A COMPARISON OF CURRICULAR DECISION-MAKING IN ENGLAND AND NEWFOUNDLAND

CENTRE FOR NEWFOUNDLAND STUDIES

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A COMPARISON OF CURRICULAR DECISION-MAKING IN ENGLAND AND NEWFOUNDLAND

An Internship Report

Presented to

the Faculty of Education

Memorial University of Newfoundland

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Education

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by

Royston Russell Kelleher

August 1973

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The guidance and constructive criticism of Dr. Kenneth W. Wallace, who served as academic advisor, have been invaluable in planning internship activities and in the preparation of this report.

Gratitude is also extended to Mr. Peter Fletcher, Divisional Education Officer in Harlow, England, who made the necessary arrangements for placement and interviews with numerous agencies and individuals during the writer's stay in England.

Appreciation is expressed to many others, too numerous to mention individually. Included are Schools Council personnel, teachers, headmasters, officers of the Essex County Education Department, Department of Education and Science Personnel, members of the Department of Educational Administration of Memorial University of Newfoundland and officers of the Curriculum Division of the Newfoundland Department of Education.

Very special thanks are due to the writer's wife, Grace, whose patience and positive contributions made this report possible.

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PART ONE

INTRODUCTION

The internship to be described herein was carried out under the aegis of the Department of Educational Administration of Memorial University in cooperation with educational authorities in Harlow, England.

The internship which lasted for a three-month period from April to July 1973 was funded partially by Memorial University, partially by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador and partially by the intern.

The Harlow campus of Memorial University, Harlow, England, served as a place of residence and as a base from which the intern traveled to various educational agencies and institutions.

Mr. P. Fletcher, Divisional Education Officer in Harlow, made the necessary arrangements for visits with various personnel in the English educational system.

The internship in educational administration is designed primarily for its experiential value to the intern. Therefore, the writer considers this report to be secondary to any competencies and knowledge he may have gained as a result of the experience.

Part one of this report deals with the experiential aspect of the internship. It gives the rationale and

objectives of the internship, describes the intern's activities and attempts an evaluation of these activities in light of the stated objectives.

Part two presents the intern's approach to the study of curricular decision-making including a typology of decision-making and strategies adopted to facilitate the study.

In part three, various agencies in the English educational system are discussed with particular reference to their influence upon curricular decision-making.

Part four presents a similar analysis of agencies in the Newfoundland educational system.

The final section constitutes a comparison of the English and Newfoundland systems of curricular decision-making. In addition, recommendations are presented based on the intern's experiences.

RATIONALE FOR THE INTERNSHIP

School administrators have long been cognizant of the fact that they have much to gain by studying the educational structures and practices of other nations. Although educational problems and difficulties in many lands seem to be similar to those of ours, the answers and solutions worked out in response to them often differ widely. This is to be expected since each country tends to develop an educational system which will best meet its

particular needs. It is precisely these particular needs engendered and defined by differences in philosophical, historical, economic and social conditions, and other such factors, that render it impossible to transplant the school system of one country to another. Nevertheless, the study of the struggles, successes and failures of school systems outside one's own social context has the potential to help educators in the search for solutions to their own problems.

A second advantage of studying educational systems in other countries is that it ". . . can point the way to a better understanding of one's own national system, its short-comings and merits."[1]

The Harlow Campus of Memorial University afforded a unique opportunity for a student of this university to compare the educational system of Newfoundland with that in England.

Furthermore, the study of educational administration in England presented an excellent opportunity to assess the roles of teachers and administrators in a system where curricular decision making is reputed to be decentralized to a very great extent.[2] This is a topic in which the

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[1]John F. Cramer and George S. Browne, Contemporary Education, (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World Inc., 1965), p. 2.

[2]Allen Bryan, Headship in the 1970's, (Oxford: Alden and Mowbray Ltd., 1968), p. 19.

intern is keenly interested. It was for these general reasons that an internship at Harlow was undertaken.

OBJECTIVES OF THE INTERNSHIP

The internship was designed to fulfill the following objectives:

1. To provide the intern with a broader exposure to such aspects of educational administration as
   (a) the operation of local boards of education;
   (b) budgeting within a district and within a school;
   (c) school facility planning;
   (d) school-community relations;
   (e) the administration of pupil personnel services;
   (f) the administration of in-service education;
   (g) supervision of instruction; and
   (h) the role of the administrator in curriculum development.

It was thought that this exposure should help the intern in the following ways:

(a) provide a view of educational administration in a different culture, thus enabling the intern to look more critically upon established but possibly ill-founded tenets of educational administration in Newfoundland, and

(b) provide experiences which may enable him to become a more effective change agent in any

positions he may hold in Newfoundland in the future.

2. To provide an opportunity for the intern to explore in some depth a topic of special interest and concern to him, that is, the role of the teacher and administrator in curriculum development.
3. To provide an opportunity for personal and professional development through contact with persons in another cultural milieu.

TYPE OF INTERNSHIP

The internship took an "integrated" approach as defined by the faculty of Educational Administration of Memorial University of Newfoundland.[3] Specifically this meant that the intern worked in several situations while at the same time exploring a single topic of interest.

While in England opportunities were provided the intern to work at the Department of Education and Science, the Schools Council for the Curriculum and Examinations, Essex County Education Offices, the Harlow Divisional Executive for Education, three comprehensive secondary schools, two junior schools (catering to students from approximately seven to eleven years of age) and one infant

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[3]Faculty of Educational Administration, Memorial University of Newfoundland, A Descriptive Statement of the Internship in Educational Administration, (St. John's: Memorial University of Newfoundland, 1972), p. 8.

school (students from four to seven years old).

These various agencies were vantage points from which it was possible to view the roles of administrators and teachers in curriculum development. However, as pointed out in the statement of objectives, the emphasis on this topic did not preclude the study of other aspects of educational administration.

INTERNSHIP ACTIVITIES

This section of the report is not intended to describe in detail the day-by-day, hour-to-hour activities of the intern; rather the purpose is to list the major activities in which the intern was engaged with various agencies and institutions in the English educational system. The institutions are listed in the chronological order in which they were visited; an order which was only in part determined by the preferences of the intern. In most cases attendant practicalities dictated the timing and length of visits. These exigencies included the availability of personnel with sufficient time to spend with the intern, the institution's willingness to accommodate a visitor, the distances to be travelled, and even in one case the difficulty of ascertaining the appropriate division of a governmental department to arrange for a placement.

The first two weeks were spent in two comprehensive secondary schools. During this period, informal interviews

were held with teachers, department heads and deputy headmasters and head mistresses; classroom instruction was observed; files which were thought to be useful were studied; informal discussions with individuals and groups of students were held; and on one occasion the intern taught a lesson.

This was followed by a three-week placement at the County Education Offices in Essex. Periods varying from one to four days in duration were spent in each of the seven branches of the County's education department. Activities included attending a meeting of the county education committee and two sub-committee meetings, interviewing personnel in the various branches and studying reports, documents and minutes of various meetings.

Two weeks were spent with the Schools Council for the Curriculum and Examinations. During this period the intern attended meetings of the Schools Council field officers; attended a symposium on secondary school examinations; studied schools council reports, pamphlets, journals and curriculum materials; talked with various officers of the schools council; and accompanied two field officers on their visits to schools. These visits usually resulted in meetings with the staff of a school.

Two weeks were spent in infant and junior schools, the activities being similar to those in which the intern had been involved in the secondary schools.

As the internship progressed it became increasingly

evident that access to reading material was essential. As a result, a period of approximately one week was spent in libraries including the Essex County library, the library at the University of London Institute of Education and at the Brentwood College of Education.

Two days were spent at the Schools Branch of the Department of Education and Science. Initially it was hoped that more time could be spent in the department but this proved to be impossible because of the number of visitors being received. The two days were spent interviewing administrative officers and in collecting Department of Education and Science pamphlets, and newsletters.

A total of three days were spent with the Harlow Divisional Executive for Education, half of which was spent with the Divisional Education Officer and the remaining time was spent talking with the office personnel including advisors. As well, during the stay one meeting of the Harlow Divisional Executive for Education was attended.

EVALUATION OF INTERNSHIP EXPERIENCES

Ideally an internship in educational administration should provide an opportunity for the intern to participate on the same basis as other workers in a real work situation with provision made for systematic and continuous examination of the experience in relation to educational theory.

