

THE PREPARATION OF NATIONAL SCHOOL PUPILS FOR TECHNICAL TRAINING AND INDUSTRIAL LIFE.

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1. EDUCATIONAL NEEDS OF TO-DAY.

The recent action of the Commissioners of National Education in Ireland instituting an official certificate for pupils leaving the higher standards in Day National Schools makes of practical interest the consideration of other provisions, long overdue, in the Primary Schools of the country.

Some notes are made in this paper—from unavoidable circumstances rather loosely put together—on the need of the provision of Manual Instruction in Woodwork; of Medical Treatment for pupils of Day National Schools; and the organisation of Continuation Classes for such pupils on leaving the Day Schools for the working world.

Such subjects have long had their place in School Systems outside Ireland. Their continued omission from most of our Primary Schools at this juncture detracts in a real way from our ability to bear, equally with the rest of the United Kingdom, the social and economic burdens to follow the War and the payment of its cost.

Appeals of self-interest and patriotismlike are put forward to the citizens of the United Kingdom to exercise the highest technical skill in developing their industrial resources; and the general adjustment in social conditions following the War will call for qualities of order and discipline to a larger extent than in the past and no less in Ireland than in the rest of the United Kingdom.

Writing, in its first year, of the War, the Chief Medical Officer of the English Board of Education in his Annual Report expressed the view:—

“ There is now no ultimate need of the State greater, more imperative or more urgent than that of securing the health and physical efficiency of the rising generation with a view to its all-round practical education.”

In the words of another educationist—Mr. Graham Balfour—uttered two years ago:—

“ It is more and better education that we shall want. And the time of preparation is now. We were unprepared for the War now raging. Let us be ready for the equally important, if less sanguinary, struggle which is to follow.”

2. VIEWS OF EMPLOYERS.

With us the question arises of the adequacy of the curriculum in our Primary Schools to prepare pupils to become efficient workers in industrial life, and, in particular, to benefit by technical training in our Technical Schools. In the Primary Schools under the Board of National Education the average number of pupils on the Rolls, according to the last return available (Report for 1914-15, p. 17) was 700,265. The interests involved in their instruction are measured by the fact that most of these pupils end their education for good on reaching 14 years, when they leave school, mainly at the Fourth or lower Standards. If you ask a working boy why he left school, you will frequently get the reply “ because I was fourteen,” this even though he does not take up employment immediately on so doing. There is no tradition to follow up their schooling in such cases.

In 1914, before the War, in connection with the Dublin Juvenile Advisory Committee the opinions of representative employers were being taken by the writer as to the educational condition of their juvenile workers under queries concerning the elementary education, attendance at Technical Schools, playing of games, efficiency at work, etc.

Criticism of the preparation in the National Schools of pupils for their work might be summed up in the phrases “ no initiative ” and “ lack of manual dexterity.”

An analysis of the actual replies and longer statements given would require a separate paper.

Justice could not be done to either the juvenile workers or employers by merely citing individual replies to particular phrases, though interesting, such as the following:—

“ Too much collective teaching.”

“ The boys appear to learn by rote and are unable to apply the principles taught them in every day problems.”

“ It is difficult to get highly skilled or efficient artisans.”

“ The Dublin mechanic is of necessity slovenly, not thorough and unreliable—faults in my opinion of circumstances.”

“ Is apt and intelligent as anywhere, but his anxiety to excel in the technical side of things is not so great as in the North, or, say, Scotland, England or Wales. In Dublin the lads are badly educated for Technical Trades.”

One employer plaintively wrote:—“ They have no manners, are stupid, they can read, write and spell fairly well. They are slow in the ‘ up take ’ and they don’t take an interest in their work. What is it which makes the smart London office boy by the tens of thousands and overlooks the Dublin youngsters. I should much like to know?”

There is, indeed, testimony from various other quarters that there are real deficiencies to be made good and some hope of remedy at hand.

Action has been taken by the authorities in the matter, as the following extract from the Report for 1916 of the Dublin Chamber of Commerce, p. 44, shows:—

“ Recently the Commissioners for National Education invited representatives of this Chamber to meet them and discuss the question of modifying the programme of instruction in National Schools so as to render it more suitable to the special needs of pupils in industrial and commercial centres.

