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GENERAL REPORTS ON HIGHER
EDUCATION WITH APPENDICES
FOR THE YEAR 1902**

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by Various

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GENERAL REPORTS

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HIGHER EDUCATION

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FOR THE YEAR 1902.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of His Majesty.



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GENERAL REPORT for the year 1902 by C. A. BUCKMASTER, ESQ.,
*one of His Majesty's Chief Inspectors, on SECONDARY
 SCHOOLS, SCIENCE CLASSES, ART CLASSES, and EVENING
 SCHOOLS, in the SOUTHERN DIVISION OF ENGLAND, comprising
 the counties of WORCESTER, OXFORD, GLOUCESTER, BERKS,
 SOMERSET, DORSET, DEVON, CORNWALL, WILTS, HANTS, and
 KENT, with part of LONDON.*

MY LORD,

I have the honour to submit to you a general report on the work of my Division.

The transfer of the supervision of the Evening Schools from Whitehall to South Kensington, which has been completed since my last report, has brought the Inspectors of the latter branch into intimate contact with many varieties of educational work with which we were previously only generally acquainted. The novelty of much of this work has impressed itself deeply on my colleagues in this Division and it will be seen from the information with which I have been furnished that a marked freshness of view has thus been secured. I propose, therefore, to devote the greater portion of this present report to the consideration of some of the more obvious problems presented by these evening schools. Many of the conclusions to which we have been led have already found expression in the reports of colleagues published last year, notably in that by Mr. F. Pullinger, but as my own division differs widely from his in character, habits of thought, and industrial pursuits some at least of these conclusions may perhaps deserve restatement.

The great variety presented by the evening schools is the first characteristic which impresses the observer. But though the variety of subject is almost endless yet the number of types is limited and the whole of the evening classes may be roughly but effectively arranged in six or seven well defined groups. This arrangement has been carefully worked out by Mr. Swain, whose district comprises the three counties of Hampshire, Wiltshire, and Dorset, and may be usefully given in his own words:—

"Evening schools carried on in this district may be conveniently divided into six different groups, in each of which, though there may be considerable overlapping, there is a class of student distinct from that met with in the other divisions. These groups comprise the Science and Art Classes so long established under the Department of Science and Art, pupil teacher classes, elementary continuation classes, technical and technological classes, recreative classes, and lastly a group which may be described as Home Industry Classes.

"(1.) *The Science and Art classes* in the old sense flourish more particularly in the larger centres such as Portsmouth Technical Institute, The Hartley University College, Southampton, The Technical School at

Swindon, and, to a smaller extent, at Eastleigh, Ryde, Bournemouth, Salisbury, Trowbridge, and Chippenham. In Dorset classes of this type exist only on a small scale, nor is there throughout the county any centre boasting of a well-equipped technical school of considerable dimensions. These classes are attended mainly by those teachers who are anxious to increase or improve their certificates, pupil teachers who do not attend a special centre, apprentices to the building trades, teachers seeking to qualify for the earlier stages of the London degrees, Chemists' apprentices, and those attached to engineering works of various types. They represent necessarily a heterogeneous collection of students who, in many cases, have had to commence earning a livelihood before being properly equipped by a properly graded education. They belong to a class to whom the facilities for study offered by the late Science and Art Department for many years were of very great value, and under the existing arrangements for young people in the various professions and trades this class of student is likely to remain as a factor to be considered in the educational scheme of the county or borough.