The structuring of the internship experience in

England did not permit intensive participation in work situations because the length of stay with any one agency or office was of too short duration to allow anything other than formal and informal interviews and observation. Furthermore, because of the limited opportunity for involvement in actual work situations, it was impossible to define behaviourally those skills and competencies which the intern could expect to gain as a result of his experiences. However, objectives were formulated for the internship, albeit in general terms, and it is in light of these that the internship is evaluated. Each of the stated objectives will be examined in light of the internship experiences related to that objective, followed by an evaluation of those experiences.

Objective One

To provide a broader exposure to the operation of local boards of education.

Activities

The intern attended meetings of the Essex County education committee and two of its sub-committees as well as a meeting of the Harlow Divisional Executive. Talks were held with individual members of the Harlow Divisional Executive. Various governmental acts relating to the duties and powers of the aforementioned boards were studied. Many of the administrative officers of both the County Education

Committee and the Harlow Divisional Executive were interviewed. Furthermore, minutes of meetings held by both these groups were studied by the intern.

Evaluation

The foregoing activities enabled the intern to gain insights into the operation of a county education committee and a divisional executive. Unfortunately it was impossible to arrange suitable experiences with regard to the operation of either boards of governors of secondary schools or the managers of primary schools. Ideas about the operation of these two bodies were gleaned from talking to headmasters and several members of boards of governors and managers and from studying instruments and articles of government of secondary and primary schools. Hindsight suggests that attendance at meetings of boards of governors or managers would have proved to be extremely beneficial. The reasons for this will be more fully explained in part three of this report.

Objective Two

To gain an understanding of budgeting within a school district and within a school.

Activities

Meetings of both the Essex County education committee and the Harlow Divisional Executive were attended. Three

days were spent with the senior administrative officer in the Finance Branch of the Essex County Education Department. Furthermore, interviews with head masters and heads of departments in English schools were conducted during the three month period.

Evaluation

While no attempt was made to become fully knowledgable with all the intricacies of financing education in England, the activities in which the intern engaged provided a general picture of the allocation of monies for various educational purposes.

Basically, the cost of education is met by local property taxes (known as rates) collected by local authorities and rate-support grants forthcoming from the central government to local authorities. The Department of Education and Science has estimated that the central government grant in the 1972-73 fiscal year would amount to approximately fifty-eight percent of local authority expenditures on the social services they provide.[4] Since education is only one of these social services, the education department of the local authority has to vie with other departments for financial resources. To ensure that each service receives a share of local authority resources, safeguards have been incorporated

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[4]Government of the United Kingdom, Department of Education and Science, The Educational System of England and Wales, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1972) p.14.

into the system. For example, if the Secretary of State for Education and Science decides that a particular authority is not providing adequate educational services, he may recommend to Parliament that the rate-support grant to that authority be reduced.

Another constraint on the expenditure of money by local authorities is the stipulation that all capital projects costing in excess of £50,000 must be approved by the central government. The authority is free to spend as much as it wishes on other aspects of education such as inservice education programs, various categories of staff--both professional and non-professional, and on teaching aids and equipment.

It should be realized that financing education in England is an intricate and complicated process. To fulfill the purposes of this report only the broad outlines of that process have been presented.

Objective Three

To provide an opportunity to study school facility planning in England.

Activities

One day was spent with the assistant Education Officer responsible for the school building program in Essex. One day was spent with an architect in the employ of the Essex County Council. It was possible during this day to

visit two projects on which the architect was working--one an old school which was to be renovated and the other a new primary school nearing completion.

Talks were held with two subject advisors employed by the County Council of Essex regarding the drawing up of educational specifications for new schools.

A two-hour interview was held with an officer in the Schools Branch (responsible for allocating money for school buildings) in the Department of Education and Science.

Evaluation

While many of the schools visited were somewhat similar to those with which the intern had previously been familiar, the experience was worthwhile in that the procedures for planning were different in some respects. For example, there was less involvement of teaching staff and head-masters in the development of educational specifications than the intern expected. Drawing up educational specifications was largely in the control of county administrators and advisors.

Unfortunately, it was impossible to visit any of the more innovative school buildings in England because of their distance from Harlow and because of the lack of available time.

Objective Four

To gain a deeper understanding of school-community

relations.

Activities

Few activities were wholly devoted to ascertaining the status of school-community relations in England. Nevertheless, informal talks with several parents as well as discussions with teachers and headmasters regarding school-community relations were possible.

Evaluation

This objective was not achieved to the satisfaction of the intern. No opportunity was provided to attend a parent-teacher association meeting and the dicussions with parents, teachers and headmasters proved to be vague and inconclusive. In several cases teachers felt that parents should not be given an opportunity to interfere in school affairs and that parent-teacher associations were futile ventures.

Objective Five

To provide exposure to pupil personnel services in England.

Activities

No activities were especially devoted to the study of pupil personnel services mainly because none of the schools visited employed guidance counsellors. In spite of that, interviews were held with careers masters, headmasters,

county careers officers and teachers during which this topic was discussed.

Evaluation

Because the administration of pupil personnel services was discussed only tangentially in most interviews, the impressions gained by the intern are vague, confusing and may even be erroneous. Of all the objectives, this is the one considered by the intern to have been least well achieved.

Objective Six

To obtain insights regarding the administration of in-service education.

Activities

Teachers, headmasters, schools council field officers, and county advisors and inspectors were queried about in-service education. Of those interviewed, one headmaster and a schools council field officer had lectured at inservice sessions throughout the county.

Evaluation

The intern feels he has an understanding of the types of inservice courses offered for teachers both at colleges of education and at the national and local levels. Otherwise, there was no exposure to an ongoing inservice education program at the school or county level.

Objective Seven

To provide exposure to the supervision of instruction in England.

Activities

Two days were spent with a county school inspector. As well, teachers, heads of departments, headmasters and county advisors were asked about supervision of instruction in England.

Evaluation

The intern considers these experiences to have been effective in presenting an appreciation of the approaches to supervision in England. Those approaches were not radically different from those which one encounters in the Newfoundland system. The methods employed by headmasters to improve instruction varied considerably. Some spent considerable time in teaching areas, others were desk-bound by administrative details while others had initiated on-going programs of staff improvement.

Supervisors and inspectors generally acted in a consultative role by talking with teachers individually and in groups, organizing inservice education programs and by issuing pamphlets containing information and suggestions on a variety of topics.

In secondary schools, any classroom visitation was usually carried out by heads of departments. Headmasters of

secondary schools invariably stated they found it impossible to visit teachers on a regular basis because of the size of their schools and consequently they concentrated on visiting all beginning teachers occasionally throughout their first year in their schools.

Objective Eight

To gain an appreciation of the role of the administrator in curriculum development.

Activities

These will be discussed in the section dealing specifically with curricular decision-making in England.

Evaluation

Because this topic was the focus of the internship experiences, more time was spent in pursuing this objective than any other: the intern considers this time to have been well-spent. A more thorough evaluation of this objective is implicit in part three of this report.

Summary

There is no doubt in the mind of the intern that the experience was beneficial, intellectually, professionally and personally. It has assisted him to diagnose administrative problems more adequately and has suggested solutions which he would not have considered prior to the internship. It has enabled him to view administrative processes in

Newfoundland from a different perspective and has, as well, presented an opportunity to assess the applicability of course work completed prior to the internship. In the final analysis, however, the success of this internship will only be manifest through any contribution the intern makes to education in Newfoundland in the future.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE INTERNSHIPS

The following suggestions are made in light of the author's recent experience with the hope that they might be beneficial to those planning to undertake internships in the future.

The intern's placement with the Department of Education and Science, although short, differed from the other assignments in that the organization was so large and complex that it was impossible to become involved in activities other than those which were highly specialized. Furthermore, most officers with the exception of those in extremely highly placed positions, were conversant only with their specialized role and lacked a thorough knowledge of the operation of the total organization. It seemed that the smaller the office, in terms of the number of people employed, the more comprehensive the experience and the more opportunity there was for involvement. On the other hand, if an intern is seeking competencies in a specialized area, then a larger office may be an appropriate assignment.

In the case of this intern's experience, relevant course work and reading preceded the internship. This proved to be satisfactory but only to a limited extent. The writer feels it would be desirable to undertake related course work concurrently with the internship experience. Undoubtedly, it would have been beneficial to have either enrolled in or audited a course in comparative educational administration or other similar course during the three months.

During the three months stay in England it was only possible to remain in contact with the intern's academic supervisor by letter. It is felt that frequent individual conferences with the supervisor would help the intern analyze and interpret events and consequently make the experience more rewarding. Continual personal contact with the writer's academic supervisor was impossible during the internship experience because of the distance involved.