“ The President and Mr. Good made statements as to how, in their opinion, the programme of education might be modified, and expressed the belief that much good would accrue if a system were adopted which would instil in the minds of the pupils a greater desire to engage in industrial pursuits. This would have the effect of improving the earning capacity of many who would otherwise go to swell the ranks of unskilled labour.

“ A discussion followed after the delegates had made their statements, and Dr. Starkie intimated that the views put forward would be carefully considered by the Commissioners.”

3. A BETTER SCHOOL ATTENDANCE ACT.

The proposals of the Chamber of Commerce have not yet been published, but it is contended that no reform in programme of instruction, whether in manners or manual work, can be effective without an adequate radical strengthening of the Compulsory Attendance Provisions of the Irish Education Act, 1892.

The lack of “ tone ” in industrial work and character of the juvenile workers of to-day in Dublin and elsewhere must

be attributed in large measure to the vicious effects upon the school work of pupils in the National Schools under the lax terms of the Irish Education Act, 1892, as regards attendance at Day Schools, taken in conjunction with the fact that as far as direct payment by the parents, the education given is free. Those pupils attending regularly suffer, it should be noted, by delay in progress occasioned by the intermittent attendance of their colleagues.

I offer, therefore, no apology in going into the details of the evil effects of the present Act, often before this Society in previous papers, and giving its inadequate effects in the appended facts and figures for Dublin, some of which have, however, the interest of not being published (I understand) separately from the returns for the whole country. They are given in Note A.

Two things claim immediate attention. One is the failure to retain in the schools the majority of National School pupils till they have acquired such an education as would equip them for a decent livelihood and the failure to provide for the further education of those obliged to leave school before their education is complete. The other is the lack of a practical programme to fit boys for the working world.

A careful examination of the Returns available in the various Annual Reports of the Commissioners of National Education, and other publications, has led to the conclusion that the situation shown in the above tables for Dublin obtains, with local variations, through the country generally, with like deplorable results; and the recent public utterances of responsible speakers confirm this opinion. Here then we have two of the causes of our low standard of education—leaving school too soon, and bad attendance.

To remedy this state of things the Compulsory School Attendance Act should be amended and a system of Continuation Classes and Night Schools should be established. The former would mete out even-handed justice to defaulting parents and boys; the latter would provide for the case of the boy where his Elementary Education has not normally developed in the day school or has been cut short by a domestic calamity or for some valid reason. It is evident that a better Compulsory Attendance Act will not completely solve the problem, for the necessitous condition of their homes will oblige quite a number of boys to leave school at the legal age, or before it, to earn a small wage, without being sufficiently educated to work their way into anything like progressive employments, in which they may hope to earn, at an older age, a living wage. Bad

health and dullness, etc., may have precluded progress in the Day Schools. The "Blind Alley" of unprogressive employment swallows them up. Some may even have been relatively highly educated whose learning wears away in a few years owing to the pursuit of such "blind alley" occupations. For these boys supplementary schooling is necessary.

To assist such boys in the battle of life provision should be made in Night Schools and Continuation Classes for their further education with the definite view of getting them into Technical Schools.

4. EXISTING ELEMENTARY EVENING SCHOOLS.

The existing Evening Elementary Schools do not, in number, meet the needs of the case. For some years past the activities of schools of this class have steadily declined, as the Reports of Inspectors under the National Board show. The following figures may give the measure of the loss:—

In 1905 the number of Night Schools in operation were 631, in the year 1915, 301.

In the Vote for Public Education, Ireland, 1905-6, the grant for Evening Elementary Schools stood at £23,000, and in that year £11,928 was used: in 1914-15 the grant was reduced to £8,000 and only £7,900 was used, the loss to the country by the annual reduction in the decade being in round numbers £170,000.

Several practical reasons have restricted the use of the grant:—

The Rules of the Board of National Education administering the grant are too rigid in the distribution of the hours of class work; the number of pupils required to be in attendance in a class and the number of meetings of a class, for qualification for any grant.

The rates of payment to teachers are low, and the method of payment protracted. In the case of the lower classes, most needed, not more than 2s. an hour may be expected.

