ENGLISH EDUCATIONAL INTERESTS AND THE ELEMENTARY EDUCATION ACT OF 1870

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PREFACE

From 1869 to 1874 the Gladstone Ministry initiated a number of Liberal measures to increase the happiness of Britons. Among the legislative acts was the Elementary Education Act of 1870, which began a dual system of Anglican and secular elementary schools in England and Wales providing an educational opportunity for millions of children. Before the Education Act received the royal assent the elementary school issue stimulated the activities of educational interest groups. My objective throughout has been to examine the two principal educational interests and their effect on the British government's legislative activity. The study does not claim to be exhaustive, but suggests interest groups had limited influence on government legislation.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The efforts of Anglican educational enthusiasts were a poor match for the almost irresistable indifference of the British middle class. The ruling class of English society, content with laissez-faire and liberalism, gave insufficient support to religious organizations that attempted to provide schooling for the working class. The Elementary Education Act of 1870 was the most significant measure for correcting the situation and ameliorating the inadequate system of schools for the children of the laboring class.

The campaign for the Education Act was not a peaceful affair. Bitter animosity between two rival groups endangered the passage of the Act. The National Education League agitated for a national system of free, compulsory, and unsectarian education. In contrast, the National Education Union counter-propagandized for the preservation of the Church system. The government proposed a politically pragmatic course of action to establish a supplemental school system functioning as a complement to the old Church organization. The purpose of this thesis is to examine the competing interests and their effect on the Elementary Education Act of 1870 and to explain that despite some government concessions to the League and to the Union it was the government's plan that attracted enough votes in Parliament for the measure to pass into law. For the first time in English history Parliament enacted legislation requiring the use of local taxes for a national system of elementary schools.[1]

There are essentially three approaches to the question of educational reform and the 1870 Act: political, religious, and socio-economic. Interpreting it from a political viewpoint, G.M. Trevelyan thought the Education Act was the result of rising Nonconformist political power. According to Trevelyan, before 1867 and the extension of the franchise, a national system of education would have been possible only on conditions favorable to the Anglican Church. After 1867 and the rise of the Nonconformist vote, it became politically necessary to consider their opinions on the matter. Trevelyan thought the government plan of 1870 was better than no national program at all.[2]

In a more recent study of the political issue surrounding the 1870 Act, A.J. Marcham examined the effects of the franchise reform in 1867 and found that Liberals had much more of an educational reform tradition than the Conservatives.[3] Conservatives were hostile to any changes in the status quo. Lord Derby, for example, was against Liberal schemes for rate-aided schools.[4] Liberal reform measures were not succesful before 1870. Up to that time the proof of educational deficiency was not convincing and arguments for improving elementary education focused on the "increasing body of evidence for educational destitution, not on speculations about the effects of the Reform Act, although the extension of the franchise was sometimes used as a supplementary argument."[5]

Historians rarely fail to mention that the Act was a compromise. Keith Evans noted that in the context of the time it was a major triumph to have overcome the monopoly of school provision held by religious organizations such as the Church of England.[6] The government act overcame the hostility of the Anglicans, the hesitancy of Parliament, and the opposition of child employers.[7] Interests within the Gladstone ministry

needed reconciliation; retrenchment and parsimony impeded legislation.[8] The issue of party sentiment could not be ignored. Conservatives were usually opposed to state intervention in education, because they espoused an elitist laissez-faire attitude and it was difficult to overcome their adherence to voluntary school provision. The Liberals showed greater interest in education and the left-wing of the party supported state intervention.[9]

The religious aspect of educational reform received scholarly attention in Marjorie Cruickshank's Church and State in English Education, a study with emphasis on the importance of Church influence on the legislative functions of the state in regards to education.[10] For Cruickshank the religious controversy surrounding the Act was of vital importance. Many Victorians thought education was for the salvation of the soul and the lack of religious instruction meant eternal damnation.[11] This idea was common among most religious groups. Cruickshank indicated that a political and religious schism between Church and Nonconformity that began in the sixteenth century lasted into the nineteenth, and resulting controversies included control of elementary education.[12] Many Anglicans wanted to retain control over the instruction of the working class, but Nonconformists had their own schools and could not accept the idea of state funds flowing into the coffers of Church schools. The state chose a compromise and the settlement satisfied government fiscal policy because it was cheap.[13] The 1870 Act was a fundamentally English approach to a difficult problem. A new system was added to an old system. After 1870 the state committed itself to providing only for the secular requirements in schooling.[14]

Socio-economic interpretations of the 1870 Act take into account the

influence of the working class on educational reform and the duty of the state to provide schooling. Evans wrote that working class agitation had an influence on political attention to education for children of the laboring class.[15] The expansion of the franchise in 1867, according to Evans, made it necessary to build up an educated working class electorate.[16] Nevertheless, the working class, over whose children the battle was fought, had little to say in the matter: the fight was essentially between sections of the middle and upper classes.[17]

The Education Act is not without its Marxist and socialist interpreters who base their conclusions on socio-economic foundations. Brian Simon claimed that the working class became organized and, influenced by the middle class, began to call for a national system of education.[18] Charitable institutions forced the reliance of the people upon the wealthy capitalists and the schools were nothing more than pulpits for sectarian religious propaganda.[19] The interference of religious bodies and the wealthy hindered the education of the masses.[20] Election reform suited the Liberal scheme of improvement, but it was the agitation of the working class that caused the Reform Act of 1867.[21] The elite feared giving the vote to the workers because they might destroy culture, patriotism, and property.[22] Disraeli and the Tories feared working class demonstrations and passed the Reform Bill.[23] The Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners pressed for a national system of elementary schools and even industrial capitalists requested education for the workers in an effort to match foreign competition.[24] Simon maintained the old idea that the Reform Act of 1867 created new conditions which stimulated the drive for an education act. The call for education was part of the continuing struggle for socialism and, "from the moment of the repeal of

the Corn Laws, the capitalists could in fact, take no step which was not conditioned by the attitude of the working class."[25] David Wardle's English Popular Education was an attempt at providing a theoretical structure of explanation for the history of English education.[26] Based on an analysis of class attitudes Wardle's thesis was that the lower class supported collectivist schemes, while elites proclaimed the virtues of laissez-faire.[27] Upper class utilitarians believed that a man should be responsible for himself in all matters and that state intervention in his affairs was morally objectionable. According to Wardle, this attitude stood in the way of a national system of education.[28] Proof of the unpopularity of individualism among the working class was the existence of friendly societies and the Trade Union Congress: laissez-faire was never a universal creed, especially among the laboring class.[29] Wardle thought the Education Act symbolized the change in government policy from individualism to collectivism.[30]

A controversial book by E.G. West, an economist, questioned the need for the Education Act.[31] West argued that the statistics used by the government to form judgments about the need for a national system were faulty. If the Education Act had failed to pass in the House of Commons the results would not have been as devastating as was popularly imagined.[32] According to West, political literacy only required a working knowledge of the British constitution, and before the Education Act most Englishmen achieved political literacy through their own efforts. The government tried to sabotage these efforts through state intervention in schooling.[33] West thought there should have been less government control and more freedom for the individual.[34] W.P. McCann confuted West's supposition that the statistics of the government were improperly

used. Henry Roper supported McCann's findings.[35] In his examination of attendance data, McCann concluded that while it was true the government statistics were never corroborated they were all the government had available in the 1860s.[36] Roper thought the motivation for the Education Act was a widespread discovery of educational deficiencies and an awareness of schooling destitution in urban areas which led to a questioning of the voluntary system and a call for legislative action.[37]

Most of the historical literature alludes to the function of compromise and the need for reform in the elementary school crisis. There is, however, a need for further consideration of the competing educational interests involved in the campaign for reform of the elementary education system. The present study is an interpretation of the Education Act with an emphasis on interest group conflict and its relationship to government action. Highly vocal interest groups were at work trying to impose their partisan programs on the nation. Although agitation for state intervention came from non-government organizations the Education Act was essentially a government solution to the crisis.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Llewellyn Woodward, The Age of Reform (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979), p. 483.

[2]G.M. Trevelyan, British History in the Nineteenth Century and After (London: Longmans, Green, 1947; first edn. 1922), p. 353.

[3]A.J. Marcham, "Educating Our Masters: Political Parties and Elementary Education, 1867-1870," British Journal of Educational Studies XXI (June 1973):181-191.

[4]Ibid., p. 181.

[5]Ibid., p. 187.

[6]Keith Evans, The Development and Structure of the English Education System (London: University of London Press, 1975), p. 33.

[7]Ibid., p. 34.

[8]Ibid., p. 4.

[9]Ibid., p. 8

[10]Marjorie Cruickshank, Church and State in English Education (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963).

[11]Ibid., p. 21.

[12]Ibid., p. 1.

[13]Ibid., p. xv.

[14]Ibid., p. 37.

[15]Evans, Development and Structure, p. 7.

[16]Ibid., p. 29.

[17]Ibid., p. 9.

[18]Brian Simon, Studies in the History of Education, 1780-1870 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1960), p. 14.

[19]Ibid., p. 343.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., p. 353.

[22]Ibid., p. 355.

[23]Ibid., p. 354.

[24]Ibid., p. 360.

[25]Ibid., p. 366.

[26]David Wardle, English Popular Education, 1780-1970 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. viii.

[27]Ibid., p. 15.

[28]Ibid., p. 3.

[29]Ibid., p. 16.

[30]Ibid., p. 18.

[31]E.G. West, Education and the State: A Study in Political Economy (London: Institute of Economic Affairs, 1970; first edn. 1965).

[32]Ibid., p. xvii.

[33]Ibid., p. 42.

[34]Ibid., p. 77.

[35]Henry Roper, "Toward an Elementary Education Act for England and Wales," British Journal of Educational Studies XXIII (June 1975):181-208.

[36]Ibid., p. 184. See W.P. McCann, "Elementary Education in England and Wales on the Eve of the 1870 Education Act," Journal of Educational and Administration History II (1969-1970):20-29.

[37]Ibid., p. 203.

CHAPTER II

THE STATE OF ELEMENTARY EDUCATION BEFORE 1870

In 1818 Lord Brougham's Select Committee on the Education of the Lower Orders of Society described England as the worst educated country in Europe. Only one quarter of England's children were receiving some sort of education. The landed aristocracy preferred to keep the lower orders of society in ignorance, according to Keith Evans.[1] The lack of educational facilities was a constant problem in England until the Elementary Education Act of 1870. Until that time, and until the state took a greater responsibility for the education of the lower orders of society, the working class received education from voluntary bodies.

In the years antedating the Education Act class bias and religious influence were the two most significant factors in determining the education of English children. Each of the three broad categories of social rank, working class, middle class, and upper class, had their own educational institutions. Elementary schools were for the children of the working class. The middle class sent their children to endowed grammar schools, and the upper class shipped their offspring to the public schools.[2] The majority of schools, regardless of class bias, were affiliated in some way with a religious organization. Indeed, the middle and upper classes were religiously minded, if church attendance is proof of religiosity. The 1851 census revealed high church attendance for the latter, but in urban areas the attendance figures for the working class were low;

they were religiously apathetic.[3] For their children a legislative battle would be fought, and the combatants would come from the middle and upper classes. The working class, over whose children the contest was fought, had relatively little influence in the matter.[4]

The Anglican Church would be one of those combatants for it was the most influential education interest in England. Inspired by a desire to save souls, the Church of England claimed the right to educate every child in the United Kingdom. They believed in the denominational principle that every elementary school should be under the supervision and direction of the Established Church.[5] Nonconformists disagreed with this notion and after 1814 many of them patronized their own schools of the British and Foreign School Society.[6] The auxiliary unit responsible for Anglican proselytization of the working class was the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church. The National Society wanted to exclude the government from any involvement in the management of schools. They would, however, accept funds from the government, if there were no conditions attached.[7] Thus, from the early nineteenth century the field of education served as a battle ground for sectarian rivalry. Nonconformists did not like the self-proclaimed Anglican hegemony in elementary education.[8] Joseph Lancaster, a prominent Nonconformist, blamed sectarian rivalry for the lack of a national school system.[9]

The philosophical concepts of utilitarianism were also a barrier to a national system. Utilitarians believed in the freedom of the individual and this determination for self-reliance impeded the development of elementary education. Man was to be self sufficient and it was morally objectionable that the state should intervene in his affairs.[10] The 1834

Poor Law serves as an example of this attitude. Workhouses for the unemployed were intended to be slightly more desirable than starvation. The destitute were not considered assiduous enough in their lives and their failure was a reason for the punishment of the workhouse.[11] It is extremely doubtful that the working class ever believed in laissez-faire or utilitarianism.[12] In the opinion of strict Free Traders the state should not interfere in education.[13] An illustration of this laissez-faire position is taken from the Economist, 1 February 1851:

> Schooling must be sought from self interest and obtained from self exertion. With the question of the poverty of the people, which precludes them from getting education, we have no concern; but it may be feared that education may help to keep them in poverty and dependence. We think they should be left to provide education as they provide food for themselves.[14]

The ethos of individual effort virtually prohibited state intervention in education and encouraged a cheap system of education. Until 1833 elementary schools were voluntary institutions, receiving operating expenses from parental fees, charitable subscriptions, and money from church organizations. The schools were an expanded Sunday School system, and the method of teaching in both Anglican and Nonconformist schools was the monitorial system.[15] One school master trained several monitors, or pupil teachers, who in turn taught lessons to younger students. The poverty of the elementary schools necessitated adoption of the monitorial system, because it eliminated the need to hire additional teachers.[16] There were several drawbacks to the method, for example, it was a low quality system; teaching standards were poor; the classes were large; and educational ideals were minimal at best. The schools employed mechanical teaching methods in the only subjects available: reading, writing, and arithmetic.[17]

State influence in the elementary schools of England began in 1833, when Parliament initiated a program of annual grants to voluntary elementary school organizations. The grant, disbursed from Treasury funds, was for voluntary groups that could provide 50 per cent of the total building cost of a new school and guarantee that operating expenses would be paid by the voluntary body. State aid was therefore limited to those localities with sufficient interest and financial resources to meet half the cost of a new school.[18] While it is true that grants were available, it is also true that the government had no authority to establish schools. The state helped those who could help themselves; those who could not help themselves went without education.[19] The government routed grants through the National Society (receiving 80 per cent) and the British and Foreign School Society (receiving 20 per cent).[20]

An important phase in state influence in education began in 1839 with the establishment of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education. The Committee of Council was responsible for developing regulations and administering the Parliamentary grants. Created by royal prerogative to escape religious interference and bickering, the Committee of Council was therefore not responsible to Parliament.[21] Committee members were the Lord President, the Lord Privy Seal, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the Home Secretary. The real work was under the direction of the Secretary of the Committee.[22] The immediate accomplishments of the Committee were the development of the grant system to Anglican, Nonconformist, and Roman Catholic beneficieries; the establishment of Her Majesties Inspectorate, responsible for reporting on school conditions; the adoption of the pupil-teacher system; and, the founding of teacher training colleges.[23]

