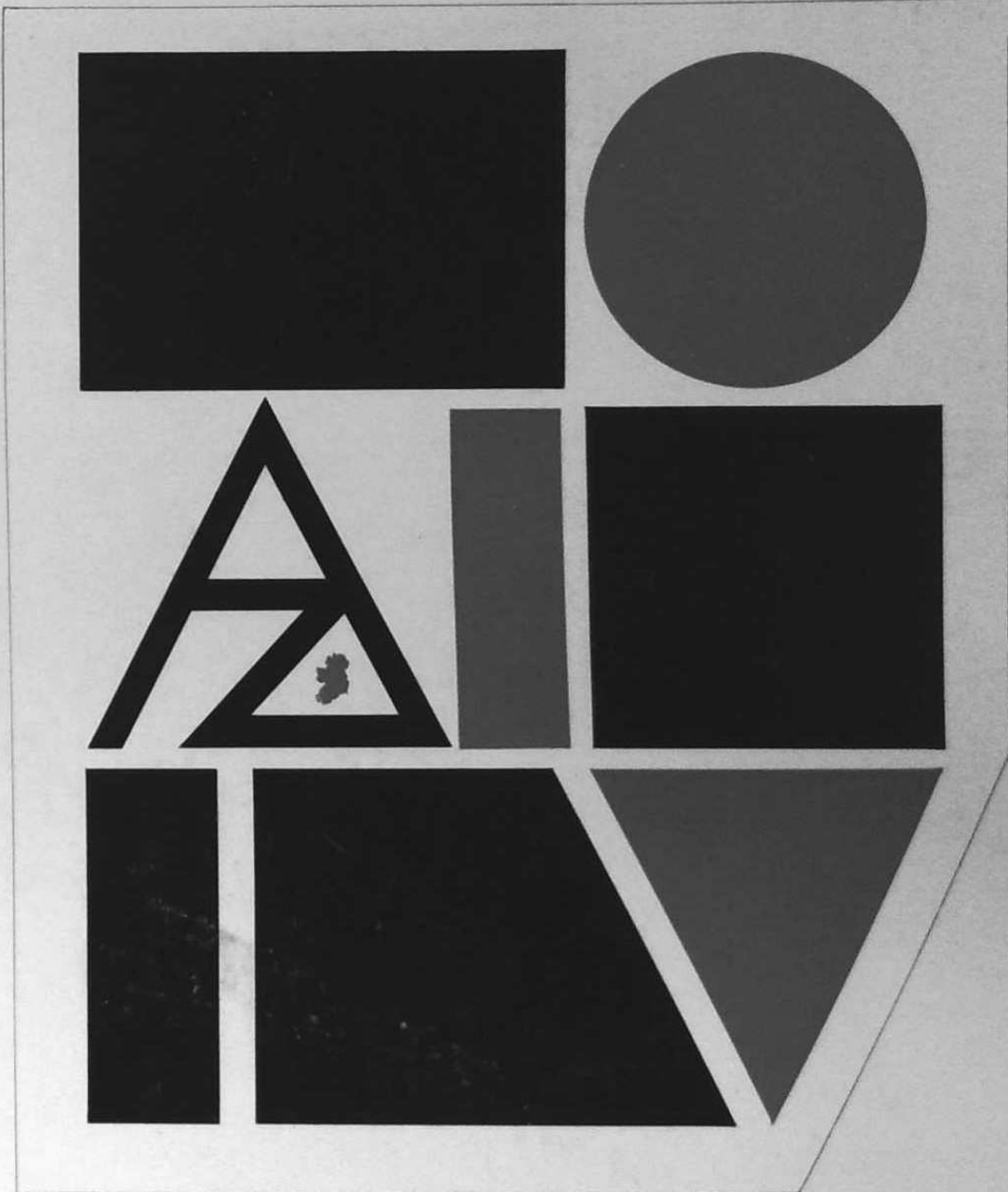


# education in Ireland

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ENCYCLOPAEDIA OF  
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Scríofa ag T. G. Ó Muirghis, Ph.D.  
Arna chur amach ag AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS.

## EDUCATION

**INTRODUCTION.** Due to the zeal of Irishmen who had studied in Britain and who had come under the influence of the western British Church, monasticism took root in Ireland in the early years of the sixth century. Later, the monasteries became centres of learning which attracted not only Irish youths but students from abroad as well. Particular attention was paid to the Scriptures and to the writings of the later Christian Fathers. The students used styli on waxed tablets, while the more accomplished scribes devoted skill and care to the transcription of the Gospels and other books. The work was at first in Latin, but in time the monks began to write in Irish as well. Though most of the surviving manuscripts are of a late period, many of them embody traditions and literature transmitted through the monasteries from a much earlier time. The *Fífl*, a body strongly attached to the ancient language, composed Irish poetry in metres deriving from Latin hymns, and assembled the Brehon Laws. Writers and poets produced prose romances and historical tales, as well as reconstructing the great pagan epics, so that Ireland was the first nation north of the Alps to produce a vernacular literature.

From such schools as Clonard, Clonmacnois and Bangor, missionaries went overseas and made a noteworthy contribution to civilization in a Europe that had been overrun by the barbarian invaders of the Roman Empire. They brought back with them that combination of vernacular and Christian learning represented abroad by such Irish scholars as the geometer, Virgilius of Salzburg, and the philosopher, John Scotus Eriugena (see pages 403, 406 and 407).

Partly as a result of the Norse incursions, Ireland's contribution to European education declined between the ninth and the eleventh centuries. Hardly had the Norse threat been overcome when the Normans arrived; this invasion marked the beginning of that continuous struggle for survival as a nation which lasted down to the present century and impeded the development of a national culture.

From the days of Henry II to those of Henry VIII, rivalry between the Irish and the Norman-English hindered educational progress. During this period, when the great European centres of learning were being developed as universities, Irish students were not readily admitted to the better schools within the walled towns of the English colony, or 'Pale', while Englishmen were often excluded from the monasteries controlled by the Irish. Beyond the Pale, education was provided by monastic schools attached to the convents of the mendicant orders; in these, promising youths might learn Latin and make some progress in the *trivium* and *quadrivium* (the two branches of medieval learning, comprising respectively: grammar, rhetoric and logic; arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music).

