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ABSTRACT

Focus of this speech is on the challenges of providing employment related education and training for young people in England. After briefly outlining the British education system, the author discusses recent and proposed changes designed to help young people (particularly the unemployed, terminal degree student, or those who are working and receiving daytime training) affect a smoother transition from school to work. Two contemporary programs are outlined which are providing on-the-job experiences for youth: the Youth Opportunities Program and Unified Vocational Preparation, both of which have provided much useful information to the British government relative to the school-to-work transition. The resultant proposal is also described: that young people who leave school to enter work should be offered traineeships in their early months of work as part of a joint enterprise of school and training service providers, much like an apprenticeship. In concluding, a proposal currently under consideration, shortening the apprenticeship period by substituting qualifying examination for a portion of the four year apprenticeship, is discussed. (Answers to nine questions from the audience of research and development personnel are included.) (MEK)

Occasional Paper No. 61

EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN ENGLAND: SOME PROBLEMS FROM A GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE

by
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THE NATIONAL CENTER MISSION STATEMENT

The National Center for Research in Vocational Education's mission is to increase the ability of diverse agencies, institutions, and organizations to solve educational problems relating to individual career planning, preparation, and progression. The National Center fulfills its mission by:

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- Developing educational programs and products
- Evaluating individual program needs and outcomes
- Providing information for national planning and policy
- Installing educational programs and products
- Operating information systems and services
- Conducting leadership development and training programs

PREFACE

As part of its ongoing effort to present the views of national and international leaders in vocational education, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education is pleased to present a speech by Dr. Clive Booth, assistant secretary (planning), Department of Education and Science in England.

Educated in both England and the United States, Dr. Booth holds bachelor's and master's degrees from Cambridge University. He received a second master's and his doctorate from the University of California at Berkeley. He distinguished himself early in his academic career by receiving Trinity College prizes for three consecutive years, and he was named Harkness Fellow of the Commonwealth Fund, New York, from 1973 to 1975.

Dr. Booth has held various positions in the Department of Education and Science. He has served in the Further Education branch, Schools branch, the Science branch, and the Architects and Building branch. In 1975, he was appointed private secretary to the secretary of state for education, Mr. Mulley, and in 1976 to Mr. Mulley's successor, Mrs. Shirley Williams. In 1977 he became head of the division responsible for the education and training of young workers and for managing the relationship between the education service and the Manpower Services Commission. As assistant secretary for planning, Dr. Booth has responsibility for general oversight of planning work in the department.

In his speech, Dr. Booth focuses on the challenges of providing employment-related education and training for young people. A brief outline of the educational system in England is presented. Dr. Booth follows this with a discussion of some of the changes recently instituted or proposed which are designed to help young people make a smoother transition between formal education and the demands of the working world.

One of the proposals currently under consideration is a plan to shorten the apprenticeship period by substituting qualifying examinations for a portion of the traditional four-year apprenticeship. Dr. Booth also discusses the Youth Opportunities Program, implemented in 1976, which is providing on-the-job experiences for great numbers of British youth. With encouragement by government, the education and industrial communities are finding ways of working together to solve common problems.

On behalf of The Ohio State University and the National Center, I take great pleasure in presenting Dr. Booth's speech, entitled "Education and Training in England: Some Problems from a Government Perspective."

Robert E. Taylor
Executive Director
National Center for Research in
Vocational Education

EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN ENGLAND: SOME PROBLEMS FROM A GOVERNMENT PERSPECTIVE

Introduction

Earlier this year you spent one of these sessions in the company of Dr. Keith Hampson, Member of Parliament, a leading Conservative Party commentator on education affairs. He gave you a candid and often critical appraisal of the relationship between school and work in Britain. He talked about the school curriculum, attitudes to work and industry, the possibilities for giving school education a stronger vocational thrust, the role of official agencies, and careers education. I want to avoid traversing too much of the same ground in this talk; but you may wish to raise some of Dr. Hampson's concerns in discussion afterwards. Let me just emphasize that my perspective is personal, and—as a civil servant—nonpolitical.

First, a word about my own duties. For most of my working life I have served in a variety of administrative roles in the Department of Education and Science (DES). Until July I was concerned with the role of the education system in responding to the needs of young people age sixteen to eighteen. Since July I have been secretary to the top committee in the DES planning organization which is known as the Policy Steering Group. In 1978, this group authorized a major program of work on the broader context of educational planning, including a series of seminars with other government departments on the long-term policy developments in their respective fields with possible implications for educational policy. The Policy Steering Group also works on the longer-term outlook for public expenditure on education, including the development of a demographic forecasting model, and the commissioning of scenarios from a small number of outside experts and commentators.

