

Fabian Tract No. 55.

BA161511  
(55)

# THE WORKERS' SCHOOL BOARD PROGRAM.

PUBLISHED BY

THE FABIAN SOCIETY.

PRICE ONE PENNY.

LONDON :

TO BE OBTAINED OF THE FABIAN SOCIETY, 276 STRAND, W.C.

SEPTEMBER 1894.



## THE WORKERS' SCHOOL BOARD PROGRAM.

---

Few departments of the public service need so much looking after as our Educational System. It is of little use getting every man and woman a vote, securing Labor candidates and Payment of Members, abolishing the House of Lords, or even nationalizing the land and all the means of production, unless we at the same time take care that each generation of children gets the best schooling that we know how to provide, and can possibly afford. Universal suffrage can prosper only through Universal Education. Without a well-taught electorate, Socialism is impossible.

Unfortunately many Socialists and Radicals, who are keen enough on other reforms, neglect the most vital of them all. The London workman, for instance, works moderately hard to return a Progressive County Council, but lets the Church and Belgravia put in a reactionary School Board. In Cambridge, Eastbourne, Preston and other towns, the working-men won't even take the trouble to get a School Board at all, and thus leave the whole management of their children's education (which they are nevertheless taxed to pay for) in the hands of the capitalists and the clergy. In hundreds of towns and villages the school fee still remains, a wanton toll upon knowledge.\* Everywhere the public elementary schools are allowed to fall far below the high level of those of Saxony or Switzerland. Nor is the Parliament which the working-men elect any more vigorous than the School Boards. The sectarian training colleges are permitted practically to monopolize the training of teachers; no adequate "ladder" of scholarships and continuation schools is provided from the Board School to higher levels; Secondary Education is abandoned to anarchy; and no serious attempt is made to open the national universities to all who would profit by a university training.

These, and many other defects of our Educational System, urgently call for remedy. But the most pressing need of all is the Reform of the Public Elementary Schools, both Board and Voluntary, at which five-sixths of the children of the country receive all the school education that they ever get.

---

\* In any place where school fees are still exacted, a petition should be got up, extensively signed by parents, and sent to the Education Department, London, asking that a free school should be provided.



### How London Flung its Chance Away.

Let us take London as an instance. In 1870, when the Elementary Education Act was passed, half the London children were getting no schooling at all. The first School Board started off well, and good schools sprang up rapidly in all directions. Large sums were expended in making up the arrears of school accommodation, and in providing for the rapid increase of population. The so-called "voluntary" schools, mostly managed by the clergy, were hard put to it to keep up with the new schools of the Board; and the clergy, alarmed for their privilege of teaching sectarian creeds in State-aided "Voluntary" schools, quickly raised an outcry against their rivals. Most of the London workmen unfortunately cared nothing about education, and in a few years the educational pace set by the first Board slackened; the opposition to progress gradually increased; and, finally, at the 1891 election, the Progressive candidates were defeated in all directions; a thoroughly bad Board was elected; and retrogression set in.

The previous Board had partly submitted to the stress of argument and circumstances, and had adopted a fairly good policy, in spite of the fact that the Progressives were in a small minority. It was the first among public bodies to insist on Trade Union wages; it made the Day Schools free, and arranged for the Evening Classes to be freed in a few months; it sanctioned the supply of pianos to schools possessing a hall, so that the children might march to music and have their school-songs brightened by an accompaniment; it granted special advantages to the upper standards, and was thus beginning to supply Higher Grade Schools; it ordered swimming baths to be attached to a few new schools; and it started separate classes for dull and defective children. But these excellent reforms alarmed the poor ratepayers of the Liberty and Property Defence League, and horrified the clerical managers of half-starved "voluntary" schools; while the London workmen cared nothing about the matter, and left the peers and parsons to work their will. A compact clerical majority was consequently returned under the leadership of Mr. Diggle, who quickly showed his determination to pare down the expenditure and sacrifice the health and education of the children to the interests of "distressed" landlords and the patrons of voluntary schools. Under his guidance the Board at once rescinded the resolution which would have freed the evening classes, and so succeeded in hampering the only continuation schools at present available for most artisans. They peremptorily stopped the supply of pianos, and countermanded the projected swimming baths. But these "economies" were more irritating than profitable, and the majority of the Board had promised at all hazards to reduce the rate. This is how they set to work to cripple the education of the children of the London workmen.

### INDICTMENT OF THE MODERATES.

(1) *They have refused to build Board Schools that were required, and have thus driven children into sectarian institutions, or left them to roam the streets in ignorance.*

In Hackney there has been a deficiency of 9,000 places for five years. The accommodation is now over 1,600 places short of what was admittedly required ten years ago. At last even the patience of the Education Department has been exhausted, and a peremptory order has been made that more schools must be built at once. The schools in the district are shamefully overcrowded. At the beginning of June, 1894, the following was the relation of accommodation to number on the roll in some of them :

School.	Accommodation.	Num. on Roll.	Excess of Scholars over Accommodation.
Bay-street ... ..	498	586	88
Glyn-road ... ..	988	1273	285
Haggerston-road ...	1600	1709	109
Homerton-road ...	1180	1305	125
Mansford-street ...	1320	1527	207
Tottenham-road ...	1448	1643	195
Wilton-road ... ..	1588	1821	233

In July, 1892, Her Majesty's Inspector condemned the school in Bailey's-lane, Hackney, and requested the Board to inform the Education Department "what steps are being taken to provide permanent schools, as my Lords cannot undertake to recognize the present temporary buildings beyond the current school year." The department is still waiting for the new buildings.