Beyond the Pale, also, there was a highly developed system of Bardic Schools, which were a distinctive feature

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of Gaelic civilization. These were secular institutions devoted to the study of Gaelic literature, with special emphasis on metrical composition. In them, bards received formal training for what was considered to be the exalted and highly professional career of the man of letters; this was an exclusive calling, protected by the ordeal of initiation. The Ollamh, or chief poet, had to know by heart a large number of romances, including the two hundred and fifty 'prime stories'—combinations of novel and epic, prose and poetry, ranging over a highly-formalized series of conventional themes, such as destruction of fortified places, courtships, feasts, water-eruptions, navigations, and so on. The bardic schools were maintained in part by the gifts of the students, but depended mainly on the generosity of local rulers. Since, however, the bards were regarded as inimical to English rule, from Tudor times onward government policy aimed at their suppression. When the military conquest of the country was effected in the sixteenth century, many of the chiefs fled to the Continent and, deprived of their patronage, the hereditary families of poets and teachers also took refuge abroad, or were absorbed into the peasantry. Cromwell's campaign, and the widespread plantation that followed it, marked the end of the bardic schools. Something of their tradition lived on in the 'Courts of Poetry' which, though little more than gatherings at which poetry was discussed and recited, helped to keep alive the craft of verse-making down to the nineteenth century.

The dissolution of the great abbeys under Henry VIII ushered in a new era of positive intervention by the English State in education. Hereafter there was to be a carefully-planned State system of schools, aimed at assimilating the Irish people to English culture and the new religion. This policy was to be maintained with varying emphasis and intensity for the next three hundred years. These aims were unacceptable to the mass of the people.

The Penal Laws against Catholic education were circumvented, in part, by the founding of Irish colleges at Louvain, Lisbon and Salamanca. At home, the later Penal period was the era of the hedge-schoolmaster. Hedge-schools were so called because the master had to teach out of doors, since a householder might suffer distraint for harbouring him. The hedge-school curriculum was often quite extensive; based on the 'three R's', it might include history, geography, book-keeping, surveying and mathematics. Devotion to the classics persisted; it is said that fluent speakers of Latin could be met with in parts of the country.

With the hedge-schoolmaster is linked the 'poor scholar', usually a promising pupil who, having obtained basic education at his local hedge-school, travelled to others in search of further knowledge, depending the while on the hospitality of the peasants. Hedge-schools first appeared in the seventeenth century, and flourished in the eighteenth; their popularity was due to the willingness of an already impoverished people to make sacrifices for their children, and to their co-operation with the teachers. In the second half of the eighteenth century, the rise in

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population and the relaxation of the Penal Laws resulted in a considerable increase in the number of hedge-schools. In 1824, there were 7,600 independent 'pay schools' under lay Catholic teachers: of these, the majority were hedge-schools. They were tolerated, but received no state assistance, and were usually conducted in huts or cabins. In sharp contrast were the endowed schools, mainly Protestant in character, such as those of the Erasmus Smith Foundation and the schools of the Kildare Place Society; these received parliamentary grants up to 1831, when the grants were transferred to the newly-introduced system of National Education, upon which our present system of Primary Education is based.

The authority of the State in education is vested in the Minister for Education, who is a member of the Government and responsible to Dáil Éireann. The Minister's administrative agency is the Department of Education, the staff of which—administrative, inspectorial, and other—are civil servants. At the head of these is the Secretary, and there are three Assistant Secretaries, each in charge of a major administrative division of the Department in primary and post-primary fields. The Department also deals with the Universities and other institutions of higher education, the National Library, National Museum, National Gallery, Reformatory and Industrial Schools, and various organizations of a cultural nature.

**PRIMARY EDUCATION.** The fundamental principles underlying the educational system are set forth in Articles 42 and 44.4 of the Constitution of Ireland. The State acknowledges that the primary and natural educator of the child is the family, and that parents are free to provide this education in their homes, in private schools, or in schools recognized or established by the State. The State, however, as guardian of the common good, requires that the children receive a certain minimum education, moral, intellectual and social. The State 'shall

provide for free primary education' and, when the public good requires it, shall provide other educational facilities or institutions. Legislation providing State aid for schools shall not discriminate between schools under the management of different religious denominations, nor be such as to prejudice a child's right to attend a state-aided school without attending religious instruction in that school. Thus, in the Articles dealing with education, the Constitution safeguards the rights of parents, especially in the matter of religious and moral formation, as well as the natural and imprescriptible rights of the child.

It can be fairly said that the pattern of National Education, after its introduction in the last century, evolved in such a way as to constitute, ready to hand, a system closely according in the tenor and spirit of its operation with the principles enshrined in the present Constitution. When the system was set up in 1831, a Board of Commissioners was established to assist in the provision of elementary schools, and in the supplying of existing elementary schools with trained teachers and suitable text-books. It remains the accepted practice in Ireland that the State does not normally conduct schools, but makes provision for education by enabling other parties to do so. Hence, the National Schools were, in origin, voluntary parochial schools established by the various religious authorities; and the Manager of a National School, who is responsible for appointing teachers and for the governing of the school in accordance with the regulations, is usually the local pastor or other clergyman of the religious denomination to which the majority of the children attending that particular school belong. The principle laid down for State assistance was that a school receiving such aid would afford to the children of different religions combined secular instruction and separate religious instruction, so that there might be no interference with the religion of any pupil. From the start, however, the tendency on all sides was for a particular

school to be managed by, and cater for children of, one denomination only. Hence, in practice, most National Schools are of a fully denominational character. There is no prejudice to the right of any child, of whatever religion, to enrol at any National School where there is sufficient accommodation for him. The actual provision of school buildings is usually effected through an arrangement whereby the Manager provides a suitable site and the State contributes a high proportion of the cost of building or reconstruction, the balance being provided by the Manager from local sources. Buildings thus provided are vested in trustees acceptable to the Minister for Education.

The curriculum of primary education in the National Schools resembles those of other European countries, except in its concern, from the infant stage onwards, with two languages; one of the vital aims of the State is 'the strengthening of the national fibre by giving the language, history, music and traditions of Ireland their natural place in the life of the Irish schools'. The importance of the Irish language in the curriculum reflects its position as the avowed national language and the first official language of the State. The home language of the vast majority of the pupils is English, and the programme aims to equip them with a knowledge of Irish, oral and written, sufficient to enable them to discuss ordinary daily topics in that language. Every encouragement is given towards making Irish the language of the school.

In general, the programme of instruction in the various school subjects prescribed by the Minister is obligatory. Approval, however, may be obtained for alternative programmes as being better suited to local conditions; every effort is made in country areas to give the work of the school a rural basis. School texts are prepared and issued, for the most part, by independent publishers. National Schools are equipped, at State expense, with basic reference libraries, and there is also close co-operation between the public libraries and schools of all types.

Under the School Attendance Act, 1926, attendance at a National School, or other suitable school, is required of every child between the ages of six and fourteen, unless he or she is excused on certain defined grounds. A progressive re-definition of the age limits is envisaged: the first step will have the effect, in 1970, of raising the upper

age limit to fifteen. Where the children reside at a considerable distance from the nearest suitable school, there is a new free transport scheme in operation. Specially favourable transport provision is made to facilitate the attendance of children of minority religious denominations at National Schools under the management of their own religious communities. The total number of pupils on roll in National Schools is approximately 500,000. In certain urban areas a number of children attend private primary schools.

**THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS.** From 1570 onwards, there existed in Ireland statutory provision, from diocesan revenues, for secondary schools. In that year, 'An Act for the Erection of Free Schools' was passed by the Parliament in Dublin, which provided that 'there shall be from henceforth a free school in every diocese of this realm of Ireland, and that the schoolmaster shall be an Englishman or of the English birth of this realm.' The Diocesan Schools thus legislated for were of the secondary grammar school type. Further state provision for secondary education was made later. In 1614, and thereafter, five Royal Free Schools were established in Ulster from endowments forming part of the lands confiscated from the native Irish in the Plantation of Ulster. This type of public provision by Royal endowment was continued by Charles II, who issued charters for the establishment of two Royal Schools in Leinster. Another notable group of schools founded and maintained by public endowment were the Erasmus Smith Grammar Schools, at Drogheda, Galway, Tipperary and Ennis, so called after a Cromwellian who obtained large tracts of Irish land confiscated after the insurrection of 1641. Various other schools and groups of schools were founded and maintained by private endowment, or through funds provided by corporations and municipal bodies. All the schools under these various headings were Protestant, catered for the ascendancy minority, and were intended to strengthen State policy in its aim of preserving and extending English ways and English power in Ireland.

After the Reformation, the fortunes of Catholic schools varied according to the measure of the effectiveness of State control and the rigour with which State policy was applied. During the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Catholic grammar schools managed to survive and even to flourish, especially in the towns. In this period, some twenty colleges for Irish Catholic students were founded on the Continent, mainly to educate candidates for the priesthood. From the end of the seventeenth century onward, State control became effective over the whole of Ireland, and Catholic education could be carried on only furtively, and under difficult conditions, as a consequence of the implementation of a severe penal code aimed at the economic and cultural subjection of the nation.

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, the Penal Laws, under pressure of enlightened and patriotic Protestant opinion, began to be relaxed. Under the Relief Act of 1782, Catholic schools and teachers were countenanced by law, under certain conditions. This led at once to the

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS



FIG. 199. Primary school classroom.



FIG. 200. Vere Foster (1819-1900) devoted a large private fortune to the improvement of Irish education in the mid-nineteenth century and was a founder member of the Irish National Teachers' Organization. His Headline Copy Books became world famous.

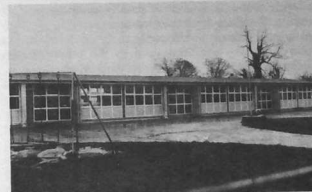


FIG. 201. Primary School.





FIG. 202. St. Columba's College, Rathfarnham.

foundation of Catholic secondary schools. Throughout the nineteenth century, various types of schools were founded by religious orders of priests, brothers and nuns, providing some kind of secondary education. Progress was slow, as these schools were entirely private and un-endowed, and did not receive state aid or recognition. By 1871, only 12,274 Catholic pupils, out of a Catholic population of over four million, were receiving what could be termed a secondary education; at the same time, 11,896 protestant pupils, out of a protestant population of a million and a quarter, were receiving a secondary education at various types of state-endowed schools.

The first State provision for general Secondary Education came with the Intermediate Education Act of 1878. This Act established the Intermediate Education Board for Ireland, whose duty, as defined by the Act, was to provide secular intermediate (i.e. secondary) education: (1) by instituting and carrying on a system of public examinations; (2) by providing payment for prizes and exhibitions, and giving certificates to successful students; (3) by providing for the payment to Managers of schools complying with the prescribed conditions, of fees dependent on the results of public examinations;



FIG. 203. The Swimming Pool, Gormanston College.



FIG. 204. Glenstal Abbey School.

(4) generally, by applying the funds placed at the disposal of the Board, provided that no examination be held in any subject of religious instruction, nor any payment made in respect thereof. The Act made no change in the status of schools; the state-endowed schools retained their endowments as well as receiving the payments specified in the Act. All other schools (the vast majority, in fact) were privately owned and managed. The examinations held by the Board were in three grades, Junior, Middle, and Senior. Exhibitions and prizes were available, on a competitive basis, to candidates in each of the three grades.

After the establishment of *Saorstát Éireann* the Intermediate Board was abolished (1923). A new system of secondary education, with a new programme, followed on the Intermediate Education (Amendment) Act, 1926. The Secondary system became the concern of the new Ministry for Education; changes in various regulations had the effect of broadening the curriculum, improving teaching methods and the conditions of teachers, and, in general, freeing the schools from the constricting effects of a system in which the provision of educational needs was largely governed by money grants dependent on success in examinations. The new programme replaced the Junior, Middle and Senior Grades by two Certificate Examinations. The Intermediate Certificate was intended to testify to the completion of a well-balanced course of general education for pupils leaving school at 16. The Leaving Certificate was to testify to the completion of a good secondary education, and to the fitness of the student to enter on a course of study at a university or an educational institution of similar standing.

The reform of the educational basis of the system was effected by making a course of study over a definite number of years the educational unit, rather than an isolated year's work. The Junior course leading to the Intermediate Certificate was to be of three or four years duration, according to the age and attainments of the pupil at the time of his entering the school. The Senior course, of two years duration and leading to the Leaving

Certificate, allowed of a certain amount of specialization; senior pupils could follow a course comprising any five of the recognized subjects of the curriculum, provided that the selection included either Irish or English. Shortly afterwards, Irish was made obligatory in the course, and in the Leaving Certificate Examination.

**COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS.** In Ireland, as elsewhere, the demand for secondary-level education took a sharp upward turn in the post-war years. By the mid-sixties, the increase in the number of schools was so great that there were over three hundred vocational schools and some six hundred secondary schools in operation; and about two-thirds of the pupils who had reached the age of fourteen were receiving post-primary education of some kind. There were, however, unmistakable pressures on the system. At a time when one-third of those leaving National Schools received no further formal schooling, it was increasingly recognized that the duty of the State system of post-primary instruction for all. This conviction was strengthened by the growing importance of training and education in a radically altering context of industrial, commercial and agricultural development. Despite the tremendous growth in post-primary attendance, there were still areas in the country which had neither a secondary school nor a vocational school within easy daily reach. Furthermore, what secondary and vocational schools were available were being conducted as separate and distinct entities, without links between them, so giving little or no scope for the assessment and cultivation of aptitudes not directly associated with their own disciplines, and small scope for transfer, if desirable, from one educational stream to another.