In particular, the terror of the "rule of ten" threatening the grant hangs over a teacher in the case of backward boys, requiring personal attention, and thus his interest is often lost in the most deserving pupils.

This rule requires an average attendance at each meeting of ten eligible pupils, *i.e.*, those who have made ten attendances or over. Thus twelve pupils may make 30 attend-

ances each out of 40 meetings of a class. This would be a fair attendance at a Night School and secure solid work done. Yet no grant would be earned by such a class, the "average attendance" only being 9; *pro rata* payment would be withheld.

There is no direct aid towards the payment of initial expenses or the organisation of new schools, or the rent, heating, lighting, cleaning and maintenance of existing night schools—often a difficult problem—or towards the supplies of school equipment, books or prizes. The grant of from 2s. to 3s. an hour for instruction, on an average, is the sole State aid given to the management, and this is generally mortgaged to the teachers.

No detailed programme of instruction exists, designed to fit in with Technical Instruction, nor books designed to suit the young worker backward in his reading.

It is easy to provide a reader such as *Treasure Island*, the *Christmas Carol* or *Knocknagow* for the boy in the Fifth Standard and upward. For the boy in the working world who is spelling out his words and writing headlines the relatively childish books of the Third or Fourth Standard of the day schools are dull and distasteful. Similarly the teaching of Arithmetic presents difficulties.

A Continuation School Programme is required to meet the situation, such as is found in Great Britain and on the Continent.

For instance, a programme in a Continental City is designed specially "for boys in unskilled occupations," and includes instruction in the first year on leaving the Day School in such subjects as "choice of calling; meaning of labour; regulation of work; correspondence with employer (sickness, inability to attend work); duties towards the employer; attitude towards one's fellow-workers." Under *Arithmetic* we find "transactions in connection with the Post Office, papers and forms connected with the insurance of the worker, his work-book and wages book; the meaning and kind of wages; protection and reasonable use of wages; and such topics as 'personal hygiene,' and 'employment of leisure time for gymnastic, walking and games; for culture instruction and conversation.'"

Outside technical difficulties the long hours of work of many pupils and the absence of active co-operation of parent or employer impair attendance.

The bad weather of winter operates adversely to the attendance at Evening Classes of boys who may have to spend their evenings at home in drying their only pair of boots—badly broken—and their sole suit of clothes for the morrow's work.

5. SUITABLE CONTINUATION CLASSES NEEDED.

For the Juvenile Workers of to-day who will be untouched by any future reform in the Day National Schools it seems desirable that Continuation Classes on a concerted plan be at once established through the country.

Things being as they are, it would appear fatal that adequate provision for their future education should be left to the spasmodic initiative of local and individual effort. A systematic plan of Continuation Classes for the country, on a whole, linking up the National with the Technical Schools must be devised for the benefit of these boys.

The best results are naturally to be obtained by taking the boys in hands immediately after they leave school, as the habit of learning is apt to be weakened should too long an interval elapse between the time they leave school and their entrance into the Night School.

Manual Instruction in Woodwork should in these classes have a particular place.

Linked up with the Night School system there should be a recreation centre with provision for games, indoor and outdoor, a library. Physical Training should here have its definite place, and for all Uninsured Juvenile Workers, Medical Inspection and Treatment continued from the Day Schools. The recreation centre should be open only to those who attend the classes regularly. Each boy should pay a small fee weekly. They should be taught to realise the value of good citizenship and a corporate spirit should be promoted amongst them. Physical Training should include instruction in swimming and organised games. In the Clarendon Evening School this has already been attempted, the Iveagh Baths being used last summer. In the classes for the employees of Messrs. W. & R. Jacob Basket Ball has been introduced and taken to with enthusiasm by the pupils.

Such centres could, to a large extent, be provided by the co-operation of existing Working Boys' Clubs and Institutes, while preserving their local autonomy; and in forming new centres the services of members of existing philanthropic or social welfare societies would be of great assistance. The Juvenile Advisory Committee, through their After Care Visitors, in particular, could assist. These latter have already, in our National School system, a definite position not very largely as yet taken up by them in Ireland. The "After Care Committee" may, with the assent of the school manager, appoint to the school visitors to follow up the industrial career of the pupil

The following note in the Programme for Technical Schools and Classes issued by the Department has importance in the organisation, pending further powers of limiting the hours of work of juveniles of a workable system of Continuation Classes.