A placement of at least six weeks with any one office seems to be necessary if the intern is actually to participate in a meaningful way in the every day work of the office. A shorter period does not allow sufficient time for an adequate orientation to the office as well as meaningful involvement. If an intern is to move from office to office, as in this case, then the study of a topic which can be viewed from the vantage points of all these offices is highly desirable. Otherwise the result might be a mass of confused impressions. The topic in which the intern was particularly interested,

curricular decision-making, preserved a sense of continuity while the intern moved from one situation to another.

PART TWO

TOPIC OF SPECIAL INTEREST: CURRICULAR DECISION-MAKING

This section of the report presents the theoretical considerations utilized by the intern in the study of curricular decision-making. An attempt at defining the term 'curriculum' is followed by a discussion of types of curricular decisions and various levels of decision-making. The strategies adopted to facilitate the study of curricular decision-making are presented in broad outline and finally, the limitations of the approach adopted are discussed.

CURRICULUM DEFINED

In the early years of the study of curriculum development, the term 'curriculum' was often defined as the course of study or the programme of studies followed by a student within an educational institution. In 1935 Caswell and Campbell offered an expanded definition of curriculum to include the total learning activities or experiences provided for a student under the direction of a school.[5] This enlarged view of curriculum has taken several decades to become accepted by some practising educators.

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[5]Hollis L. Caswell and Doak S. Campbell, Curriculum Development (New York: American Book Company, 1935), Chapter IV.

In the meantime, as long as the programme of studies and the curriculum were accepted as somewhat synonymous, curricular decision-making, in many instances, centered on the revision of courses of study. Thus the curriculum was seen as something which could be built by a committee or by a competent curriculum 'writer' and subsequently prescribed for and implanted into a school.

The writer believes the prescription and adoption of a single text as a guide to course content engenders the same narrow thinking about curriculum in that the textbook becomes the course of study.

This restricted view of curriculum has gradually been widening until today we have curriculum defined as ". . . a plan for learning,"[6] ". . . all learning opportunities provided by the school"[7] and even as ". . . what happens in an educational environment. It may be prescribed, emergent, accidental, or unidentified."[8]

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[6]Hilda Taba, Curriculum Development; Theory and Practice (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc., 1962), p. 11.

[7]J. Galen Saylor and William M. Alexander, Curriculum Planning for Modern Schools (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1966), p. 5.

[8]Elizabeth Jones, "Curriculum Planning in Early Childhood Education" as quoted in Curriculum Is What Happens (Washington, D.C.: National Association for the Education of Young Children, 1970), p. 5.

B. TYPES OF CURRICULUM DECISIONS

If we accept the foregoing view of curriculum, then the idea that curricular decision-making is the sole prerogative of any single person or agency, is indefensible. It is conceivable, and in fact probable, that numerous decisions regarding interrelated aspects of the curriculum will be made by different agencies, persons, or groups working either independently or cooperatively.

Curricular decisions have been categorized by several writers. Lindquist has delineated three types of decisions: (a) deciding on purposes and policies, (b) determining the specifics of the over-all programme, and (c) determining correct individual professional and technical behaviour.[9]

Stewart outlines three types of decisions regarding curriculum; (a) decisions to initiate a development, (b) decisions to approve a development, and (c) operational decisions.[10]

Saylor and Alexander give policy making, content selection, technical development, and arrangement of curriculum opportunities as the four types of curriculum

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[9]Donald M. Lindquist, Development of an Instrument to measure Group participation in Administrative Decision Making in Public Schools (New York: Columbia University Press, 1960) p. 13.

[10]L.D. Stewart, "Decision Making in Curriculum Development", The Canadian Administrator, Vol. 7, No. 7, April, 1968.

decisions.[11]

Taba says that:

> Curriculum development involves many kinds of decisions. Decisions need to be made about the general aims which schools are to pursue and about the more specific objectives of instruction. The major areas or subjects of the curriculum must be selected as well as the specific content to be covered in each. Choices must be made about the type of learning experiences with which to implement both the content understandings and other objectives. Decisions are needed regarding how to evaluate what students are learning and the effectiveness of the curriculum in attaining the desired ends. And, finally, a choice needs to be made regarding what the over-all pattern of the curriculum is to be.[12]

For purposes of this descriptive study, the writer identified four types of decisions. The first, in the area of policy, included those decisions regarding the general purposes and goals of the school.

The second category focused on those decisions regarding particular subject areas to be included in the school curriculum.

The third included decisions specifying topics and content to be covered in each subject area.

The last category of decisions comprised those which deal with selecting and arranging appropriate learning activities for each child in the classroom.

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[11] *Op. cit.*, p. 24.

[12] *Op. cit.*, pp. 6-7.

C. LEVELS OF CURRICULAR DECISION-MAKING

In order to compare curricular decision-making in two systems adequately it was necessary to examine not only the types of decisions, but as well, the various levels at which they were made in the decision-making process.

Saylor and Alexander see five levels of decision-making: the teacher; the teaching group, for example, a team of teachers; the school; the school system; and the state.[13]

Sand defines three levels: the instructional level, the institutional level, and the societal level.[14]

Four levels of decision-making were considered for purposes of this study: the national level, the provincial or county level, the school district or system level, and the school level.

The first level includes those decisions made by agencies at the national level such as central governments, their departments, and other national agencies.

Decisions made by legislators and provincial/county departments or boards constitute the second level.

The third level, that of the local school district, includes decisions made by local boards of education,

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[13] *Op. cit.*, p. 19.

[14] Ole Sand, "Curriculum Change" The Seventieth Year-Book of the National Society for the Study of Education (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971), p. 219.

district curriculum committees, or school district administrators.

The fourth level of decision-making is the school. The decisions at this level are made by the total school staff, the school administrators, subject departments, or by individual teachers.

The writer is aware that types and levels of decision-making are not always discrete or even discernible. Furthermore, it was impossible within the scope of the study outlined here, to categorize or even identify the manifold influences on the curriculum of a nation's schools. However, it was hoped that the foregoing typology of decision-making would serve as a guide in the comparison of the Newfoundland and English systems.

STRATEGIES

Because of the short period of time in each placement, it was necessary for the intern to adopt a non-participant observer role. This proved to be advantageous in two ways: first, if the intern had been involved in the operation of the various schools and offices his behavior might have influenced events in these situations and, secondly, the non-participant observer role provided flexibility in activities which might not have been possible had the intern been involved in a specific aspect of the operation of each office.

In all cases, people contacted were informed by the

intern that he was an impartial observer having no connections with the English educational system. Moreover, anonymous and confidential treatment of information was assured all who agreed to be interviewed.

These tactics seemed to have achieved their purpose as later evidenced by frank interviews, invitations to attend committee meetings and the opportunity to study files not ordinarily available to persons outside of the various organizations.

LIMITATIONS OF THIS APPROACH

Holmes states that those comparing administrative systems would do well to realize that,

> . . . in all probability there will be some kind of formal organization concerned with the control of education at each of several levels; namely national, regional, local, and inside individual institutions.[15]

The writer feels that only a searching analysis of the kinds of decisions and levels of decision-making within a multiplicity of agencies and institutions would permit an adequate comparison of the administrative organizations in two systems. Such rigorous research was not the objective of the internship under discussion. To have carried out a thorough analysis would have involved the utilization of

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[15]Brian Holmes, Problems in Education: A Comparative Approach (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Co., 1970), p. 158.

structured interviews, questionnaires, and other such tools of social science research, as well as a longer period of time. The purpose of this internship was to provide beneficial experiences for the intern rather than to conduct such systematic, comprehensive research. That is, of course, the single greatest limitation of the section of the report which follows.

Other limitations are obvious. The impressions presented here are those perceived by one person in the short period of three months. Furthermore, because of prior study, the intern may have found only what his reading told him he would find. A further limitation is that the intern spent the greater proportion of his time in one county in England, and it cannot be assumed that this county was necessarily representative of the total system.

PART THREE

CURRICULAR DECISION-MAKING IN ENGLAND

Various agencies in England either participate in or influence decisions regarding the experiences a child receives under the guidance of a school.

Each of these agencies will be taken in turn beginning with those which operate on a national basis followed by regional and intermediate local agencies and ending with the school. Figure one presents a simplified diagram of the relationships among some of these agencies. Each of these agencies will be discussed with particular regard to the scope of its legal responsibilities as well as the author's impressions of their actual influence on practice in the classroom.