The essential feature of Comprehensive Education is that the school strives to meet the needs of the pupil by providing courses suited to his interests and abilities. It tries to avoid the necessity of pupils having to make far-reaching vocational choices at the point of entry to post-primary education, and provides for a period of observation and guidance during which the pupil's interests and abilities may develop, and at the end of which he may be in a position to make a more informed choice. The direction of post-primary education to this end called for the pooling of the resources of existing vocational and secondary systems, and necessitated the bringing of the vocational stream throughout the country to a parity of standard and evaluation with the secondary stream.

In practice, this is achieved by extending the Day Continuation Courses in vocational schools from two to three years, and by opening the Intermediate Certificate, with revised syllabuses and new courses, to the Vocational Schools, thus ensuring a common standard of work in all post-primary schools. This extended Intermediate curriculum offers greater scope for practical subjects and, by increasing the number of options available to the student in either type of school, allows him to follow a course structured to his interests and abilities, and paves

the way for intelligent specialization later.

In places where adequate facilities for post-primary education did not exist, the State established comprehensive post-primary day-schools, equipped with transport services and open to all children within a radius of about ten miles. The management is in the hands of small committees, the members of which represent the religious authority, the Vocational Committee, and the Minister for Education. As these schools serve as demonstration centres for the comprehensive programme, the curriculum is of considerable interest. During the three year Intermediate Course, every student is required to take courses in Religious Instruction, Irish, English, Mathematics, Social and Environmental Studies (incorporating Civics), Physical Education, Library Projects, Singing and Musical Appreciation. In addition, every student must take at least one hand-and-eye subject—either Woodwork, Metalwork, Art or Home Economics. Should a pupil wish to take more than one hand-and-eye subject, he may do so when choosing his optional subjects. Of the core of compulsory subjects, Religious Instruction is subject to diocesan examination; four more—Irish, English, Mathematics, and a hand-and-eye subject, are examined at the Intermediate Certificate examination; the rest of the compulsory subjects are non-examination. This compulsory core is so treated as to leave time for three optional subjects; here the curriculum offers in addition



FIG. 205. A Science classroom.

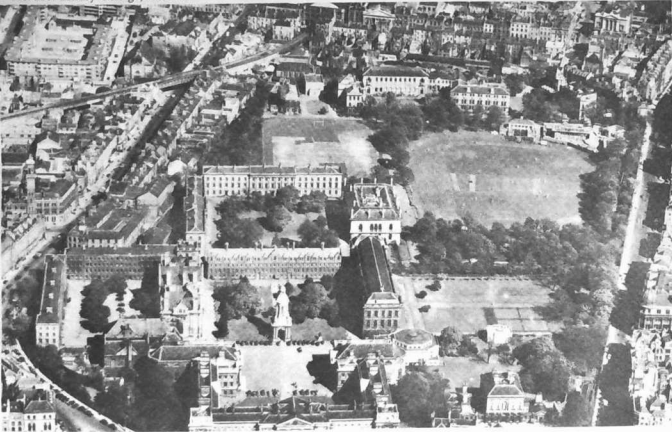
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to the hand-and-eye subjects above, Continental Languages, Latin, History and Geography, Commerce, and the Science subjects; these are examination subjects and the student may, therefore, offer seven subjects at the Intermediate: four of the compulsory group, and three from the optional.

Throughout, the period leading to the Intermediate Examination is one of close investigation and observation, and the pupil's achievement is regularly recorded and reported on by his teacher. This information forms part of the total picture of the pupil's achievements, aptitudes and interests, available to the guidance staff and the Department's psychologists when giving advice to the pupil and his parents. Thus, should he decide to continue his formal education after the Intermediate stage, his choice of fields of further study is based on expert investigation of his tastes and performance over the preceding three-year period.

Since a reasonable degree of specialization is aimed at after the Intermediate Course has been covered, those completing the Junior Course who elect to continue their schooling are afforded a choice of further courses. Students of an academic bent enter on the Leaving Certificate Course. Those whose abilities incline towards the technological or practical may be catered for in the local Technical School, functioning either as a senior storey of the comprehensive school or as a separate technical institution. At the higher levels of technical education, far-reaching changes are being made in order to enable more talented students to take the technical subjects in the Leaving Certificate curriculum. Courses leading to the Leaving Certificate are to be provided at a number of Technical Colleges having a regional status, as well as at a number of selected Vocational Schools.

FIG. 206. Trinity College, Dublin.



**THE UNIVERSITIES.** In the turbulent centuries that followed the Norman invasion, several efforts were made to establish universities in Ireland. In 1311, John de Leah, Archbishop of Dublin, obtained a bull from Pope Clement V authorizing him to establish a university in Dublin, but he died before anything could be accomplished. An attempt was made in 1465 to found a university in Drogheda; this was to be endowed, as far as the Parliament of the English Pale could do it, with all the rights and privileges of the University of Oxford. The Parliament concerned was presided over by Thomas, Earl of Desmond; two years later he was attainted and beheaded, his estates were confiscated, and once more the idea of a university came to nothing. At last, in 1591, the idea was realized.

**Trinity College Dublin.** In that year a group of Dublin citizens obtained a charter from Queen Elizabeth I incorporating Trinity College as a *mater universitatis*. By this term they envisaged that a group of university colleges would stem from Trinity in the continental and English style; owing to the course of Tudor and subsequent Irish history that ideal has not yet been realized. The Corporation of Dublin granted to the new foundation the lands and dilapidated buildings of the Monastery of All Hallows, lying south-east of the city walls. Subscriptions were raised from among the principal gentlemen of each county, who had been invited to assist the new college to the benefit of the whole country, whereby Knowledge, Learning and Civility may be increased, to the banishment of barbarism, tumults and disorderly living from among them. A number of landed estates were secured to the College out of the confiscations which followed the defeat of the northern Earls.

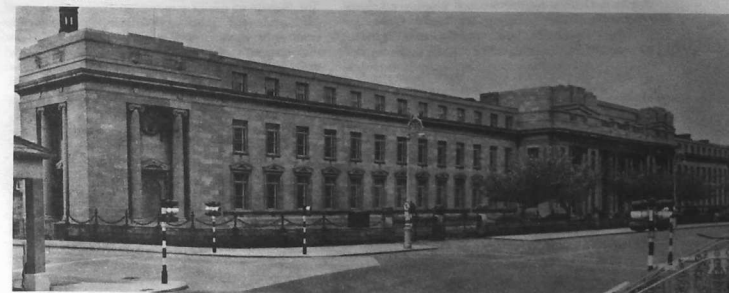
The University was designed to encourage English

culture in Ireland, and to promote the reformed religion in its statutory form, so that its establishment afforded no opportunities for higher education to recusant bodies, whether Catholic or Dissenting. The College survived the storms of the Cromwellian and Revolution periods, and settled down as the university of the colonial ascendancy, taking its tone from the new Whig society, mainly mercantile and *nouveau riche*, which had been put in power by the Williamite victory. Yet even in the religious and political doldrums of the eighteenth century, the true university and liberal spirit survived in Trinity, and its alumni included Swift, Berkeley, Burke, Goldsmith, Grattan, and Wolfe Tone. Towards the close of the century there was an awakening sense of independence and of patriotism in what had been a colonial minority, with a consequent relaxation of the penal code which had discriminated, in religion and culture, against the native Irish and the Anglo-Irish majority; and after the passage of the Catholic Relief Act, 1793, Trinity abandoned the exclusive character it had hitherto borne.