Under the Secretaryship of Dr. James Kay-Shuttleworth, the respon-

sibilities of the Committee of Council increased enourmously. The original Parliamentary grant of 1833 was twenty thousand pounds, but by 1861 the annual grant increased to eight hundred thousand pounds.[24] The Committee became an administrative center for the disbursement of grants to thousands of teachers and school managers. The link between the schools and the Committee was Her Majesty's Inspectorate (HMI), which assured proper use of state funds.[25]

There were some notable disappointments during the Secretaryship of Kay-Shuttleworth in the 1840s and 1850s. A fully state operated teacher training college did not become established until 1902, due to the opposition of Anglican clergymen who wanted to maintain their administrative control of the older state funded colleges.[26] Poor urban areas in the west and north of England were unable to generate 50 per cent of building costs for new schools; they remained educational wastelands. A Factory Bill introduced in 1843 proposed a remedy to this problem, but the schools would have been under the control of the Church of England. The legislation failed because Nonconformists rejected it. They began the "voluntaryist" movement, which held as its chief tenet the duty of the people to refuse state aid to religious educational organizations.[27]

Parliament exercised little supervision over the Committee of Council, and to correct this situation the legislature created the Education Department in 1856.[28] The officer responsible to Parliament and who maintained de facto control over the new department was the Vice-President of the Committee of Council.[29] The Education Department formulated regulations, published annually, and had to justify every pound sterling distributed to the thousands of schools in Britain.[30]

In 1858 a royal commission investigated the state of education in

England and made recommendations for improvement in its report of 1861. The Newcastle Commission's report was a great stimulus to the development of elementary education in the nine years before the introduction of the Education Bill. Henry Pelham, Duke of Newcastle, chaired the commission, which was to inquire "into the present state of popular education in England and to consider and report what measures, if any, are required for extension of sound and cheap elementary instruction to all classes of the people."[31]

The Commission found the total population of England and Wales in 1858 to be 19,523,103. Of this total the number of children who ought to have been in school was put at 2,655,767. The number of children actually in attendance was 2,535,462, leaving 120,305 children without education. The children of the poorer classes amounted to 2,213,694 of the above mentioned school age children.[32] The Commission affirmed that there had been great progress in education since the beginning of the century. In 1803 elementary pupils made up approximately one in seventeen of the total population, while in 1858 the ratio stood at one in seven.[33]

Despite this encouraging statistical picture there were 573,436 children in private schools of a very poor quality. Much remained to be done. The state gave assistance to 6,897 schools with 900,000 pupils, while 15,750 schools were without such aid, leaving about 600,000 students out of the grant system.[34] Also, from the evidence of HMI, only one in four students received a good education.[35] Far too great a number of scholars left school without a sound knowledge of reading, writing, and arithmetic.[36]

The Commission considered the education systems of other countries and found them less satisfactory than the English model and the program of Parliamentary grants. The majority opinion favored the grant method

of state assistance. The minority opinion rejected the idea of state aid and favored a gradual withdrawal of the grant progam, but realized that after twenty-nine years in operation it would be impracticable to dismantle it.[37] In its opinion the Commission did not view favorably the program of compulsory attendance extant in Prussia, because it went against English traditions of politics and religion.[38] The American common school system was not desirable either. In the USA there was no established church which claimed authority in matters of education. Also, in the United States there was less class distinction and people supported the common schools because they used them. The same situation did not obtain in England; English schools were class biased.[39] The voluntary system needed expanding, but the problem was how to improve the apportionment of public aid to private bodies. For the Commission and the English public, the private bodies had to be religious because religion was thought inseparable from education. Based on previous response, any undenominational system would provoke extreme opposition from the Church.[40]

The recommendations of the Newcastle Commission ultimately initiated a "payment by results" system of grant allocation. The plan for modifying the voluntary program included funding schools from Parliamentary grants and county rates. The county would grant funds from its rates and the schools in reciept of the money would have to demonstrate a certain level of proficiency in the academic work of the pupils. Each county and borough of over forty thousand inhabitants was to have a Board of Education.[41] The function of the boards would be to examine students and assign grant aid according to the degree of excellence achieved by the students.[42] To relieve the administrative burdens of the Committee of Council, the grants would be sent to school managers and not to indiv-

idual teachers.[43]

It remained for the Vice-President of the Committee of Council, Robert Lowe, to implement the Commission's recommendations. In the opinion of Henry Holman, a Victorian authority on education, Lowe was "the evil genius of beggarly elements and payment by results," a program which "blighted and withered teachers and scholars."[44] Lowe did not, by law, have to modify the regulations of the Education Department in accordance with the recommendations of the Newcastle Commission, but he did institute some important changes. He did not accept the idea of rate aided schools, but resolved the bureaucratic muddle in his department by making annual grants dependent on the results of inspected examinations and school attendance.[45] The previous scheme forced the Education Department to rely heavily on the impressionistic reports of HMI. The motive for the changes made by Lowe was fiscal. Due to the expenditure by the government on the military there was greater need on the part of government departments for parsimony.[46] Lowe said his department was not interested in improving the quality of education and that he wanted to fix a "minimum of education, not a maximum."[47] Instead of a vague policy, Lowe instituted a clearly defined statement of retrenchment. The public was to get value for its money. His pronouncement of Education Department policy was the Revised Code of 1861, slightly modified in 1862.

The salient aspects of the Revised Code can be summarized briefly. It was a payment by results plan for allocating the Parliamentary grant. Firstly, it abolished grants for furniture, for books, for pupil-teacher stipends, for teacher's merit awards, and for teacher pensions introduced during the Secretaryship of Kay-Shuttleworth. Secondly, it reduced grants to teacher training colleges and scholarship programs for pupil-

teachers. Thirdly, elementary schools had to earn their grants on the basis of attendance records and examination results for children six to twelve years of age. After implementation of the Revised Code annual Parliamentary grants fell by 23 per cent in the period from 1862 to 1867.[48] See Appendix A.

The Vice-President was proud of the new order, but others were quite hostile to it. With alacrity Lowe and his lieutenants managed to circumvent Parliament by using a departmental minute to implement the new program. The House of Commons was virtually powerless to interfere. An educational scheme involving Treasury funds came into being without interference from politicians and without the advice of men in the field, the inspectors for HMI.[49] Lowe thought the Code was " ' exceedingly ingenious ' " and he prided himself on introducing fear into the classrooms of elementary schools. Fear of penalty was to induce teachers to improve their pedagogical techniques. All Lowe wanted was " 'to have a little Free Trade.' "[50] Notwithstanding, a great protest over the Revised Code stimulated a small pamphlet war and a movement to alter the Code. Parliament changed one part of the Code; children were to be grouped for examination by previous accomplishment, not by age, as Lowe wanted.[51] Matthew Arnold, an inspector with HMI and a widely read social critic, opposed the Code, calling it a "reduction and a prize scheme."[52] He thought civilization could not advance under such a scheme--the lower classes could not enjoy culture and higher ideas with this mechanical approach to education.[53] Arnold's agitation partly influenced Parliament to amend the Code, but it must remain doubtful that MPs could resist a scheme that promised so great a reduction in Treasury expenditure.

The Revised Code had some advantages and disadvantages. Positive

results of the program were increased attandance and reduced administrative burdens on the Education Department. On the negative side the curriculum remained confined to the 3 Rs; teachers became hired drill instructors, attendace officers, and in some cases, register falsifiers; teachers came to regard HMI as an inquisition; and the geographic distribution of schools remained biased towards rural areas. Poor districts could not afford education.[54] See Appendix B.

The Revised Code brought changes, occasionally unpleasant ones, to the elementary schools of England. Teachers saw their duty to provide the minimum, although the Code did not forbid instruction in other subjects. If no grants were forthcoming for other subjects, the teachers had no reason to bother with them. Pupil-teachers were most seriously affected; originally they received a salary directly from the Education Department, but under the Code funds went to the managers only, who then fired as many pupil-teachers as the Revised Code allowed.[55] According to Lowe, teachers were not meant to be ladies and gentlemen, but rather children trained for a life of labor.[56] If Lowe meant to increase the work load of teachers he succeeded, because the average class size increased from 37.7 scholars in 1860, to 43.4 in 1866. The pressure on students and instructors increased, especially when the salary of the teacher depended on the performance of the pupils. It was not unusual for a sick child to be forced into a school to meet the attendance claims on inspection day.[57] Some children learned their lessons by rote and inspectors reported that they found pupils reading from books held upside down.[58] Henry Holman wrote that "Mr. Lowe deserves our thanks for having perpetrated a blunder" which helped the nation to a more effective and cheap education system,[59] "imparting the maximum of the forms of knowledge with the

minimum of meaning."[60]

The operation of the Revised Code improved the finances of the government. The Committee of Council's annual report for 1862 expressed confidence in the new order: "a road has been marked out for the solid and suitable education of the classes who support themselves in independence by manual labour -- no part of the great field of education remains unknown or uncared for. Progress is being everywhere made."[62] Subsequent reports demonstrated that such optimism was not warranted.

From 1862 until 1870 the annual reports made little attempt to hide the problems of the voluntary system. If there was blame to place, the Committee usually saw fit to attribute problems to the shortcomings of teachers and managers. The report for 1863 revealed that extension of improved education to rural areas had been less rapid than to other parts of the country, but at least there was some growth in the system. The difficulty was that small parishes could not meet examination standards.[63] The state could advance no further without sacrificing efficiency.[64] In the 1864 report the Committee proudly displayed a table marking the decrease of grant allocations for the period 1862-1863, the amount saved being fifty-three thousand pounds sterling.[65] The Committee regretted the difficulties caused by the period of transition, but admonished school managers to work harder in order to meet government standards.[66] In 1865 there was more of a demand for certified teachers, but "this is impossible on account of cost."[67] At the same time there were ninety-three pupils per certificated teacher.[68] Small schools suffered most and unaided schools were in a situation "often due to nothing but the want of will to improve it."[69]

The theme of manager and teacher incompetence gained acceptance.

In 1866 examination results continued to indicate retrograde teaching methods. Girls did poorly in arithmetic compared with boys, but girls were often superior in reading skill.[70] The Committee advised teachers to improve their pedagogical skills, yet it is difficult to understand how they could improve when their sole function was to cram students for a successful showing on examination day.[71] The Committee thought unimaginative and dull teaching endangered the entire school system.[72] The report of 1867 opined that inability to comply with the terms of the Code evidenced a lack of will on the part of the managers.[73] Demonstrating a flaw in the voluntary system, the report indicated that success in elementary education depended on public spirit and the interest of clergy and gentry.[74] In many cases it was indeed the country curate in some obscure parish who devoted his time and money to education because nobody else would.[75] Unfortunately, the best efforts of the village vicar were not enough.

By 1869 a change of attitude became apparent in the reports of the Committee. Inspectors, whose investigations filled most of the reports, noted suggestions by school managers that legislative action might help solve their difficulties. Compulsory attendance was one way suggested to correct the inefficiency of schools; but many poor parents kept their children away from school because they could scarcely resist the temptation of adding the smallest sum to the weekly income, especially in rural areas.[76] The 1870 report called for a national system of education; the old voluntary program was not working well.[77] Some problems were in need of reform. The report called attention to the extravagance of paying for inspection of religious teaching; examination standards were too low; and irregular attendance caused learning problems.[78]

That there were problems with the voluntary system was generally accepted, but urban educational difficulties had not been fully explored. An important source for the state of education in urban areas is the "Return Confined to the Municiple Boroughs of Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, and Manchester of All Schools for the Poorer Classes of Children."[79] The return reported on the finances of the schools, their quality, the age and attendance of the scholars, and the religious connection of the schools. J. G. Fitch made an inspection of Birmingham and Leeds, while D.R. Fearon made his report for Liverpool and Manchester. In Birmingham the schools not receiving aid were of extremely poor quality. In one such private school Fitch reported:

> I found forty boys in the upper apartment of a mean and very dirty house. Old newspapers are hung up at the windows as blinds and the aspect of the room is squalid and miserable. The boys are sitting at desks around the room, the large majority amusing themselves with devices on slates, or sitting quite idle. The business of each day consists of learning lessons by heart. But of teaching, I could find no evidence.[80]

Another type of private school was the dame school, often kept by a governess as a source of income. One was described as:

> a school consisting of forty-two children of all ages, from three to fourteen, held in the front room of a small dwelling house, and is so crowded that ten of the little ones are sitting on a staircase. There is no desk or table, so those who write do so on their knees. The mistress is a young woman, known to support a widowed mother.[81]

In Leeds the private schools were also of a poor quality, and Fitch wrote "Of teaching, in fact, there is scarcely any evidence."[82] Proficiency in the 3 Rs was lacking; girls were frequently employed in needlework; religious instruction was almost absent; and the school rooms were ill furnished.[83] The state of education in Birmingham and

Leeds was deficient; more schools were one remedy and the existing ones needed improvement.[84]

D.R. Fearon used a more statistical approach in his investigation of elementary schooling in Liverpool and Manchester, but the results were similar. In Liverpool Fearon discovered a school age population of 90,000. Only 42,000 were on the rolls of inspected schools, and of these, 32,295 were in regular attendance.[85] The number of pupils who qualified for examinations was 15,967 and only 3,231 passed above Standard III, considered attainable at age ten.[86] Only 144 children out of 90,000 passed Standard VI. There were approximately 20,000 children not on the rolls of any school whatever.[87]

Fearon's inquiry at Manchester was equally sobering. Out of 14,360 pupils examined 11,431 could not pass Standard III. Fearon thought inspected schools were the only ones worth visiting and education in this city was of poor quality.[88] The inspected schools did not meet the needs of the poorer class of children and it was not the number of schools but their quality which accounted for the disappointing state of education in Manchester. Of 53,271 school age children (five to thirteen) 40,974 were on the rolls. Actual attendence was 30,863. Fearon calculated that at most there were 20,841 children not receiving an education or attending any school at all.[89]

When W.E. Forster introduced the Education Bill on 17 February 1870, he based the government proposal on statistical information indicating severe educational destitution in Britain.[90] Conservatives and zealous Anglicans immediately questioned his announcement that extreme deficiency existed. The Annual Report of the National Society for 1869 claimed that only a few parishes were without education facilities and denounced

any insinuation that the voluntary system was a failure.[91]

W.P. McCann wrote a study that supported Forster's contention that roughly one and a half million children of school age were without educational facilities. McCann found that the total number of school age working class children in England and Wales for 1868 was 2,531,000 (school age was six to twelve inclusive).[92] Forster said 950,000 pupils were in grant assisted schools, while one and a half million were not. He did not say whether the larger number were in school or in the streets. McCann calculated the total number of children in unaided schools at 1,692,000. This means 839,000 children were not on the registers of any schools.[93] By using a different formula McCann calculated the number of children not attending any schools at 1,523,000 (based on an age group of three to twelve year olds).[94] The 1870 Committee of Council report indicated the number of working class children aged five to thirteen at 3,430,335.[95] The same report found a total of 1,397,379 pupils present on the day of inspection by HMI.[96] Thus, 2,032,956 children were not in aided schools. The total number of children in grant assisted schools in 1869 was 1,797,388.[97] Subtracting the number of children on the registers from the total number of five to thirteen year olds leaves a difference of 1,632,947 children not on the rolls of aided schools. A more conservative difference comes from the subtraction of those present on the day of inspection from the number McCann gave for six to twelve year olds: 1,133,379 not in aided schools. The most conservative estimate is the difference between the figure for six to twelve year olds and those pupils on the registers: 733,112 not in aided schools. Even this most conservative estimate dwarfs the ludicrous deficiency figure of 300,000 put forward by the Tory peer, Lord Robert Montague.[98] Thus,

Forster was not as far off from the truth as his critics claimed.[99]

McCann found a host of problems confronting the education system. Despite fervid protestations to the contrary by Anglicans, there was a school accomodation deficiency of one million places.[100] This meant no accomodation was available for one million children, even if their parents wanted to send them to school. In addition, the time most pupils spent in school was very short. For example, in 1867 only 6.5 per cent of the pupils in the Anglican schools of Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire, and Yorkshire completed the full five year course of study.[101] Pupils in Cambridge, Bedford, and Huntingdon had a school life of two years.[102] Nationally, few made it to the last grade, Standard VI. In 1869 the majority of students were in Standards I and II; only 80,000 pupils took the examination for Standards V and VI; according to age 807,000 children in aided schools should have taken the examination.[103] Only one-ninth of the children aged six to twelve achieved literacy.[104]

English elementary education went through distinct stages of development in the forty years preceeding the Education Act of 1870. Until 1833 popular education for the children of the working class was an affair of religious organizations, supported from charitable donations and parents' fees. In 1833 Parliament began assigning grants to religious societies for the purpose of maintaining education facilities. Oversight of the grant system began with the establishment of the Committee of the Privy Council on Education in 1839. Responding to the recommendations of the Newcastle Commission, Robert Lowe devised the Revised Code of 1861 to increase the efficiency of the Education Department and introduce Free Trade into the classrooms. The denominational school system, although forced to accept some form of standardization, remained

an incomplete answer to the education question. On the eve of the Education Act there was a shortage of one million school places; there was poor attandance; hundreds of thousands of children were not in any schools; and, there was a tradition within the elementary school system of pedagogical mediocrity, if not inferiority.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Keith Evans, The Development and Structure of the English Education System (London: University of London Press Ltd., 1975), p. 15.