I'd like to interject a word about the organization of education and training in the United Kingdom. What I am about to say contains some necessary generalizations which I think are excusable to avoid introducing too much detail. My department has the central government responsibility for education in England, and the Department of Employment has a parallel responsibility for training. Many programs in the field of training and occupational placement are devised and executed for the government by the Manpower Services Commission, which I'll say more about later, although training is still regarded as being primarily industry's responsibility.

Most children attend schools (primary schools from age five to eleven and secondary schools from eleven to sixteen or eighteen) provided at public expense and administered by elected local authorities. These are multipurpose in the sense of providing various other local services unconnected with education. About 60 percent of the total funds expended by these authorities is covered by a block grant calculated by a Byzantine formula few profess to understand fully but which depends on measures of the needs of the authorities and of their ability to raise income from local property taxes. These local authorities (I shall call them LEAs for short from now on) build schools, employ teachers, and so on. They also provide postschool education in colleges of various kinds with some courses going to a first degree level and beyond. Although the LEAs have a fair degree of autonomy, they have traditionally looked to the central government for guidance in developing the education

system. Central government can exert some legislative controls over local government, but in general these have been diminishing as the years have gone by and the new government has recently promised to abandon over 300 different controls.

The universities are self-governing but depend for much of their revenue on government from which they are insulated by a body called the University Grants Committee, which distributes their funds.

Developments in Education and Training

When thinking about what I should discuss with you today, it occurred to me that the ground to be covered was so enormous that I would have to be highly selective. At the same time, I wanted to give you some impression of the wide range of subjects that have been the concern of government during the last three years. The upshot is the personal selection of events since October 1976 which I have circulated. This shows how wide-ranging the preoccupations of government have been. Notable among this list are actions concerned with standards of achievement in schools, the transition from school to work, the quality of the teaching force, youth unemployment, the training of people for skilled occupations, and so on. From among this super-abundance of topics I want to speak on two themes: the effects of demography and the education and training of young people age sixteen to eighteen.

The political and economic background is something no one concerned with the future of public services can afford to ignore. The Western economies are likely to see little or no economic growth for the next year or so as the recession deepens. Furthermore, public willingness to foot the bill is in doubt. You have your tax-cutting movements; we have a new Conservative government which came to power on a manifesto which promised cuts in public expenditure and taxes (although it also showed concern for the quality of education and the need for higher standards of achievement in basic skills). This means we are going to have to manage our resources more efficiently in the future. We shall have to do so at a time when demographic trends will make it harder to run an efficient system than hitherto, as I shall attempt to show.

A Personal Selection of Some Important Education and Training Events Since October 1976

October 1976	Prime Minister launches the "Great Debate" on education.
January 1977	Announcement of much reduced teacher training system.
Spring 1977	Regional conferences on education.
May 1977	Holland report, "Young People and Work," published by the Manpower Services Commission (see also next entry).
June 1977	"Youth Opportunities" program for young unemployed announced by government.
July 1977	"Education in Schools, a Consultative Document" published by the Secretary of State for Education and Science. Major proposals included —

1. review by local authorities of the curriculum;
2. agreement on the framework for the curriculum, including whether a "core" should be recognized;

	3. development of diagnostic tests for assessing individual pupils; 4. continued development of national monitoring in English language, mathematics, and science; 5. higher entry standards for teacher training course; 6. more induction and inservice training for teachers; 7. further efforts to close the gap between school and working life.
September 1977	Publication of the report of the Taylor committee on the management and government of schools, entitled "A New Partnership for Our Schools."
October 1977	First meeting of Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education.
November 1977	Publication of "A Study of School Building" based on a two-year official investigation on school building policy during a period of population decline.
November 1977	"Training for Skills: A Program for Action" published by the Manpower Services Commission.
February 1978	"Higher Education into the 1990s" consultative paper issued.
April 1978	Engineering Industry Training Board proposals for reform of craft apprenticeship.
April 1978	Reorganization of the Manpower Services Commission.
May 1978	Publication of the report of the Committee on the Education of Handicapped Children and Young People, entitled "Special Education Needs."
May 1978	Assessment of performance unit national survey of ten-year-old pupils' performance in mathematics. (Another survey, on fifteen-year-olds, followed in November.)
July 1978	Report on a single examination at sixteen to replace the General Certificate of Education and Certificate of Secondary Education.
September 1978	Creation of a committee of inquiry to investigate the teaching of mathematics in schools.
September 1978	Publication of "Primary Education in England," a major report by Her Majesty's Inspectors on the primary schools.
October 1978	Microelectronics development program announced.
October 1978	Manpower Services Commission review of the Training Opportunities Scheme (TOPS) published.
January 1979	Consultative paper on education and training of sixteen- to eighteen-year-olds issued.
April 1979	Publication of a consultative paper on the vocational preparation of young people, "A Better Start in Working Life."
April 1979	Manpower Services Commission review of the Employment and Training Act of 1973 (including the Industrial Training Board system) instituted.
Expected late 1979:	• Report of the Finniston Committee on Engineering. • Report on secondary education by Her Majesty's Inspectors. • Report on the local authority review of the school curriculum.