Since 1947, the College has received substantial grants from the Irish State. Recent years have brought to the University a great diversity of students, with many of the undergraduates coming from Great Britain and from overseas.

The University is represented by the Chancellor, Vice-Chancellor and Senate, whose main function is to confer degrees. The College is governed by the Board of Trinity College. The assent of the Board is required to all Acts of the University Council, which has charge of the academic functioning of the University, nominates to all professorial chairs and other academic posts, and determines details of courses and examinations. The Provost of the College is nominated by the Government from one of three names submitted by the Board. Except in this last respect, the University and the College enjoy complete autonomy. The College Library is entitled to claim a copy of every book published in Great Britain and Ireland (see *Libraries*, page 370).

FIG. 208. University College, Dublin. View of Earlsfort Terrace front.



THE UNIVERSITIES



FIG. 207. Cardinal Newman.

**The National University of Ireland.** Under the Queen's College (Ireland) Act, 1845, Colleges were established by the Government at Cork, Galway and Belfast, to provide higher education on a non-denominational basis. Unfortunately, the form of organization and the character of these Colleges were felt to be out of accord with Catholic educational principles, and after a storm of public controversy they were condemned by the Hierarchy.

In 1854, the Catholic University of Ireland was established by the Hierarchy, who invited John Henry Newman to be its first Rector. Newman, imbued with the liberal principles embodied in his celebrated *Idea of a University*, was not quite at home amid the realities of Irish political and religious controversy, and his brave experiment failed. As 'Newman's University' was not recognized by the State, it could not confer degrees, neither did it have any public endowment. Curiously, its best success was in medicine, for the College of Surgeons and the Apothecaries' Hall recognized the

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courses of study pursued by the Catholic University Medical School students and admitted them to the College and Hall examinations, thus to become registered medical practitioners.

The Royal University was founded in 1879. This was merely an examining body, set up mainly for the purpose of enabling the students of the Catholic University to obtain recognized degrees. In 1883, the Catholic University, henceforth to be called University College, Dublin, was placed in the charge of the Society of Jesus, who maintained it successfully until the passing of the Irish Universities Act, 1908. This Act provided for the dissolution of the Royal University and of Queen's College, Belfast, and for the foundation in their stead of two new Universities, one in Belfast which was to become Queen's University, and the other, in Dublin, the National University of Ireland. The two universities are self-governing institutions operating under charter, autonomous as regards policy and administration, and appointing their own academic and administrative staffs.

The National University of Ireland is a federal university, with a central office in Dublin and three Constituent Colleges: University College Dublin, University College Cork, and University College Galway; and one Recognized College, St. Patrick's College, Maynooth. Maynooth is a seminary for the training of Catholic clergy. It was founded in 1795 and endowed by a Government who, chastened by the French Revolution, recognized the conservative and conserving character of the Irish priesthood. In 1845 the Maynooth College Board of Trustees was incorporated by Statute, and in 1899 was invested by the Holy See with authority to confer degrees in Philosophy, Theology, and Canon Law.

The National University itself does not teach; the courses for degrees are conducted by the Colleges which, in practice, lay down their own programme and set their own examinations. Courses are given in the various faculties, with certain exceptions, at each of the Constituent Colleges; and in Arts, Philosophy and Sociology, Celtic Studies, and Science at Maynooth. Courses in Dairy Science are given only at University College Cork; courses in General Agriculture and Veterinary Science are (outside of Trinity College) confined to University College Dublin. By the University Education (Agriculture and Dairy Science) Act, 1926, the Royal College of

Science and the Albert Agricultural College were transferred to University College Dublin, which was empowered to continue the functions formerly fulfilled by these institutions.

Like Trinity College, the National University receives, through the Department of Education, financial assistance from the State in the form of annual grants-in-aid, as well as non-recurrent grants for capital purposes. Each of the Colleges is a complete organism, with its own Governing Body and full control of its own finances.

Apart from the Universities, higher education leading to professional medical qualifications is available in Dublin at the Royal College of Surgeons, which awards licences in Medicine, and at the Royal College of Physicians. The Apothecaries' Hall is an examining body which awards licences in medicine also.

Since the war, the steady rise in the numbers of young people embarking on second-level education has resulted in a corresponding pressure on the universities. The intake of students from Great Britain, as well as from Asia and Africa, has also increased. Accommodation problems were considered by a Commission set up by the Government in 1957. Following its recommendations, a building scheme for University College Cork has been initiated; and the complete transfer of University College Dublin, from the congested premises which it has inherited in the city to a 280-acre site in the south suburbs, is well under way.

The demand for a 'second avenue' to a qualification acceptable as the equivalent of a university degree has made itself felt in a number of technical education institutions; in these, higher education at university level has now been organized in the fields of Architecture (including Quantity Surveying), Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Pure and Applied Science.

**Northern Ireland.** Two institutions provide university education in Northern Ireland, the Queen's University of Belfast and Magee University College Derry. The Report of the Committee on Higher Education, 1965, under the chairmanship of Sir John Lockwood, envisaged a requirement of between 8,000 and 9,000 full-time university places by 1973-4, and a big expansion thereafter. The major recommendation was that a new University should be established in the Coleraine area, and

that Magee University College, which since 1909 had had relations with Trinity College Dublin, should become a Constituent College of the new University. Queen's University is undertaking a major building programme to provide for the rapidly expanding student population. Stressing the importance of higher education outside the university sphere, the Lockwood Committee recommended that a new central institution, to be called the Ulster College, should be established in the Belfast area. This recommendation has been accepted in principle, and it is the intention that eventually the new College should include the Belfast College of Art, a new regional College of Technology, and other colleges providing educational services.

**VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS.** The organization of technical and craft education in Ireland is comparatively modern; it developed as a result of voluntary movements in cities and towns, mainly for the teaching of art (see *Art Schools*). In the mid-nineteenth century Biancofiore founded the Mechanics Institute at Clonmel. In 1848, a School of Design in Art was founded in Cork, and four years later a School of Art was established in Limerick at the instance of the Athenaeum Society. Of special significance was the founding in Dublin, 1867, of the Royal College of Science, to supply courses of instruction related to the sciences of industry; particularly mining, agricultural, engineering and manufacturing operations.