In St. Luke's, Millwall, 200 or 300 children are running the streets for want of accommodation; and yet the question of building a new school has been adjourned by the Board time after time for fifteen months, in the hope that the Church party would relieve them of the responsibility. Since it takes at least two, and generally three or four, years to erect a school building, these children are likely to remain in the streets for that time.\*

In January, 1894, the Divisional Superintendent for East Lambeth told the plain truth and dared Mr. Diggle. "To make effectual headway," he said, "against the tide of non-supply for our helpless children we ought to have four or five schools now building, or to be immediately built, in the Division, and some others projected for certain future wants." "At the present time we are 1170 places to the bad, *plus* the present year's certain increase (over 1600)," and "the existing misfortune of having our Lambeth school places crowded by Southwark children on a considerable portion of the Southwark border."

"I cannot take into practical account, for immediate relief, any future merely projected supply; for experience has somewhat painfully taught the fact that the supply itself only comes at a time when it is outdistanced by further actual claims."

"In the five weeks after the summer holidays, 1893, twenty schools furnished, on the backs of the duplicate registers, names of 820 children refused admission. It should be remembered that these rejected children are only the pioneers of great numbers of others

\* See "Report to his Constituents," by Mr. G. L. Bruce, a member for the Tower Hamlets (London: September, 1893).



who would apply if there were a chance of admission. Parents in any given neighborhood soon learn whether the nearer schools are full or not, and do not apply at all where their applications would be unavailing."

Many other parts of London are in a like destitute condition.

(2) *The teaching staff has been reduced and the classes increased; so that many teachers are now in charge of 80, 90, 100 and even 120 children.*

In the Tower Hamlets division the average attendance of scholars in the schools increased by 1,600 during the last official year, while the staff of teachers was diminished by four. At Nichol Street, Bethnal Green, the attendance increased by thirteen, the staff was reduced by one; at Newcastle Street, Shoreditch, the attendance diminished by ten, and three teachers were taken away; and at Pocock Street, Southwark, the attendance increased by eleven, and the staff was reduced by one.\* So that in the three schools there were fourteen more children to be taught and five teachers fewer to teach them. Over the whole of London the increase in attendance was 16,860. Taking 60 children as the maximum for one class, there ought to have been 281 new teachers appointed; but the actual number appointed was 54, or one teacher for every 312 scholars. Between Lady-day and Michaelmas, 1893, the number of children on the roll throughout London increased by 14,000, and the average attendance by 10,000, while the number of teachers was reduced by 240.

Effective education is impossible with these large classes. Individual attention, study of the mental peculiarities of each pupil, and care for the weak points of his character are of the essence of true training. But with 80 or 90 scholars the teacher must treat all alike. Class work under these conditions must be mechanical. Each child becomes a machine; and every machine is made to do precisely the same kind and quantity of work. Originality must be discouraged. One way only must be allowed for doing everything, and all must adopt it without variation. The boys and girls lose elasticity and eagerness: they become dispirited and listless. In France, Germany, and Switzerland, where the classes are much smaller, the children are "human,"† as they are at such schools as Eton and Harrow, which are attended by the sons of the rich.

With unwieldy classes the strain on the teacher is unduly severe; his nerves are overwrought; his tone becomes petulant; the children reflect his impatience; and school life becomes intolerable both to him and them. With classes of reasonable size the discipline can be mild and kind; but with huge masses military methods *plus* flogging are indispensable. The teacher is helpless. Every child must acquire a fixed amount of information before the day of examination, or the Government Grant is reduced; the ratepayers complain; and the teachers suffer dismissal and professional ruin. Therefore strict order must be preserved; and with big classes this necessitates the use of

---

\* See pamphlet by Mr. Bruce, previously quoted.

† See reports on education in these countries by Matthew Arnold.

severe methods. Hence the children come to dislike school, and throw away their books with delight as soon as they have attained the minimum age and Standard for leaving.

(3) *The schools have been "starved," and deprived of proper appliances.*

The supply of books and stationery has been rigidly cut down to a point at which efficient teaching is impossible. The walls of many class-rooms are disfigured by faded, ragged maps, the outlines of which are hidden by dirt; the work of the schools is hampered for lack of exercise books; apparatus for the practical illustration of elementary science is refused; and reading books that are worn to tatters and dirty on every page are left to teach lessons of untidiness, where order and cleanliness should be suggested.

At a school in Bethnal Green the Government Grant was increased £10 in 1893 by the successful teaching of history as a class-subject. To continue this work seventy-two history books were necessary for the upper Standards, but the Stores Committee of the Board refused them on the ground that sufficient books for one-third of the class were already in the school. And although it was pointed out that the books provided were useless, as they began exactly where the lessons for the year must end, the teacher was left to worry along somehow without them; the hundred boys in Standards V., VI. and VII. got no chance of learning the period set for study; and a Government Grant of £10 was imperilled—all to save £3 10s. This is only one case out of many.

(4) *No adequate provision is made for the clever boys and girls.*

The sharpest children in many schools are punished for their cleverness by being left without a separate teacher when they reach the Sixth and Seventh Standards. They attain this elevation at the age of twelve or thirteen; but frequently they are too few to form a separate class and engage a teacher's full attention. Consequently they are considered rather a nuisance than a credit; advanced subjects are not taught to them; and they are not discouraged if they show an inclination to "get a little place" and leave school. Thus the best intellectual power in the school is often wasted. Our educational system ought to provide for the further training of these bright children, and the introduction of technical and commercial subjects into their curriculum. For lack of such provision England is handicapped in the industrial struggle with other nations. The Board of 1888-91 resolved to establish a number of Higher Standard Schools, to which the elder children could be drafted, and where they might be efficiently organized and receive instruction in the use of tools, shorthand, chemistry and other sciences. Unfortunately, it fell to the reactionary Board to carry this out. The creation of Upper Standard Schools was stopped. Of the forty-nine projected, only twelve have been made even moderately efficient as Higher Grade Schools. Some others have been called Upper Standard Schools—a new name costs nothing, and may deceive the electors and parents! But no more money could be spared, even to do justice to London's cleverest children.