Demography

Few discussions of educational trends get far these days before the subject of demography intervenes. Small wonder—as Chart A shows, the birthrate plunged from 1965 and even more steeply from 1971, only turning up again in 1978. What this means for the schools is clear from Chart C. The total population in schools, having grown from 5 million in 1946 to a peak of 9 million in 1977, is likely to fall to 8 million in 1983 and 7.5 million before the end of the decade. By 1987 primary school rolls will be one-third below their maximum of 1973, and two-thirds of this drop has yet to come. Secondary schools are expected to reach their maximum enrolment in September 1979 and to fall to a minimum of 70 percent of that by 1993.

A whole host of policy problems flow from this phenomenon. I can only touch briefly on a few. First, many school places will be taken out of use. Often this will mean schools abandoning temporary buildings hastily provided during the expansion in student numbers. Many schools will become too small to be viable and will have to close. Experience suggests that such closures will often be bitterly fought by parents. This also raises the thorny question of how far a "free market" in parental choice can be allowed to operate if that were to mean some schools suffering a slow and lingering death. The government is taking steps to allow LEAs some measure of control over this while offering safeguards for parental choice.

Second, the cost per student will rise as the system contracts and we experience the reverse of economies of scale. Efforts to prevent the cost per student from rising too rapidly (for example, by reducing teacher numbers in line with falling rolls) could harm the educational process. For example, larger classes might result (although the research evidence on student performance and class size is not decisive), and the number of electives may have to be reduced. More small primary schools are likely to adopt teaching groups spanning more than one year; the evidence we have suggests that such mixed-age teaching groups are less than ideal. Secondary schools will be obliged to cooperate more, for example, by pooling students wishing to study specialized subjects. This could imply a more active role for LEAs in influencing the curriculum offered in their schools, which would be a departure from traditional practice for many of them.

The implications for teachers are, of course, profound. Drastic adjustments here had to be made in the number of teacher training places. Through a policy of closures and amalgamations, this will have been reduced from over 100,000 in 1975 to 36,000 in 1981, six years later. In spite of an apparent surplus of teachers in general, shortages of certain specialties (including mathematics, business studies, physical sciences, and craft design/technology) persist, and a special program has had to be introduced to train or retrain teachers to fill these gaps. Another problem arises from the far smaller numbers of people entering the teaching profession. This will be felt in two ways: first, relatively fewer bright and energetic young teachers will be entering the schools each year. Second, as the average age of teachers increases, the need for updating and refresher courses will increase.

Voluntary School Attendance

School attendance in Britain is compulsory between the ages of five and sixteen. Participation of youngsters over sixteen is voluntary. When looking at this area we have to consider the numbers willing and able to remain in the education system as well as the total size of the age group. The proportion of pupils staying on at school beyond sixteen has hardly changed since the early 1970s, but more youngsters at sixteen have been moving from school to full-time study in colleges of further education. At the present time almost 30 percent of young people age sixteen to eighteen are in full-time education. A major policy question here is whether we should attempt to rationalize the existing provision between the schools and colleges, much of which is probably uneconomic.