In England, a Department of Practical Art had been set up under the Board of Trade, in 1852, to foster general elementary instruction and to give assistance to schools in which art was taught. This was taken over by the Privy Council Committee on Education, and became the Department of Science and Art, with the task of distributing, in Ireland as well as in Britain, the annual Parliamentary Vote for instruction in these subjects. Aid was given in National and Secondary schools, and also in evening schools and technical institutions; there were grants for building and apparatus, and payments on the results of examinations as well as scholarships and prizes. The Technical Instruction Act of 1889 empowered the local authorities to strike a rate in aid of schemes for technical or manual instruction, and to appoint committees to act on their behalf in administering such schemes. Schools were eligible for grants under the Act, provided they were open to the public, the premises were suitable, the teachers satisfactorily qualified, and the curriculum approved by the Department. After 1892, the Department of Science and Art contributed towards technical instruction a direct grant equal in amount to the sum contributed by the local authority. However, the moneys available were still inadequate to provide an efficient system of technical instruction. As a result of the recommendation of the 'Recess Committee' of inquiry into Ireland's agricultural and industrial resources, the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction came into operation, by Act of Parliament, in 1900. Besides granting increased sums to encourage the teaching of science and allied subjects in National and Secondary

VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

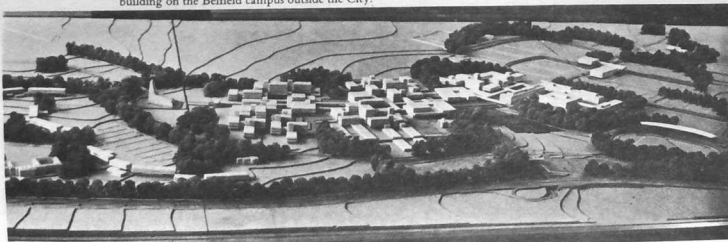
Schools, the Department proposed state-subsidized schemes for instruction in Art, Technology and Science, in urban areas, and in Manual Instruction, Rural Industries and Domestic Science, in rural areas. These schemes, if acceptable to the local authorities, were to be administered by Committees set up by them, and would be organized and aided by them. The Act was a success in practice, and 49 local Committees were set up. Permanent Technical Schools were established in the larger urban centres; instruction in the rural areas was provided mainly by itinerant teachers who gave short intensive courses in woodwork and domestic economy. In all areas, instruction was confined to afternoon and evening classes; whole-time day classes were few. A Training School for teachers of Domestic Economy was maintained at Kilmacud in Co. Dublin; and courses of higher scientific and technical instruction were given at the College of Science and the Metropolitan School of Art.

After the Department of Education had assumed responsibility for the educational services, a Commission was appointed in 1926 to inquire into, and advise on, the system of Technical Instruction in relation to the requirements of Trade and Industry. The principal recommendations made by the Committee were embodied in the Vocational Education Act of 1930. Of special significance for the future was the observation in the Committee Report that, for many boys and girls, there was 'a period of idleness or of indefinite educational purpose from the age of 14 years or so', with the view expressed that 'a proper system of continuation education is of vital importance, and its organization should be undertaken without delay.' The Act enjoined on every Vocational Education Committee the duty of establishing and maintaining in its area a suitable system of continuation education, and of supplying, and aiding the supply of, technical education. Provision was made for compulsory attendance at continuation or technical courses in areas designated by the Minister.

It soon became evident that the most satisfactory manner of dealing with the problem was to establish permanent central schools at which full-time courses would be available. In due course some 300 such schools were in operation. The curriculum, if it were to have practical value, could not be a uniform one applicable alike in city, town and country; hence different types of courses were organized. By arrangement with ecclesiastical authorities, religious instruction was provided in all schools. The most typical courses were, for boys, the Junior Technical Course and the Junior Rural Course, and for girls, the Junior Domestic Science Course and the Junior Commercial Course.

The Junior Technical Course was intended to cater for boys aiming at skilled manual employment and requiring some kind of technical knowledge, while the Junior Rural Course was slanted towards agriculture. Junior Domestic Science prepared girls for occupations requiring manual skill, more especially in all that appertains to care of home and family; the Commercial Course catered largely for prospective book-keepers, typists and business

FIG. 209. University College, Dublin. Model for the new building on the Belfield campus outside the City.



employees. Pupils at the end of a two-year course were expected to have reached the standard of the Day Vocational Certificate, awarded on the results of an examination conducted by the Department. This Certificate was widely accepted as evidence of qualification for certain types of employment. When, in later days, vocational education was integrated into a wider and more comprehensive post-primary system, it was decided to retain the Day Group Certificate. In city areas, particularly in Dublin, where the number of pupils available and the number of openings for boys and girls call for a certain amount of specialization, some large schools cater mainly for one type of course and no more. Many apprenticeship training schemes have been developed by Vocational Education Committees working in association with those representing particular industries and trades.

**AGRICULTURAL COLLEGES.** An efficient agriculture depends on an educated farming community, with a sound grasp of the business and some practice in modern farming. The rate of application of agricultural science to farming depends on the educational level of farmers, and if Irish agriculture is to meet the challenge ahead, special attention must be given to the training of potential farmers in the knowledge and skills that modern agriculture requires.

In less than a generation, agriculture has changed from an industry of traditional practice to a highly technical one, a trend which is developing rapidly. New varieties of crops have been bred to give heavier yields; chemical weed control has become specialized; new methods and materials have been devised to control insect and fungoid pests; new techniques have been introduced to livestock breeding, and new machinery has taken much of the drudgery out of farming.

Maximum productivity and profits from farming, however, demand a knowledge of a wide variety of activities and the marshalling of men, materials, machinery and other resources. Farmers must be masters of many jobs demanding diverse skills; this makes their education and training more complex than that of the specialized workers in other industries.

The farmer of the future will need to have not only a good primary and post-primary education, including a knowledge of basic science subjects pertaining to agriculture, but also education and training obtainable at a

winter agricultural class, a winter farm school, or a residential agricultural college; of these, the best results may be expected from the course at an agricultural college.

There are nine agricultural colleges in this country which provide full-time educational courses for young men, with accommodation for about 600 students in all. These are residential colleges with farms attached.

Three are owned by the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries:—

The Agricultural College, Ballyhaise, Co. Cavan.  
The Agricultural College, Clonakilty, Co. Cork.  
Mellows Agricultural College, Athenry, Co. Galway.

The remaining colleges are privately owned and managed by religious bodies but are subsidized by, and subject to inspection by, the Department. These are:—

The Agricultural College, Copewood, Pallaskenry, Co. Limerick.  
The Agricultural College, Mount Bellew, Co. Galway.  
The Agricultural College, Warrenstown, Drumree, Co. Meath.  
Gurteen Agricultural College, Ballingarry, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary.  
St. Isidore's Agricultural College, Multyfarnham, Co. Westmeath.  
St. Patrick's Agricultural College, Monaghan.