[2]Ibid., p. 6.

[3]Ibid., p. 9.

[4]Ibid.

[5]Marjorie Cruickshank, Church and State in English Education (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), p. xiv.

[6]Evans, Development and Structure, p. 11.

[7]Cruickshank, Church and State, p. 5.

[8]S.J. Curtis and M.E.A. Boultwood, The History of English Education Since 1800 (London: University Tutorial Press, 1960), p. 57.

[9]Ibid., p. 50.

[10]David Wardle, English Popular Education, 1780-1970 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 3.

[11]Ibid., p. 4.

[12]Ibid., p. 16.

[13]W.F. Connell, The Educational Thought and Influence of Matthew Arnold (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971; reprint edn. of Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., London, 1950), p. 40.

[14]Ibid., p. 43.

[15]Evans, Development and Structure, p. 17.

[16]Ibid., p. 18.

[17]Ibid.

[18]Ibid., p. 20.

[19]Norman Morris, "1870: The Rating Option," History of Education I (1972): 25.

[20]Evans, Development and Structure, p. 20.

[21]Ibid., p. 139.

[22]Ibid.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Ibid., p. 21.

[25]Ibid.

[26]Ibid., p. 22.

[27]Ibid. The terms "voluntaryist" and "voluntaryism" appear in this thesis and the spelling is of the Victorian era. All Nonconformists were not followers of voluntaryism. Dissent was hardly a united religious organization. Some supported the British and Foreign School Society. Others, the Wesleyan Methodists for example, built their own schools, but accepted state grants. See Marjorie Cruickshank, Church and State in English Education (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), p. 6. The largest voluntaryist group was the Congregationalists. They originally had a connection with the British Society, but broke away over the issue of state aid and formed the Congregational Board of Education. See George C.T. Bartley, The Schools For the People (London: Bell and Daldy,1871), p. 87.

[28]Evans, Development and Structure, p. 140.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers (Commons), 1861, vol. XXI, pt. I, Education Commission, "Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire Into the State of Popular Education in England," p. 1.

[32]Ibid., p. 293.

[33]Ibid., p. 294.

[34]Ibid., p. 295.

[35]Ibid.

[36]Ibid., p. 296.

[37]Ibid., p. 299.

[38]Ibid., p. 300.

[39]Ibid., p. 306.

[40]Ibid., p. 311.

[41]Ibid., p. 331.

[42]Ibid., p. 337.

[43]Ibid., p. 334.

[44]Henry Holman, English National Education (London: Blackie and Son, Ltd., 1898), p. 141.

[45]Connell, Matthew Arnold, p. 204.

[46]Ibid., p. 206.

[47]Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 3rd series, CLXV, 1862, col. 238.

[48]Evans, Development and Structure, p. 25.

[49]James Winter, Robert Lowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 175.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Ibid., p. 179.

[52]Connell, Matthew Arnold, p. 350.

[53]Ibid., p. 213.

[54]Evans, Development and Structure, p. 26.

[55]Holman, National Education, p. 168.

[56]Winter, Lowe, p. 180.

[57]Curtis, English Education, p. 72.

[58]Ibid.

[59]Holman, National Education, p. 171.

[60]Ibid., p. 172. The House of Commons voted to censure Lowe in 1864 because he deprived Parliament of information. Reports from HMI had passages deleted from them, ordered taken out by the Education Department. Lowe resigned from office claiming he was not responsible for the deletions or department policy. After a Parliamentary investigation in 1865 H.A. Bruce said Lowe, as Vice-President of the Committee of Council, was responsible for policy decisions. Winter suggested the real motive for Lowe's resignation was his disappointment at not being promoted in the Ministry. See Winter, Robert Lowe, p. 191.

[61]Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers, 1862, vol. XLII, "Report of the Committee of Council on Education," p. xii. Hereafter

cited as Sessional Papers.

[62]Sessional Papers, 1862, XLII, p. xiii.

[63]Sessional Papers, 1863, XLVII, p. xiv.

[64]Ibid., p. xv.

[65]Sessional Papers, 1864, XLV, p. xiii.

[66]Ibid., p. xvii.

[67]Sessional Papers, 1865, XLII, p. xi.

[68]Ibid.

[69]Sessional Papers, 1865-66, XXVII, p. x.

[70]Sessional Papers, 1867, XXII, p. xxvi.

[71]Sessional Papers, 1867-68, XXV, p. xxiv.

[72]Ibid., p. xxxi.

[73]Ibid., p. xlii.

[74]Ibid., p. xliii.

[75]Sessional Papers, 1868-69, XX, p. xxx.

[76]Ibid., p. xxxiv.

[77]Sessional Papers, 1870, XXII, p. vii.

[78]Ibid., p. xiii.

[79]Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers, 1870, vol. LIV, p. 265. "Return Confined to the Municipal Boroughs of Birmingham, Leeds, Liverpool, and Manchester of All Schools for the Poorer Classes of Children."

[80]Ibid., p. 316-317.

[81]Ibid., p. 319.

[82]Ibid., p. 317.

[83]Ibid., p. 373.

[84]Ibid., p. 388.

[85]Ibid., p. 436.

[86]Ibid., p. 439.

[87]Ibid.

[88]Ibid., p. 421.

[89]Ibid., p. 422.

[90]W.P. McCann, "Elementary Education in England and Wales on the Eve of the 1870 Education Act," Journal of Educational Administration and History II (1969-70): 20.

[91]Ibid., p. 23.

[92]Ibid., p. 24.

[93]Ibid.

[94]Ibid.

[95]Sessional Papers, 1870, XXII, p. xv.

[96]Ibid., p. xi.

[97]Ibid., p. viii.

[98]McCann, "Elementary Education in England and Wales," p. 23.

[99]Ibid., p. 24.

[100]Ibid.

[101]Ibid., p. 25.

[102]Ibid.

[103]Ibid., p. 27.

[104]Ibid., p. 28.

CHAPTER III

LINES OF BATTLE

The rhetoric and organizational skill of two rival interest groups drew the lines of battle in the struggle for elementary education in England. The first group was predominantly Nonconformist and Liberal, the National Education League. The NEL had its strongest support in urban areas such as London, Birmingham, and Liverpool. The NEL leadership was left-wing Liberal, including men like Joseph Chamberlain. Nonconformist ministers such as R.W. Dale worked with determination for the League. The NEL was also very successful in gaining support from trade unionists and labor leaders such as Robert Applegarth. Except for a few knights and baronets, the NEL membership included no titled aristocrats. The second group was the National Education Union, set up to oppose the NEL and to assert the denominational school system. The NEU was a reactionary organization under the domination of Anglican clergymen, peers, Conservatives, and Roman Catholics. With the exception of Roman Catholics, the NEU was an establishment association; the principal characters had ecclesiastical or hereditary titles such as the Duke of Marlborough, Earl of Harrowby, Marquis of Salisbury, and the Bishop of Manchester.

Liberals were active in trying to reform the old voluntary program of elementary education. In sketching the history of these efforts Francis Adams, Secretary of the NEL, maintained that the voluntary system was a program of sectarian interests.[1] Adams placed the NEL in a

tradition of Liberal school reform dating back to 1847 and the Lancashire Public School Association. Under the aegis of Jacob Bright and the Rev. W. McKerrow the Association expanded its efforts and became the National Public School Association. Their plans were for a national system of free schools supported from local rates, managed locally, and offering secular instruction.[2] The movement gained the allegiance of the "best known Liberal politicians in the country."[3]

The Association went to the nation with its proposals. In 1850 W.J. Fox, MP for Oldham, introduced a bill based on the Association plan. In response, the Church party raised the old cry of "religion in danger." Lord Arundel damned the measure and, in Manichean phraseology, determined that it signaled a battle between religion and irreligion, the Church against infidelity, and God versus the Devil.[4] Bishop Ullathorne, a Roman Catholic, denounced the bill saying it would "unchristianize" the country.[5] Anglicans and Roman Catholics joined in opposition to Fox's measure. Their exclusivity was in danger. The current Secretary of the Committee of Council, Kay-Shuttleworth, opposed any system "separate from the superintendence of the great religious bodies of the country.[6] Fox's bill was thrown out on the second reading.[7]

The hopes of educational reformers rose after the death of Palmerston in 1865. According to Adams, Palmerston's Ministry had been a "do nothing, rest and be thankful" government, "a constant wet blanket upon the agitation for domestic improvement."[8] Adams thought the people were "tired of the tinkering process and half measures," and that they wanted a "comprehensive law" for education.[9]

Birmingham proved to be the new center for education reform. George Dixon, mayor of Birmingham, assisted in tne formation of the Education

Aid Society in 1867. The purpose of the Society was to investigate education conditions in the city of Birmingham. They found a shortage of schools and learned that where schools were available many parents could not afford to pay the fees.[10] At a meeting of the Society in Dixon's home the members decided to form a national league to agitate for elementary school reform.[11] The core of the new league's ideology came from the proposals of Jesse Collings who wrote a pamphlet in 1868 entitled An Outline of the American School System. He extolled the common school system of New England with its control by rate payers and the absence of sectarian religious instruction.[12] The new league established branches throughout the nation in urban areas such as London, Manchester, Bradford, Bristol, Bath, Leicester, Sheffield, Liverpool, Leeds, Exeter, Devonport, Carlisle, and Merthyr Tydvil.[13]

The newly formed National Education League began its campaign in October 1869. The aims of the NEL were not complicated. It wanted the establishment of a nationwide system of elementary schools which would secure the education of every child in the country.[14] The means were as follows:

1. Local authorities shall be compelled by law to see that sufficient school accomodation is provided for every child in their district.
2. The cost of founding and maintaining such schools as may be required shall be provided out of local rates supplemented by government grants.
3. All schools aided by local rates shall be under the management of local authorities and subject to government inspection.
4. All schools aided by local rates shall be unsectarian.
5. To all schools aided by local rates admission shall be free.
6. School accomodation being provided, the state or the local authority shall have power to compel the attendance of children of suitable age not otherwise reciving education.[15]

Joseph Chamberlain was one of the most influential persons in the

NEL membership. A manuscript by Chamberlain written in 1867 revealed his thoughts on tne education question and outlined his ideas on the matter. He thought the state must provide for the education of the children; the right to an education should not depend on religious tests; and the right should not depend upon charity or the disposition of parents. A national society to promote these principles should collect information on the condition of schools; defend the society's program in meetings, lectures, and through the Press; and, urge the government to legislate for reform.[16] At this early time, Chamberlain wanted unsectarian and free education for the children of parents unable to pay for it themselves, and that schools for this purpose should be rate supported and supplemented with government grants. The nation, he thought, should not aid sectarian schools.[17]

Another prominent member of the NEL was the Congregational minister R.W. Dale of Birmingham. Before his activity within the NEL, Dale wrote a series of letters for the English Independent in 1867, and in these missives Dale propounded his educational philosophy. Along with Chamberlain and Dixon he advocated the idea of rate supported schools; and he agreed with the principles of the NEL except for the idea of universal free education, because he thought that if education was free for the working class, then it could not be denied to wealthier classes.[18]

The NEL held its first meeting at the Birmingham Exchange Assembly Rooms on 12 October 1869.[19] Dixon, as chairman of the meeting, gave the League definition of "unsectarian" and said it meant "in all schools it should be prohibited to teach the Catechism, creeds, or theological tenets peculiar to particular sects."[20] He thought Bible reading in the schools should be a question for local districts to decide.[21] In

his speech, Chamberlain said "this Imperial realm, while she exacts allegiance, will admit the obligation on her part to teach those who are born to serve her."[22] Condemning the denominational system, George Dawson said sectarian education made as much sense as a sectarian water-cart or a sectarian vaccination. He regarded education as a national right, above denominational interests, and under the supervision of the state.[23]

The Times was generally critical of the NEL's program. It noted the League's uncompromising position and advised "protestations of this kind are seldom made good in the hour of trial," and it would be "mischievious if their decrees could be imposed on a Minister as an ultimatum not to be varied."[24] It was, according to the Times, a "rhetorical absurdity" to say that they would not compromise, for if they did not modify their schemes they would experience utter defeat.[25] Such counsels were prophetic. The NEL did not relent or compromise its program, with unfortunate results.