“A second difficulty is the shortness of time available for Instruction in Evening Classes. Speaking generally, not more than two evening attendances a week can be expected, for home work is essential if full advantage is to be derived from the work in class. The hours of school study thus limited become precious and the organisation of the school and the efforts of the teachers should be earnestly directed to the most thorough utilisation of these hours, and to this end every lesson should be carefully prepared.

A better attendance at the Day National Schools should be required for the future under an amendment of the present Act. Proposals for this in detail are given at the end, Note B.

Attendance at Continuation Classes by, in particular, the present Juvenile Workers who will not come under the benefits of reform in the *day school*, should be secured by a Juvenile Workers' Act, of which a draft is given. In particular, boys in “blind alley” occupations require, as has been suggested, the protection of an Act limiting their hours of work. See Note C.

The proposal to extend, in the United Kingdom, Compulsory Attendance at Continuation Classes by Juvenile Workers between 14 and 17 years is not so revolutionary as may at first appear as may be seen in the action in recent years of the General Post Office in relation to their Telegraph Messengers; the Scottish School Boards under the Education (Scotland) Act, 1908, requiring attendance by juvenile workers who have not obtained the Merit Certificate in their Day School at Continuation Classes up to seventeen years of age; and the action of the Dublin Corporation in this year in respect of Juvenile Street Trading under the Employment of Children Act, 1903. Particulars are given in Note D.

6. EDUCATIONAL SALVAGE WANTED.

To meet Irish needs steps must therefore be taken to establish Continuation Classes on an adequate scale, possible of easy local development. We have been informed in October last that

“the Commissioners of National Education have at present under consideration the general question of Education in Industrial and Commercial Centres and that they

will, in connexion therewith, take into account the organisation of Elementary Evening Schools and other kindred topics."

Any system of Continuation Classes to be immediately instituted must conform, for practical considerations, to the present managerial system. The creation of fresh educational authorities, or the amalgamation or modification of the five distinct Boards controlling various forms of Education in Ireland would prove a task of time and trouble, raising such large social and political issues as might defeat the immediate needs of the case, namely, (1) the educational salvage of the present Juvenile Workers while it may not yet be too late, and (2) the beginning of a practical reform by the improvement of the programme of the Senior Classes in Day National Schools.

For these purposes, a strengthening of the powers of existing educational authorities interested is all that is requisite.

The needed legislation, which is small, could easily be got through Parliament as an agreed measure, administrative and departmental orders would do the rest.

Despite the five Boards mentioned above, it should be noted that through the Board of National Education alone can come the improvements suggested in Elementary Education.

There is not, indeed, the "overlapping" rather vaguely mentioned by critics of Irish Departments; and a note on the limitations placed by Statute upon the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland and the local Technical Committees in the matter of elementary instruction, etc., may be of use, as these bodies are frequently wrongly blamed for the backward condition of Irish workers.

"The Department" and the local Technical Committees under it were created by the Agriculture and Technical Instruction (Ireland) Act, 1899. Section 30 of this Act states:—

"The expression 'technical instruction' means instruction in the principles of science and art applicable to industries."

"It shall not include instruction given in Elementary Schools."

By these words local Technical Committees are precluded from providing from out of the rates or the grant from the Department either Manual Work for Day National School pupils, or Evening Classes for backward juvenile workers in English or Mathematics. Their so-called "Introductory

Courses " must be introductory to a Technical Subject and the regulations require, in consequence, that

" Students on whom grants are claimed must have received such an education as would entitle them to be placed in the sixth class of a school under the National Board."

Hence comes the Entrance Examination.

It should be also noted that Technical Schools are not intended to provide trades and consequent employment for the young workers not already in a trade, as is popularly believed. This is indicated in the Section of the Act above mentioned where it states, defining the expression " Technical Instruction," " it shall not include teaching the practise of any trade or industry or employment." Accordingly accredited apprentices are only admitted to Trade Courses, those not bound properly to workmen or to employers (as the case may be), only being allowed to attend classes at quadruple fees.