A student at a residential college spends about half his time each day in the classroom, where he is taught the scientific principles and business methods which apply to modern farming. As the course is designed especially for young men returning to the land, a living interest in farming and in rural life is fostered. The lessons of the classroom are supplemented by demonstrations on the land, in the farmyard and in the workshop. A standard syllabus of instruction is followed at all the colleges, covering the following subjects: Agriculture, Horticulture, Forestry, Dairying, Poultry-keeping, Botany, Zoology, Chemistry, Physics, Engineering, Manual Instruction, Farm Accounts, Veterinary Hygiene, and general subjects. The course begins in September and ends in July. Students attending the private agricultural colleges must be at least 15 years of age, as it is considered that serious agricultural education cannot be given effectively to pupils under that age. For entry to the State-owned agricultural colleges a minimum age of 17 years is prescribed. While education of Primary Certificate standard suffices for entry to an agricultural college, in fact over 90% of students have a higher standard. The average standard for entrants is the Group Certificate of the Vocational Schools, or Intermediate Certificate of the Secondary Schools, and more than one third of the pupils have reached the Leaving Certificate standard on admission. An examination, comprising written, oral and practical parts and based on the syllabus, is held annually by the Department for the award of a National Certificate in Agriculture.

Fees from pupils attending the colleges vary down wards

from a maximum of £175. More than 300 scholarships are awarded each year to pupils entering agricultural colleges, and priority of admission is given to holders of scholarships. In addition, a capitation grant of £45 is provided by the Department for each eligible pupil.

Not all pupils who complete a year at an agricultural college return to farm at home. Some proceed to higher studies at the University, some become technical officers in the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, in the Agricultural Institute, or with private farms; and in recent years some have become apprentices under the Farm Apprenticeship Act Scheme. All these occupations, however, benefit the agricultural industry. In recent years the demand for places at agricultural colleges has exceeded the supply, despite continuous expansion in the accommodation provided. This trend is evidence of a growing desire by young men for agricultural education, and is a good augury for the future of the industry.

**Rural Domestic Economy Schools.** There are twelve residential schools of Rural Domestic Economy, seven of which operate under the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries. The schools are privately owned, but are State subsidized and subject to inspection in the same way as agricultural colleges. Students are admitted from the age of 15 upwards. The course runs from September until June. The syllabus comprises theoretical and practical instruction in the following subjects:—Poultry-keeping, Dairying, Cookery, Housewifery, Dressmaking, Laundry, Arts and Crafts, Physiology, Hygiene, First Aid and Home Nursing, Horticulture and general subjects.

At the end of the course, a standard examination comprising written, oral and practical tests, is held and certificates are awarded to successful candidates. About 600 young women attend these schools annually. Over 250 scholarships awarded by County Committees of Agriculture, each year, are tenable at the schools. In addition, capitation grants are payable for each eligible pupil. Some pupils who complete the session at a rural domestic economy school proceed to other studies, for careers in Poultry Specialization, Farm Home Management, Domestic Science, Hotel Management, or Nursing. The course at the schools is, however, a good training for all future housewives.

The Munster Institute, Cork, under the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, conducts advanced courses for selected pupils from rural domestic economy schools:—

- (1) A three year course in Farm Home Management.
- (2) A three year course in Poultry Specialization.
- (3) A one year course in Poultry Husbandry.

Girls who complete the three year courses are employed as instructors by the County Committees of Agriculture, or as teachers. Girls who complete the year's course in Poultry Husbandry are employed as technicians in the poultry industry.

**ART SCHOOLS.** The Metropolitan School of Art began as an academy established in 1746 by the Royal

Dublin Society, for the promotion of drawing and painting. During the first hundred years of the School's existence, instruction was free of charge; and the four departments of figure drawing, landscape and ornament, architecture, and modelling, provided courses useful to sculptors, embroiderers, weavers, printers, silversmiths and workers in other crafts. In the nineteenth century, the School was successively under the control of the Royal Dublin Society, the Board of Trade, the Department of Science and Art, and the Department of Agriculture and Technical Instruction for Ireland. Following its transfer to the last-named body, classes were established in the principal artistic crafts, including metalwork and enamelling, mosaic, embroidery and woodcarving. The School also acquired a high reputation for its part in the development of stained glass and for the felicitous influence which, under the guidance of Sir William Orpen, it exerted on painting in Ireland. In 1924, control was assumed by the Department of Education; and in 1936, the National College of Art, an extension and development of the School, was established.

The National College of Art is the principal institution of the system of Art Education in Ireland as administered by the Department of Education. Its general purpose is to promote the advancement of Art, to advocate and maintain the highest artistic values in national culture, and to combine artistic design with practical skill in the interests of industry. There are three schools: the School of Design, the School of Painting and the School of Sculpture, with a Preliminary School, which includes an Upper and a Lower Division. In this way, the College provides for the study of the Fine Arts and of the Decorative Arts and Crafts, and for the training of Art teachers eligible for employment in post-primary schools. The College has working arrangements with University College Dublin and with the Bolton Street School of Technology. It also maintains liaison with the National Library, the National Museum, and the National Gallery of Ireland.

Outside Dublin, whole-time day courses and part-time evening courses are provided at the Crawford School of Art, Cork, and the Schools of Art in Limerick and Waterford.

To foster the study of the History of Art, Miss Sarah Purser and Sir John Purser Griffith established, in 1934, two equal funds, one to be administered by Trinity College, and the other by University College Dublin, the income from which provides Travelling Scholarships and prizes to be competed for every year, alternately in each University. Extra-mural courses are given at University College Dublin, which College also provides courses leading to a degree in the History of European Painting taken with another subject. Lectures are also provided, mainly for post-primary students, in the National Gallery.

**LEAS ÓIGE (YOUTH WELFARE).** Activities in the domain of Youth Welfare and Recreation are conducted mainly on a voluntary and local basis. Uniformed organizations such as Boy Scouts, Girl Guides, Boys' and

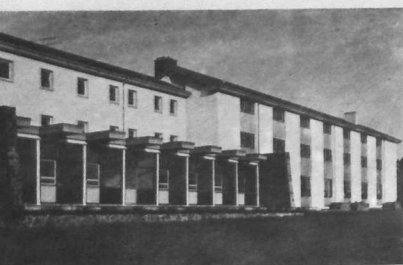


FIG. 210. Clonakilty Agricultural College.





FIG. 211. The Girls' Brigade.



FIG. 212. Boy Scouts.

Girls' Brigades, make a substantial contribution; athletic and sporting organizations play a significant part—in particular, the nation-wide influence of An Cumann Lúth-Chleas Gael is directed towards objectives which transcend the mere cultivation of skill within a particular code.