The Observer was much less critical than the Times. It urged its readers to consider the one-hundred-seventy thousand children in London who received no instruction. A better educated populace would mean a reduction in crime and expenditure on poorhouses and jails. To think of the NEL plan as irreligious was an erroneous assumption, according to the Observer.[26]

Throughout the fall of 1869 and the winter of 1870 the NEL held numerous meetings and lectures across Britain. Most of the meetings attracted favorable response from the audiences gathered to hear the NEL argument. At Dundee the Rev. George Gilfilan said education should be compulsory, for man required to be driven to his own benefit. He thought education should be secular. His own recollections of religious train-

ing in school were of dull "drilled lessons, dog-eared Shorter Catechisms, dirty Testaments, and general disgust."[27] He said he learned more by reading Pilgrim's Progress than in years at school.[28]

Many English artisans shared an interest in the activities of the NEL. At the Leeds Trade Council in January 1870 the delegates resolved that any system of national education should be free, unsectarian, and compulsory.[29] Allen Barraclough, a cabinet maker, said he was a radical secularist and he denounced the clergy because they always endeavored to keep the people in ignorance. He objected to ministers being in the NEL because they always meant to deceive; where there was theology there was tyranny.[30] A Mr. Pickles voiced the minority opinion that the denominational system worked well enough; besides, it was well known that enlightened nations always "sunk into profligacy and debauchery."[31] At a worker's meeting in Birmingham in the same month, Chamberlain spoke to the audience and opined that opponents called the NEL godless. But, at a time when Gladstone was called Judas Iscariot, and Dr. Temple a heretic, the League could afford being labelled atheistic.[32]

Trade unionists were active in their support of the NEL program. Robert Applegarth, leader of the Amalgamated Society of Carpenters and Joiners, wanted education for all sections of the working class, from the skilled artisan to the slum dweller, and even to the idle sots at the lowest end of society.[33] Other union organizations formed auxiliaries in support of the NEL, such as the Manchester Order of Bricklayers, National Association of Miners, and the Operative Bricklayers of Birmingham.[34] Working class meetings in favor of the NEL were held in Leeds, Halifax, London, Leicester, Wolverhampton, and Manchester.[35] In Manchester laboring class opinion was split between the NEL and the NEU.

Conservative and NEU ruffians broke up NEL meetings in Manchester and in nearby Salford.[36] W.P. McCann reported that working men did not want religious instruction for their children to take place in school, but they had few objections to Bible reading during schools hours: the sectarian war being fought in the newspapers and in Parliament did not concern them.[37]

In addition to politicians, Nonconformist ministers, and trade unionists, the NEL drew support from University men. Professor Fawcett spoke at Cambridge in January 1870 on the education question. He said the more anyone studied the social and economic condition of England, the increase in pauperism, and the trade depression, the more it appeared that the nation had to deal with the ignorance that blighted the land. He praised the voluntaryists, but wished they had more success. Fawcett maintained that as it was the duty of every civilized state to educate their children it was no less important than the duty of every parent to clothe and feed their sons and daughters.[38] Speaking after Fawcett, John Macnaught insisted that any labor shortage resulting from children compulsorily attending school would mean an increase in the wages of the parents.[39]

Roman Catholics were not supportive of the NEL. Bishop Ullathorne issued a diatribe against George Dixon and the NEL to a meeting of Roman Catholics assembled in Birmingham. Amid cheers and applause he said Dixon was the dictator of the NEL. The Bishop said the League proposed an unchristian and godless system of education, where all parents would send their children to schools under brutal threats of imprisonment and fines for refusal to obey the NEL scheme. He claimed that Protestants would run the school boards and the schools taught by "Protestants of

the lowest type," who would use the sacrilegious Protestant Bible. For Ullathorne this was unthinkable. The majority of the people, he thought, believed in the "revealed mysteries of religion, expressed in some definite creed" and denominational schools provided that belief. The Bishop said Roman Catholics had to have Catholic schools based on Catholic principles. He anathematized the idea of rate aid to schools, because Catholics would have to pay rates and not receive the benefits.[40]

The Times was quick to point out the errors in Ullathorne's philippic. The bishop's remarks were misrepresentations and misconceptions. His speech, to quote from the Times, was a "model discourse from a Catholic Prelate on a question of public policy," and was "affected with some incurable vice."[41] The Times clarified the NEL position for its readers; working men would be compelled to send their children to common schools only if they did not send them to denominational schools.[42]

The Observer voiced similar comments on Ullathorne's rhetoric. According to the paper, the bishop misrepresented the League program. The NEL wanted to supplement the voluntary system, not replace it. Coercion of the sort Ullathorne outlined was not part of the League plan. The Observer commented that the Catholic clergy preferred children brought up in ignorance rather than they should attend schools not under their control. As in Ireland, the Catholic clergy in England demonstrated their narrow minded bigotry, and the Observer opined that "we may count on the active support of the Roman Catholics to defeat a satisfactory scheme of national education."[43]

A group equally hostile to the program of the NEL was the National Education Union. The NEL caused panic among Anglicans and the Union formed as a reactionary organization to thwart the plans of the NEL, es-

pecially unsectarian schooling.[44] In opposition to the NEL, the Conservatives and Anglican churchmen formed their Union "to counteract the efforts of the Birmingham League, and others advocating secular training only, and the secularization of our national institutions."[45] The NEU membership was aristocratic and the inclusion of moderates such as Cowper-Temple was a feeble attempt to relieve the Tory aspect of the Union.[46] According to Adams, the political composition of the League, in contrast to the NEU, was Liberal and all religious opinions, excepting those of Roman Catholicism, had representation within the organization.[47]

Anglicans long maintained their right to instruct the children of Britain. Tories and Anglican Church hierarchs united in making education an instrument of social control.[48] To devoted Anglicans "the aim of moral and religious education is to provide for the armour of salvation."[49] The National Society Annual Report for 1847 stated the Anglican position on insruction, that "education is not education unless religion is, throughout, its pervading essence."[50] As a means of social control the National Society's concept of the place of religion in school was important, especially for the lower orders. Francis Brown thought "the living energy of religion is requisite for all men, but especially for the poor; it alone enables them to transmute their hard necessities into duties."[51] This medieval concept of religion as the only solace for the laboring person became a dead letter with the advent of legislation aimed at mitigating the condition of the working class. In a consideration of the criticism of the Anglican role in English education Brown wrote "only those of the household of faith can really and to the core properly appreciate the mind and motives of those who built up Christian education in our land during the last century."[52] Those outside the Anglican estab-

lishment could not, and cannot, begin to be sympathetic critics of what the Church achieved, and failed to achieve.[53] Robert Gregory, Treasurer of the National Society, thought Nonconformists were jealous of the sacrifices made and the great "exertions" of the Church in promoting popular education.[54]

Richard Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity helps explain Anglican ideology concerning Church and State relationships. Hooker thought the power to decree rites and ceremonies within the Anglican Church rested in the Crown and Parliament. He thought that "'when a nation, by external profession aknowledges Christ as its Lord and Head the nation becomes a Church. So in the realm of England, the Church and State cannot be described as being in alliance with one another; they are . . . identical.'"[55] In Hooker's opinion, the state represented the Commonwealth in secular affairs, and the Church represented the Commonwealth in spiritual affairs. Ecclesiastical and secular laws alike expressed the will of the nation in its two functions.[56]

Nonconformists rejected the idea of a church and state unity as profaning New Testament claims that the Christian church is a religious organization only.[57] An example of Anglican/Nonconformist hostility regarding the role of the state occurred during the 1850s when the Committee of Council wanted to exempt Dissenters from religious instruction in Anglican schools. The National Society refused to accede to any such demand and announced that the right of conscience could only be given as a favor. This condescending attitude infuriated Nonconformists and increased the animosity between Anglicans and Dissenters.[58] Nonconformists did not object to the idea of religious instruction, although they disagreed about the time and place for it. The problem of religious

instruction in schools was a serious conundrum to any plans for a national system of education.[59]

Many Anglican clergymen had opinions on the education issue. As an example, the Rev. John Oakley thought education was the duty of the state, but its promotion was properly the concern of the Church. Nevertheless, he believed the voluntary system had ceased to function well. Compulsory attendance would help solve the problem, he thought. In addition, Oakley saw education as the only hope for the poor. He wanted the government to declare that children "shall not be born and bred like rabbits, and left to live the lives and die the deaths of rabbits, without at least a chance of being moulded into human beings."[60] Oakley's call for government action may have been a ploy to extract more public funds for Church schools. Oakley wanted denominational schools aided from the rates.[61] Above all, he thought religion should not be taken out of education.[62]

The issue of religious instruction was a favorite topic in the harangues of NEU speakers. They helped make religion one of the most important questions for debate in the months prior to the passage of the Education Act. The NEU persisted in imputing irreligion to the NEL program. The NEL did not want sectarian teaching in any new national system of elementary education. This idea went against the National Society and Anglican philosophy of social control. Therefore, the NEL was to be the object of destruction.

At one of the first NEU meetings in early November 1869 the tirades against the NEL began the battle of the elementary schools crisis. The Earl of Harrowby said the education question was whether or not religion was to be taught in the schools. The statistics showing education-

al deficiency were "fallacious and most absurdly and ridiculously exaggerated."[63] According to the Earl, laboring class parents did not want free schools, and the best idea was to have the state support the denominational system. Lord Montagu stated that religion must be taught in schools "to assure that development of the nobler qualities of mankind, and the subordination of the animal nature." He thought the present system was not a failure; the Committee of Council data raised a "phantasm of educational destitution" where none existed.[64] Other speakers at the meeting made similar remarks, one exclaiming that rate supported schools would mean a loss of religious zeal throughout Britain. Another thought a general adoption of the Manchester Poorhouse Act of 1784 would eliminate the education problem by taking the idle and dissolute children off the streets and educating them in religion and industry. Colonel Akroyd said that after thirty-five years the Factory Acts were finally showing good results, at least in his factories, and that education under the provisions of the Acts was quite satisfactory. He thought sectarian instruction did little harm to children under the age of thirteen because they did not understand what was being said.[65]

A letter written by the Anglican Bishop designate of Manchester, James Fraser, signaled a change in battle tactics. In a dispatch to the Times Fraser expressed his concern over the "opposite tendency of parties" when combination was more desirable. He made the suprising statement that secular education was preferable to the darkness of ignorance, if it had to come to that. He thought there must be some "common ground"for the League and Union to meet on.[66]

Despite the continuing jeremiads about the dangers of the NEL scheme the Church demonstrated a willingness to make concessions. An instance

of concession came during the meeting of the Norwich Church Assembly in February 1870. The Dean of Norwich said Rome and Greece produced high civilization, but also the darkest vice. The palladium of education, said the Dean, was religion, and any legislation on the subject of elementary instruction should require the children of laborers learn the truths of Christianity. In an important statement, F. Walpole said the denominational system needed extension and state aid should be increased for this purpose, but only in extreme cases should the government provide education facilities.[67] "Only in extreme cases" proved to be the loophole which allowed for state intervention in education.

The idea of government provision of schools received endorsement at an NEU meeting in London. The meeting resolved that the government should build and maintain schools where deficiency existed, paid for by grants and rate aid. There was to be local management, but parents already paying for denominational education would be exempt from paying rates for the government schools.[68]

Opposition to the NEL did not cease. The League was still a threat and the religious difficulty loomed ever larger. The London proposals were not acceptable to all NEU members and their ideas about state involvement were not well defined. Who was to decide where deficiency existed? Was sectarian instruction permissible in the schools? Where were the parents of children too poor to afford denominational schools going to find money for higher rates?

The Duke of Marlborough simplified the religious difficulty with an aside into the philosophy of history. The education question reminded him that "events repeat themselves in the course of a series of years." Marlborough said there was a time when it was thought necessary to en-

force religious uniformity and there were some persons who wanted to take away English civil and religious liberty and impose a new uniformity--not one of religion, but of no religion. The Duke admonished his listeners to follow the principles "given to you in the words of Holy Writ, to fear God and Honour the King."[69] For the Duke it was simply a question of whether or not persons wanted education based on religion.

During the fall of 1869 and the winter of 1870 two well organized education interest groups formed and engaged in acrimonious debate over the future of elementary school provision in Britain. The NEL demanded the government establish a national system of schools, free, rate aided, compulsory, and nonsectarian. To defend the assumed superiority of the extant denominational program Anglicans formed the NEU. The Gladstone ministry could not initiate legislation wholly favorable to either side.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Francis Adams, History of the Elementary School Contest in England (London: Chapman and Hall, 1882), p. 147.

[2]Ibid., p. 152.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid., p. 154.

[5]Ibid.

[6]Ibid., p. 156.

[7]Ibid., p. 154.

[8]Ibid., p. 176.

[9]Ibid., p. 192.

[10]Ibid., p. 196.

[11]Ibid., p. 197.

[12]P.N. Farrar, "American Influence on the Movement for a National System of Public Education in England and Wales, 1830-1870," British Journal of Educational Studies XIV (1965): 43.

[13]Adams, School Contest, p. 198.

[14]W.F. Connell, The Educational Thought and Influence of Matthew Arnold (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971; reprint edn. of Routledge & Kegan Paul, London, 1950), p. 135.

[15]Ibid.

[16]J.L. Garvin, The Life of Joseph Chamberlain, 6 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1935), I:92-93.

[17]Ibid.

[18]A.W.W. Dale, The Life of R.W. Dale of Birmingham (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1905), pp. 271, 273.

[19]Adams, School Contest, p. 199.

[20]The Times (London), 13 October 1869. Hereafter cited as Times.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Garvin, Chamberlain, p. 98.

[23]K.M. Hughes, "A Political Party and Education: Reflections on the Liberal Party's Educational Policy, 1867-1902," British Journal of Educational Studies VIII (1959-1960): 114.

[24]Times, 15 October 1869.

[25]Ibid.

[26]The Observer (London), 17 October 1869.

[27]Times, 30 December 1869.

[28]Ibid.

[29]Times, 3 January 1870.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Times, 7 January 1870.

[33]W.P. McCann, "Trade Unionists, Artisans, and the 1870 Education Act," British Journal of Educational Studies XVIII (June 1970): 147.

[34]Ibid., p. 138.

[35]Ibid., p. 139.

[36]Ibid., p. 141.

[37]Ibid., p. 146.

[38]Times, 8 January 1870.

[39]Times, 17 January 1870.

[40]Times, 17 November 1869.

[41]Times, 18 November 1869.

[42]Ibid.

[43]The Observer (London), 21 November 1869.

[44]W.H.G. Armytage, "The 1870 Education Act," British Journal of Educational Studies XVIII (June 1970): 124.

[45]Adams, School Contest, p. 207.

[46]Ibid., p. 208.

[47]Ibid., p. 206.

[48]Gillian Sutherland, Policymaking in Elementary Education, 1870-1895 (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 5.

[49]C.K. Francis Brown, The Church's Part in Education, 1833-1941 (London: National Society, 1942), p. 48.

[50]Ibid., p. 154.

[51]Ibid., p. 155.

[52]Ibid., p. 125.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Robert D.D. Gregory, Elementary Education: Some Account of Its Rise and Progress in England (London: National Society Depository, 1895), p. 102.

[55]Dale, Life of Dale, p. 371.

[56]Ibid.

[57]Ibid.

[58]Marjorie Cruickshank, Church and State in English Education (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), p. 10. According to Cruickshank, there were approximately 6,000 National Society schools, and 1,500 Nonconformist schools in 1869 (Cruickshank, p. 18). Nonconformists tended to use schools that were operated by the British and Foreign School Society. British Society schools followed a rule that the Bible be read during school hours, but "no catechism or other formulary peculiar to any religious denomination should be introduced or taught during the hours of instruction." See George C.T. Bartley, Schools for the People (London: Bell and Daldy, 1871), p. 59. National Society schools were under the direction of Anglican clergymen and used a program of dogmatic instruction (Bartley, p. 59). The Catholics had their own organization for the channeling of government grants--the Catholic Poor School Committee--established in 1847. A minute of the Committee of Council, 18 December 1847, stated that this body be responsible for forwarding grant applications made by managers of Roman Catholic elementary schools (Bartley, p. 80).