It should be noted that by Section 23 of this Act there was created a " Consultative Committee of Education " for the purpose of " co-ordinating educational administration," consisting of five members representing:—

" The Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction," three members.

" The Commissioners of National Education," one member.

" The Intermediate Education Board," one member.

This body could, it would seem, most usefully consider the problems under discussion to-night.

7. MEDICAL TREATMENT.

There is no Medical Treatment in general in National Schools in Ireland and no record of the medical condition of the pupils as a whole. Medical Inspection of the pupils on entrance exists to a limited extent in the Model Schools. Dental clinics have been established to a limited extent, scarcely appreciable. They were discussed in a paper before this Society by Dr. Story before the present grant was authorised.

In 1912-13 a grant of £7,500 for " Medical Treatment of School Children and services auxiliary thereto," was included in the Vote to the Board of National Education.

In the Public Accounts of that year the following note appears by the Comptroller and Auditor-General upon the small part of the sum actually used, namely, £263:—

" When applying for this Grant the Commissioners of National Education contemplated that the entire cost of the service, which was proposed by them to be con-

fined to dental treatment of the pupils, was to be discharged out of the State grant. Every possible effort was made by the Commissioners to induce the School Managers and their parties interested in the matter to prepare and to introduce schemes for making use of the grant for the purpose for which it was voted; but undertakings to comply with conditions imposed in regard to half the cost being borne out of funds provided locally could not be procured."

In 1913-14 the grant was, in consequence, reduced to £5,000, and of this only £498 were used, a similar reason being recorded.

In 1914-15 the grant was further reduced to £2,000, of which only £891 was expended.

The last Report of the Commissioners of National Education states:—

"It is almost needless to say that the condition attached to these grants renders it very unlikely that the dental inspection and treatment will make much advance in the Schools so long as there is no power to raise a local rate for the purpose by the County Councils."

It would seem inequitable that conditions not contemplated by the Commissioners of National Education should have been imposed and continued upon the use of this grant, of vital importance to the welfare of the people, when by such action the object of the grant is defeated, and by delay in the needed relief the existing evil aggravated.

In the Clarendon Evening School two Medical Doctors volunteered to examine and record the medical condition of 50 pupils, taken at random, mainly between 14 and 16 years, with a view to formulating a scheme of Medical and Dental Treatment and to estimate its cost. The condition of 50 pupils were registered on cards prepared for the purpose and a report drawn up, the scheme to include cost of treatment of boys suffering from the ailments commonly prevalent amongst their class, under terms to be arranged with local hospitals and dispensaries, to include what the hospitals and dispensaries in their *Medical Treatment cannot ordinarily give*, viz., special drugs.

The report concluded with reference to the "necessitous condition of the juvenile workers in Dublin" as follow:—

In making this recommendation the Medical Officers have clearly in view that each of the boys attending this

School hopes to enter the Technical Schools and as such hopes to become a skilled worker.

“ When, therefore, we find on investigation the number of boys suffering from diseases of the eyes (Defective Vision) to be 16 out of 50; from discharging ears, with, in many cases, concurrent defective hearing, 12 out of 50, and also that their home conditions—bad as they have been—are now growing worse owing to the War, such system of Medical Inspection and Treatment as has been suggested is, in the opinion of the Medical Officers, essential and urgent.”

Such provision will, it is hoped, not be overlooked in any settlement of the Medical Treatment question by extending this service to Continuation Classes.

8. THE NEED FOR MANUAL INSTRUCTION.

It seems imperative from the previous facts to give a more practical direction to the curriculum of National Schools or others attended by the children of the worker, so that the best brains may not go, as they now seem to do in many cases, into relatively unproductive employments.

It is the experience of those in touch with Irish Elementary Education that most children of the working classes, especially in the National Schools, who are able to reach the Sixth and higher Standards, have a disposition to seek commercial or office careers, aiming at Government or Municipal clerkships and the like, leaving the residue, those who do not pass beyond the Fifth Standard, to recruit mainly the ranks of industrial workers. As all forms of “ unproductive ” or “ distributing ” employment in a degree depend for their remuneration upon the increase or at least the adequate supply of the tangible wealth derived from rural or urban industries, it seems that an undesirable and uneven distribution of part of the trained intelligence of the country is taking place, adding another cause to many that prevent the industrial development and prosperity of the country.