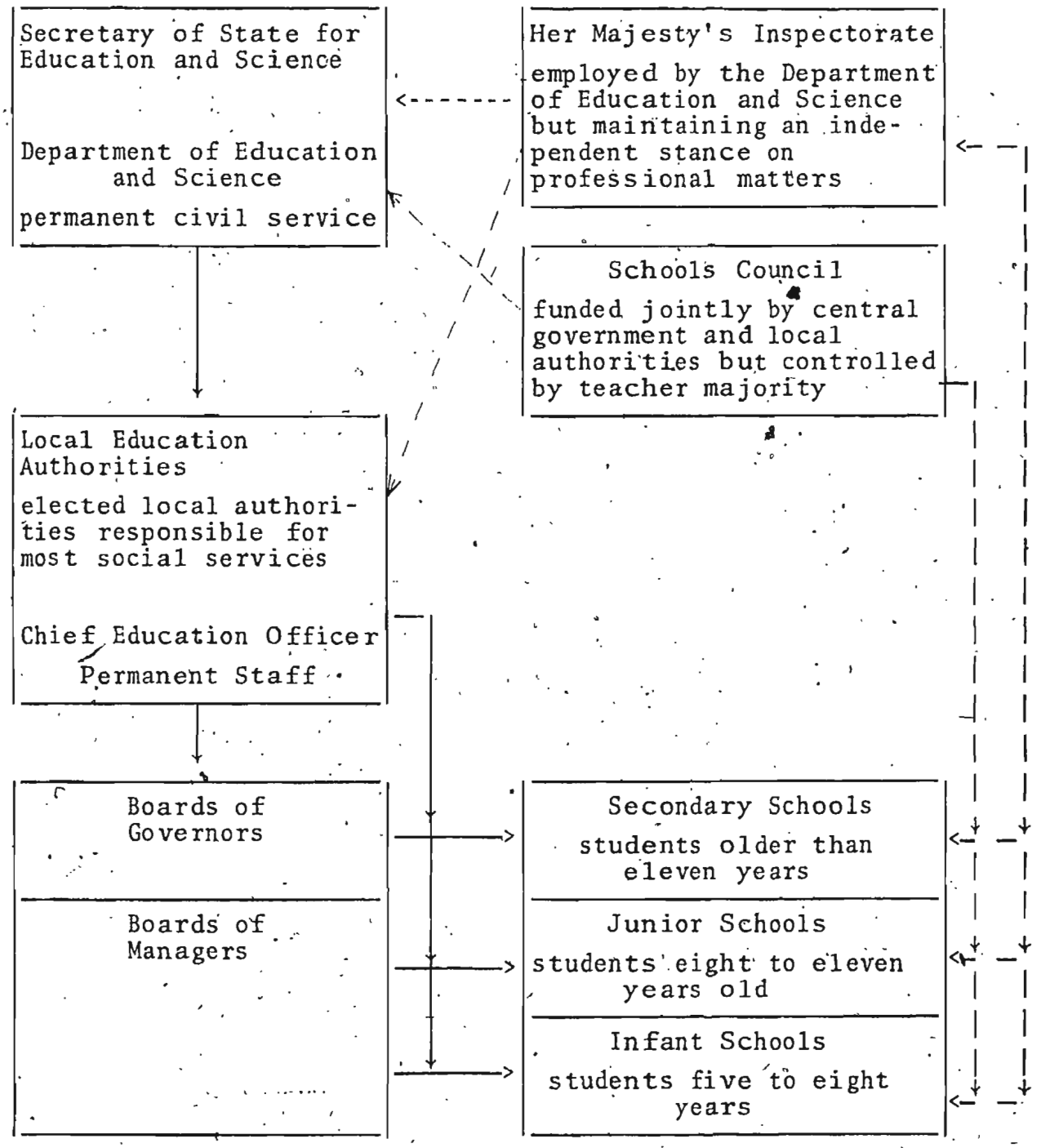
A. THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SCIENCE

In one of its pamphlets, the Department of Education and Science states

> The Central Government does not run any schools or colleges, or engage any teachers, or prescribe any textbooks or curricula, but it does:
>
> Set minimum standards of educational provision, control the rate, distribution, nature and cost of educational building;
>
> control the training, supply and distribution of teachers and determine the principles governing recognition of teachers as qualified;

FIGURE I

ENGLISH SCHOOL SYSTEM-GENERALIZATION OF MAIN STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS



——— = lines of control

– – – = consultative and advisory relationships.

administer a superannuation scheme for teachers;

in consultation with local authority associations, forecast the level of local authority expenditure on education to be taken into account in determining the size of the Exchequer grant;

support financially be direct grant a limited number of institutions of a special kind;

support educational research through the agency of the National Foundation for Educational Research, university departments, and other bodies; settle disputes, for example, between a parent and a local education authority, or between a local education authority and the managers of a school.

Control under the Education Acts is exercised and guidance is given by means of regulations, orders and circular letters, and by pamphlets and handbooks.[16]

As defined by the 1944 Act, the Secretary of State for Education and Science has the duty:

to promote the education of the people of England and Wales and the progressive development of institutions devoted to that purpose, and to secure the effective execution by Local Education Authorities under his control and direction of the national policy for providing a varied and comprehensive educational service in every area.[17]

In practice neither the Secretary of State for Education and Science, nor employees of his department have interfered in curricular matters within the jurisdiction of Local Education Authorities which are legally under the control and direction of the Secretary of State. The singular instance

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[16] Government of the United Kingdom, Department of Education and Science, The Educational System of England and Wales, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1972), p.12.

[17] Government of the United Kingdom, Education Act, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1944), Section 1.

of central government involvement in curricular affairs is in the provision of religious education throughout the country.

Section 25 of the Education Act 1944 stipulates that:

> . . . the school day in every county school . . . shall begin with collective worship on the part of all pupils in attendance

and that

> . . . religious instruction shall be given in every county school . . . .[18]

This seems to be the only curricular issue on which the Department of Education and Science has ever taken a unilateral stand.

Notwithstanding, the Secretary of State for Education and Science makes his policies known by means of regulations, circulars and memoranda. While most of these deal with overall financing and management of education, some impinge upon the curriculum sphere either directly or indirectly. An excellent example of this is the effect of circular 10/65 in which the Secretary of State requested Local Education Authorities ". . . to prepare and submit to him plans for reorganizing secondary education on comprehensive lines."[19] Although this circular was not legally binding, it gave great

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[18]*Ibid.*, Section 25.

[19]Government of the United Kingdom, Department of Education and Science, Circular 10/65 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1965), p. 1.

impetus to the movement toward comprehensive schools, a movement which has had considerable effect on secondary school curricula.

The writer saw no evidence other than that mentioned above of Department of Education and Science involvement in either selection of content, teaching materials or teaching methods.

B. HER MAJESTY'S INSPECTORATE

A corps of school inspectors, approximately five hundred and fifty strong, appointed by Her Majesty the Queen but employed by the Department of Education and Science, has had considerable influence upon the development of education in England. Although employed by the Department of Education and Science, they enjoy a degree of independence and autonomy not accorded other employees of that department. In probably the most authoritative account of the inspectorate ever written, John Blackie states:

> . . . The independence [of Her Majesty's Inspectors] is genuine and important. . . . The inspector serves the office but is not at its beck and call.[20]

He further states that

> . . . what he (an inspector) says to a teacher or writes in a report . . . is not in any way trimmed to suit government or departmental policy.[21]

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[20]John Blackie, Inspecting and the Inspectorate (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), p. 52.

[21]*Ibid.*, p. 53.

This professional autonomy of the inspector placed him in a favourable light in the minds of those teachers with whom the intern talked because they felt he was not acting simply as an agent of the central governing authority. In fact, one teacher interviewed held the mistaken view that the inspectorate was a completely autonomous body, not in the employ of the Department of Education and Science.

Her Majesty's Inspectors engage in a variety of activities; but their two main functions are to inform and advise the Department of Education and Science regarding the standard of education in the country and secondly, to give advice to local education authorities, headmasters and teachers on educational matters. Advice to teachers may take several forms; it may be a report to a staff by an inspector or team of inspectors after a thorough inspection of a school, it may be through the publication of pamphlets, distributed nationally, dealing with some aspect of teaching, or it may be through in-service education programs at which members of Her Majesty's Inspectorate often lecture or lead discussions. However, the advice of the inspector is simply that; it is not administrative fiat. Their authority is that which comes from knowledge and experience rather than from legitimated institutional power, or so it would seem.