[59]S.J. Curtis and M.E.A. Boultwood, The History of English Education Since 1800 (London: University Tutorial Press, 1960), p. 58.

[60]Rev. John Oakley, "The Attitude of the Church Towards Primary Education," The Contemporary Review XIV (April-June 1870): 198.

[61]Ibid., p. 209.

[62]Ibid., p. 218.

[63]*Times*, 4 November 1869.

[64]Ibid.

[65]Ibid.

[66]*Times*, 26 January 1870.

[67]*Times*, 7 February 1870.

[68]*Times*, 11 February 1870.

[69]*Times*, 14 February 1870.

CHAPTER IV

PUBLIC MEASURES

On 17 February 1870 W.E. Forster introduced the plan of Her Majesty's Government to correct the deficiencies in elementary education.[1] Forster's Bill proposed to "fill up the gaps" left by the voluntary system.[2] The central idea was to establish a nationwide organization of local school boards to manage the new schools, supported from local rates. The founding of local boards would occur only upon proof that a deficiency existed; a national survey of elementary school provision would establish the proof.[3]

Forster's idea was not new. Jeremy Bentham, in his Principles of Penal Law, advocated a national plan of education for the poorer classes as a method of averting crime.[4] John Stuart Mill thought it was the duty of every parent to educate their children, and if necessary state funds should be available to assist them. Nevertheless, Mill deplored the idea of purely state education because a centrally directed education system would mould all children into one likeness.[5] Classical economists were not in favor of the competitive market principle for elementary schooling. From Adam Smith to J.S. Mill the classical economists posited a negative utilitarian thesis that education could serve to reduce crime, therefore it was economically justifiable for the state to aid education.[6] T.B. Macaulay, Henry Brougham, and J.A. Roebuck agreed with Thomas Malthus who wrote that an educated Scot was more lawful than an ignorant Irishman.[7]

In Parliament there were many notable failures to enact legislation for a national system of elementary schools. Whitbread's Parochial Schools Bill of 1807 called for the establishment of rate aided parish schools, managed by elected parish committees. The schools under the Bill would provide two years of elementary education. Brougham's Parish Schools Bill of 1820 suggested a combination of private and public funding; schools would be financed from a mixture of rate aid and endowments, while staffing and curricula would be under Anglican authority. J.A. Roebuck's Education Bill of 1833 proposed universal education for all of Britain. There was to be a Minister of Public Instruction at the head of a national network of locally elected School District Committees which would run schools on rate aid. Attendance was to be compulsory for children six to twelve. The House of Commons rejected these measures.[8]

One of the most important ancestors of the 1870 Education Act was a bill designed by the Manchester and Salford Education Bill Committee. H.A. Bruce, an MP with a strong interest in education reform, introduced the Committee's bill in the Commons in July 1867. The salient features of the bill were firstly, local authorities would have the discretionary power to levy rates to assist existing schools, or to establish new ones. Secondly, the new schools would be inspected under the terms of the Education Department. Thirdly, all schools accepting rate aid must have religious instruction. Finally, a conscience clause would allow the withdrawal of children from school upon written notice from the parents. Again, the Commons rejected the bill.[9]

H.A. Bruce made another attempt at legislation in 1868 and the measure he introduced differed from the 1867 bill in one important matter. Rates were to be compulsory on a national basis. Local committees would

not have power to deny rate aid to any school, because all schools would receive assistance from the rates.[10] Bruce experienced as much success with the re-drafted bill as with the earlier plan. In the drafting of the bill Bruce had the able help of W.E. Forster.[11]

When Forster came to draft the Government's bill in October 1869 he could choose from a number of ideas and schemes. He could begin with an innovative approach based on the philosophy of men such as Matthew Arnold. He could as readily utilize the programs outlined by the rival education groups, the NEL and the NEU. Another method would be to continue the ideas of Bruce's bill. Lastly, Forster could make use of Robert Lowe's suggestions. Forster's own thought on the question in his younger days tended towards favoring purely secular schools. During conversations with the Anglican Dr. Hook of Leeds, he altered his philosophy and accepted the belief that education must include at least Bible reading.[12]

Matthew Arnold thought education was the best way for Englishmen to prevent the Americanization of Britain and the decline of English culture. For Arnold the "intrinsic commanding force of the English aristocracy" was very much on the decline, and became "less and less qualified to command and captivate."[13] He thought there was only one way to save the nation and that was the action of the state: those who opposed this idea, who tried to run the country on individualism and energy, would bring the nation down with low ideals and want of culture.[14] Arnold believed in collective action, which was a more efficient than individual efforts. He thought only the state was capable of coordinating such great activities as saving culture, the perfection of man through intellect, the ultimate goal of education.[15] According to Arnold,

culture meant getting to know the best that had been thought and said in the world and putting this knowledge to use in uplifting the nation.[16] It must be said that Arnold's terminology was somewhat vague; he did not explain the words "best" and "knowledge." He thought there was an irresistable force which was "gradually making its way everywhere, altering long fixed habits, undermining venerable institutions, even modifying national character: the modern spirit."[17]

Arnold thought the "modern spirit" was changing and expanding England, but the change lacked direction which only the state could provide; the state could equalize society through education. Arnold was particularly impressed with the French institution of centralized state authority in education and he advocated a Ministry of Education for Britain. He admired French national institutions such as the Academy, which served as the intellectual authority for all of France.[18] Arnold was in favor of uniformity and condemned Nonconformists, because they refused to accept the Anglican Church as the arbiter of English religion. He thought the Anglican Church was an agent for good, promoting uniformity and national singlemindedness in religion, but Nonconformists fragmented English society.[19]

The greatest bar to public education, according to Arnold, was the lack of municipal organization in England. In France municipalities had the power and self government necessary for the maintenance of a public school system. In England a similar situation did not obtain and the county district system of local government seemed a curious vestige from the Middle Ages.[20] Most of the bills on education before Parliament suggested ad hoc committees completely separate from local government and Arnold thought this idea was not workable.[21] He wanted

to see a unity of advisory and executive functions within a Ministry of Education, guiding school policy for the nation, which local municipal authorities would carry out. Unfortunately, local government was not a reality in England until the Local Government Act of 1888 created County Councils, replacing the authority of Justices of the Peace.[22]

Robert Lowe, who denounced Arnold's idea of an egalitarian society, thought the upper class had to assert their greater intelligence and conquer back, through the cultivation of the mind, what they lost to the working class in the Reform Act of 1867. He wrote "the lower classes ought to be educated to discharge the duties cast upon them" and they must "defer to a higher cultivation when they meet it."[23] Lowe thought the higher classes ought to "exhibit to the lower classes that higher education to which, if it were shown to them, they would bow down and defer."[24] He advocated a meritocracy on class lines in which all classes must see their position in life and the station they were best suited for. The class best suited for leadership, in Lowe's opinion, was the upper class, although room might be made for exceptional talent emerging from the subservient classes through the use of competitive examinations.[25] He had a positive dread of the working class and opposed the Reform Bill of 1867 because he thought that with the vote workers would destroy English civilization.[26] Lowe was not far from the sentiments expressed by the principal of St. Mark's Training College, who said "to produce schoolmasters for the poor the endeavour must be, on the one hand, to raise students morally and intellectually, while on the other hand, we train them to lowly service."[27]

After the passage of the Reform Act of 1867 Lowe changed tactics. On 15 July 1867 he spoke in the House of Commons about the need for a

national system of education:

> I believe it will be absolutely necessary that you should prevail on your future masters to learn their letters. From the moment that you can entrust the masses with power, their education becomes an absolute necessity, and our system of education which--though not perfect, is far superior to the much vaunted system that prevails in America or any other nation on the Continent as one system can be to another--must give way to a national system.[28]

In November of the same year Lowe gave a speech in Edinburgh outlining his ideas on the education of the laboring class. He said the state had a duty to provide education for the people; enforce attendance; and, supervise local education authorities. The education system should, he said, be seen in terms of results, as this was the best way to guage efficiency. There was obviously no change in Lowe's attiude towards payment by results. His administrative plan called for a national survey of every parish to determine educational needs. The Education Department would then review the data, for example, the number of schools, the number of children, and what was thought necessary to correct the situation in destitute areas. The Department would notify parishes that were in need of schools that they should establish one immediately, and such a school would receive government assistance.[29] In response to a query from Forster in 1869, Lowe wrote that deficient areas should have unsectarian rate aided schools. He thought voluntary schools should be kept in operation and did not approve of the idea that both voluntary and board schools should receive rate aid.[30] This was an idea that Forster did not heed, with dangerous results when his bill became a subject for debate in the Commons.

Lowe had a deciding influence over Forster's program, outlined in

a memorandum to the Cabinet 21 October 1869. Forster thought the Gladstone Ministry should have two major goals in elementary education: (1) "cover the country with good schools," (2) make certain the parents send their children to school.[31] He gave consideration to four programs: (1) the NEL's, (2) the NEU's, (3) Bruce's 1868 Bill, (4) Lowe's recommendations. The NEL plan was thought too expensive and therefore rejected. The NEU program was insufficient, because, as Forster wrote, the voluntaryists proved their incapability of supplying the nation with schools.[32] The problem with Bruce's Bill involved the rates question. Forster thought rates for denominational schools would not be acceptable to all constituents. Lowe's proposals were most acceptable and Forster was very optimistic about them "the ruling idea of which I understand to be compulsory school provision, if and where necessary, but not otherwise."[33] Those who disliked rates would have the opportunity to do something on their own, but no one would be able to keep a district in destitution. Forster thought the school boards should have the power to aid denominational school in their secular instruction. Although it would be unjust for a Roman Catholic to pay a rate for the religious instruction of a Methodist, it was fair for the same Catholic to pay for the secular education of the Methodist.[34]

The question of religious instruction in the board schools was of great concern to Gladstone. It was the only item which he made Forster revise. Gladstone endorsed the Scottish method of deciding religious instruction; the local board would have the option of choosing the denomination it wanted in the school.[35] The Prime Minister was against the idea of unsectarian religious instruction in board schools and when the Bill was brought before the Commons in February 1870 the Government gave

school boards the option of deciding whether or not they wanted a particular denomination to teach religion in their schools.[36] Forster originally wanted the new schools to aknowledge Christianity by requiring the teachers to read the Scriptures in class at some time during the school day. The recitation of the Scriptures without commentary by the teacher was called unsectarian instruction.[37] Had Gladstone aquiesced in the matter, the debates in Parliament would have been much shorter, for the Nonconformists fervently opposed denominational, that is, Anglican, influence in the new schools.

The last topic discussed in Forster's memorandum was compulsory attendance. Forster did not want the people to pay for schools and have no children attend them. But if there were no attendance requirements, this fear might be realized. There were two methods open to the government for encouraging attendance: (1) indirect compulsion, making school attendance a condition for outdoor relief or of work, (2) direct compulsion, under threat of prosecution.[38] Forster chose direct compulsion because indirect methods were difficult to enforce. Parents might neglect the education of their children before they began work as half-time employees under the education provisions of the Factory Acts.[39] Forster left to the school boards the power to enforce attendance by passing by-laws. Small fines would be the penalty for truancy. Despite Forster's concern over truancy Her Majesty's Government decided that schools would have to be built first; attendance laws made in Parliament had to wait.[40]

In late November of 1869, the Cabinet welcomed Forster's proposals and agreed to the preparation of an education bill on the basis of his memorandum. Forster feared a delay in the prospect of bringing in his

bill at the coming session, but he learned that the Cabinet worked out a program which would allow the introduction of the bill on 17 February 1870. Forster's biographer passionately assessed the progress of his hero:

> There must have been within him a strong sense of grateful pride, that to him at last it should have fallen to be the instrument under Providence of converting into reality that which had for years been the dearest dream of so many noble spirits. His work on earth was not yet done.[41]

The government solution to the elementary school crisis was a congeries of ideas worked into the form of a bill. The basic idea was to supplement the voluntary schools with rate aided schools. The old system was not to be thrown away and many of the details in the bill were not new ideas. The classical economists recognized the sagacity of a national program of education at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Numerous bills came before the House of Commons during the sixty years prior to Forster's Bill; all of them were failures. Nevertheless, many of their concepts were incorporated into the Elementary Education Act of 1870, such as, rate aided schools under the control of locally elected ad hoc committees; compulsory attendance; a religious conscience clause allowing students to absent themselves from religious instruction; some form of religious instruction during schools hours; no church organization would manage the new schools; and, schools must be under the inspection of the Education Department. The influence of a social critic and employee of the Education Department, such as Matthew Arnold, was negligible. The ambiguous philosophy of Arnold was not influential in Forster's postulate for elementary school improvement. The more moderate of Arnold's plans called for the action of strong municipal authorities, but this idea would not become reality until 1888 and the Local

Government Act. It was left to the old administrator and master of the payment by results program, Robert Lowe, to exert the strongest influence on the Government measure. Lowe suggested school provision where necessary. The Education Department was to decide the definition of necessity and superintend the entire program. The NEL, and to some extent the NEU, would not remain quiescent during the parliamentary debates on the Education Bill and the pressure of their demands would weigh heavily on the Government during the struggle at Westminster.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 1870 3rd series, CXCIX, p. 438.

[2]Ibid., p. 444.

[3]Ibid., p. 445.

[4]S.J. Curtis and M.E.A. Boultwood, The History of English Education Since 1800 (London: University Tutorial Press, 1960), p. 51.

[5]Ibid., p. 145.

[6]E.G. West, "The Role of Education in Nineteenth Century Doctrines of Political Economy," British Journal of Educational Studies, XII (May 1964): 162.

[7]Ibid., p. 163.

[8]Keith Evans, The Development and Structure of the English Education System (London: University of London Press, 1975), pp. 18-20.

[9]A.J. Marcham, "Educating Our Masters: Political Parties and Elementary Education, 1867-1870," British Journal of Educational Studies, XXI (June 1970): 185. Henry Roper pointed out that Bruce's Bill was the most important precedent for the 1870 Education Act. See Henry Roper, "Towards an Elementary Education Act for England and Wales, 1865-1868," British Journal of Educational Studies, XXIII (June 1975): 191.

[10]Ibid., p. 188.

[11]Roper, "Towards an Elementary Education Act," p. 200.

[12]T. Wemyss Reid, Life of the Right Honorable William Edward Forster (London: Chapman and Hall, 1889), p. 242.

[13]Matthew Arnold, The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, ed. R.H. Super, Democratic Education (Ann Arbor, Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 1962), p. 15.

[14]Ibid., p. 25.

[15]Curtis, Education Since 1800, p. 141.

[16]W.F. Connell, The Educational Thought and Influence of Matthew Arnold (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1971; first edn. 1950), p. 164.

[17]Arnold, Democratic Education, p. 29.

[18]Connell, Influence of Arnold, p. 81.

[19]Ibid., p. 149.

[20]Ibid., p. 107.

[21]Ibid., p. 117.

[22]Ibid.

[23]The Times (London), 4 November 1867.

[24]Ibid.

[25]James Winter, Robert Lowe (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976), p. 170.

[26]Brian Simon, Studies in the History of Education, 1780-1870 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1960), p. 335.