CHART A: BIRTHS (England and Wales)

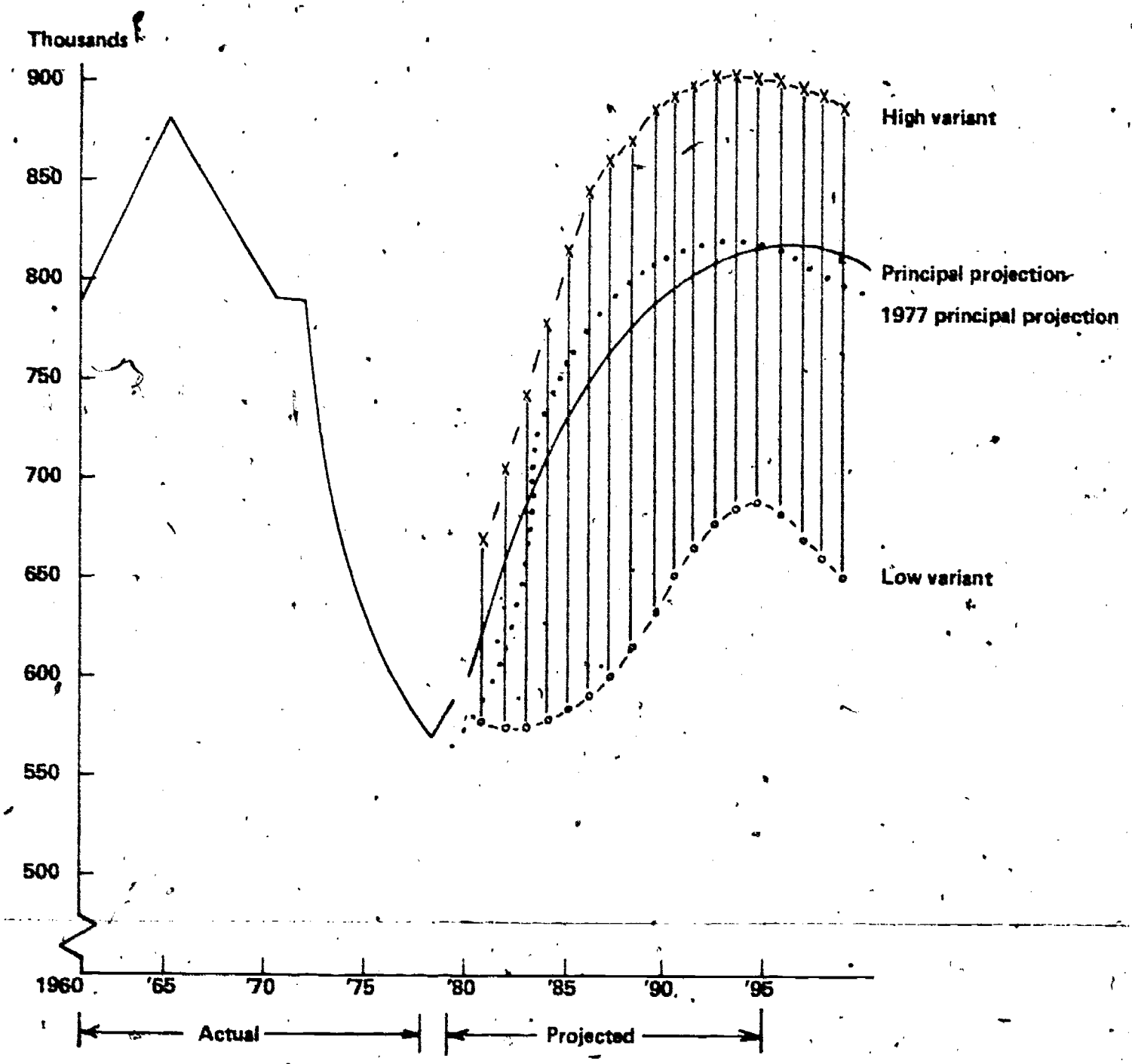


CHART B: TOTAL SCHOOL