(5) *The teachers are underpaid and unfairly dealt with.*

We want the very best brains to cope with the difficult problem of how to make education efficient and popular. But for some years the position of the assistant teachers in the London Board Schools has been disappointing to the ablest amongst them. From the nature of the case few of them can be promoted; for they outnumber the head teachers in the proportion of five to one, and sometimes equal them in age and excel them in ability. The result is the existence of a large and growing class of assistants who have long been qualified for the highest posts, and after eleven years' service have reached the maximum salary of £155 a year for men, and £125 for women. They have petitioned for the raising of this maximum for the men on the valid ground that on three pounds a week a middle-aged man in London cannot keep himself abreast of the time on educational matters and support a family in the way expected of a schoolmaster. It must be remembered that the London teachers are among the pick of the profession, and that no allowance is made by the Board for the lengthy overtime which every successful teacher must work. But the Moderates know that the starvation wages paid in many Voluntary schools would have to be increased if the Board's teachers were better paid. They have shewn an unsuspected sense of cutting humor in dealing with the petition; for by reducing the salaries of head teachers, instead of raising the maximum for assistants, they have diminished the advantages of promotion to the small fraction of able assistants who obtain it. Never was there an apter example of asking for bread and receiving a stone.

The work of the teacher is so arduous and ill-paid that the Board has the greatest difficulty in obtaining boy apprentices. Last year they had thirty fewer than previously, though the number of teachers of other grades increased. Parents show considerable unwillingness to allow the brightest child of the family to enter a profession which demands a long apprenticeship marked by an exhausting combination of teaching and study, succeeded by a costly college course; which then offers classes of 80 to 120 and a maximum of three pounds a week after eleven years' successful service.

(6) *The teachers have been harassed, and the necessary work of the Board has been delayed, by a wanton stirring-up of theological controversies.*

For twenty years religious teaching in the Board Schools has been regulated by the following article of the Code for the guidance of Managers and Teachers:

"In the schools provided by the Board the Bible shall be read, and there shall be given such explanations and such instructions therefrom in the principles of morality and religion as are suited to the capacities of the children; . . . provided always—

"That in such explanations and instructions . . . no attempt be made in any schools to attach children to any particular denomination."

This rule forms the compromise which was agreed upon by the first Board. No attempt was made to break through it until the Moderates began to waste sitting after sitting in the discussion of parts of the Church of England creed, and passed an amendment

to insert the word "Christian" before "religion" in the above article. They have defined the Christian religion in a circular which informs the teachers that "you will impress upon the children the relation in which they stand to God the Father as their Creator, to God the Son as their Redeemer, and to God the Holy Ghost as their Sanctifier." And further: "If there are any of its teachers who, from conscientious motives, wish to be released from the duty of giving religious instruction, steps will be taken, without prejudice to their position, to arrange that this shall be done." This circular has already been used as a new religious test on the teachers, and should immediately be withdrawn.

The case of London is unfortunately paralleled by that of many other large towns in England, and by the great majority of rural School Boards. Where no School Board exists, the state of things is even worse. A few towns, such as Birmingham, Leeds and Nottingham, are a little better off from an educational point of view, chiefly because they have included a small number of determined men, who would not suffer the schools to be neglected. But everywhere in England, owing to the apathy of the wage-earners, and their neglect to take even as much interest in the election of the School Board as they do in that of the Town or County Council, they are allowing their children to grow up with far less education than the Swiss or Prussian child, who will one day be taking the bread out of their mouths. It is high time that every Trade Union, Labor Party, Workmen's Club, Socialist Society and every other Progressive organization took up the Educational Question. Here is the

## **WORKERS' SCHOOL BOARD PROGRAM,**

applicable both to London and the provinces.

### **I. Good Schools and Plenty.**

There should be a school-place for every child, close to its home. All parents are taxed to pay for the schools; therefore none should be deprived of public education for their children. An excess of places in one division cannot compensate for a deficiency in another, any more than an over-abundance of food in the larders of Belgravia can compensate for the empty cupboards of Bethnal Green. The schools must be put where they are wanted. While the population is shifting from the centre to the suburbs, some schools will be left empty; and for want of an Aladdin to have them moved, new ones must be built in the freshly populated districts. Even if the supply of schools were at this moment complete, London needs at least one new school of 1,000 places a month merely to keep pace with the natural increase of population.

### **II. Ample Teaching Staff.**

No child can have justice done to it at a school which is short of teachers. The most crying educational need of the London schools is a larger teaching staff.



At present the rule of the Board is that each fully qualified assistant shall be awarded sixty pupils, each head teacher thirty, and each senior pupil teacher thirty. If the classes never exceeded these numbers there would still be ground for criticism. But it is not possible to make all classes the same size, like companies in a regiment. The higher Standards always contain fewer scholars than the lower, and thirty or forty in Standards V., VI. or VII. will take up a teacher's full attention. The result is that the lower classes must be outrageously large, even if the full staff according to the Board's regulation is allowed. But at the best the average attendance and not the number on the roll is taken as the basis for staffing. It is in the poorest districts, where unfortunately the attendance is most irregular, the teachers most harassed by antagonistic home conditions, and the children most in need of individual attention, that the teachers are fewest. The parents ought to demand the immediate appointment of sufficient adult teachers to give one for every fifty scholars *on the roll*.

There is no saving in the long run by the establishment of unwieldy classes, for the reduction of efficiency causes a loss of Government Grant. The Education Department has written to the Board again and again: "No grant should be paid for this department (of a school) next year unless the numbers in the class-rooms are reduced."

### III. Full Supply of School Material.

The pitiful parsimony in the allowance of pens, ink, paper, books, maps and apparatus now practised by the London Board, as by School Boards in many smaller places, must be immediately stopped. School libraries must be fully supplied with books suitable for the children; and the girls must have their own separate libraries provided with the same sort of books as the boys' libraries, or they will soon find themselves shut out altogether.