[27]Francis Warre Cornish, The English Church in the Nineteenth Century, pt. 1 (London: Macmillan and Co., 1910), p. 203.

[28]D.W. Sylvester, "Robert Lowe and the 1870 Education Act," History of Education, III (1974): 16.

[29]Ibid., p. 17.

[30]Winter, Lowe, p. 188.

[31]Reid, Forster, p. 255.

[32]Sylvester, "1870 Education Act," p. 18.

[33]Reid, Forster, p. 256.

[34]Ibid., p. 257.

[35]John Morley, The Life of William Ewart Gladstone, 3 vols. (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1932; first edn. 1903), II:298.

[36]Henry Roper, "W.E. Forster's Memorandum of 21 October 1869: A Re-examination," British Journal of Educational Studies, XXI (February 1973): 73.

[37]Reid, Forster, p. 258.

[38]Gillian Sutherland, Policy-Making in Elementary Education, 1870-1895 (London: Oxford University Press, 1973), p. 120.

[39]Ibid.

[40]Ibid., p. 121.

[41]Reid, Forster, p. 264.

CHAPTER V

CAMPAIGN FOR THE EDUCATION ACT

W.E. Forster introduced the Elementary Education Bill on 17 February 1870. He made several general comments about the state of elementary education in England and Wales before outlining the Bill. Forster said the question of popular education affected the intellectual and moral training of a vast proportion of the population. As Vice-President of the Committee of Council, he warned the opposition that the Government was not prepared to compromise on the Bill. He said one and a half million children in England and Wales were without education, the voluntary system was not working, and where "State help has been most wanted, State help has been least given." The object of the government was to cover the country with good schools, according to the Vice-President. Forster said the old system could not be eliminated for "our object is to complete the present voluntary system, to fill up the gaps, sparing public money where it can be done."[1]

In his outline of the Bill, Forster stressed the importance of school boards. After a national survey of school accomodation, school boards were to come into operation in districts based upon the old parish boundaries. Town Councils or local vestries would elect the boards. Boards were to assist existing schools or those built by the boards themselves, while financing of the new schools would be from parents' fees, government grants, and local rates. Any school receiving grants from the state would have to undergo annual inspection and guarantee a con-

science clause.[2]

Response to Forster's speech was immediate. Lord Montagu questioned the Vice-President's claim that deficiencies existed and opined that the voluntary system was working adequately and growing at an acceptable rate. He announced that the voluntary system was threatened with destruction from those who would rather not pay subscriptions, and instead, would leave the burden to rate payers. Dixon, the NEL's chief spokesman in Parliament, said he regretted that the government proposed to give voluntary schools a year of grace in which to make up for deficiencies. He added that parental fees were an injustice and the government's plan for compulsory attendance was too weak. Sir John Pakington said the Bill should provide for the creation of a new department of state for education because the present Education Department was not adequately defined in its responsibilities. He thought compulsory attendance was a good idea, but some provision had to be made to allow children to attend a school and go to work in the same day.[3]

The NEL suspected Liberal treason even before Forster's speech and they feared the League program was not to be part of the government bill. Yet, according to his biographer, Forster did not try to please those persons he regarded as doctrinaire Radicals.[4] Adams thought Forster embraced the Union cause and tried to drag the Liberal party with him.[5] Although it was true Forster called for all parties to forget their self-interests on the issue this tactic only made earnest Liberals distrust him.[6] The Vice-President was accused of lacking courage for not taking advantage of the Liberal majority in the Commons and according to Adams he gave the Tories far too many concessions. Adams thought the Bill was designed to win Conservative support.[7]

In general the press gave support to the Bill. The Times said Forster achieved a triumph in Parliament with his bill, which was a measure at once comprehensive and conservative. The Daily News remarked that "by the slightest means it does the largest work." For the Pall Mall Gazette the one blot on the bill was the permissiveness of the attendance clause, but recognition of compulsion was an advance just the same. The Telegraph thought the bill was "bold in conception and cautious in execution." The Standard took pleasure in Dixon's discomfiture commenting that "it is as Mr. Dixon perceived a heavy, if not fatal, blow to the objects of the Secular or Heathen party. The favorite theories and most passionately cherished dogmas of the extreme Radical school are not included in the bill."[8] Only time could indicate whether or not "dogmas of the extreme Radical school" were to have some place in the Elementary Education Act.

The NEL objected to the bill for nine reasons:

1. School boards lacked the power to compel attendance.
2. One year's grace for the voluntary bodies to correct deficiencies on their own was far too long.
3. Extension of denominational schooling in the year of grace would deny a truly national system of education.
4. Vestries were not fit to represent the will of the rate payers.
5. Permissive compulsion was a proven failure.
6. Schools were not going to be free.
7. Religious instruction in the new schools was to be the decision of school boards.
8. There was no time-table conscience clause in the bill. A time-table conscience clause meant schools would schedule religious instruction during the first or last hour of the school day to allow children the option of not presenting themselves for such training.
9. New boards would be able to assist voluntary schools from the rates.[9]

Chamberlain prepared countermeasures against the bill. In a letter to Dixon he wrote that the NEL had asked for an appointment with the Prime Minister. "Inflammatory" circulars had been sent to all NEL branches,

urging public meetings and petitions against the bill. Chamberlain, in another letter to Dixon, suggested that the NEL should revive agitation for the disestablishment of the Anglican Church unless Forster came forward with an improved bill.[10] In March 1870, at a Birmingham town meeting, Chamberlain truculently denounced the Education Bill, because the proposal to allow rate aid to denominational schools was nothing less than a scheme to re-impose Church rates. He gave fair warning that the measure, if passed, would signal the beginning of a conflict that would end in the disendowment and disestablishment of the Anglican Church.[11] Earlier meetings of the NEL at Ipswich and Birmingham had already condemned the bill.[12]

In a letter to the Times, Chamberlain rebutted accusations that the NEL was anti-religion. The problem arose over the NEL use of the word unsectarian. Chamberlain wrote that the term unsectarian meant that in all schools supported from the rates "it shall be prohibited to teach catechisms, creeds, or other theological tenets during school hours. But beyond this prohibition we are not going."[13] More specifically the program of the League was that the new schools should have Bible reading or not; the decision should be left to the rate payers. Bible reading was not wholly satisfactory to any party, but the Conservatives and Churchmen were the most vehemently opposed to it.[14]

The NEL proposed six amendments to make the Education Bill more acceptable:

1. There should be school boards in all districts, regardless of deficiency.
2. There should be no delay in school provision--no grace period.
3. School boards should be elected using the secret ballot.
4. Parliament, and not school boards, must decide on compulsory attendance.
5. Board schools must be free of parental fees.

6. School boards must not be under the control of religious organizations and they mut enforce a time-table conscience clause.[15]

The NEL leadership regarded Forster as a traitor to Liberal ideals and thought trying to sway him was useless. They went to the Prime Minister. On 9 March a deputation of 46 MPs and approximately 400 League members waited on Gladstone at 10 Downing Street. Chamberlain led the group and announced the League opposition to the year's grace period. In addition he advised the Prime Minister that the conscience clause was unacceptable because it required a written request from parents to withdraw children from school.[16] Chamberlain said the permissive compulsion clause really meant permissive sectarianism and that the clause would be ineffectual.[17] Sir Charles Dilke also spoke against the attendance clause. Robert Applegarth represented the views of working men and the Rev. S.A. Steinthal remonstrated against school fees.[18]

NEL meetings continued around the country to protest the bill. There were meetings in early March in Leeds, Liverpool, Newcastle, Ipswich, Bromsgrove, Norwich, Nottingham, Bolton, and Tavistock. The people at the meetings expressed a common sentiment that the bill was an insuperable barrier to a national system of elementary education. The consensus was that the bill lacked adequate measures to ensure attendance; there would not be free schooling; one year's grace period was too long; rate payers would have to support board schools, yet have no right to vote for the members of the boards; and, religious instruction was left to the control of school boards.[19]

J.S Mill lent his support to the NEL at a League meeting held in St. James's Hall. Mill denounced the rate scheme for the board schools.

Mill told his listeners:

> A more effectual plan could scarcely have been devised by the strongest champion of ecclesiastical ascendency for enabling the clergy of the Church of England to educate the children of the greater part of England and Wales in their own religion at the expense of the public.[20]

It is noteworthy that the immediate response by the NEU to the bill was favorable. A meeting of the NEU in March featured a speech by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, who said the government bill deserved "weighty support" inasmuch as it aimed to supply the needs of popular education without compromising religious instruction, imparing parental responsibility, and superceding good schools already in place. He called compulsory attendance "un-English."[21]

The NEU was not remiss in making its own case heard in the parlour of the Prime Minister. W.F. Cowper-Temple led a Union delegation to 10 Downing Street and expressed his opinion that the state should not interfere in the religious teaching of the schools and the state should respect the religious sentiments of schools managers and parents.[22] Edward Baines, MP, said direct compulsion was not called for because the Factory Acts were operating satisfactorily. Colonel Akroyd, a prosperous manufacturer, said the combination of work and education that obtained under the Factory Acts was a success and preferable to the "police visitation of every house" that compulsion implied.[23]

At the second reading of the Education Bill on 14 March, Dixon made several comments on the measure before proposing an amendment calculated to alter the religious instruction clause. He expressed concern over the bill's provision making town councils responsible for voting on school board membership; in rural districts the people were too much under the

influence of the dominant sects, the squire, and the parson. He rejected the Church view that "morality was based upon religion, that all religion was based upon religious dogmas and therefore that these dogmas be taught in our schools." Dixon proposed an amendment to guarantee the separation of secular and religious teaching in the new schools, operating under a time-table conscience clause and hoped that it would speed the decline of denominational schools.[24] Illingworth seconded the amendment, and said local authorities should not determine religious instruction in the schools and Parliament should decide what form such training would take.[25]

Forster was disturbed that an amendment had been proposed at the second reading. Such a practice usually meant extreme hostility to a bill. He said religious questions ought to be submitted to municipal authorities such as school boards. Forster maintained that purly secular education had no place in England and the government intended to leave the religious issue to the school boards.[26] He reminded his listeners of their duty that "it is the remembrance of the past that forbids us to exclude religion from the teaching of our schools."[27]

The question of religious instruction did not disappear. Winterbotham said the voluntary system was only temporary and state grants to denominational schools were dangerous and unconstitutional. In the previous night's debate Forster spoke of his difficulty in deciding to which church he could claim allegiance. Winterbotham said "the indecision of a private man should not control his conduct as a statesman," suggesting the religious issue should not be left to local school boards. He thought local authorities should not have the power to decide the religious difficulty; Dissent would be swamped. In his speech Winterbotham pointed

out the Church antipathy towards Dissent and said that in rural areas Anglican clergymen tried to destroy Nonconformity. It was his assertion that Romish doctrines of priestcraft made vicars think they must be the sole educator in the parish. He thought secular instruction was best and that religion was better suited to Sunday schools.[28] He wrote to the Times to defend his criticism of the Church in obstructing a national system of education. He took offense at the remark of the Bishop of Winchester, who observed that the three greatest problems of his clergy were beerhouses, overcrowded cottages, and Dissent.[29]

The debate engendered by Dixon's proposal resulted in continued expressions of opinion from Anglican and Nonconformist, or NEL speakers. Lord Montagu extolled the virtues of religious strife. In arguing that such animosity was not such a bad thing he cited the examples of the Christian martyrs, the Seven Bishops, and the Scottish Presbyters.[30] Beresford-Hope praised the work of Christian charity in education and thought it would be monstrous were it to be sacrificed for a "mere Chinese love of uniformity."[31] The Commons, said he, had a choice. It could recognize the "magnificent monument of voluntary charity" or "discourage voluntary zeal, and set up the State-ridden system of cold and godless secular teaching."[32] There was a voice of moderation in Herbert, who opposed rate aid to denominational schools and thought Forster could not have written such a clause that would allow this.[33]

Sir Henry Hoare also rejected the idea of rate aid to denominational schools. He thought passage of the bill in its present form would mean the ascendency of the Church. Hoare said "the spirit of persecution always existed unchecked among members of an Established Church. There were many self-convicted fanatics among laymen as well as among

clergymen." He believed there were men in the Commons who held that persons not paying church rates should be burnt at the stake. As a matter of principle he thought Beresford-Hope would light the first fire.[34]

Vernon Harcourt warned that religious majorities could oppress religious minorities at will under the provisions of the bill. He said leaving the question of religious teaching to local town councils and vestries would result in sectarian political strife at every annual municipal election. Harcourt suggested "blue and yellow placards will invite the voters to support 'Jones and the 39 Articles,' or 'Smith and No Creed,' or 'Robinson and down with the Bishops.' "[35] He said added to this (because in some cases women would have a vote) would be the female susceptibility to religious fervor, a formidable element. Harcourt was certain the bill would give the Church a monopoly on education in all of the rural districts.[36]

As a member of the NEL, Harcourt wrote to Dixon and Dilke urging them to pursue a common action with him in the "great cause" being debated in the Commons. He wanted to destroy denominationalism. Nevertheless, he realized that to meet "the flood [of denominationalism] by the direct dyke it will simply be over our heads, and we shall go to the bottom. We must break the force of the wave by a side slope," and deal with the diminished force later on.[37] Harcourt advised Bible reading during a specific time of the school day as the only allowable form of religious instruction. He thought the proposal would drive the Church party into demanding religious teaching; Bible reading not being satisfactory. On this point he hoped to embarrass them in debate.[38]

In the Commons Gladstone asked Dixon to withdraw his amendment. The Prime Minister regarded the motion of Dixon as hostile to the gov-

ernment and harmful to the prospects of the bill. After indicating that the Ministry would reconsider the section dealing with religious instruction, Dixon withdrew his amendment.[39]

Before the bill went into committee in early June the rival education interests continued their partisan campaigns. Within the Anglican hierarchy there was not universal agreement about the role of the state in funding their schools, but there was no question that Church schools should continue. The General Conference of the National Society, on 6 April, resolved that "a rigorous time-table conscience clause" was objectionable; that denominational schools should receive rate aid; that new schools should be built with state grants, but with no time limitations or grace periods.[40] The Anglican Convocation of Canterbury, in its "Report on Elementary Education," rejected the time-table conscience clause. Instead, the report maintained that aid to denominational schools should come in the form of increased state grants.[41]

The NEU indicated a willingness to accept Forster's Bill, but the question of religion in the schools remained of paramount importance in the sonorous rhetoric of their spokesmen. At the 8 April NEU rally in St. James's Hall, the Earl of Shaftesbury said Forster's Bill was not all they had hoped for, but if it was not perfect, then at least it did not deny religious teaching in school. The NEL wanted, he exclaimed, to found rate aided schools in which religion would have no place. The Earl urged his audience to support education nurtured in the faith, fear, and admonition of the Lord. The Marquis of Salisbury called on all Christians to join together in ernest defense of great principles. He thought most working men wanted religion in the schools and advised everyone that religion "must either be taught or opposed. There is no neutrality in

this matter."[42] The Marquis announced that religious zeal was the most powerful agency in the promotion of education and the question for politicians was whether or not they would have this power on their side. According to Salisbury, those opposed to the Union were hostile to religion. He was certain the NEU recognized the "natural craving for education and the yearning for religious instruction."[43]

