to enjoy the improved facilities and amenities of new schools, others have had to continue to work under unsatisfactory physical conditions, all the more irksome where classes are of excessive size. Scotland has too many schools housed in nineteenth century buildings which remain much as they were when first erected. This is true not only of the towns but also of the rural districts, where the provision of schools that conform to modern standards is an important factor in maintaining the life of the countryside. In some cases the only satisfactory solution will be replacement; in others extension, adaptation and modernisation may suffice. Much work also requires to be done in a large number of schools built in the present century in order to improve sanitary and washing facilities, staff rooms and playgrounds. Teachers and pupils must be given working conditions up to good modern standards in space, lighting, amenities and attractiveness if we are to expect them to give of their best and if we hope to secure the maximum benefit from our educational system.

IMPROVEMENT OF SECONDARY FACILITIES

20. With regard to the second task, where secondary schools do not yet have the best facilities for scientific, technical and practical work of various kinds education authorities will be asked to provide them as soon as possible. Facilities of this kind in the new schools built in Scotland since the war, especially the new junior secondary schools, compare favourably with those in any other country. The task now must be to see that where existing schools are below standard in this respect, the necessary adaptations and improvements are put in hand without delay.

FINANCE

21. To achieve the first of the objectives mentioned above will necessarily be a long task, but it should be possible to attain the second in three or four years if a properly sustained effort is made. The Government are determined that both tasks should be tackled as speedily as possible, and they accordingly intend to authorised between 1960-61 and 1964-65 capital expenditure for school building to the extent of £270m.

22. The Government are confident that education authorities will cooperate with them to the full in their efforts to make good one of the most serious shortcomings in our educational provision—the continued use of out-of-date and unsuitable buildings. Such a step will do much to assure serving teachers of the determination of those responsible to give them conditions worthy of the work they do and to make the educational service more attractive. Authorities will shortly be asked to survey their requirements and to draw up the programmes of work they will be ready to start between 1960-61 and 1964-65.
23. To effect the improvements in our schools outlined in this Paper will require, in addition to the programme of capital expenditure mentioned in paragraph 21, a substantial increase in annual expenditure mainly in order to provide for a greater number of teachers. The Government calculate that by the end of the period under review, i.e. 1964, the increase over the whole educational service will, on today's level of prices, wages and salaries, amount to up to one third of current expenditure. For their part the Government will contribute their share of such a cost, and, in fixing the grant for the first general grant period, they have taken account of the policies proposed in the White Paper. They feel sure that the education authorities will be equally ready to meet the portion of the cost that will fall upon them and to join with the Government in carrying out the advances proposed.

24. These advances are the immediate objectives which must be secured before we can come within reach of extending the compulsory period of education, whether full-time or part-time, as provided for by the Act of 1946. For the present, the Government consider that the available resources should not be dissipated in premature attempts to attain such wider objectives but must be concentrated on securing an advance on a limited front if they are to be effective. More and more young people today want to avail themselves of opportunities for secondary and further education. It is the Government's aim to ensure that the opportunities offered meet all their needs and aspirations.