C. THE SCHOOLS COUNCIL TO THE CURRICULUM AND EXAMINATIONS

The constitution of the Schools Council for the Curriculum and Examinations states:

> . . . The object of the Schools Council shall be the promotion of education by carrying out research into and keeping under review the curricula, teaching methods and examinations in schools, including the organization of schools so far as it affects their curricula.[22]

Financed in equal proportions by the Central Government (through the Department of Education and Science) and the local education authorities, the Schools Council since its inception in 1964 has become a powerful force in curriculum development. All headmasters and most teachers interviewed were in agreement on this point. However, occasionally answers from teachers in response to a question about the role or influence of the Schools Council produced such replies as "Well, I'm not sure exactly what they do" or "It has not changed my teaching in any way". Nevertheless, many teachers agree that the Schools Council is effective because of its numerous publications including research reports, working papers, a journal, pamphlets, curriculum bulletins, as well as materials devised as a result of curriculum development projects, and also because of its field officer team which is in constant contact with schools throughout

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[22]The Schools Council for the Curriculum and Examinations, Constitution, Sec. 2.

the country.

For the purposes of this report, the most important point to be realized about the Schools Council is that, although it is financed by the central and local governments, it is by constitutional provision directed by teachers. The majority membership on the governing council and on all important sub-committees is held by teachers. Figure number two, reprinted from a Schools Council newsletter illustrates the proportion of teacher representation. Thus, while ostensibly and perhaps effectively directed by the teaching profession, the Schools Council provides a supporting service to the classroom teacher. In its many endeavours it is guided by the following code of conduct included in its constitution.

> In the execution of the provisions of this constitution and in exercise of all functions conferred hereby regard shall at all times be had to the general principle that each school should have fullest possible measure of responsibility for its own work, with its own curriculum and teaching methods based on the needs of its own pupils and evolved by its own staff.[23]

D. EXAMINATION BOARDS

One of the most noticeable influences upon curriculum development experienced during the internship was that exerted by examinations at the secondary school level. No

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[23] *Ibid.*, Sec. 4.

FIGURE TWO

REPRESENTATION ON SCHOOLS COUNCIL COMMITTEES

Governing Council (G.C.)
Ultimate responsibility for Council's policy.

Teachers 39 Others 34

working through:

Programme Committee (P.C.) Senior educational policy committee, responsible to G.C. for determination of priorities, oversight of work programme and appointment to committees.	9	9*
Steering Committee 'A' (S.C.A.) Curriculum for pupils 2-13 and detailed proposals for research and development.	15	10
Steering Committee 'B' (S.C.B.) As for S.C.A. but for pupils 11-16; also (with S.C.C.) central co-ordinating authority for secondary school examinations	15	13
Steering Committee 'C' (S.C.C.) As for S.C.B. but for pupils 14-18	16	15
Welsh Committee Combines functions of all Steering Committees in matters of specific concern to Wales except in relation to examinations. Advises Council on special problems of Welsh education.	14	9
G.C.E. 'O' Level Sub-Committee Supports F.E.C.	12	10
C.S.E. Sub-Committee Supports F.E.C.	9	16†
Second Examinations Committee Examinations beyond the level of first examinations; works to S.C.C.	12	12†
Subject Committees Curriculum and examinations in their respective fields	10	6
Finance and Staff Committee Financial policy, staffing, audit; advises P.C. of state of resources	4	7

FIGURE TWO (CONTINUED)

First Examinations Committee (F.E.C.) Examinations normally taken at 16+; works to S.C.B.	12	10
Publications Committee Arranges publication of material approved by P.C. which is responsible for publications policy, although G.C. has overall control.	3	3

*Some ex-officio members are expected to be teachers; otherwise, the teacher majority will be secured by co-options.

†A proportion of CSE boards' representation is expected to be by teachers; otherwise, the teacher majority will be secured by co-options.

similar influence was discernible in primary schools perhaps because in the areas where the intern worked 'eleven-plus' examinations had been eliminated. The results of these examinations, administered to students after they reached the age of eleven, had traditionally been used as the basis for assigning students to secondary schools; those students who achieved well, went on to grammar schools and the others to either secondary modern or secondary technical schools. In Harlow, all secondary schools are comprehensive and primary school pupils automatically transfer to comprehensive secondary schools after reaching eleven years of age. Any tests or examinations administered at the primary levels are prepared by the staffs of the individual schools as part of their ongoing assessment of each child's achievement. It should be understood, however, that although the 'eleven plus' examination has lost favour, some areas of the country still determine the kind of secondary school each pupil will attend on the basis of this examination.

In secondary schools there are two main examinations, one leading to the General Certificate of Education (G.C.E.) and the other to the Certificate of Secondary Education (C.S.E.). The G.C.E. examinations, administered by university based boards are taken by students at two levels. The ordinary (O) level examinations are taken at age sixteen and the advanced (A) level at eighteen years of age.

The administrative framework within which G.C.E.

examining boards operate is laid down by the Department of Education and Science and although the examination boards are based in nine universities throughout the nation, the Subject Committees which actually prepare syllabuses and examinations for G.C.E. subjects are largely composed of practising teachers. Despite this fact many teachers expressed the view that the G.C.E. examinations are university controlled and that the universities are effectively imposing their wishes on teachers in secondary schools. Although teachers have the freedom to choose among the syllabuses of the nine boards, many whom the intern interviewed felt this type of examination was restrictive. Nevertheless schools may, if they desire, design syllabuses in accordance with their own particular philosophy and ideas about a subject. These may be presented to the G.C.E. board for approval after which the board sets and marks the examinations. So far as can be determined few schools have taken advantage of this flexibility; the reasons for the small number being a matter upon which the writer can only speculate.

The C.S.E. examination, instituted in 1964, is regionally rather than nationally based with fourteen boards, each serving a section of the country. Whereas the G.C.E. examinations are written by the academically-inclined pupils, the C.S.E.'s are designed for the 'average' student. G. H. Newsom in Half Our Future states that C.S.E. examinations

were to be:

> . . . aimed at a band of candidates extending from those who just overlap the group taking the Ordinary level of the G.C.E. examination to those who are just below the average in ability.[24]

The C.S.E. boards use three methods of examining known nationally as Modes one, two, and three. Mode one consists of examinations set and marked by the board on syllabuses drawn up by the board's subject committees. When a school designs its own syllabus to be approved by the board and examinations are set and marked by the board, this is known as mode two. Mode three examinations are set and marked by the teachers of the school which draws up the syllabus. In this case, the syllabuses, examinations and marking are moderated by the regional board. The C.S.E. examinations also take into account the work done by a student throughout the year and as much as fifty percent of his final grading may be assigned by the teacher in some designated subjects.

Most of the schools visited were using mode one examinations, none were using mode two and several had adopted mode three in a small percentage of subjects.

On this subject Thomas, Sands and Brubaker state,

> Although the freedom of the teacher is justly prized, it is remarkable how willing he has been to sacrifice it, particularly to authorities responsible for examinations. The role of

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[24]J. H. Newsom, Half Our Future, (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1963), p. 132.

> examinations, particularly those destined for the academic students has been perhaps the paramount force for determining the content of the curriculum.[25]

The writer believes that there may be a large number of teachers in England who are not 'remarkably willing' to surrender their autonomy to examination authorities. In that respect, the statement cited above may be an over-generalization. Nonetheless, the influential role of examinations on secondary school curricula was readily admitted by most teachers, some of whom preferred the situation while others considered it to be too restrictive.

E. LOCAL EDUCATION AUTHORITIES

With the implementation of the 1944 Education Act, elected county and borough councils became the local education authorities in their respective areas. However, since county and borough councils are concerned with all other aspects of local government as well as education, the 1944 Act provided for the establishment of education committees of the county councils. The majority of members on the education committee must be county councillors, but in order to increase competence in educational matters it may co-opt members from the public who are familiar with local educational conditions and others

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[25] R. Murray Thomas, Lester B. Sands and Dale L. Brubaker, Strategies for Curriculum Change: Cases from Thirteen Nations, (Scranton, Pennsylvania: The International Textbook Co., 1968), p. 157.

who are knowledgeable about education in general. The authority must consider committee reports before exercising any of its powers in educational affairs or it may delegate authority to the committee to act as the authority, with the exception that committees may never be empowered to borrow money or raise taxes.