It is high time that the teaching of elementary science in London should cease to be crippled by apparatus that will not work, and is as deficient in quantity as it is bad in quality. Sufficient apparatus ought to be supplied to allow each child in a class to perform simple scientific experiments. The observation of experiments performed by the teacher, though helpful, is not enough. The pupil should handle the objects, make experiments, and record results for himself, or he will not get the training in manipulation, in accurate observation and reasoning which scientific studies are intended to afford.

The understaffing and starving of the London schools under the rule of Mr. Diggle are unfortunately also found in many provincial schools. In some large towns an enlightened educational system is adopted; but in country districts and under small Boards, school and teachers are often shamefully stinted. After twenty-three years' administration of the Education Act there are scores of schools in which the reading books bear the thumb marks of several generations of scholars, the maps shew the course of weather-stains more clearly than the coast lines, and the seats and desks are covered with the sign manuals of scholars who are now grey-haired.

#### IV. Provision for Physical Exercises and Manual Training.

Under the baneful system of Payment by Results, which tyrannized over our schools for many years and is not yet completely dethroned, the cramming of facts usurped the place of true education, and practically forbade attention to physical training. The consequence is that last year, out of a total of 19,500 schools in England and Wales, systematic physical exercises were given in only 1938. No wonder that town children are puny and flabby. A sound and well-trained body is as important as a developed mind. A big playground is requisite for every school. The children should go through a course of scientific physical training with lessons given day by day as carefully as lessons in reading and writing. In small towns and villages, playing fields should be open to scholars in elementary schools, and games of cricket, football, &c., should be organized with as much zest as in middle-class schools. The training in organization and co-operation given by such games would be as beneficial to the artisans of the future as the healthy exercise and fresh air. Swimming would also be as useful a school-subject in the British Islands as in land-locked Switzerland.

Manual instruction—paper, cardboard, wood and metal work—is an effective educational instrument and an essential preparation for the technical education which the children of an industrial nation like the English should receive. But last year only 430 schools obtained a grant for this subject. With the County Councils busy organizing technical education, and foreign nations still leagues ahead of us in the matter, plans must be adopted to make such training available to the children in every school as would enable them to get the skill of hand and eye, the sense of accuracy and proportion, which would fit them for technical and trade instruction later.

#### V. Special Provision for Advanced Schools.

Towns like Birmingham, Leeds and Manchester have each one or more fully-equipped higher grade schools for the special scientific, technical and commercial instruction of older scholars. London has only twelve schools which can possibly be called Higher grade, of which there are only three for advanced work beyond the Standards, and not one to compare with the Waverley-road school at Birmingham, with its magnificent laboratories and workshops.

In the official reports, forty-nine schools in London are dubbed Higher Standard schools. But thirty-seven of them are ordinary elementary schools simply decked with the new name—jackdaws parading in peacock's feathers. The next London Board must convert these shams into realities and give the children of London the same advantages as those of Birmingham or Nottingham. Every town or district of 20,000 inhabitants ought to have at least one Higher Grade School.



## VI. Free Evening Classes or Continuation Schools.

Most boys and girls must go to work, at present, at thirteen or fourteen years of age; some, unfortunately, younger still. For them, evening schools must be provided, which should, of course, be free. In London, the School Board refuses to abolish the fee, and does very little to encourage its scholars to continue their education and retain the benefit of the learning they have acquired in the day schools. To get rid of the fee in London would cost only £4,000 a year. Nowhere is the fee really worth collecting, for it effectually keeps the schools empty. But the work of these evening schools must also be extended. Every year about 700,000 boys and girls leave the public elementary schools, who will quickly forget nearly all they have learnt if they do not keep up their education in evening classes. In London alone, over a hundred thousand children leave the Public Elementary Schools every year. In 1892-3 the average number of pupils on the rolls of the Evening Classes was 18,334, and the average attendance was only 11,532.

## VII. Fair Treatment of Teachers.

We must not "sweat" the educational servants of the public. There are 151 certificated masters and 3,071 certificated mistresses in England and Wales who receive less than a pound a week; while 2,586 masters and 12,324 mistresses receive less than thirty shillings a week. This means that skilled men and women of some culture are kept at the arduous and responsible work of training the voters of the next generation on less than a living wage. They cannot maintain their own education on the paltry pittance allowed them. They therefore gradually lose power, and the children suffer the consequences of their parents' parsimony. Englishmen have yet to show that they understand the teaching of modern economists that "no change would conduce so much to a rapid increase of material wealth as an improvement in our schools."\* We cannot stand still. Either we must go forward and keep pace with France, Germany and Switzerland, or confess that the richest country in the world cannot afford to educate its children, and prefers to fall into the second rank among the nations.

The salaries of the teachers should rather be raised than lowered, or able men and women will not be attracted to the work. The teacher's duty is of superlative importance to the State; and yet four-fifths of the men teachers in London, where the pay is highest, have a maximum salary of £15 a year less than the second-class clerks in the offices of the Board. They ask that their work may be valued as highly as a book-keeper's; and their request may well be granted without fear of extravagance.

The cases in which a head-master and mistress are husband and wife and together receive over £600 a year are as exceptional as the "families of miners who get £15 a week"; and the scale has long been reduced so that the recurrence of such instances is most unlikely. The scale of salaries ought to be the same for women as

---

\* Professor Marshall, *Economics of Industry*, p. 145.

for men. Their training is as long and expensive, and their work as important and even more arduous. The honest Trade Union maxim of equal wages for equal work should be applied in their favor. The training of the young is particularly unsuitable work for worn-out men and women. Teachers should therefore be put under a pension scheme the same as other classes of civic servants, and compelled to make way at the age of sixty for younger, more energetic workers.