In Dublin, where pressure of population necessitates a more systematic approach, the Vocational Committee co-operates with the Department of Education by appointing a sub-committee, Comhairle le Leas Óige (the Council for Youth Welfare), to establish Youth Training Centres, and to assist and encourage voluntary youth clubs. Comhairle le Leas Óige is financed by an annual State grant, supplemented by certain facilities provided by the committee. It operates for teenagers, a number of Youth Centres which supply programmes of occupational training geared to imbue members with a sense of citizenship and at the same time fit them for suitable employment. The Comhairle also gives assistance to individual clubs, which may qualify for affiliation, without prejudice to their autonomy. Among the services available to affiliated clubs are: the services of

instructors in art crafts, boxing, physical training, drama, woodwork; courses in leadership training; the loaning of equipment; lectures with films and filmstrips; grants towards decoration of club premises, and general direction and advice. The Club Secretariat, set up by An Chomhairle, acts as a clearing-house for information, arranges inter-club activities, and purchases equipment for affiliated clubs on favourable terms.

Comhairle le Leas Óige maintains close liaison with the Catholic Youth Council, which is the co-ordinating authority for Catholic youth movements in the Diocese of Dublin. The C.Y.C. undertakes the co-ordination and extension of youth work in Dublin, as well as planning and research, and the training of youth leaders. It also negotiates and co-operates with public bodies and Government Departments, and disburses such funds as are made available for youth work.

In Northern Ireland also, the Youth Service draws its strength largely from Scout, Guide, and Brigade movements, voluntary bodies and pre-service organizations. Many youth bodies are associated with individual churches. Government participation is exercised through the Youth Welfare, Physical Training and Recreation Act of 1962, which set up a Youth and Sports Council for Northern Ireland, and authorized the payment of State grants towards expenses incurred in providing facilities for youth welfare and in organizational and instructional work related to Physical Education and Recreation. The Act also empowers the Ministry to assist local authorities and voluntary organizations to provide and equip playing fields, holiday camps and gymnasia. General control of the development of Youth Welfare, Physical Training and Recreation is exercised by the Youth and Sports Council, which advises also on questions of broad policy, and engages in a wide range of social and recreational activities. A Youth Employment Service assists boys and girls who have left school to select and retain employment suited to their age and capacity, and helps employers to obtain suitable employees from this age-group.

**NORTHERN IRELAND.** To the year 1921, the history of educational organization in Northern Ireland, so far at least as state involvement is concerned, does not differ from that of the country as a whole. Thereafter, however, the two systems followed somewhat different lines of structural development. The Education Act (N.I.) of 1923 constitutes each county and county borough as the responsible education authority for its area, under the general control and supervision of the Ministry of Education. The powers of the councils are exercised through committees consisting of representatives of district interests (who are appointed by the council) and representatives (appointed by the Minister) of voluntary managers who have transferred the management of their schools to the committee. The local education authority frames schemes for the provision of elementary and secondary education and for the award of scholarships, and manages 'county' schools. In addition to these county schools, there are many voluntary schools, the manage-

ment of which is in the hands of individual managers, usually Roman Catholic, of school committees, or of boards of governors: these receive substantial financial assistance.

The Education Act of 1947 provided that every child should receive full-time education suitable to his age, ability and aptitudes. It prescribed the period of compulsory attendance as between the ages of five and fifteen, and defined three progressive stages in the statutory system of education, to be known as primary education, secondary education, and further education. The existing arrangement whereby children up to the age of fourteen were catered for at elementary schools was discontinued, and was replaced by a system of primary schools for the majority of children up to the age of 11 years and 6 months, and of different types of secondary schools for the older pupils. Primary schools other than the nursery schools (which are intended for children between two and five years of age) are divided into two main classes—the county primary schools, and the voluntary primary schools under the management of private individuals or of a statutory committee upon which the former manager has a two-thirds representation. The Ministry Programme for Primary Schools sets forth the principles governing curricula, suggests teaching methods, and deals in general terms with the construction of curricula syllabuses. Primary education on the same lines is also provided by the preparatory departments of grammar schools, which are conducted on a fee-paying basis with the aid of grants from the Ministry.

Recruitment at second-level schools usually takes place at 'eleven-plus', when the pupil passes to a Secondary Intermediate School, to a Grammar School, or to a Technical Intermediate School. In order to gain admission to Grammar School or Technical Intermediate School, the pupil must normally satisfy a Qualifying Examination conducted by the Ministry. Education in these schools is free, except in the case of voluntary grammar schools where small charges may be made. About one quarter pass to Grammar or Technical Intermediate Schools, and the remainder transfer to Secondary Intermediate Schools. The curriculum in the last-named is planned on a four-year basis, and is varied enough to provide scope for the interests and aptitudes of pupils of all kinds. During the first two years, a broad general course is followed, and the degree of emphasis varies with the needs and abilities of the pupils. In the third and fourth years, an additional element of bias or specialization is introduced, serving to stimulate a vocational bent. Both the Grammar School, Junior Certificate and the Junior Technical Certificate Examinations are open to pupils of the Secondary Intermediate Schools, some of which also provide courses of study leading to the General Certificate in Education.

About one quarter of the Grammar schools are 'county' schools, the remainder being voluntary schools under boards of governors. Though they are all fee-paying schools, qualified pupils are awarded scholarships which, in the case of county schools, cover the fee. There are two

examinations, the optional Junior Certificate at the end of the third year, and the G.C.E., which attests completion of grammar school education and, taken at prescribed levels in appropriate subjects, qualifies the holder for entry to university or other institution of higher education, and to various professional careers.

Technical Intermediate Schools are county schools operated in association with institutions of further instruction, and are known as junior technical schools. The curriculum, similar in many ways to that of the grammar schools, is a specialized practical one, weighted towards science and mathematics and related to the needs of industry. The examinations taken are: the Junior Technical Certificate, taken at the age of fourteen, and the Technical Certificate, taken a year later. Abler pupils sit for the G.C.E.

Further education includes instruction, part-time or full-time, for persons over compulsory school age, in domestic, commercial, scientific or technological subjects, and is given in technical colleges or institutions under the management of local education authorities. Connection with industry is close, and many of the students are part-time, while the courses of instruction vary considerably from the range of engineering skills needed at major centres of industry to the work done during the winter at small out-centres.

The operation and development of the public system of education in Northern Ireland is the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, the Minister being accountable to Parliament for the working and policies of his department. In the field of primary and secondary education, the Ministry reviews the planning by the local authorities in the provision of schools, prescribes standards for school premises, gives guidance in matters of curriculum and method, conducts examinations, and assists financially the development of the youth service and adult education. The Ministry is assisted by the Advisory Council for Education, and is advised in particular aspects of its work by the Youth and Sports Council for Northern Ireland, by the Council for Educational Research, and various other standing committees.

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