The lower residue of these less educated boys fall naturally into casual or unskilled occupations, with their resulting evils.

Manual Instruction, now absent, of a practical kind in wood- or metal-work, such as is given from the age of about 11 years in most Schools in Great Britain, should be established. The Irish Kindergarten System taught from 5 to 11 years, is not, as was originally intended, carried

on to the use of real tools, such as would make easier the transition of the schoolboy into the young worker and stimulate an interest in trades and industries rather than in clerical work.

The following general conclusions, and the grounds on which they are based, of the Belmore Commission of 1898 have still relevance in view of the fact that their recommendations regarding Manual Work are not yet carried out:—

“ We think that Kindergarten methods and principles should be continued in Classes I., II., and III. of ordinary schools, in the form of Paper-folding, Cardboard work, Wire-work, Brick-laying, Clay-modelling, and such like exercises. These exercises we include under the general term of Hand and Eye Training, and we look upon them as of great importance, for the purpose of carrying on the Manual training of the children, from the Kindergarten stage to the higher grades of Manual Instruction. Further, we consider that some form of more advanced Manual Instruction should be introduced, as far as possible, in the higher classes of schools for boys, and we recommend, as most suitable for this purpose, instruction in the principles and practice of Woodwork, treated educationally. The object to be aimed at is not to make the boys carpenters, but to train them in habits of accurate observation, careful measurement, and exact workmanship. Such habits we regard as of great value to all boys, whatever may be their subsequent career in life.

“ We think that the changes recommended ought to be introduced, not all at once, but gradually and tentatively. They should be tried first in the larger centres, and afterwards extended to more remote districts. It would be necessary, at the outset, to engage the services of experts, from outside the present staff of the National Education Board, whose duty it would be to organise the classes, and to aid the teachers with their counsel and instruction.

“ We regard it also as a very significant testimony to the value of Manual training that wherever it has been once introduced it has, with hardly an exception, been continued and extended. There has been practically no disposition to go back to the old system, which made primary education almost exclusively literary in its character; and, after an experience extending over some years, there is a general consensus of managers of schools, inspectors, and parents that the value of primary education has been greatly enhanced by the change.

“ Lastly, there is a consideration of a practical character which seems to us deserving of no little weight. A strong desire exists throughout this country, and it is growing stronger every day, for the introduction of a general system of Technical Education. It is thought that a good system of Technical Education would contribute largely towards the development of arts and industries in Ireland; and in this opinion we entirely concur. But the present system of primary education is so one-sided in its character that it leaves the pupils quite unprepared for Technical Education. The clever boys trained in the National Schools, if they are disposed to seek for a higher education, may pass with advantage into Intermediate Schools of the kind now general in Ireland; but they are not fit to enter a Technical School, even if they had such a school at their doors. Now it seems to us that the changes we recommend would go far to remedy this defect. The system of National Education, modified as we propose, would give an all-round training to the faculties of the children, and would thus lay a solid foundation for any system of higher education—literary, scientific, or technical—which might afterwards be found suitable to their talents and their circumstances.”

9. PRESENT POSITION OF THE SUBJECT.

Following the Belmore Commission the sum of £5,000 was set down in the Vote for Public Education, Ireland, for five successive years, under the sub-head Manual and Practical Instruction. No scheme to utilise this sum for Manual Instruction such as was recommended above was agreed upon by the Commissioners of National Education with the other parties interested. A difficulty had arisen as to the training of National School Teachers to do this work.

The subsequent Estimates were reduced, in consequence, by this sum of £5,000 and the words “ and fees ” removed from the sub-head. The sub-head remains with a grant of £12,238, seemingly limited to Domestic Economy and Equipment Grants; and the Commissioners do not seem to have the power of financing out of their large Vote of £1,182,700 a single class, even experimentally, in this subject.

