

1960

children give until the most suitable adaptation can be found, a tiny seed of awareness is implanted which may grow in sensitivity. Then again concentration was necessary for the children to master the sol-fa additional part, translate it into chime bar playing (every child had to be eligible, not just the gifted one) and maintain it against the tune. Because this was kept at a simple level there was not the discouragement that the more difficult round-singing often brings to both teacher and child, and therefore a certain amount of perseverance brought satisfactory and speedy results. The Junior child feels a great thrill in making harmony of his own and the necessary learning of sol-fa for this purpose had become an eager pursuit leading towards the enrichment of his own song-singing. Furthermore the vocabulary of pitch-relationships which he gradually acquires is of inestimable value for the development of aural perceptions, the growing preciseness and complexity of which ultimately condition to a great extent his power of sight-reading and to a lesser degree his capacity for musical appreciation.

And now a word about the singing itself, which in verve and quality of tone has improved fairly considerably since term began, when it was thin and weedy. Reasons for the improvement may be many, including growth in physical

stature and the resulting increase of lung-power, but added interest in song-singing as a means to other worlds of music-making may also be a factor. The lack of piano accompaniment for supporting the voice has been partly responsible for that increased vitality of tone which inevitably results from unaccompanied singing. As the accompaniments provided by the percussion and chimes, on the other hand, did not reproduce the melody of the song for the voice to lean upon, a greater mental effort (which has also contributed towards firmness of tone) became necessary.

It should be stated that the children sang during the term, in addition to those analysed above, many songs in the more usual ways, listened also to gramophone records, played their recorders and even produced a bugle and a trumpet from which a few managed to extract authentic sounds. This last event will provide yet another growing-point which the children have created for themselves, an interest in the timbre of orchestral instruments and the music composed for them.

Finally, the creating of accompaniments to new songs continues and the children are adding to their repertoire and skill with increasing zest. N.B.—Instructions for making the large drum can be obtained from the Institute on request to the writer.

## The Crowther Report and the idea of General Education

By LAWRENCE STENHOUSE, Institute Staff Tutor in Secondary Education. *A summary of a lecture given to the 1960 Conference of Individual Members of the Institute.*

The extension of compulsory education suggests the extension of "general education"; and the problem of "general education" figures largely in the Crowther Report. The issues can perhaps be clarified in the context of certain premises which the Consultative Committee appears to accept, though not always to argue.

The Report accepts by assumption the emphasis on social class and on academic ability which is the most striking feature of English education. Public schools and private schools cater for the upper strata of society, the public schools equating roughly to grammar schools, while many private schools are closer to secondary modern schools in the range of ability of their pupils. What these schools

share is parental aspiration towards certain class patterns of behaviour and parental resources sufficient to meet their fees. Secondary modern schools are, by contrast, primarily working-class and lower-middle-class institutions. Except in some homogeneous middle-class areas, few parents of the middle class will resign their children to the modern schools. The state and direct-grant grammar schools, acceptable to many of the upper middle-class and accessible to the working-class, are socially diverse and provide an avenue of social mobility.

Access to mobility depends upon academic ability, and parents' ambitions for their children lead them to acquiesce in a competitive school system involving selection and streaming. This produces what is variously known as "equality

of opportunity " or " meritocracy."

A second group of premises relates to the economic basis of education. It is assumed that ours is an expanding economy, based on technology, and capable of absorbing more technologists and technicians than it is likely to get. It is doubtful whether the data to justify this assumption exist, but it is perhaps a pardonable article of faith, which, since the Committee accept that it is one function of education to support the economic life of the community, allows the justification of present educational spending as investment. It is maintained, however, that education must also be viewed as a social service, concerned for the welfare of the individual as well as that of the community. The Committee sees no inherent opposition between these aims.

It is not surprising that the Crowther Report does not define "education" exactly, for the word describes a social process of great complexity. But this word evokes a favourable response, and the Committee feels that education, whatever it may be, is a good thing. Since it is worried by undue narrowness, either in academic or in technical-vocational training, we may take it that something of this good resides in what may fairly, if vaguely, be called "a general education."

Two vital questions arise. How does this "general education" infuse the various branches of an educational system differentiated according to social class and academic ability? How does "general education" relate to specialist and particularly vocational education?

There is no academic monopoly of "general education." This the Committee must believe. To fail to do so against a background of selection and streaming would be to abandon hope for the unselected.

There are therefore several roads one may travel.

The A road, the academic road, leads to a specialisation in advanced studies, which demands not only that the subjects of study should be few, but that these subjects should be cognate. This education is held to produce an educated man in some sense or other, but it has nonetheless certain shortcomings as a "general education." Hence the problems of literacy and numeracy and of minority time.