It is the duty of local education authorities,

> . . . to contribute to the spiritual, moral, mental, and physical development of the community by securing that sufficient education throughout those stages [primary, secondary and further education] shall be available to meet the needs of the population of the area.[26]

In order to fulfill this duty the local education authority is empowered to build and equip schools, employ teachers, and so on. In the curriculum sphere, however, the presence of the local education authority is less evident. The allocation of financial resources to schools by the authority will of necessity have some effect upon the curricular offerings of schools within its jurisdiction. Furthermore, the authority can decide the size, type and number of schools to be built, as well as provide for the inspection of these schools.

In order to carry out this inspectoral function, most authorities employ a team of inspectors whose functions are

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[26]Government of the United Kingdom, Education Act, 1944, Sec. 7.

similar to those of Her Majesty's Inspectors in that they advise the authority on the state of education in the county and advise teachers on educational matters. Their duty is mainly to advise, not to direct, and as such they generally act as consultants, especially in the area of curriculum. However, in some cases they are required to make judgements which affect promotion of personnel, the allocation of resources and the granting of permanent certificates to probationary teachers. It is the practice with some authorities to employ advisors in the various subject areas as well as inspectors. In Essex, the county in which the intern spent the greater proportion of the three months, there is no direct curriculum control by the local education authority and only indirectly does it influence its schools' curricula. This influence, exercised in the various ways described above, leaves much to the discretion of the headmaster and his staff. Literature about English education suggests this to be the case in all counties.

F. MANAGERS AND GOVERNORS.

All schools maintained by local education authorities are required to have managing bodies consisting of persons appointed in accordance with regulations stipulated by the Department of Education and Science. In the case of primary schools, these bodies are known ~~as managers and for secondary~~ schools they are referred to as governors.

In the case of primary schools, the rules of management are made by the local education authorities. Consequently managers have only those powers which the authority delegates to them.

The situation, in the case of governors, is slightly different in that the articles and instruments of government of secondary schools have to be approved by the Secretary of State for Education and Science.

Although governors are officially charged with the general direction of the conduct and curriculum of the school, they seldom interfere in these matters. All headmasters with whom the writer discussed this point felt that governors were helpful to them in interpreting community feelings and reaction to the school and its approach to educational problems. Furthermore, heads quite often used the governors as a channel of communication with the local-education authority when repairs, extensions and other improvements were needed for his building. The majority of headmasters stated that they could remember no instance of governors' involvement in curricular affairs. In fact, several heads stated emphatically that they would not tolerate such interference. All persons with whom the intern talked, including several governors, felt that it was generally the case for governors to be in 'the pocket' of the headmaster. They felt that even in cases of conflict, the governor would probably be the first to depart the scene. The intern

received some indication that this situation was changing in other parts of the country, but not in the areas he visited.

Tyrell Burgess states that the reason for this stance on the part of governors is ". . . The very strong tradition that what goes on at a school is the business of the headmaster normally ensures that governors have next to no influence on it."[27] This seems to be the case.

G. SCHOOLS

Heretofore, agencies external to the school have been discussed with particular reference to their influence upon curricular decision-making in England. Collectively, these agencies have considerable impact upon what happens in a school but they nevertheless leave a wide area of freedom and discretion to the school staff. The scope of this freedom is of such a degree that Beauchamp and Beauchamp say

> The arena for curriculum planning in England is the individual school despite national and area projects on various aspects of a curriculum. Acceptance of anything done externally is a decision made at the school level.[28]

As stated in previous sections of this report, ultimate

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[27]Tyrell Burgess, A Guide to English Schools, (Baltimore: Penguin Books Inc., 1972), p. 79.

[28]George A. Beauchamp and Kathryn E. Beauchamp, Comparative Analysis of Curriculum Systems, (Wilmette, Illinois: The Kagg Press, 1972), p. 36.

responsibility for the efficient running of a school lies with the local education authority which operates within a framework laid down by the 1944 Education Act administered by the Secretary of State for Education and Science and his department. Immediate responsibility for operating schools lies with the governors and managers to whom the headmaster is answerable. In practice, however, as a result of a powerful tradition in English education, the headmaster is given considerable latitude for decision-making on all internal matters affecting the school. To illustrate the personal exercise of this power by the head teacher, case studies of two schools which the intern visited will be presented. These are described because they are in many ways representative of practices in other schools visited. Where exceptions to this universality were apparent, they will be mentioned.

The first, a comprehensive secondary school with an enrollment of approximately 1250 students, had seventy-two staff members. Of these, the headmaster, deputy headmaster, deputy headmistress, three senior teachers and the heads of the various subject departments held positions with administrative responsibility. General overall policy for the school was usually determined by this group which met frequently. Meetings of the total teaching staff were held at irregular intervals and sometimes only twice per year.

Responsibility for developing curricula had been

delegated by the headmaster to the heads of departments. Considerable autonomy was permitted departments, each making its own decisions regarding organization of teaching groups, expenditure of money within the framework of the departmental allowance, development of syllabuses including aims, objectives and so on and allocation of the teaching load within the department.

Heads of departments adopted various styles in their relationships with teachers. In one case, the head of the department dictated topics to be included in courses and even prescribed textbooks. This was the exception, however. Most department heads worked cooperatively with members of their departments and decisions in the areas mentioned above were group decisions except in cases where the department head was forced to be the final arbiter. In all cases, teaching methods were left to the discretion of the individual teacher.

The second, an infant school had approximately 350 students and a staff of fourteen teachers. Official staff meetings were held once per month. These were supplemented by informal meetings held as and when required. Matters discussed at these meetings included allocation of financial resources, curriculum and schemes of work, problem children, co-curricular activities and so forth.

Teachers were free to develop their own schemes of work. to use materials they deemed desirable, and to evaluate

student progress. However, because the headmaster kept in close contact with teachers, his views were well known. It is probably because of this fact that only occasionally did he intervene to suggest improvements to individual teachers. It was not unusual to observe the use of widely divergent materials and methods between two teachers working with the same age group. By contrast, in another school visited of the same type and comparable size, the headmaster had introduced a uniform series of mathematics textbooks throughout the school to ensure continuity of program. This example of divergent approaches as well as others experienced during the internship illustrate the degree of discretion the headmaster has over what is taught and how his school is organized.

SUMMARY

Part two of this report included a description of categories of decisions and levels of decision-making which were considered for purposes of this report. Four types of decisions were identified each concerned with one of the following: philosophy goals and curriculum policy; subjects to be included in the curriculum; selecting specific content and topics to be taught; and, selecting and arranging learning experiences for each child.

The four levels of decision-making identified were the national level, the county level, the school district

level and the school.

The foregoing discussion of the influence of various agencies upon curriculum development in England suggests quite strongly that decisions in all four categories mentioned above are made at the school level. There are exceptions. For example, as pointed out earlier, the teaching of religious education is mandatory by virtue of a decision made at the national level. In the area of policy, the national government in 1965 quite forcefully suggested that comprehensive secondary schools replace the existing tripartite system. Nevertheless, decisions such as these do not seem to be the rule in the English educational system. The philosophy of the school, the subjects and content to be taught and the methods of teaching are, with few exceptions, under the control and direction of the headmaster and his staff. To have agencies other than the school make these decisions would be regarded by teachers as an unwarranted infringement upon their professional autonomy.

PART FOUR

CURRICULAR DECISION-MAKING IN NEWFOUNDLAND

This section, dealing with the curricular decision-making roles of various agencies in Newfoundland, is based on the writer's experience as a teacher and school district supervisor in the Newfoundland school system, as well as on interviews with persons presently engaged in that system.