"(2.) *The Pupil Teacher Classes* are a distinct section, they are composed mostly of girl students whose time is very limited and whose objective is the King's Scholarship examination. Their studies are mostly carried on at a time when body and mind are fatigued and the variety of subjects which they have to study in such a way hinders all breadth of development, while the study of any subject with a view to subsequent teaching of the same seems almost impossible. The counties of Dorset, Hampshire, and Wiltshire have looked at the pupil teacher question in different ways. These have been determined largely by the attitude of the technical committees towards elementary education. In *Dorset* the committee has considered hitherto that the training of pupil teachers is a matter for the elementary authorities, and doubtless paucity of funds has helped this policy, the imperial grant to the county being a diminishing amount each year. Local people have been left to start classes which in the main are attended by pupil teachers, but no special terms are offered by the County Committee to such classes beyond those offered to any other students. There are no special arrangements for pupil teachers to attend classes in secondary schools in the week days. In *Hampshire* the Technical Committee has regarded the pupil teachers more favourably and local managers have been encouraged to start classes at definite centres, the county undertaking to pay the teachers and provide a certain portion of travelling expenses. But the greatest effort has been made in *Wiltshire* where day classes for pupil teachers, in the secondary county schools, have been organized. The staff of the day schools has been strengthened to meet this demand, and liberal grants have been offered by the County Committee for each pupil teacher who makes not less than 9 hours' attendance per week at the secondary school. There does not seem to have been as yet any successful effort to teach the pupil teachers in the same classes as the secondary day school students, though it is difficult to see why this should not be attempted. Any drastic alterations in the present system of pupil teachers must necessarily involve a large increase in the cost of the staff at any school; for if, as has been suggested, the pupil teachers were to give the whole of their time, say for three years, to secondary school studies, their place would have to be supplied at least for the next three years by a qualified staff which is at present non-existent. Such a change would have to be introduced gradually, for there is still a vast body of opinion in favour of young pupil teachers getting used to method and class management at a very early age.

"(3) *The Technical and Technological Classes* proper can only flourish in connection with a well-equipped and well-organized central institution such as exists at Portsmouth, Swindon, and Southampton. The students at these classes are definitely engaged in local industries, and their attendance at the evening classes is wholly with a view to perfecting themselves in the theoretical side of their practical daily work, so that the principles underlying the various trades should be properly mastered by those apprenticed to them. When such technical institutes take their

proper place in connection with the industries of the neighbourhood it seems only reasonable to expect that attendance at suitable classes shall form a definite part of the duty of an apprentice. This supposes the closest co-operation on the part of leaders of industries and managers of works with the governors of the technical school in their neighbourhood. The course at the technical institutes at Portsmouth, Southampton and Swindon are becoming more and more organized with a view to this policy of co-operation. The new buildings for the Municipal Technical School at Portsmouth are not yet started although the site has been acquired and the plans approved long ago. The present accommodation is most unsatisfactory. The Hartley College at Southampton has secured recognition as a University College and will henceforth, it is hoped, take the leading part in higher education in this district.

"(4) The continuation classes in the strict sense of the term are still very largely devoted to the recovery of work done in the day school years ago rather than to the continuation of studies for which the students acquired a taste when at school. The very elementary character of much of the work in Arithmetic, History, Geography, and other day school subjects must not, however, in every case, be regarded as an adverse comment on the day school work. But it is difficult to evade the suggestion that if the boys and girls left the day schools with a reasonable aptitude for study, or having acquired studious habits, the rudimentary work of earlier years would not be so completely lost. I refer entirely to subjects taken in the day school. The poor work in drawing, the very elementary syllabuses of needlework, the simple character of the exercises in mensuration, etc., all seem to me to point to a want of grounding in the day school. But it cannot be doubted that, in a vast number of cases, the children leave the day school just as their faculties are beginning to rapidly develop, and the practice in so many schools of compelling the few boys in an upper standard to take their lessons with those below them must inevitably discourage them and make them long to be away at work. But so long as the prospects of a teacher are dependent on the number of the 'standards' in which he has been experienced, so long will the temptation exist to retain one or two boys at the top of a school when they ought to be drafted into other schools where they can form a class of their own.