### IX. Provision of School Libraries.

One aim of a liberal education is to create a taste for good literature. Children at school should be therefore set to study some of the most beautiful pieces of prose and poetry in the language, to learn extracts by heart and sometimes to act scenes from great plays. But it is stupid and unkind to stimulate a scholar's imagination, to purify his taste and to sharpen his intellectual hunger, and then to refuse him access to great books. His desire for reading will be strong in proportion to the success of the school training; and he will assuredly find means to satisfy it. Probably he will feed on the garbage of the "penny dreadful," the cheap and unhealthy diet left to the scholars in the 14,000 English schools which possess no school library. At only 5,832 schools do the managers appear to be conscious of the pleasure and stimulus that lads and lasses get from works of fiction, poetry, travel, adventure and history.

### X. Trade Union Conditions.

Like all public bodies, School Boards must become model employers of labor. All manual workers whom they engage should be paid Trade Union wages and work not more than forty-eight hours per week; they should insert a rigid Trade Union clause in all contracts, similiar to that adopted by the London County Council; and, wherever practicable, they should do their work without the intervention of a contractor. To ensure proper attention to these matters, one or two workmen should be put forward by the local Trades Council or a similar body at every School Board election. But the main work of the Board will be educational; and probably the contest for Trade Union conditions will need to occupy only a small fraction of its time. It will be well, therefore, if the candidates chosen have previously shown an interest in purely educational work. The training of the children of all the workmen in a town is more important even than an increase of wages to the few employed by the Board; because the safe progress of the Labor movement will be in proportion to the enlightenment of successive generations, which itself will depend chiefly on the efficiency of the nation's schools.

For the above reforms no fresh legislation is required; but they will cause an increased expenditure which the occupying ratepayer, especially in the poorer districts, should not be asked to bear. Every progressive School Board should therefore join the London County Council in urgently demanding from Parliament power to put the burden on the right shoulders. A Municipal Death Duty on local



land and houses, and the Taxation of Ground Values would at once place some portion of the charge for education on the Unearned Increment now steadily accruing to the propertied classes through the very advance in national efficiency for which the occupier has had to pay.

Even if all School Boards were controlled by enthusiastic educational reformers who should break through tradition and administer the law solely in the interests of the children, there would remain for agitation the following important

## LEGISLATIVE EDUCATIONAL REFORMS.

### I. Public Control of all State-aided Schools.

By the Act of 1870 the Education Department was empowered to order that if the accommodation in a school district were not made sufficient within a certain time, a School Board should be created with authority to raise money by rates. But the private managers of voluntary schools have set their faces against the creation of School Boards. By providing barely sufficient places in their own institutions they have warded off the dreaded invasion and compelled taxpayers to accept the charity of people from whom they differ in religious opinion. In almost all districts the Voluntary Schools still compete with their rivals, though some of them succumb each year. 14,673 of them, with an average attendance of 2,411,362 children were at work in 1893. The name "voluntary" is given them because they are partly supported by subscriptions to which that term more or less applies. But less than one-fifth of their income is derived from this source. The remainder is provided almost wholly by the State, a very small fraction being now paid in fees. But on account of the one-fifth they are exempted from local public control. The managers represent the handful of subscribers; the taxpayers have no direct representation—and this in a country which boasts about "no taxation without representation."

It is notorious that hundreds of voluntary schools are under-sized, badly lighted and ill-ventilated, the teachers too few and woefully underpaid, and the desks, books, and apparatus antiquated and inadequate. Consequently, the children who attend them obtain worse education than their neighbors in the Board Schools, and so sustain a loss for which limitless dogmatic theology can never compensate.

The supreme manager of the voluntary school is in most cases the clergyman of the parish, who often rules school and teacher with a rod of iron. It is true that the Inspector for the Education Department holds a yearly examination; and since the grant depends upon his report, the central office, through him, has considerable control over the curriculum. But this is not enough. The direct representatives of the ratepayers should at least be in a majority on every body of managers, the voluntary subscribers being represented only in proportion to the aid they give. To this end

School Boards should be created all over the country, the members of which should assist in managing existing schools even when it is unnecessary to build new ones. In country districts the area of each Board should be large. Experience has made it clear that small Boards are unable to secure public control and cannot be trusted to enforce the Education Acts against the opposition of the squire or of a large farmer interested in obtaining cheap child-labor. As the subscriptions to the voluntary schools decline, the Boards must assume entire control and make them fully efficient.

The Secondary Schools, now mostly supported by separate and badly distributed endowments, must also be brought under public control. The Town and County Councils, at present administering the Technical Instruction Acts, might well be required to do as the London County Council has done, viz., delegate their educational powers to a Joint Committee formed of representatives of the Town or County Council for each district, the School Board, the teachers, the local Trades Council, and any local institutions of university rank. To some such body as this the supervision of all Secondary and Technical Education should be entrusted.

At the head of the whole educational system of the country we want, finally, a real Educational Minister—an Acland with greater power and far more funds—directly responsible to Parliament and the nation for the efficiency of the Board School, the Technical Institute or Secondary School, the College and the University.

## II. Pupil Teacher System.

The supply of masters and mistresses for elementary schools is maintained by the Pupil Teacher System, under which boys and girls are apprenticed for four years in a school, and the lucky ones taught for two or three additional years in a training college. The apprentices are generally taken from the upper standards at the age of thirteen or fourteen. Their work is exceptionally hard, as they have charge of a class during the day, and must study steadily at night if they wish to pass their examinations. The master or mistress of their school is directed to instruct them at least five hours per week; but in many cases even this modicum of help is not given. Largely in consequence of this neglect, 2,968 out of 9,511 candidates were plucked in 1893 at the Queen's Scholarship examination, the final ordeal of the apprenticeship. Natural inaptitude or laziness would not account for so great a slaughter. In a few big towns the pupil teachers are taught at special schools. But in small towns and country districts they must teach all day right through their apprenticeship, because their work is relied upon for carrying on the school. The whole system is a scandal deserving swift abolition. In no other country are boys and girls of fourteen set to teach, nor youngsters who have just passed Standard V. considered competent to instruct older children in Standards VI. and VII. The institution is a legacy from the dark days before 1870, when child-labor was used in education because it was cheap and because the methods of the factory were deemed applicable to the school. Both pupils and teachers



suffer under it. The former cannot be as skilfully educated by a boy or girl instructor as by a fully qualified master or mistress. The young pedagogues are unduly strained by the exhausting combination of teaching and study; and the time they get for self-culture is ludicrously inadequate. Consequently, many of them fail at their examinations and are compelled to seek a fresh calling at the age of eighteen or nineteen; while a large proportion of those who pass to the training colleges must spend the term there in laying a foundation of knowledge which should have been laid and built upon years before.