The Commissioners of National Education have recently come to an agreement with the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for the holding of suitable classes for National School pupils in Instructional centres by

teachers trained under the Department. The financial control of these classes must, from the terms of the Statute founding the Department, remain under the Commissioners. They, having no funds available out of their vote, applied to the Irish Government for what amounts to a restoration of part of the above Grant to institute such instruction in cities and towns, and in their recent Report for 1914-15 they state:—

“ Unfortunately owing to the War it has been necessary to postpone the matter, but we have been informed by the Irish Government that our request will receive favourable consideration when circumstances permit.”

The cost is estimated at about £350 for an experimental establishment, as was suggested by the Belmore Commission, of this Instruction in a few select centres.

Looking at the matter broadly it would seem that the circumstances of “ the state of backwardation ” to be made up in Education in Ireland call urgently, in the interests of both Ireland and the Empire, for the institution of Manual Instruction and the other needed services of Medical Treatment and Continuation Classes on a large and generous scale.

Note A.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN DUBLIN AND ELSEWHERE IN IRELAND.

As regards School Attendance the following figures for the City of Dublin, giving the number enrolled for the Third and higher Standards on the 31st December, 1914, tell their own tale. In Dublin there were on the rolls of the Dublin National Schools, 17,281 boys, distributed as follow:—

Standards I. and II.	12,771
,, III. to VIII.	4,510
			17,281
Total	17,281

This distribution has remained constant in recent successive years.

Presumably, then, in each year there leave these National Schools over 8,000 boys, who have not advanced far beyond the II. Standard, and it has been computed that at least half of these, namely, 4,000, end their systematic schooling and remain for all practical purposes illiterate.

Here are the figures in the other Standards:—

1,747	were enrolled in	III.	Standard.
1,270	„ „ „	IV.	„
840	„ „ „	V.	„
448	„ „ „	VI.	„
161	„ „ „	VII.	„
85	„ „ „	VIII.	„

It may be assumed that a small proportion of pupils leave the National Schools to enter schools that are not under the Commissioners of National Education, but there is no doubt that the education of the vast majority end when they leave the National Schools.

The figures given above show that in 1914 over 400 left School before reaching the Fifth Standard, and nearly 900 left before reaching the Fourth Standard. Such a state of things is truly lamentable. But the whole story is not told. The majority of those on the rolls attend but irregularly. For, of these 17,281 boys on the rolls on 31st December, 1914, only

269	had made	200	attendances or over	within the year.
3,331	„	175	„ and under	200 „
3,404	„	150	„ „	175 „
2,489	„	125	„ „	150 „
1,767	„	100	„ „	125 „
2,252	„	75	„ „	100 „
1,859	„	50	„ „	75 „

and 1,910 had made under 50 attendances within the year.

An attendance of 150 days in the year cannot be considered as good. Yet, in the above table it will be seen that 10,277 did not make 150 days attendance in the year. This means that those boys could not have made much progress in their schooling in the period.

The following extract from the last Report for school year 1914/15 of the Commissioners of National Education, p. 31, are of interest in this connection:—

“ **COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE PROVISIONS OF THE IRISH
EDUCATION ACT, 1892.**

“At the end of the year 1914, 232 School Attendance Committees existed, 92 in the County Boroughs, Urban Districts and Municipal Towns, and 140 in Rural Districts.

According to reports received from the Committees, the provisions of the Act were enforced, during the year, by 229 of these Committees.

“ There are 41 Urban Districts or Towns having municipal government, to which the provisions of the Act apply, but for which School Attendance Committees have not been appointed. There are 112 Rural Districts without School Attendance Committees.”

Note B.

(1) HEADS OF PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO IRISH EDUCATION ACT, 1892.

1. Daily attendance required by each child.
2. Local registration of all children of school-going age to be made to the local School Attendance Committee by parents or guardians each year.
3. No child to be entered upon the Roll of a school without an interview on the part of the parent or guardian of the child with the Head Master or Manager of the School.
4. The Head Master shall furnish an annual report to the parent or guardian of the child's progress.
5. No child shall be removed from the Roll of the school without notification in writing by the parent or guardian stating the reason, nor shall the Head Master or any other educational authority remove the child's name from the Roll of the school without notifying the parent or guardian.
6. On a child's absence from school the Head Master shall daily furnish to the School Attendance Officer the names of such child absent from the Roll and the School Attendance Officer shall within a week of its absence so notified summon the parent to attend before the School Attendance Committee unless the Officer shall have received within a week a note in writing by the parent or guardian giving a reasonable excuse for the child's absence.
7. A Magistrate may, in his discretion, inflict upon the parent or guardian a fine not exceeding £1 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding 1 month without the option of a fine, where the parent or guardian shall have been proved to have neglected to secure the attendance of the child at school.