POPULATION

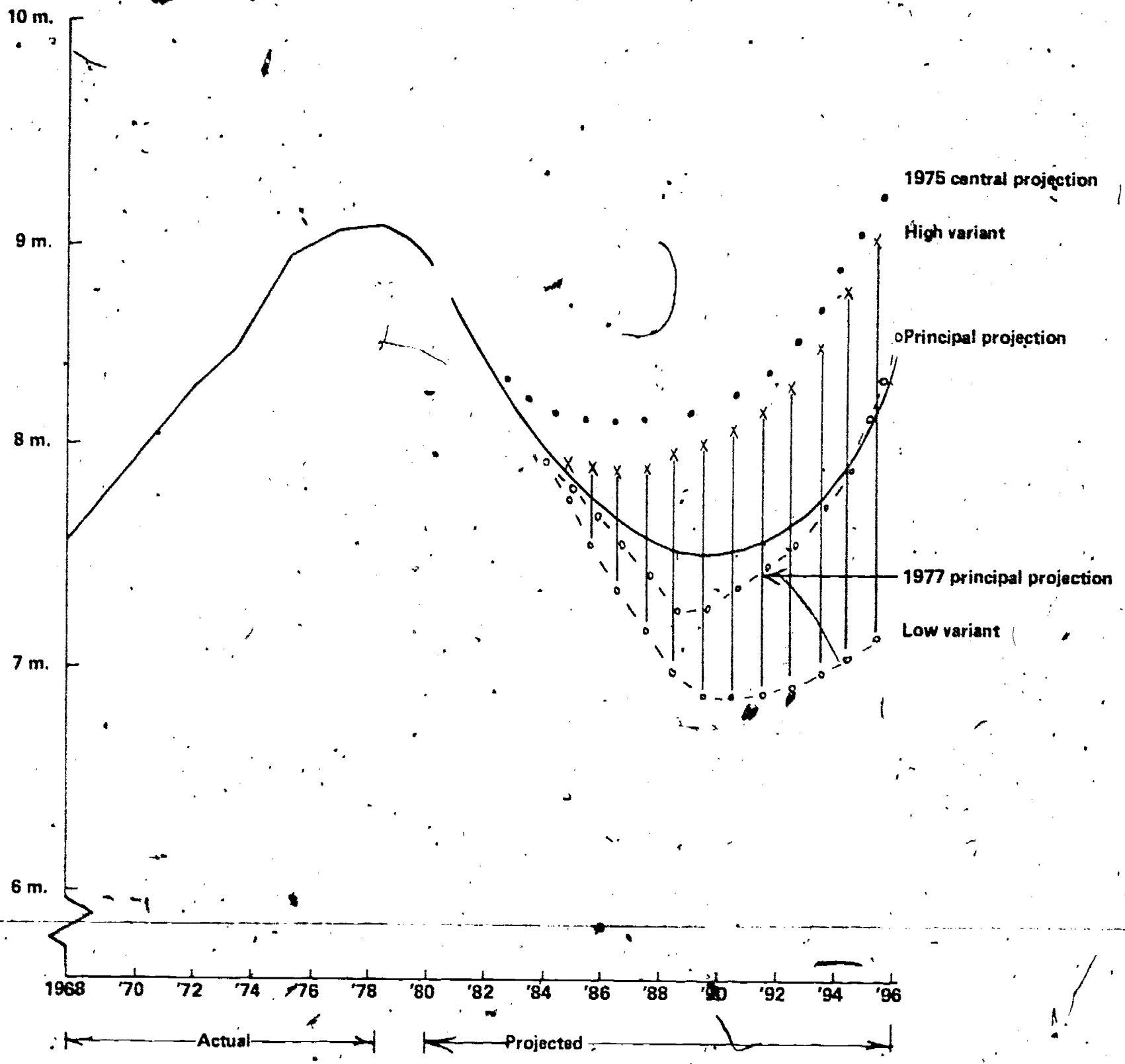
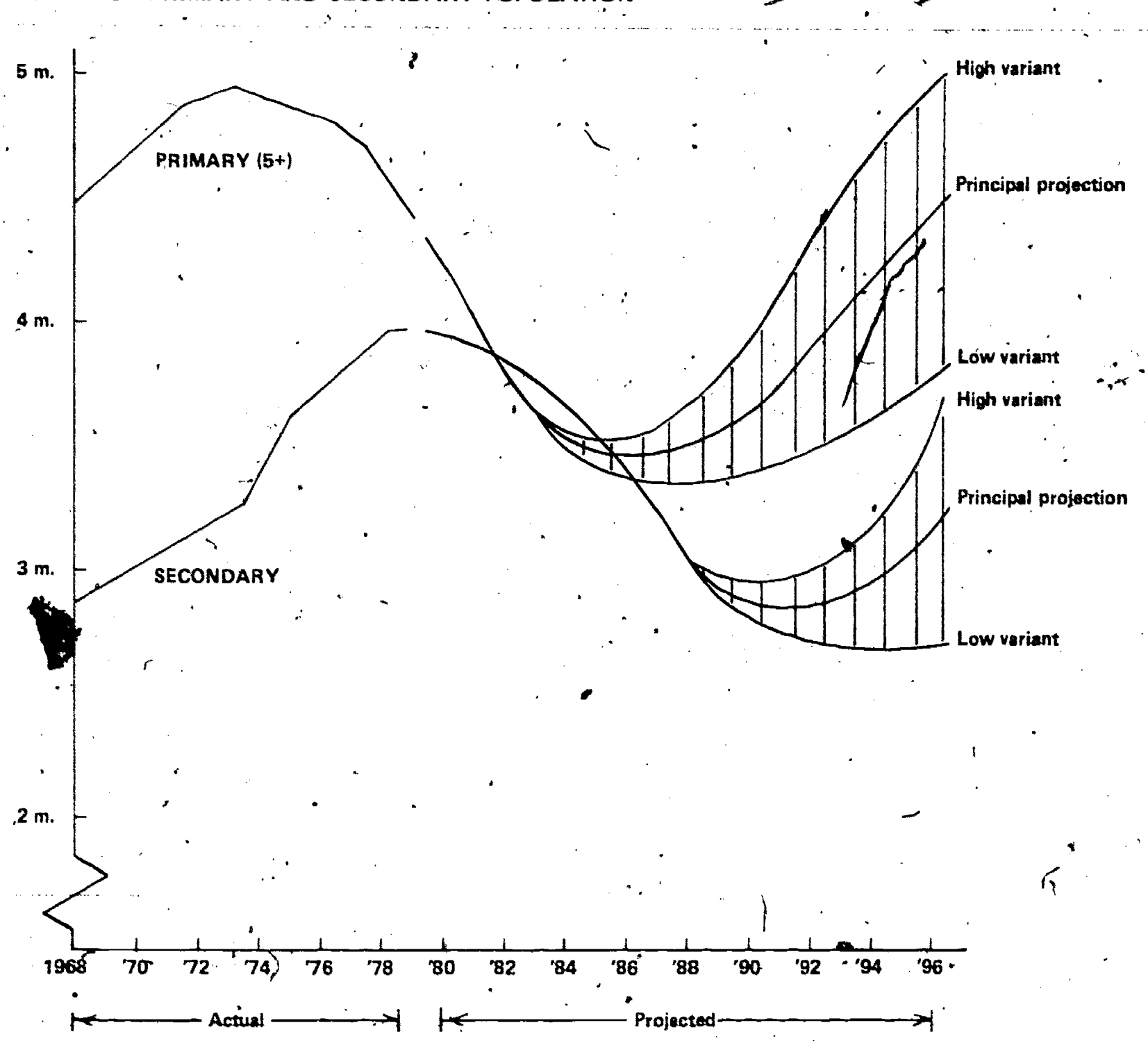