The system is carefully adapted to hold the victim in a narrow groove. During his whole professional life he is confined to the society of scholars and teachers in elementary schools. Without a break he passes from the school of his childhood to another in which his apprenticeship is spent. What instruction he receives is again given by an elementary schoolmaster. At the training college he meets only budding schoolmasters who have passed through precisely the same mill as himself and have ideas and ideals the very color and texture of his own. Even the professors are often men who have gone through exactly the same training. At last he commences to instruct pupil teachers who are just starting on the dreary road he himself has traversed, in a school which is an exact copy of those he has previously worked in.

A more humane and logical system of training must be devised. In workshops it may be wise to allow a young workman to spoil materials for the sake of practice, but child material is too precious for this sacrifice. The clever boys and girls in the Elementary Schools who wish to become teachers should pass by means of scholarships into Secondary Schools and continue their studies for three or four years. The Scholarships must include adequate allowance for maintenance to enable the sons and daughters of artisans to enter the profession. After the course of higher education, two or three years should be devoted to studying the science and art of education at a training college, where regular and abundant practice in the management of classes under the supervision of experts would be essential. To give the students the breadth of mind and widened sympathy which comes from mixing with men and women destined for various callings, the training college should be affiliated to the Universities and University Colleges.

### III. Training Colleges.

Bad as is the state of things concerning the private domination of our schools, it is creditable compared with the condition of the training colleges. A conscience clause forbids the exclusion of a child from an elementary school on account of its parents' creed, religious tests have been abolished at the Universities, and an Atheist may sit in the House of Commons; but the training colleges for schoolmasters and schoolmistresses are closed to students whose religious opinions are considered unsatisfactory by private committees of management. The places at the residential colleges are divided as follows:

Church of England	...	...	...	...	2,284
Roman Catholic	...	...	...	...	272
Wesleyan	...	...	...	...	236
British and Foreign School Society	...	...	...	...	534
Udenominational	...	...	...	...	283*

Every student at the Church of England, Roman Catholic and Wesleyan Colleges must be a communicating member of these respective churches. The British and Foreign School Society requires attendance at prayers daily and at some church or chapel on the Sunday; and the undenominational colleges also demand Christian, though not sectarian, belief. In one or two instances the principals relax the regulations; otherwise not a single place in a residential college would be open to an Agnostic. The entrance to four-fifths of the accommodation is through the narrow gate of sectarian theology. Consequently, students who desire admission often pretend to hold opinions which they really reject, and repudiate immediately their college course is ended. Honest candidates who frankly state their difficulties are refused admission, no matter what their attainments. Orthodoxy is more requisite than learning, and hypocrisy more successful than honesty.

The Day Training Colleges which have been recently established in connection with the University Colleges, and are now training 787 students, are free from religious tests.

As in the case of the Voluntary Schools, the reason for allowing the training colleges to be private preserves is that a small fraction of their income is obtained from voluntary subscriptions. But the State is their chief supporter. The following table shews the facts of the case in 1893-4 :

Grants by the State	...	...	...	...	£ 132,817
Fees by students and books sold to them	...	...	...	...	£ 31,303
Subscriptions and donations	...	...	...	...	£ 17,736†

This demonstrates that more than three-fourths of their income is from public funds and less than one-tenth from private patrons. Yet the latter appoint all professors and officers, determine what students shall be admitted, what fees they shall pay, how they shall be lodged and fed, and what religious opinions they shall profess. "The time is ripe, yea, rotten ripe for change." The colleges should be converted into national training schools, religious tests abolished, and the best places opened to the best men and women.

Additional colleges are required. At present, more than half the teachers who desire to take the college course and are qualified by passing in the first or second class at the Queen's Scholarship Examination are excluded for want of accommodation. In 1893, 4,585 so passed and only 2,098 were admitted. The remainder had entered the nation's service at thirteen or fourteen, and honorably served their apprenticeship; but at its conclusion they were refused the opportunity to render themselves fully efficient. Many of them doubtless left the work in disgust. Their apprenticeship was wasted.

\* See Annual Report on Training Colleges.

† See Report on Training Colleges, 1893-4.



Most of them went back to the schools at salaries of £50 or £60 per annum, and are now studying privately for the Certificate Examination, which must be passed before they can be recognised as efficient masters or mistresses. But, inevitably, their studies are less satisfactory than those of the college students. Each year the Inspectors complain of the sad contrast between the intellectual equipment of the two classes, and urge the necessity for making the college training compulsory for all teachers. At present nearly half of the masters and about five-sevenths of the mistresses in the country have not passed through a training college. The Education Department estimates that an annual supply of 3,000 teachers is necessary. The existing colleges can turn out only 2,000, and therefore half as many more places should be provided. But the number of pupil teachers should be regulated, and only so many as statistics shew will be necessary, should be allowed to start their apprenticeship, due allowance being made for subsequent failures and withdrawals; and no teacher should then be fully certificated who had not gone through the full college course.