Of course not all Anglicans were sanguine about the Education Bill. The Bishop of Lincoln said the government bill was far too secular. For the Bishop, education was the "training of the child for eternity" and the "doctrine of the blessed Trinity was the very foundation of all Christian and all national education."[44]

The Quarterly Review argued that Forster's Bill was not really necessary. While it was true the bill made provision for attendance, the real solution was to make attendance mandatory. If this expedient were taken all children would find a place in the existing schools and if an excess demand for places occurred, the voluntary bodies might receive grants from the state to help them build new schools. The NEL wanted only secular schools. This was a dangerous idea because Church schools were already valuable in promoting peaceful relations between Anglicans and Dissent. Secular schools, with secular teachers would produce calamity in the villages of England because religion would be destroyed and the fear of God banished.[45]

The conservative Blackwood's Magazine was highly critical of the NEL alternative to the bill. The NEL, it claimed, wanted only secular teaching and such instruction would prove destructive. There was a Christian duty that all schools must provide: to teach the less fortunate their duties to God and to their betters. Blackwood's decided that the

working class was indebted to the voluntary system for its education and denominational schools were an antidote "to the meaness and coarseness of their daily lives."[46] Secular education was, according to the magazine, only a "convenient engine for that form of Dissent which is rather political than religious"; it was an opportunity to attack the Church. Blackwood's could not understand Nonconformist opposition to Church schooling, as one of its most important contributions was to teach the Anglican catechism, which taught one to honor one's parents.[47]

The Roman Catholic position on the education question was almost identical to the position taken by the Convocation of Canterbury. Cardinal Manning was not in England at the time of the early debates and most of the English Roman Catholic hierarchy were in Rome attending the Vatican Council. Nevertheless, the Cardinal found time to communicate his wishes on the Education Bill to Gladstone. Manning's first principle was that education was anathema without religious instruction, and on this point the Roman Catholics and Anglicans were in complete accord. Like the NEU Manning favored an extension of the voluntary system, supported with state grants.[48] His idea of "filling up the gaps" was to increase the number of denominational schools. When Manning heard of the specific clauses in the bill he immediately execrated the entire program. The year's grace period was thought much too short and Clause 22 gave boards the option of assisting local schools out of the rates. Manning thought Anglicans would take advantage of this and deny funds to Roman Catholic schools.[49] Gladstone's response was that "the question of National Education is passing into great complication; and crude opinion of all kinds is washing blindly about like hot and cold, moist and dry, in Ovid's chaos."[50] In Yorkshire, Roman Catholics condemned any

national system of education that excluded or restricted religious teaching in elementary schools. They thought the denominational program worked perfectly well and called for its extension.[51]

The Roman Catholic position did not change during the course of the debates. In a circular released to the Times the Catholics clarified their position. Catholic children were in danger from the government bill and Catholic parents would no longer have the right to keep their children from school. Parents would be compelled to send their children to board schools where the Catholic religion was prohibited. Catholic children would receive an education antagonistic to the Roman Catholic faith, namely, Bible reading by a teacher "who cannot fail to be impregnated with the...Protestant tradition."[52]

The religious difficulty exercised the energies of the Central Nonconformist Committee in Birmingham into developing a petition of protest. One of the Committee's secretaries was R.W. Dale, who was actively opposed to the government plan to allow school boards the power of determining the religious character of the new schools.[53] The Nonconformist Committee sent out 7,300 petitions and received 5,173 signatures from Nonconformist ministers of every sect. On 11 April a deputation of the Committee met with Gladstone at Westminster to protest the issue and to present their petition. In addition to the religious character of the new schools the Committee delegates impressed upon the Prime Minister their implacable rejection of the conscience clause as defined in the bill. The delegates thought Nonconformists would find it necessary to ask for religious toleration in schools aided with state grants.[54]

Gladstone continued to receive delegations from various interested bodies until the Education Bill went into the committee stage. On 25

May he saw four deputations in one day; Nonconformist MPs; Wesleyan Methodists; Shaftesbury and the headmasters of the public schools; and, Mr. Mundella, MP, at the head of clergymen of various denominations. Gladstone asked Mundella how Roman Catholics were to pay rates for religious instruction to which they objected. Mundella answered that they could go to the priest for their religion.[55]

Religious organizations showed a strong interest in the Education Bill and made suggestions as to how the measure might be improved. The Society of Friends protested that rate aid might be routed to denominational schools. They thought that because morality derived from the Bible the reading of Scripture in schools would solve the religious difficulty. The Society proposed Parliament not prohibit Bible reading and that board schools not allow the teaching of catechisms or the doctrines of any sect.[56] The Northern Association of Baptist Churches, meeting in Darlington, supported a similar plan and objected to school boards having the power of determining the religious character of new schools.[57] The Primitive Methodist Conference in Nottingham, representing 6,397 congregations, advised Parliament to adopt Bible reading without note or comment as the only solution to the religious difficulty.[58]

Despite the cant of NEU speakers about working men wanting religion in the classroom, the laboring class meetings before the committee stage of the bill reveal a somewhat different and contradictory view of artisan opinion. At the Shields town hall, 7 June, working men's representatives met and resolved to support the NEL program and to reject the government bill.[59] In London, at a meeting of working men to discuss the bill, it was resolved to endorse Bible reading only.[60] Later in the week, at Exeter Hall, working men agreed that the Bible should be

read in schools, but declined to support the idea of sectarian influence in the new proletarian palaestras. A Mr. Cremer warned that it was a mistake when a Liberal government introduced a measure acceptable to the Anglican clergy.[61]

Meanwhile the NEL went ahead with its program to stir public opinion before the bill went into committee. They held meetings at St. James's Hall for Wesleyans, Baptists, Unitarians, Congregationalists, and Presbyterians.[62] At the NEL executive conference, Chamberlain re-emphasized the League program and said the government bill did not provide for free, compulsory, and unsectarian education. He did not believe the government would act "in direct antagonism to so powerful and prosperous a body as the League."[63]

Looking back at the outcome of the religious difficulty, Gladstone wrote Lord Lyttelton in October 1870 explaining that the solution to the problem was not his idea. Gladstone thought the best that could be done was to exclude religious formularies and catechisms in board schools and reduce the "popular imposture of undenominational instruction."[64] The Prime Minister insisted that the Apostle's Creed was not a formulary, although others thought it so, and that it was aknowledged "by the great bulk of Christendom."[65]

What Gladstone did not communicate to Lyttelton was the tremendously important role played by Robert Lowe in the solution to the religious difficulty. After the Government announced that it would reconsider parts of the bill on 18 March the Cabinet deliberated over the problem until 13 May, when Forster and Lord de Grey presented a draft of amendments. Firstly, the bill was to incorporate an amendment by Cowper-Temple that "no catechism or religious formulary which is distintive of any

particular denomination shall be taught" in board schools.[66] Secondly, there was to be a time-table conscience clause that would allow scholars to withdraw at times of religious instruction in school. Thirdly, inspection for religious training was to cease. Lastly, according to Clause 22, school boards would have the power to aid voluntary schools with rates. With one dissenting vote the Cabinet agreed to the modifications on 14 June.[67]

The one exception to the amendments was Lowe who particularly disliked Clause 22. He thought the opposition to the clause was too great in the Commons and that the entire bill would be thrown out were it retained. With special regard to Clause 22 Lowe wrote to Gladstone the next day and opined that the value of a rating program was that payment and management should be under the direction of a single authority. Under the present bill school managers of voluntary schools were not responsible to rate payers, although board schools would be. The solution to helping the denominational schools was not through rate aid, but by an increase in Parliamentary grants allocated from the Exchequer. Lowe thought this expedient would reduce the bureaucratic burdens of school boards and eliminate a greater demand on the rates. He also thought the Privy Council should end its program of building grants to lessen the impact of increased government expenditure on denominational grants.[68] On the same day, 15 June, Gladstone, Forster, Bruce, and Clarendon approved Lowe's proposals.[69] The Cabinet also allowed school boards greater discretionary power to determine whether or not their institutions were to have religious instruction or Bible reading.[70]

The Education Bill went into committee on 16 June 1870. Gladstone announced the government's amendments, which were: the Cowper-Temple

clause; the time-table clause; no inspection for religious instruction; no rate aid to voluntary schools; discontinuance of building grants; and, the existing grant to voluntary schools would increase by 50 per cent.[71] At this point Disraeli said he thought Bible reading with commentary was necessary, but under the government bill such commentary would come from school masters, not clergymen. He said the bill would establish "a new sacerdotal class" composed of school masters.[72]

Attacks on the bill did not halt during the committee stage. Dilke said voluntary schools should not receive increased grants, and in fact, they should receive no grants at all. Beresford-Hope condemned the Cowper-Temple clause as a "trap for morbid and scrupulous consciences." He thought the Church catechism was a moderate document suitable for inclusion in the curricula of all schools.[73]

Forster commented on religious animosity and delineated the Ministry's policy as to future concessions. He explained that it was his experience in the previous ten years that the religious difficulty had kept children out of school. He said Clause 22 was originally meant to assuage denominational concerns. Opposition to this idea caused the Ministry to eliminate the clause and substitute increased grants, but no further concessions were forthcoming.[74]

The NEL denounced the government amendments both in and out of Parliament. Harcourt said he could not possibly vote for the bill because it was "founded on the principle of pure and undiluted denominationalism."[75] Dixon thought it imprudent for the state to continue its aid to religious teaching.[76] The NEL executive in London announced that it unanimously opposed the bill and the intent of the government to increase denominational grants.[77] The unrestrained philippics of the NEL perhaps

did not take into account Gladstone's assurance that Privy Council grants were intended only for secular instruction on the basis of payment by results. The state, said Gladstone, now had a duty only to secular education, and voluntary subscriptions would have to fill the void left by denial of rates to denominational bodies.[78] Harcourt continued to oppose grants to voluntary organizations. He rejected the notion of a grace period for sectarian school societies. Harcourt thought the year of grace was a misnomer; rather the term should be a year of disgrace, because it meant another twelve months of ignorance. He said denominational societies should have no time to improve their services.[79] Dixon remained obstinate and moved an amendment that "religious instruction shall not be given in a room where secular instruction is carried on." Forster could not accept Dixon's idea and said the proposal was absurd.[80]

Forster felt constrained to explain the government position on Cowper-Temple. The reason for the clause came from a "strong feeling" that religious and secular education should be separated. Thus, compulsory attendance would not mean compulsory religious instruction. The clause would be self working and require no written permission, as the previous bill had intended. Cowper-Temple also avoided religious teaching paid for by the state.[81]

Despite Forster's determination that more concessions were not possible Dilke proposed an amendment that would permit rate payers to vote for school boards instead of town councils. Forster pleaded for the use of "existing machinery," namely the town councils, where he believed the most able men for the job could be found for serving on school boards. The Commons passed the amendment by a majority of five, and eliminated both town councils and vestries as electors of school boards.[82]

Another change in the bill concerned the voting rights of the rate payers. Lord Cavendish introduced an amendment to Clause 27 that every voter should be entitled to a number of votes equal to the number of members on the school board being elected; all votes could go to one candidate, or distributed among all candidates. Gladstone spoke in favor of the idea, saying it would divest the elections of acrimony and animosity; the amendment passed.[83]

On 22 July 1870 the Elementary Education Bill passed the third reading. The final vote on the bill was 185 Ayes and 115 Noes. The House of Lords agreed to the bill on 2 August 1870 and the measure received the royal assent on 9 August of the same year.[84]

The political support for the bill illustrated the discontinuities within the ranks of the Liberal party. Nonconformists helped give the Liberal party a victory in the general election of 1868, yet Nonconformist MPs were decidedly against the education bill presented by Gladstone's government. An example of a Nonconformist MP was George Dixon. Dixon was a Radical, as were his outspoken colleagues of the left-wing of the Liberal party, Harcourt, Dilke, Winterbotham, Miall, Mundella, Bright, and Hoare. Although not a Nonconformist, Harcourt sided with the NEL against denominationalism.[85] Unlike these men of the left, the hard core Liberals such as Gladstone, Forster, Bruce, and Lowe pursued a moderate course calculated to win Conservative support.[86] The Conservatives under Disraeli agreed to support the government bill. A notice in the Times, 13 June 1870, announced Disraeli met with the leading members of the previous Conservative Cabinet and determined to support the Education Bill and oppose the NEL. Thus, despite a rift within his own party Gladstone achieved success with the aid of Conservative votes.

Dixon and Dissent made known their deep regrets at the failures of the new act. Not only did Dixon think the act was retrograde, but he criticized the increased grants to voluntary societies and the lack of adequate attendance enforcement.[87] Miall noted there were almost no Dissenting organizations which failed to condemn the act. He thought the Liberal party had not treated Nonconformity with consideration; "once bit, twice shy."[88] Gladstone answered Miall's criticism by saying he was not justified in his expectations of what the bill could accomplish and that support "ceases to be of value when accompanied by reproaches." The Prime Minister angrily said "for God's sake, Sir, let him withdraw it the moment he thinks it better for the cause which he has at heart that he should do so."[89] Not all of Gladstone's ministry gave whole hearted support to the bill before its passage into the statute books. George Trevelyan resigned his Lordship of the Admiralty over the issue of increased grants to denominational schools.[90] In Parliament Trevelyan said the increased grant was a parasitical growth which had to be cut off and that it was nothing more than a bribe for the Church party.[91] In contrast to Trevelyan, Cowper-Temple asserted that the Church had shown no desire "to press unduly her own particular views or personal objects, but had shown herself willing and anxious to pass this great measure of education without unnecessary delay."[92] The Church certainly had nothing against larger grants from Parliament.

Everyone in the Church party could not give unreserved support to the Elementary Education Act. Shaftesbury lamented that the "godless, non-Bible system is at hand . . . . Everything for the flesh and nothing for the soul."[93] Nevertheless, the Church had three hundred years in which to provide children with instruction for the flesh and soul, but

according to the government, proved itself incapable of doing so.