CHART C: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY ED

CHART C: PRIMARY AND SECONDARY POPULATION



Planning for higher education, the name given to baccalaureate studies and courses with roughly equivalent entry standards whether they are provided in universities or local authority colleges, has been fraught with uncertainty about the proportion of the age group wishing to participate. Although the proportion of eighteen-year-olds with the minimum qualifications to enter higher education has increased from 6 percent in 1960 to nearly 16 percent, the proportion actually entering grew steadily through the '60s, reaching a peak of 14 percent in 1972/73. It has since fallen back to nearly 13 percent. This has meant that we have had to revise our projections for the size of the higher education population we should plan for in 1981/82 as follows:

1972	750,000
1974	640,000
1976	560,000
1979	544,000

This run of figures should be a salutary lesson for any long-range planner.

Education and Training for Young People

There has been much public debate about whether we can improve upon the existing arrangements for the education and training of young people. The diagram shows the main pathways followed by them between the ages of sixteen and eighteen, distinguishing those in school, in further education (FE), and in employment. I want to concentrate on some developments affecting those represented by the wide arrow and the arrows on each side of it; but first, let me explain briefly what the other arrows represent.

The sharply curved arrow headed O/CSE late-takers represents the people who take an extra year to enter for the General Certificate of Education (GCE) ordinary level or Certificate of Secondary Education (CSE) examinations. The arrow is curved because, having done this, they will either exit (via one of the other arrows) into the labor market or remain within the education system. Moving clockwise, the next arrow shows those following the "academic route" to the advanced level of the GCE. Next are those I have called non-GCE/CSE—youngsters mainly following a whole host of vocational routes usually leading to the qualifications of one of our independent examining bodies such as the Technical Education Council or the City and Guilds of London Institute.