#### IV. Compulsory School Attendance.

The Act of 1870 practically recognized that it is the duty of the nation to see that its children are educated. The parent was then deprived by law of the privilege of allowing his children to grow up dunces. Attendance at school between certain ages was nominally made compulsory. But experience has shewn that it is easier to make a law than to enforce it. Thousands of children still escape the eye of the "School Board man," and many more only drop in occasionally to patronize their teacher and renew a nodding acquaintance with the alphabet. As a rule, father or mother wants them to run errands, or they are working for farmer A. or squire B. Not infrequently the delinquent farmer or squire is the magistrate who tries the case when the parent is summoned for not sending his child to school. Still oftener the court is so occupied that school-attendance cases are adjourned week after week; while some magistrates stolidly refuse to carry out the law at all. The result is that on any day the places of one out of five children who ought to be at school are vacant; and in some schools not more than half the children attend as a rule at one time. In fact, there is no such thing as compulsory attendance in England at present, though the education is free. In the interests of the children themselves, and of the nation which will have to support reformatories, workhouses and prisons for them if they escape education, the compulsory clauses should be more rigidly administered. Reforms which would stiffen the administration and make the law a reality are:

(a) Wherever possible, and especially in large towns, special magistrates should be appointed to hear school-attendance cases.

(b) The hearing should not be held at a police-court, where the parents are compelled to mix with common criminals.

(c) No magistrate should be allowed to sit on the bench during the trial of any case in which he is concerned.

(d) The Education Department should refuse its grant to School Boards which fail to secure a proper standard of average attendance, due allowance being made for any special circumstances.

### V. Half-Timers.

Since January, 1894, no child may be condemned to work half-time till the age of eleven. At the Berlin Conference, Sir J. Gorst promised, with the sanction of the Government and on behalf of the British nation, that the minimum age should be raised to twelve. But children have no votes, so national promises in their interests are not binding. When the corporate conscience becomes moderately sensitive to the sin of cruelty to children, and our boasted practical sense appreciates the bad economy of starving their education, we shall sweep the half-time system away. It is both cruel and foolish to drag children of eleven out of bed in the early morning, to send them to work half the day amid the roar and rattle of machinery, and then expect them to learn arithmetic and spelling at school when their brains are reeling and their eyes are heavy with sleep. This was the fate of 164,018 children in 1893. The inevitable result is a dwarfing of mind and body, which damages generations to come and menaces our industrial power. England should at least adopt the standard of Zürich, where practically every child is at school up to fifteen years of age. That is the minimum of education which the children in a self-governing community should receive. After leaving school, the apprentice should give up some hours every day to his technical classes; and the employer should be required to allow him time to attend them. Trade Unionists would find such a law the best way of stopping any unfair substitution of boys for adult workmen, as the employer would soon give up taking more apprentices than were really required to keep up the supply.

### VI. The Educational Ladder.

For the highest posts in industry, politics, science and art, the nation needs the brightest talent it can produce. But at present its area of choice is confined to the children of the middle and upper classes, because they alone procure the higher education necessary for the full development of their faculties. It will be good economy for the nation, and specially profitable to the manual workers, to discover and develop the latent powers of its future citizens; for only by increasing the supply of trained ability can organisers of industry, pioneers of science, and honest statesmen be procured at reasonable salaries, and a larger share of the national income be left for division among the mass of the workers. School Boards should therefore have power to establish an abundant supply of scholarships to take the clever boys and girls on to higher studies. These scholarships must include a payment in cash sufficient to compensate for the loss of wages through continuance at school; otherwise, as experience shows, they will be speedily absorbed by the middle and upper classes. An educational ladder should be set up from the Kindergarten to the Technical College or University, and the whole ascent thrown open to a clever boy or girl.



## VII. Free Meals.

In every large town some children are sent to school hungry, on account of the low wages, irregular employment, or bad habits of their parents. In London alone 30,000 scholars go breakfastless during the winter months; and careful investigation—at Leeds, for instance—has revealed an equally pitiful condition elsewhere. It is a waste of power to try to fill the brains of these children while their stomachs are empty. They must be fed before they can be educated. Authority should therefore be given to the School Board or some other public body to provide at least one free meal each day for all the children whose parents care to send them to it. Until this authority is granted, members of School Boards can help to organise and extend the work of the voluntary societies which try to feed a fraction of the starving youngsters. Kitchens, halls, utensils, labor, can be granted to these societies on the cheapest terms that the law allows; and the aid of teachers and attendance officers enlisted in discovering the necessitous and superintending the meals.

---

### BOOKS ON ENGLISH PUBLIC EDUCATION.

- ACLAND, A. H. D., and SMITH, H. LL. *Studies in Secondary Education.* Percival; 1892. 7s. 6d.  
 ADAMS, F. *History of the Elementary School Contest in England.* Chapman; 1882. 6s.  
 ARNOLD, MATTHEW. *Reports on Elementary Schools [1852-1882].* Macmillan; 1893. 3s. 6d.  
 CRAIK, H. *The State in Relation to Education. (English Citizen Series.)* Macmillan; 1893. 2s. 6d.  
 SMITH, H. LL. *Report to L. C. C. on Technical Education.* Steel and Jones; 1893. 5s.  
*The Case against Diggleism.* Alexander and Shephard; 1894. 1s.

### PARLIAMENTARY PAPERS (Annual).

- Report of Committee of Council.* 3d. With Appendix, 3s.  
*Divisional Reports by Inspectors.* 1½d. or 2d. each.  
*Reports on Training Colleges.* 4d.  
*Code.* 4½d.  
*Reports from Inspectors of Poor Law Schools. (In Local Government Board Report.)*  
*Science and Art Department Report.* 1s. 6d.

### Others (Selected).

- Commission on Popular Education, 1861.* 6 vols. 18s. 3d.  
*Commission on Technical Instruction, 1881-4.* 5 vols. 20s. 10d.  
*Commission on the Working of the Elementary Education Acts. (England and Wales), 1886.* Report, 5s. 6d.; Evidence, etc. (10 vols.), 48s. 1d.  
*Schools Inquiry Commission, 1868.* 21 vols. 69s. 3d.  
*Technical Education Commission, 1882-84.* 17s. 4d. *Report to Charity Commissioners (London Polytechnics), 1890.* 2s. 5d.