"(5) The recreative evening classes include all those which appear to have no object beyond temporarily interesting young people and occupying their time usefully while keeping them out of mischief during the long winter evenings. This type of class is not sharply marked off from the home industry or other classes. It includes a great deal of wood-carving, metal work, repoussé work, etc., which are in no sense taken up with a view to the development of industry although the students in some cases may find a market for their productions. That such classes have their uses is not to be doubted, though they can form no part of a genuine scheme for technical instruction. To attempt to direct this energy into channels which might subserve the purposes of industrial development, would be, I think, in many cases a policy founded on ignorance of human nature, and therefore bound to fail. If fundamental work in drawing, designing and modelling be insisted on in such recreative classes the students are sure to lose heart and the classes would drop. If they subserve a useful purpose their lapse could but be regretted. It is for the local authority to decide how far the term 'education' can be made sufficiently elastic to justify a subsidy for such classes. If the groundwork were better laid in the day school we might expect the young people to find their recreation in the genuine development of a well-grounded industry. In evening classes for handicrafts, the motive is necessarily far more utilitarian than educational in the sense of using the subject as a vehicle for the formation of character, but it cannot be too much insisted on, that it is in a sure foundation that true stability exists, and the proper development of any manual industry can never be assured where the groundwork has not been well and truly laid.

"(6) The home industry classes are probably the most popular of all the

evening classes. The subjects appeal to the students as of immediate utility; they are intimately connected with everyday life and surroundings, and, in many cases a very great degree of skill is never attained, sufficient for useful purposes is easily mastered. Such subjects as cookery, laundry, dresscutting, dressmaking, needlework, nursing, and ambulance, lend themselves very easily to efforts to improve the life and surroundings of the working classes. They do not, I think, in any way assist the development of industries, they rather, by teaching people to work for themselves, diminish the demands for cooks, dressmakers, needlewomen, and nurses. I have even known a carpentry class advertised as intended 'to enable people to do odd jobs for themselves,' and useful as this is, one cannot help thinking that this was not the object of the promoters of the Technical Instruction Acts. One enthusiastic attempt has been made to start a cobbling class to enable villagers to mend their own shoes and boots, while there are one or two upholstering classes to instruct people how to mend their chairs, &c. All such attempts are extremely interesting, and anything that would inculcate the spirit of self-help is to be admired."

Mr. Tutton, in his report on the counties of Worcester, Gloucester, Oxford, and Berkshire, also draws attention to the position of some of these groups. In regard to those described above as continuation schools he says:—

"There is a large proportion of evening schools which take only subjects of Division I. of the Regulations for evening schools, that is the subjects of what were formerly called evening continuation schools. My impression of the vast majority of these schools which take only the most elementary subjects is that their educational value is very small. If the primary day schools of the locality were fully discharging their rôle these evening schools would be unnecessary. For they are attended by a surprisingly large proportion of pupils under fourteen years of age, who ought still, from their youth and the low standard of their elementary knowledge, to be attending in the day time an elementary school. They have not been exempted by the granting of a labour certificate, ordinary or otherwise. Moreover, frequently when they have done so it has been because the standard of exemption happens to be unduly low as it unfortunately still is in some parts of our agricultural counties.

"Where these evening classes are not largely filled with pupils of this type they partake more or less of the character of classes for social and philanthropic purposes; in other words, classes to attract young people and remove them from the mischief of the streets. This is, of course, an exceedingly worthy object, redounding greatly to the credit of the originating manager and teachers, who strive so earnestly for the good of the young people of their locality, but it is, to say the least, doubtful how far it is the function of the State to subsidise it with grants.

"There is one further originating cause for a not inconsiderable number of evening schools of this type, namely the desire on the part of an ill-paid elementary schoolmaster to legitimately increase his stipend, which is often miserably small in country schools.

"In any case, in my opinion, the *onus* of financially aiding and inspecting evening schools of the character which has been described, could safely be left to the local authority. The State grants to the primary day schools on the one hand, and to secondary and technical schools on the other, ought to suffice, without requiring State expenditure on this very questionable form of evening primary school. If a truly educational need for such schools is found in the future, in my opinion the local authority will be to blame: if, on the other hand, they are not really essential but advisable for other than educational reasons, the local authority will both be best able to ascertain the fact and be the most suitable patron.

"Further, the inordinate expense of State inspection of these evening schools forces itself on our attention. They are among the most difficultly accessible of all the schools under our supervision, and although the expense is minimised as much as possible by giving the inspection into the hands