There are policy problems associated with all of the groups I have just mentioned but which time will not allow me to cover. Instead I should like to talk about developments in relation to three important groups:

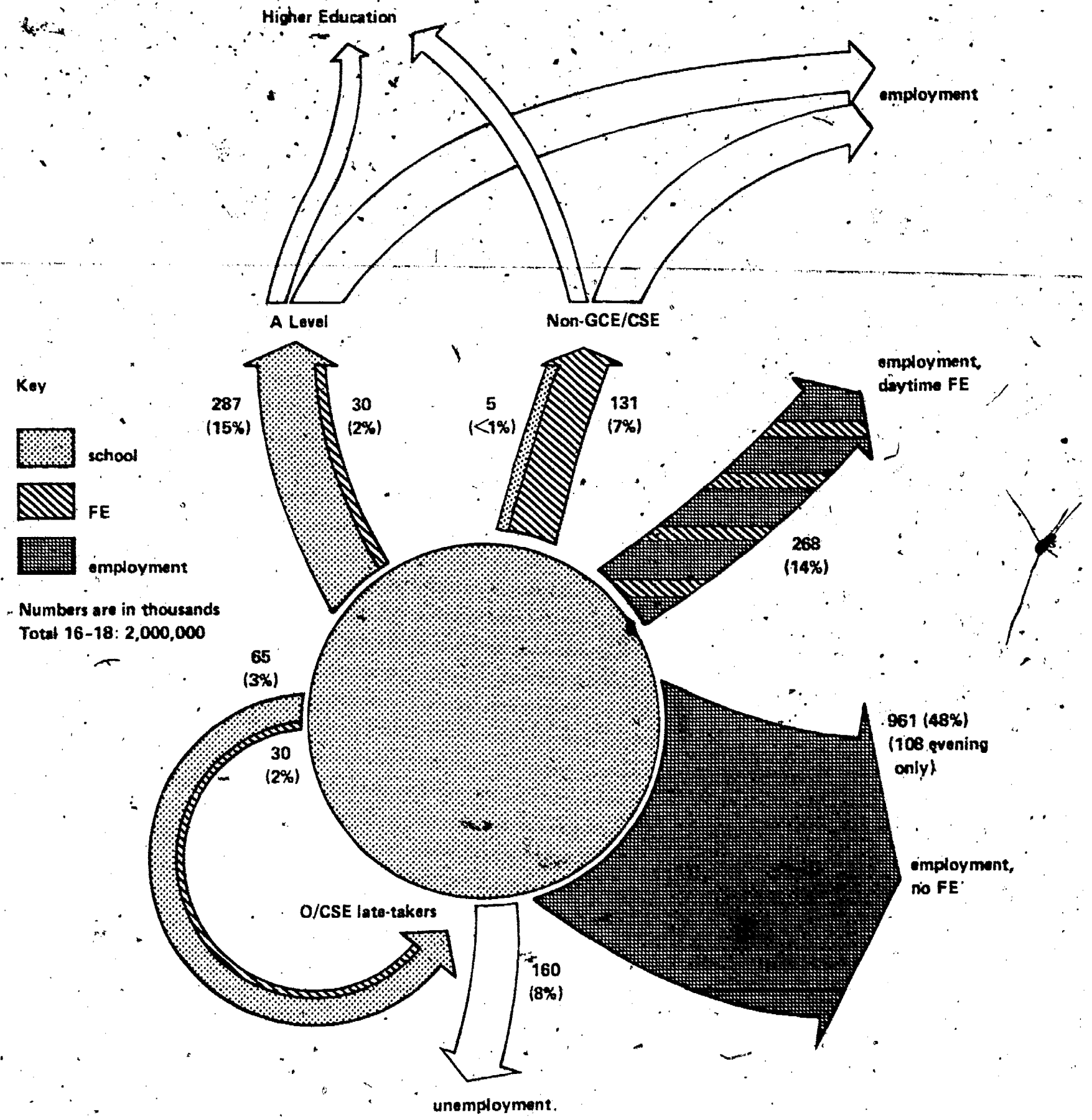
1. The young unemployed
2. Those who enter jobs with no significant further education or training
3. Those who enter employment and have daytime further education (and particularly within this category those entering long-term training as craft apprentices)

The Youth Opportunities Program

Unemployment among school leavers began to give cause for concern in 1975. Various temporary schemes were devised by government, the Manpower Services Commission, and voluntary agencies to help the young unemployed. A report called "Young People and Work," published by the MSC in May of 1977, concluded that levels of unemployment among school leavers were unlikely to fall significantly before the early 1980s. Sharp fluctuations in total unemployment of

16-18 Pathways

1976/77



young people during the course of each year would continue, and there would also continue to be major variations in the scale and nature of youth unemployment between different parts of the country. The report proposed a comprehensive program for unemployed sixteen- to eighteen-year-olds bringing together and building upon the temporary programs which were already being developed.