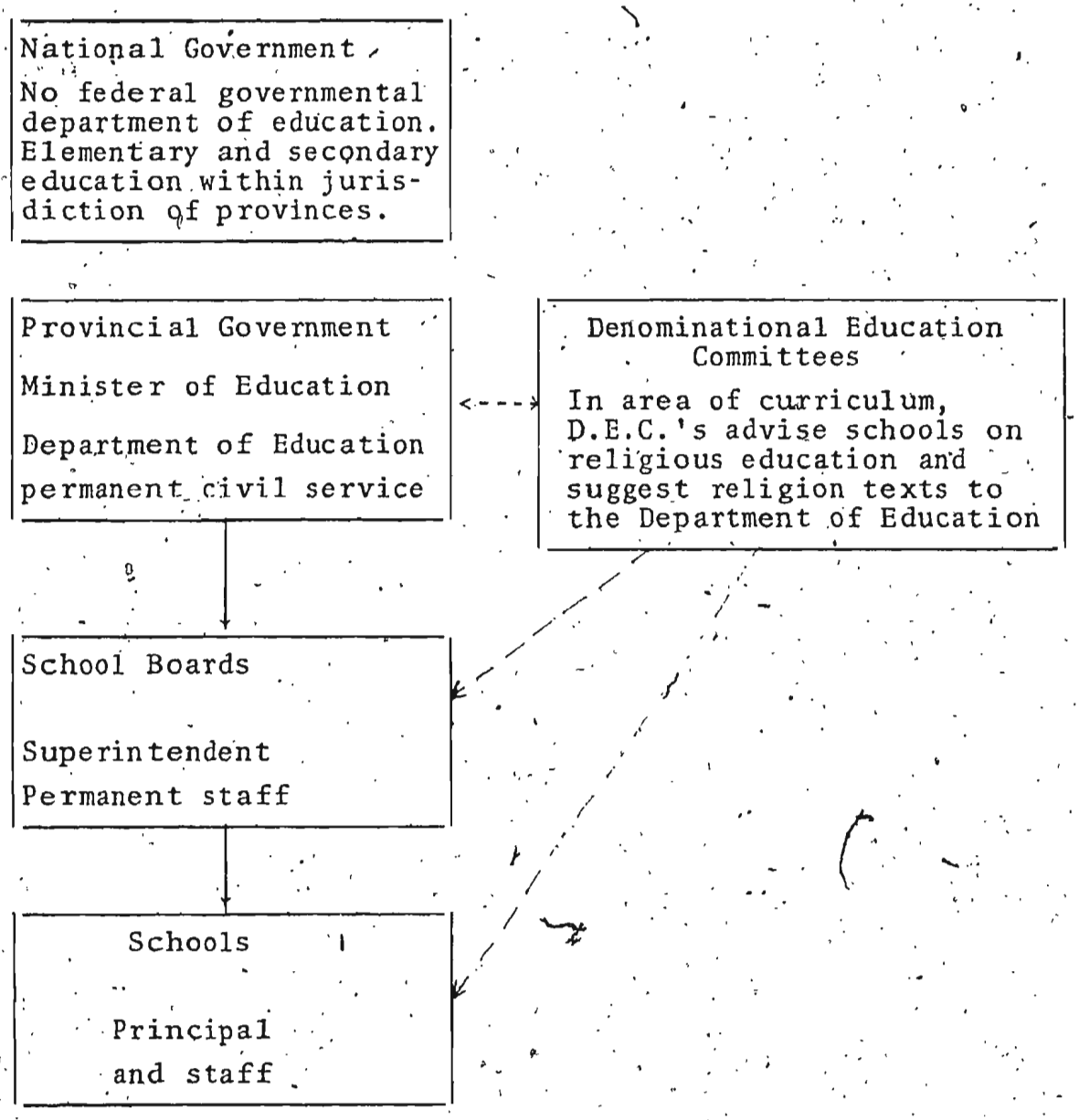
The agencies are discussed in the following order: Canadian Federal Government, Newfoundland Department of Education, Denominational Education Committees, school boards and schools. Figure Three presents a simplified diagram illustrating the relationships among these bodies.

CANADIAN FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Constitutionally, the provision of elementary and secondary education in Canada is the exclusive responsibility of the provinces and as a result there has been little official federal input in education, especially at the elementary and secondary levels. While the Department of Regional Economic Expansion, a federal government department, has spent some money on school buildings in the provinces, this has been done to provide impetus for economic growth. Moreover, the provinces have jealously guarded their rights in educational affairs, thereby limiting federal government

FIGURE THREE

NEWFOUNDLAND SCHOOL SYSTEM-GENERALIZATION OF STRUCTURAL ELEMENTS



_____ = lines of control

- - - - = advisory and consultative relationships.

involvement. As a result the federal government has had little if any direct influence upon curricula.

B. PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The Newfoundland Schools Act, which is administered by the Department of Education, states:

> All public schools shall use as a basic programme, the courses of study authorized by the minister and the textbooks authorized by the minister and distributed through the curriculum division of the Department.[29]

If a teacher wishes to use a textbook other than that authorized by the minister, he must seek permission from his school board which in turn must, ". . . in writing, request the Minister's approval therefor at least one year before the date on which it is proposed to commence use of such alternative text books."[30]

A literal interpretation of these sections of the Schools Act leaves the impression of rigidity and inflexibility. In practice, quite often alternate textbooks are authorized by the Minister and schools may choose between these for particular subjects. Furthermore, teaching methods and the manner of using texts are left to the discretion of the teacher, although even here the teaching approach used in a text book

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[29] Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, The Schools Act, Section 59, subsection 1.

[30] *Ibid.*, Section 95, subsection 2.

will determine teaching strategies to some extent. This is the case with the science texts which have been authorized for grades seven, eight and nine. These are based on the inquiry approach to teaching science and do not lend themselves to traditional expository methods.

Decisions regarding adoption of textbooks are usually based on recommendations submitted to the Provincial Director of Instruction by subject committees consisting of the Department of Education consultant in the particular subject, teachers, and Memorial University personnel. These committees are purely advisory bodies; however, their recommendations are usually accepted subject to budgetary provision.

Consultants employed by the Department of Education in the various subject fields exert an influence upon curricular decision-making by writing guidebooks and curriculum bulletins as well as by participating in in-service education of teachers around the province.

Another aspect of the Department of Education's activities which affects decisions in curriculum is the administration of public examinations. These, taken at the end of the grade eleven year are written by all students wishing to acquire a grade eleven Department of Education diploma. Grade eleven examinations are based on the courses of study and textbooks authorized by the Minister of Education thus they influence the degree of flexibility and discretion a teacher has with regard to the use of a textbook. Although schools which

meet certain conditions may assign fifty percent of the final mark of a grade eleven student, the other fifty percent is based on results on these public examinations.

B. DENOMINATIONAL EDUCATION COMMITTEES

The Department of Education Act, 1968, provided for the establishment of Denominational Education Committees, ". . . for the purpose of representing, and of being recognized by the province as representing, the religious denominations, or denominations for which ~~it is~~ established . . . ."[31] It is these committees which now carry on the traditional responsibility of religious denominations for the development of religious education. The Act cited above is very specific on this point. It states:

> Nothing contained in this act shall be deemed to derogate from the functions and responsibility of any religious denomination . . . with regard to the provision of religious education . . . .[32]

The schools act reinforces the Department of Education Act by stipulating that school boards shall cause to be followed, ". . . the courses of study and the texts in religion prescribed by the appropriate denominational authority."[33]

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[31]Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, Department of Education Act, Section 16, subsection 1.

[32]*Ibid.*, Section 26, subsection, 1.

[33]Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, The Schools Act, Section 12, paragraph 9.

To carry out this function, Denominational Education Committees have set up curriculum sub-committees to advise the government regarding the curriculum in general and religious education programs and textbooks in particular.

There are two other ways in which the Denominational Education Committees indirectly affect what happens in schools; firstly, by screening applicants who apply for an initial teaching certificate and, secondly, by determining the amount of money to be spent in each educational district on capital works programs. By determining the amount of money to be spent on each new school building and by having a voice in the certification of teachers, the Denominational Education Committees can determine, to some extent, the kinds of experiences children will receive while in school.

C. SCHOOL BOARDS

In order to discharge its responsibilities in education, the province has delegated to local school boards the power and authority necessary to operate elementary and secondary schools in the geographic areas under their jurisdiction. Established by the 1969 Schools Act, these school boards must conform to the provisions of that act. Several sections of the act delineate the board's power and authority in the curriculum field.

It must ". . . cause to be followed in the schools under its control the courses of study and texts prescribed

by the Minister,"[34] ". . . organize and carry on physical education classes on a regularly scheduled basis"[35] and ". . . provide for conferences . . . for the purpose of discussing the conduct of its schools or for purposes of inservice training."[36]

Regarding the first two duties mentioned, little needs to be said. The school board is required to be a functionary body administering provincially determined regulations. The third leaves some scope for independent discussion and action.

Additionally, the school board may ". . . establish special classes of instruction for children who are . . . unable to take proper advantage of regular school courses of study . . . ,"[37] and ". . . encourage enrichment in the school curriculum and, subject to the approval of the Minister, encourage the staff to experiment with new teaching techniques and methods."[38]

Furthermore, the school board is empowered to employ supervisors. It is the duty of the Superintendent to prescribe

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[34]Government of Newfoundland and Labrador, The Schools Act, Section 12, subsection 9.