The NEU accepted the new act with few reservations. At the Palace Hotel in Westminster, the NEU leadership praised the new education measure and voiced the opinion that it secured the existence of the voluntary system and only meant to supplement it. The meeting agreed that the alliance of secularists and Nonconformists had been discomfited and religious toleration won.[94]

Despite some reservations about the act, Roman Catholics were sympathetic to the character of the new measure. Bishop Ullathorne wrote to Cardinal Manning criticizing his support for any bill which would increase secularism and warned against the surrender of principles.[95] Lord Howard Glossop, President of the Catholic Poor Schools Committee, complained that board schools might not provide a religious atmosphere, which he thought all Catholic parents wanted.[96] What really mattered to the Roman Catholic hierarchy was Gladstone's deletion of Clause 22 and increasing grants to denominational organizations. School boards would not be able to interfere with Catholic schools and Manning wrote to Gladstone giving his approval of the Education Act and thanking him for his efforts.[97]

Except for the Methodists, Nonconformists were sharply critical of the Education Act. John Morley blasted the act as nothing more than a manipulation by the Church and he condemned the Liberal leadership for deserting their Nonconformist allies.[98] The Rev. Dale's opposition to the act came during the committee stage of the measure when an amendment by Jacob Bright failed to attract enough votes. Bright proposed that teaching from the Scriptures not be used in favor of any denomination. Dale transformed his disappointment into active opposition to Gladstone's

ministry.[99]

The NEL was least satisfied with the act, and in June the executive declared that the government amendments were not good enough. Adams thought Forster worked out a scheme whereby the sectarian schools would receive the largest share of state funds and wrote that Forster could console himself with the praise of Churchmen and Tories for his efforts.[100] Nevertheless, the NEL succeeded in having two of its goals made part of the Education Act: (1) board schools were to be under the control of rate payers, (2) sectarian religious instruction would have no place in the board schools.[101]

The Elementary Education Act of 1870 incorporated several components designed to solve the elementary school provision crisis. Rate payers were to elect school boards in districts where there was a proven deficiency in school places. The boards would establish rate aided schools and have the power to levy local taxes for such purposes. In these schools no sectarian religious teaching would be permitted, but reading from the Bible was allowed at certain stated hours of the school day. There would be no inspection for religious instruction and voluntary societies would receive a 50 per cent increase in Parliamentary grants. Building grants for voluntary school organizations were to end on 31 December 1870.[102] Board schools were to receive state grants, parental fees, and rate aid. Denominational schools were to receive government grants, parental fees, and subscriptions.[103] Fair competition was the basis of the funding distribution, but rates were much more dependable than charitable donations. Voluntary contributions would still have to pay rates.[104]

The partisans of the NEL and the NEU campaigned for their programs

both within and without the Houses of Parliament. Orators from both groups journeyed throughout England hoping to win converts to the cause of the League or Union. The rhetoric of religious discord echoed in the House of Commons while countless meetings in the public halls of the nation heard of the NEL and NEU programs. The Gladstone ministry campaigned for its own scheme unhesitatingly and made some concessions to the educational interest groups. The resulting Education Act was the subject of attack from extremists in the NEL and NEU camps.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Great Britain, Parliament, Hansard's Parliamentary Debates, 1870 3rd series, CXCIX, pp. 438, 442, 443, 444. Hereafter cited as Hansard.

[2]Ibid., pp. 449, 455.

[3]Ibid., pp. 472, 474, 476, 487.

[4]T. Wemyss Reid, Life of the Right Honorable William Edward Forster (London: Chapman and Hall, 1889), pp. 263, 265.

[5]Francis Adams, History of the Elementary School Contest in England (London: Chapman and Hall, 1882), p. 208.

[6]Ibid., p. 209.

[7]Ibid., p. 211.

[8]The Times (London); Daily News; Pall Mall Gazette; The Telegraph; The Standard, all quoted in the Leeds Mercury, 19 February 1870.

[9]Adams, School Contest, pp. 213-214.

[10]James L. Garvin and Julian Amery, Life of Joseph Chamberlain, 6 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1935), I:109-110.

[11]The Times (London), 8 March 1870. Hereafter cited as Times.

[12]Times, 3 March 1870.

[13]Times, 7 March 1870.

[14]Adams, School Contest, p. 202.

[15]Ibid., p. 214.

[16]Garvin, Chamberlain, p. 112.

[17]Adams, School Contest, p. 216.

[18]Ibid.

[19]Times, 11 March 1870.

[20]Times, 26 March 1870.

[21]Times, 10 March 1870.

[22]Leeds Mercury, 14 March 1870.

[23]Ibid.

[24]Hansard, 1870, 3s, CXCIX, pp. 1921, 1924, 1922.

[25]Ibid., p. 1930.

[26]Adams, School Contest, p. 219.

[27]Hansard, 1870, 3s, CXCIX, p. 1938.

[28]Ibid., pp. 1971, 1975, 1979.

[29]Times, 19 March 1870.

[30]Hansard, 1870, 3s, CXCIX, p. 1986.

[31]Ibid., p. 2024.

[32]Ibid., p. 2026.

[33]Ibid., p. 2051.

[34]Hansard, 1870, 3s, CC, p. 245.

[35]Ibid., p. 221.

[36]Ibid., p. 224.

[37]A.G. Gardiner, The Life of Sir William Harcourt (London: Constable and Co., 1923), p. 216.

[38]Ibid.

[39]Hansard, 1870, 3s, CC, p. 303.

[40]Times, 8 April 1870.

[41]Donald O. Wagner, The Church of England and Social Reform Since 1854 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1930), p. 18.

[42]Times, 9 April 1870.

[43]Ibid.

[44]Times, 12 May 1870. When Fox introduced his Education Bill in 1850 he said religious instruction in the schools would be superfluous if Anglicans followed the order of the 59th Canon. The Canon advised that it was the duty of all parents and clergymen to instruct children, every Sunday, in the Ten Commandments, the Articles, the Lord's Prayer, and the Church catechism. See Henry Holman, English National Education: The Rise of the Public Elementary Schools (London: Blackie and Son, 1898), p. 145.

[45]Anonymous, "The Education of the People," The Quarterly Review CXXVIII (January-April 1870): 500-505.

[46]Anonymous, "The Education Difficulty," Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine CVII (May 1870): 659, 660.

[47]Ibid., pp. 664, 666.

[48]N.J. Richards, "Henry Edward Manning and the Education Bill of 1870," British Journal of Educational Studies XVIII (June 1970): 199.

[49]Ibid., p. 207.

[50]Ibid., p. 209.

[51]Times, 13 May 1870.

[52]Times, 5 July 1870.

[53]A.W.W. Dale, The Life of R.W. Dale of Birmingham (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1898), p. 275.

[54]Times, 12 April 1870.

[55]Times, 26 May 1870.

[56]Leeds Mercury, 7 June 1870.

[57]Times, 9 June 1870.

[58]Times, 8 June 1870.

[59]Times, 7 June 1870.

[60]Times, 10 June 1870.

[61]Times, 16 June 1870.

[62]The Observer (London), 12 June 1870.

[63]Times, 16 June 1870.

[64]John Morley, The Life of William Ewart Gladstone, 3 vols. (New York: Macmillan and Co., 1932; first edn. 1903), II:306.

[65]Ibid., II:307.

[66]Hansard, 1870, 3s, CCII, p. 275.

[67]D.W. Sylvester, "Robert Lowe and the 1870 Education Act," History of Education, III (1974): 20.

[68]Ibid., p. 21.

[69]Ibid.

[70]James Murphy, Church, State, and Schools in Britain, 1800-1970 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 59.

[71]Sylvester, "Robert Lowe," p. 22.

[72]Hansard, 1870, 3s, CCII, p. 289.

[73]Ibid., pp. 518, 551.

[74]Ibid., pp. 580, 593.

[75]Ibid., p. 648.

[76]Ibid., p. 796.

[77]Times, 22 June 1870.

[78]Hansard, 1870, 3s, CCII, p. 938.

[79]Ibid., p. 1222.

[80]Ibid., p. 1046.

[81]Ibid., pp. 1035, 1036, 1044, 1251.

[82]Ibid., pp. 1399, 1407, 1414, 1415.

[83]Ibid., pp. 1420, 1425.

[84]Great Britain, Parliament, Journals of the House of Commons, 1877, vol. 68, p. 52; Journals of the House of Commons, 1870, vol. 125, pp. 354, 391, 398, 399, 410, 411.

[85]Hansard, 1870, 3s, CXCIX, pp. 1921, 1924, 1922, 1971, 1975, 1979; Hansard, 1870, 3s, CC, p. 245; A.G. Gardiner, The Life of Sir William Harcourt, p. 216; Hansard, 1870, 3s, CCIII, p. 743; Cruickshank, Church and State, p. 15.

[86]Francis Adams, School Contest, p. 211.

[87]Hansard, 1870, 3s, CCIII, p. 737.

[88]Ibid., p. 743.

[89]Ibid., p. 745.

[90]The Observer (London), 3 July 1870.

[91]Hansard, 1870, 3s, CCIII, p. 76.

[92]Ibid., p. 740.

[93]Marjorie Cruickshank, Church and State in English Education (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1963), p. 35.

[94]Times, 5 August 1870.

[95]Richards, "Manning," p. 211.

[96]Murphy, Church, State, and Schools, p. 61.

[97]Richards, "Manning," p. 210.

[98]Cruickshank, Church and State, p. 35; F.W. Hirst, Early Life and Letters of John Morley, 2 vols. (London: Macmillan and Co., 1927), I:273.

[99]Dale, Life of Dale, p. 281.

[100]Adams, School Contest, pp. 223, 228, 233.

[101]P.N. Farrar, "American Influence on the Movement for a National Sysytem of Public Education in England and Wales, 1830-1870," British Journal of Educational Studies, XIV (1965): 43.

[102]Holman, English National Education, p. 186.

[103]S.J. Curtis and M.E.A. Boultwood, The History of English Education Since 1800 (London: University Tutorial Press, 1960), p. 76.

[104]Murphy, Church, State, and Schools, p. 56.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

The Elementary Education Act of 1870 was a British Government solution for the elementary school crisis. The Gladstone Ministry possessed data indicating a shocking deficiency in school places. The purpose of the act was to provide the needed school places for the children of the working class. A new plan of schools, funded from local rates, supplemented the old denominational system. Her Majesty's Government abandoned any connection with religious instruction, although it continued grants to denominational schools for secular teaching only. In this way the British government responded to a crisis in English society.

The campaign for the Education Act was a lively affair, engaging the interests of two rival groups, each trying to win approval for its own cherished program. The NEL called for a national system of rate aided, free, compulsory, and unsectarian schools. This determination to challenge the Church dominated system of elementary schools prompted the formation of an opposition group, the NEU, which extolled the virtues of the voluntary system. Despite some concessions to both groups, it was the Government plan that attracted enough votes in Parliament to become law.

On the question of rate aid to schools the NEL partly had its way. Nevertheless, the government used this idea, not to assuage the NEL, but because Forster advocated it long before his drafting of the Education Bill. He had been involved with Bruce's Education Bills of 1867

and 1868, which incorporated the idea of rate aid to schools. In fact, the idea of rate supported schools went back to Whitbread's Bill of 1807. The NEU had no reason to complain about rates because in Forster's 1870 Bill the original plan was to allow rate aid to denominational schools. Due to intense opposition the government eliminated the clause while increasing the amount of the Parliamentary grants to voluntary school societies. The NEU and the Church party were not disappointed with this program. Outraged at this turn of events, the NEL protested but failed to sway Parliament.

The new schools were not going to be free and the NEL did not like it. Their program called for free schools, but the government would not yield on this question. Forster believed the country was not ready to accept the idea of free education because parental responsibility would be reduced. It cannot be said that the NEU favored free schools, for it would mean extraordinary competition for Anglican establishments.

The new act did not compel attendance, it merely gave school boards the power to formulate by-laws that would compel attendance locally. The government was more interested in providing schools and passing the education bill than in coercing attendance by act of Parliament. The NEL wanted Parliament to declare attendance mandatory, but the government delegated the authority to local school boards.

The religious difficulty, or who should teach religion in the new schools, was a hotly debated issue in the campaign for the act. The NEU was staunchly opposed to "godless", unsectarian schools and the idea went against their conviction that religion--the Anglican faith--should form the basis of education. The NEL rejected this notion and wanted unsectarian schools. The NEU charge of irreligion against the League

was a groundless assertion. The NEL preferred a national school system, not an auxilliary program of Anglican proselytization. The government thought English and Welsh opinion favored some sort of religious instruction in the schools and to achieve this the Gladstone Ministry decided the only permissible form of religious teaching was to be Bible reading. The boards were given the opportunity to reject or accept this plan. The NEL demanded a time-table conscience clause and the government conceded this before the Education Bill went into committee.

Denominational schools would not receive rate aid, but they would receive an increased state grant. The NEU leadership was happy about this, but disappointed that building grants were to cease at the end of 1870. Although the NEL demanded no grace period for voluntary societies the government did not completely accede to this and reduced the period of grace from twelve to six months. Six months was plenty of time for the National Society to request building grants for new schools.

Town councils and vestries were not considered adequate electors of school boards and the NEL proposed an amendment that made rate payers responsible for voting in school boards. Forster thought vestries and town councils were ideal for choosing the most able persons to serve on the new boards and objected to the more democratic plan suggested by the NEL. It was a clear victory for the NEL when the amendment succeeded.

It must be said that the government was most successful in accomplishing its objectives. It made concessions to the NEL on the issue of school board elections and agreed that sectarian religious instruction was forbidden in the new board schools. Nevertheless, NEL demands for a free and compulsory system of elementary schools failed. The NEU wishes for the preservation and extension of the denominational system

were partially met. Despite some concessions to these active educational interests, the government succeeded in making its plan into a legal reality. The new system was to utilize the existing educational machinery and supplement it where deficiencies were proven to exist.

Slightly modified, the elementary education program did not change until the Education Act of 1902. In the period between the 1870 and 1902 education acts the dual system of Church and board schools provided accomodation for 4.5 million children. The administration of the system by school boards solved several problems. School managers no longer had great financial difficulties, because local rates provided adequate funding for the schools. There was an increase in the number of teachers and their remuneration was greater than in the years before the 1870 Education Act. The larger school boards experimented with programs for handicapped and retarded children and most boards passed by-laws to enforce attendance. Legislation in 1876 obviated the necessity of by-laws by instituting mandatory attendance for all children, and this resulted in the eradication of mass truancy by the 1890s. Although reduced by such legislation, the practice of employing child labor continued into the twentieth century.[1]

Local rates helped improve the elementary education system in England and Wales, but the differences between urban and rural schools increased. The larger urban school boards could afford to build large schools and staff them with well paid teachers. The smaller rural school boards supervised small schools operating within a narrow financial margin. In 1902 local government took control of the elementary schools and education policy for the nation came under the direction of the Board of Education.[2]

FOOTNOTES

[1]David Wardle, English Popular Education (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 70.

[2]Ibid., pp. 71, 74.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

SCHOOL MAINTENANCE GRANT SCHEDULE

UNDER THE REVISED CODE OF 1861

I. Capitation Grants
   - A. 4s. per pupil with 200 attendances*
   - B. 2s. 6d. per pupil with 20 attendances at evening school (for pupils over the age of 12)

II. Grants For Examination Results
   - A. 8s. per examined student with at least 200 attendances
   - B. 5s. per evening school student with at least 24 attendances (for students over the age of 12)

III. Student failure in any one of the examinations--reading, writing, or arithmetic--meant one-third reduction in grant per pupil

* Attendance meant being in a morning, afternoon, or evening session for a total of three and a half hours; Henry Holman, English National Education (London: Blackie and Son, 1898), p. 163.

SOURCE: George C.T. Bartley, Schools For the People (London: Bell and Daldy, 1871), p. 45.

APPENDIX B

DISTRIBUTION OF PARLIAMENTARY GRANTS TO PARISHES IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Parish population	more than 5,000	1,000 to 5,000	500 to 1,000	less than 500
Number of parishes	618	2,624	2,874	8,761
Population of total	10,000,000	5,200,000	2,000,000	1,900,000
Percentage of parishes without state grants	8.5	38.3	68.5	91.3

SOURCE: Great Britain, Parliament, Sessional Papers, 1864, vol. XLV, p. xxv.

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