The B road (not yet fully open to traffic) proceeds from a grammar, technical or modern school education to a full-time technical education to the age of 18. It obviously aspires to be

"a general education" since it "should not be regarded as wholly, or even mainly, technical and still less confined to the special needs of a narrow range of occupations."(394-5) Yet elsewhere the Committee appears to fear that it may become wholly technical. "We would, however, feel that it is essential that some time and care should be devoted to aspects of education other than the technical. In Chapter 25 we gave a good deal of attention to what we have called the 'minority time' of the Sixth Form specialist. What we have in mind here is a special case of the same principle, and it is not necessary to develop the argument in detail twice over."(397-8)

The third road, that of the majority, is the unclassified road which leads through the modern school to the county college. The Committee is concerned here with a group of children whose vocational education will be neither academic nor technical, but one in general skills. "General education" is felt to loom large in their course but the precise nature of this is a matter for experiment. However, in the county colleges, and presumably in the top of the modern schools, the committee sees four main strands. Pupils must be educated "to find their way successfully about the adult world . . . to define, in a form which makes sense to them, a standard of moral values by which they can live after they have left the sheltered world of school . . . to carry over into their working life the pursuits and activities, physical and æsthetic, which they practised at school and too often abandon . . . (to remedy the) grave deficiencies in their formal school education."(179)

With the lowest streams of all we are on firm ground: we know what we are about because there is no choice of road to confuse us. We are still trying to make our pupils roadworthy.

There is, of course, a further road which we have not mentioned: the motorway of the private and public school system.

Two distinct ideas about "general education" are found in the Report. "General education" on the A and B roads implies breadth, or more accurately a war on narrowness. In the modern school and county college "general education" appears to consist in the learning of a sensible practicality in the affairs of this world, moral standards and wise use of leisure. There is apparently an unjustified assumption that an academic education confers

these or renders them unnecessary.

There appears also to be a concept of "general education" within the private sector of education which might be called "the education of a gentleman." This is socialisation into class patterns which involve high standards of conduct and effective ways of facing the world. There are many teachers within the state educational system who would willingly adopt this ideal and spread their own middle-class standards.

The situation may be summed up as follows.

Taking a social realist point of view, the Council accepts the parental demand for social mobility for children through education, and recognises that a society demanding trained manpower may be expected to finance the parents in carrying out their desires. The key to the position which emerges is the dual stress on the importance of training and the importance of qualification, on technology and examination certificates. The needs of an individual

in such a situation are primarily to make this way in society.

But the Council cannot accept this as it stands: they believe that education exists for the development of the individual in a much fuller sense than the development of his competitive powers. They feel sure that such a development is not irreconcilable with effective vocational education, but they are unsure how it is to be achieved. "General education" is interpreted in different ways and its motivation is not explored.

I would accept the Report's general picture of the forces shaping education today, and suggest that the development and definition, against a background of vocationalism and social class differentiation, of those ideas which have been called here "general education" is probably the most important task which the Report presents to teachers.

*Bracketted numerals are references to page numbers of the Crowther Report (Vol. I).*

## Appointments & Resignations

### PRIMARY SCHOOLS

#### Appointments of Headmasters and Headmistresses.

	Appointed to	Previous Appointment
<b>Cumberland</b>		
Mr. D. BROWN	Northside School, Workington	Deputy Head, Westfield Junior School, Workington.
Mr. B. M. CUNLIFF	Alston Primary School	Head, Alston High School
Mrs. E. M. DOWELL	Cargo School	Head, Ainstable School
Mr. G. McCARTEN	St. Patrick's R.C. Junior School, Cleator Moor	Assistant, St. Patrick's R.C. Junior School, Cleator Moor
Mr. H. S. NIXON	Allonby School, Maryport	Assistant, Irthing Valley School, Brampton
Miss M. M. RAE	St. James' C.E. Infants' School, Whitehaven	Assistant, Bransty School
Miss V. ROWLANDS	Penrith National C.E. Infants' School	Assistant, Penrith National C.E. Infants' School
Mr. D.W. SHEPPARD	Gilsland School	Acting Head, Newbiggin C.E. School
<b>Darlington</b>		
Miss E. M. K. COOKE	Harrowgate Hill Infants' School	Deputy Head, Springfield Primary School
<b>Durham</b>		
Mr. T. L. DAVIE	Tow Law R.C. (Aided) Mixed & Infant School	Assistant, Sunderland St. Hilda's R.C. (Aided) Mixed School
Miss E. FICKLING	Hebburn Toner Avenue County Infants' School	Assistant, Thornley County Infants' School
Miss M. J. FINLAY	Jarrow St. Bede's R.C. (Monkton Road) (Aided) Infants' School	Deputy Head, Jarrow St. Bede's R.C. (Monkton Road) (Aided) Infants' School
Mr. R. JACKSON	Sherburn County Junior Mixed School	Head of Geography Department, Bowburn Modern School
Mr. J. JOYCE	Durham St. Godric's R.C. (Aided) Junior Mixed and Infant School	Head, Willington R.C. (Aided) Mixed and Infants' School
Miss J. LUKE	Billingham Low Grange County Infants' School	Head, Pittington County Infants' School
Mr. G. B. SMITH	Cornsay Colliery County Junior Mixed and Infants' School	Assistant, Benfieldside Modern School
Mr. C. D. St. JULIEN	Sherburn Hill County Junior Mixed and Infants' School	Head, Castle Eden (Cont) Mixed and Infants' School