[35]*Ibid.*, Section 12, subsection f.

[36]*Ibid.*, Section 12, subsection q.

[37]*Ibid.*, Section 13, subsection p.

[38]*Ibid.*, Section 13, subsection r.

their roles in the school district. These supervisors are involved, to some extent, in curriculum development: it would be contrary to present thinking regarding their role if they were not involved. It seems to be true that most supervisors in Newfoundland are involved in activities either directly or indirectly related to the curriculum. In some cases, they are agents of change, pressing particular curriculum enthusiasms upon teachers in their districts. However, as stated earlier, they must work within the limitations of the Schools Act which in many instances constrains them to become involved in the improvement of teaching methods rather than in the development of syllabuses, selection of text books and so on.

E. SCHOOLS

As stated earlier, schools are subject to the regulations contained in the 1969 Schools Act regarding the use of authorized texts and in the provision of religious education. In addition, they are subject to pressures applied by school boards and their officials particularly in the broadening of the curriculum by adding new subjects and in the introduction of innovations such as continuous progress education, team teaching, independent study and so forth.

In effect, it is difficult to dismiss an uncooperative principal and therefore it is possible for him to resist the pressures mentioned above. However, school board officials can make life sufficiently difficult for a principal to cause

him to swim with the tide in many cases.

The foregoing suggests that teachers have little control over what happens in schools other than in the selection of teaching methods. This is not a completely accurate picture.

Firstly, schools may choose among texts authorized for various subjects and grade levels. Here, the teacher can exercise his professional judgement.

Secondly, the programme of studies based on those texts is considered to be a minimal, basic one and teachers are encouraged to supplement it with other materials and activities.

Thirdly, even when a single text is authorized for a subject at a particular grade level, the curriculum consultants at the Department of Education recommend that teachers use their discretion in adapting it to their particular classroom situations.

Finally, if schools have an especially good idea they wish to pursue, the Department of Education can usually be persuaded to permit its implementation, at least on an experimental basis.

SUMMARY

The foregoing discussion of various agencies in Newfoundland education indicates that major responsibility for curricular decisions rests with the Provincial Department

of Education. From broad policy and philosophy as outlined in Aims of Public Education in Newfoundland and Labrador,[39] to the selection of subjects to be offered and even to topics to be taught, the Department of Education holds the major decision-making power and authority. Exceptions to this principle have been enumerated.

The one category of decisions over which the school has major control is in the selection and organization of learning experiences in the classroom.

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[39]Division of Curriculum, Newfoundland Department of Education Aims of Public Education for Newfoundland and Labrador, (St. John's: Department of Education, 1965).

PART FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The most obvious difference between the English system of curricular decision-making and that which obtains in Newfoundland is the relatively greater degree of centralization in Newfoundland.

The forum of curricular decision-making in England is the school. Drawing up syllabuses and schemes of work, selecting text books and other materials and choosing appropriate approaches and teaching methods are all within the purview of the school.

By contrast, major responsibility for curricular decision making in Newfoundland lies with the provincial department of education. While teachers have discretion in the use of materials, these materials and the programme of studies are provided by the Department of Education.

The writer would caution the reader regarding comparisons between centralized and decentralized systems of education. Brian Holmes in Problems in Education makes a similar point: He states:

> The danger for comparative educationists is that in classifying national systems of education as either centralized or decentralized simple conclusions are drawn: for example, that the former

are necessarily totalitarian and the latter democratic.[40]

No attempt was made during the internship to make value judgements with regard to the efficiency of either system. A recent publication of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development estimated the degree of success of curriculum development initiated at various levels. The figure on page 63 taken from that publication indicates their thinking.[41]

The intern would recommend that a searching study, based on the hypotheses implicit in this figure or others of a similar nature, be carried out in an attempt to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the Newfoundland system.

Besides the question of efficacy, one must consider the present Newfoundland system in light of ever-increasing claims by teachers to professional status. A most thorough discussion of professionalization in education can be found in Myron Lieberman's work Education as a Profession.[42] He states that although it is extremely difficult to arrive at an authoritative definition of a profession, most people would agree that the following eight

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[40] Brian Holmes, Problems in Education: A Comparative Approach, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul Co., 1970), p. 158.

[41] Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, The Nature of the Curriculum for the Eighties and Onwards, (Paris: OECD Press, 1972), p. 69.

[42] Myron Lieberman, Education as a Profession, (Engle-Wood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall Inc., 1956), pp. 2-6.

characteristics must be present to some degree.

1) A unique, definite and essential social service,

2) An emphasis upon intellectual techniques in performing its service,

FIGURE FOUR

ESTIMATED DEGREE OF SUCCESS OF DEVELOPMENT ORIGINATING AT VARIOUS LEVELS

Curriculum materials	When control over development is			
	Central	Mixed	Local	External
Quality	High to average	High to average	High to average	High
Acceptability at school level	Low	Low to average	Average to high	Variable
Stimulation to programme development	Cyclical	Variable	Low	High
Suitability	Average	High	High	Low to average
Permanence	High	Average	Average to low	Low
Costs development	High	Average	Low	High
dissemination	High	Average	Low	Average
training per pupil	High	Average	Average to high	Average

3) A long period of specialized training,

4) A broad range of autonomy for both the individual practitioners and for the occupational group as a whole,

5) An acceptance by the practitioners of broad personal responsibility for judgements made and acts performed within the scope of professional autonomy,

6) An emphasis upon the service to be rendered, rather than the economic gain of the practitioners,

7) A comprehensive self-governing organization of practitioners, and

8) A code of ethics which has been clarified and interpreted at ambiguous and doubtful points by concrete cases.

The claims of teachers to professionalism can be challenged on several of these points. For example, the fourth criterion, a broad range of autonomy, is not a characteristic of the teaching occupation in Newfoundland. Even if teachers are not directly supervised, their degree of autonomy is subject to the constraints imposed by the department of education, the denominational education committees, local school boards and administrators. If teachers desire to be professionals, as defined by Lieberman, then a thrust toward greater professional autonomy would seem to be a consequence. In order to do so it would appear that they would have to entrench themselves in the power structure of education

and in doing so firmly control those aspects of education which could legitimately be considered as professional concerns. A greater voice in curriculum decision-making would undoubtedly be one of those concerns. The writer believes that the department of education, in response to such pressures, has already initiated a gradual decentralization of control over curriculum affairs. The elimination of public examinations in grades nine and ten, the introduction of school participation in the assessment of the work of grade eleven students, and the recent announcement of financial support to teachers who wish to develop educational programmes above and beyond those provincially prescribed are some indicators of this trend.

The writer would recommend the continuation of this policy with increasing control of curricula, courses of study, textbooks, and evaluation of student performance being delegated to those school districts which demonstrate the willingness and ability to assume these responsibilities. Of course, implicit in this recommendation is the assumption that the devolution of powers to school districts would create scope for professional autonomy within each district. To have curricula imposed by a school board or its administrators would be deemed as undesirable, from a 'professional' viewpoint, as those provincially prescribed.

It is becoming less common to have officials at the provincial department of education individually making

decisions regarding curricula and teaching materials. The practice, as stated earlier, is to consult with a group of teachers (curriculum committees) prior to making these decisions. Committees, however, make the same errors as individuals when they recommend the adoption of a single program for a subject at a particular grade level. Compliance with programs recommended by a committee may be as undesirable as compliance with decisions of a departmental official.

It has been the writer's experience that because so many instructional decisions have been made at the provincial level in the past, even when teachers are permitted and indeed encouraged to make such decisions, they do not have the competence or confidence to carry out that role adequately. Experience indicates that many decisions at the school level are made without prior research, without visits to other schools, without exhaustive discussion or pilot studies. Before major curricular decisions can with justification be made at the school level, teachers must adopt a more systematic approach to decision-making. On the other hand, it would be inaccurate to assert that all principals and teachers desire increased autonomy. Some are content to have curricular and other decisions made for them. The foregoing may have some implications for preservice education at Memorial University of Newfoundland as well as for inservice education of teachers at the local level.

In conclusion, it is the writer's opinion that changes resulting in increased professional autonomy would have to be implemented in a gradual manner. To institute impetuously a system such as that obtaining in England might well result in one of two equally unfortunate circumstances. The resultant changes could either be insignificant or lead to chaos.

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