**FABIAN SOCIETY.**—The Fabian Society consists of Socialists. A statement of its Rules, etc., and the following publications can be obtained from the Secretary, at the Fabian Office, 276 Strand, London, W.C.

**FABIAN ESSAYS IN SOCIALISM.**

(35th Thousand.)

Library Edition, 6/-; or, *direct from the Secretary for Cash*, 4/6 (postage, 4½d.). Cheap Edition, Paper cover, 1/-; plain cloth, 2/-. At all booksellers, or post free from the Secretary for 1/- and 2/- respectively.

**FABIAN TRACTS.**

- 1.—Why are the Many Poor? 100th thous. 4 pp., 6 for 1d.; 1/- per 100.
- 5.—Facts for Socialists. A survey of the distribution of income and the condition of classes in England. 6th edition; revised 1893. 55th thousand. 16 pp., 1d.; or 9d. per doz.
- 7.—Capital and Land. A similar survey of the distribution of property. 4th edition; revised 1893. 16 pp., 1d.; or 9d. doz.
- 10.—Figures for Londoners. 20th thous. 4 pp., 6 for 1d.; 1/- per 100.
- 12.—Practicable Land Nationalization. Revised 1894. 4 pp., 6 for 1d.; 1/- 100.
- 13.—What Socialism Is. 80th thous. 4 pp., 6 for 1d.; or 1/- per doz.
- 14.—The New Reform Bill. 15th thous. 20 pp., 1d.; 9d. per doz.
- 15.—English Progress towards Social Democracy. By S. WEBB. 1d.; 9d. doz.
- 16.—A Plea for an Eight Hours Bill. 4 pp., 6 for 1d.; 1/- per 100.
- 17.—Reform of the Poor Law. By SIDNEY WEBB. 20 pp., 1d.; 9d. per doz.
- 19.—What the Farm Laborer Wants. (Revised 1894). 6 for 1d.; or 1/- per 100.
- 20.—Questions for Poor Law Guardians. 4 pp., 6 for 1d.; or 1/- per 100.
- 21.—Questions for London Vestrymen. (Revised 1894). 6 for 1d.; or 1/- per 100.
- 22.—The Truth about Leasehold Enfranchisement. 6 for 1d.; or 1/- per 100.
- 23.—The Case for an Eight Hours Bill. 16 pp., 1d.; or 9d. per doz.
- 24.—Questions for Parliamentary Candidates. 6 for 1d.; or 1/- per 100.
- 25.—Questions for School Board Candidates. 6 for 1d.; or 1/- per 100.
- 26.—Questions for London County Councillors. 6 for 1d.; or 1/- per 100.
- 27.—Questions for Town Councillors. 4 pp., 6 for 1d.; or 1/- per 100.
- 28.—Questions for County Councillors (Rural). 6 for 1d.; or 1/- per 100.
- 29.—What to Read. A List of Books for Social Reformers. Contains the best books and blue-books relating to Economics, Socialism, Labor Movements, Poverty, etc. 2nd ed.; revised 1893. Paper cover, 3d. each; or 2/3 per doz.
- 38.—A Welsh Translation of No. 1. 4 pp., 6 for 1d.; or 1/- per 100.
- 39.—A Democratic Budget. 16 pp., 1d.; or 9d. per doz.
- 41.—The Fabian Society. By BERNARD SHAW. 32 pp., 1d. each; or 9d. per doz.
- 42.—Christian Socialism. By the Rev. S. D. HEADLAM. 16 pp., 1d. 9d. per doz.
- 44.—A Plea for Poor Law Reform. 4 pp. 6 for 1d.; or 1/- per 100.
- 45.—The Impossibilities of Anarchism. By G. B. SHAW. 28 pp., 2d.; 1/6 per doz.
- 46.—Socialism and Sailors. By B. T. HALL. 16 pp., 1d. each; or 9d. per doz.
- 47.—The Unemployed. By JOHN BURNS, M.P. 20 " " " " "
- 48.—Eight Hours by Law. 16 pp., 1d. each; or 9d. per doz.
- 49.—A Plan of Campaign for Labor. A detailed scheme for Independent Labor Representation. 36 pp., 2d. 1/6 per doz.
- 50.—Sweating: its Cause and Remedy. 16 pp., 1d. each; or 9d. per doz.
- 51.—Socialism: True and False. By SIDNEY WEBB. 20 pp., 1d. ea.; 9d. doz.
- 52.—State Education at Home and Abroad. By J. W. MARTIN. 16 pp., 1d.;
- 53.—The Parish Councils Act: What it is and how to work it. 20 pp., 1d.; or 9d. per doz. [or 9d. per doz.]
- 54.—The Humanizing of the Poor Law. By J. F. OAKSHOTT. 24 pp., 1d.; 9d. doz.
- 55.—The Workers' School Board Program. 20 pp., 1d.; or 9d. per doz.
- 56.—Questions for Parish Councillors. 4 pp., 6 for 1d.; or 1/- per 100.
- 57.—Questions for District Councillors. 4 pp., 6 for 1d.; or 1/- per 100.
- 58.—Allotments and How to Get Them. 4 pp., 6 for 1d.; or 1/- per 100.

**FABIAN MUNICIPAL PROGRAM (Tracts Nos. 30 to 37).**

1. The Unearned Increment. 2. London's Heritage in the City Guilds.
  3. Municipalization of the Gas Supply. 4. Municipal Tramways. 5. London's Water Tribute. 6. Municipalization of the London Docks. 7. The Scandal of London's Markets. 8. A Labor Policy for Public Authorities.
- Each 4 pp. The eight in a red cover for 1d. (9d. per doz.); or separately 1/- per 100.

☞ The Set post free 2/3. Bound in Buckram post free for 3/9.

Boxes for set of Tracts 1s., post free 1s. 3d.

Manifesto of English Socialists. In red cover. 8 pp., 1d. each; or 9d. per doz. Parcels to the value of 10/- and upwards, post free.