Note C.

(2) HEADS OF PROPOSED JUVENILE WORKERS' ACT
(To supplement "Employment of Children Act, 1903.")

A Juvenile Worker shall be a person employed under the age of eighteen years.

The local authority may make such regulations in respect of Juvenile Workers in any occupations in their district concerning the following matters:—

- (a) Hours of work.
- (b) Time for meals.
- (c) Medical inspection under the Local Government Board.
- (d) Attendance at Continuation or Technical Classes in Schools under either the Board of National Education or the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction.
- (e) In default of a local authority making such above provisions the Commissioners of National Education or the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction may make such bye-laws as they may direct to be carried out by the local authority.

 Note D.

COMPULSORY ATTENDANCE AT CONTINUATION CLASSES.

The principle is already found in the Education (Scotland) Act of 1908, wherein it is enacted:—

Section 10 (3). "It shall be lawful for a School Board . . . to make bye-laws requiring the attendance at Continuation Classes, until such age not exceeding seventeen years . . . of young persons above the age of fourteen years within their district who are not otherwise receiving a suitable education."

Under this section, for instance, the School Board of Glasgow, in the year 1911, made the following Bye-laws requiring that every young person who has not satisfied the Board that he has obtained, *inter alia*, the "Merit Certificate" in his Day School

"shall be bound to attend a Continuation Class for such number of attendances as will make a total equivalent of two years in a supplementary course."

In these bye-laws a Continuation Class is defined as a class meeting at 7 p m. on every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday from 4th January to 30th June, inclusive, and from 1st September to 24th December, inclusive, in each year. Attendance at a class means attendance throughout a class meeting of two hours.

The expression "two years in a supplementary course" means attendance for at least 90 per cent. of the possible number at the classes of the Course for 80 weeks.

"Every employer shall, when and as often as required by the Board, furnish a list (showing addresses, ages and particulars of the hours of employment) of all young persons in his employment."

"If the Board shall determine that a young person's hours of employment are such as will interfere with his attendance as required by the bye-laws, the Board shall notify the employer of their determination."

"Any requirement or demand made by the Board in terms of these bye-laws shall be binding on any young person, parent or employer, if made by written notice served by post or by hand of a teacher, officer, or other servant of the Board"

Such Classes correspond to the Standard of an Irish Evening Elementary School, with Manual Instruction added to the programme.

Under the General Post Office all Telegraph Messengers are required to attend, where it is possible, evening classes up to 16 years. The messengers are given the opportunity of presenting themselves for examination for entrance to the higher grades of the service, and for these they are directly prepared in the local school. In Dublin such a school has been in progress for some years, and, in the Sackville Street premises, had an excellent gymnasium and "Messengers' Institute" attached.

The Dublin Corporation have now amended the Street Trading Bye-laws under the Employment of Children Act, 1903, by the addition of the following requirement of all Juvenile Street Traders between 14 and 16 years:—

(k) Every licence-holder shall attend regularly a Continuation Class or School approved by the Commissioners of National Education for Ireland, and shall, in addition, keep him or herself registered at the City Labour Exchange as an applicant for some suitable employment." This has been duly approved by the Lord Lieutenant.

There are few schools in Dublin to meet the needs of the situation, six for boys and 1 for girls being the number of Evening Elementary Schools under the Board of National Education, and at present scarcely conduct classes at hours and in subjects suitable to the exigent needs of the Dublin newsboys.

The Public Health Committee have under consideration the summoning of a Conference of all parties interested to establish suitable classes and organise an effective administration of the bye-law.

There are thus hopes that a blot upon the civic life of Dublin may be ultimately removed—the degraded and ignorant condition of the young newsvendor. The Local Government Board might well urge other local authorities to take similar action.