All the important recommendations of the report were accepted by the government, and funds were made available. The aim of the Youth Opportunities Program is to offer youngsters opportunities that will improve their prospects of obtaining a satisfactory permanent job at the earliest possible moment and will provide a real and constructive alternative to unemployment. The YOP began in April of 1978, and the target for the first year of full-scale operation (beginning in September of 1978) was 187,000 entrants to the program. This number was based on an estimate of the number of young people unemployed for six weeks or more over the months when the annual cycle of youth unemployment reached its lowest level. Another major objective was to ensure that no "Easter leaver" of 1978 who remained unemployed by Easter 1979 should be without the offer of a suitable place on the program. This was known as the "Easter undertaking." This undertaking has meant that the YOP has been committed to directing the opportunities it provides towards the young people most in need of them and to offering a balanced and varied range or provision.

Four different types of work experience and three different types of work preparation courses are offered in the program:

1. *Work Experience on Employers' Premises.* This involves supervised experience in two or more work roles, not just a single job. This is the major element of the YOP and accounts for two-thirds of all entrants (100,000 by the end of March 1979).
2. *Community Service.* This is done in hospitals, play groups, old people's homes, centers for the handicapped, etc., or on particular projects such as undertaking a survey of needs for local services (in all, 7,500 entrants by the end of March 1979).
3. *Project Based Work Experience.* This often involves outdoor environmental projects for local authorities (8,500 entrants by the end of March 1979).
4. *Training Workshops.* This involves making and selling products (e.g., furniture, toys, horticultural produce) or providing services (4,000 entrants by the end of March 1979).

Work preparation courses take the form of employment induction schemes of two to three weeks, normally run by employers on their own premises and providing a concentrated form of vocational assessment (2,400 entrants by the end of March 1979). Short training courses of up to thirteen weeks provide training in a range of occupations up to a semi-skilled level (31,000), and work introduction courses are provided for the most disadvantaged group.

The YOP has just completed its first full year and will be very close to achieving its target of 187,000 entrants. In relation to the numbers of unemployed in August of 1978, the "Easter undertaking" has been 99 percent fulfilled. The program has not been running long enough for us to measure its overall success in helping the young unemployed to get jobs. But follow-up surveys of young people leaving work experience courses have been encouraging: over 80 percent were in a job after seven months, while nearly nine out of ten had had at least some employment. Careers officers generally are convinced of the value of having unemployed young people spend some time in the YOP to help them obtain a suitable job. Fortunately, the young unemployed are not nearly so numerous as the next group I should like to mention.

Vocational Preparation of Young People

Every year 200,000 school leavers enter jobs which have no significant education or training opportunities associated with them. These are mainly unskilled jobs in a wide variety of industries but particularly in the areas of distribution and retailing. In the sense that these youngsters receive no systematic preparation for working life after leaving school, they are at a disadvantage compared with both apprentice and technician trainees and the unemployed who can take advantage of the work experience and training opportunities of the YOP.

It is worth asking why these youngsters are, relatively speaking, neglected. One reason is that the jobs they hold are considered to be undemanding in terms of the manual or cognitive skills or personal qualities required. It is therefore assumed that they can be fully prepared for working life during compulsory schooling or the first few days of work. Another reason is that they are thought to have reached the limit of their ability—that dead-end jobs are about all they can cope with. A third reason, I suspect, is that it is assumed that they will not need to make major job changes during their working lives, or that if they do, they will somehow adjust.

Many people would argue that schools have a major role in preparing their pupils for adulthood and working life. That is undoubtedly true. Most schools are redoubling their efforts to make their curriculum more appropriate for the nonacademic children. But there are bound to be limits to what schools can do. No amount of work simulation or observation, however well designed, can reproduce the problems that confront a youngster for the first time in a real job. So varied are the occupations entered by young people that specific educational and training needs are certain to emerge that could not possibly have been anticipated at school even if it were acceptable for schools to undertake specific vocational education and training. The recognition that considerable improvement in job performance can result from strong motivation, a good grounding in the skills needed in the work place, combined with the growing complexity of the labor market and the great demands placed on workers by technological change, convinced the British government that it should encourage an experiment in extending planned provision for these youngsters. The term that has been adopted to cover the integral program of education, training, and job experience which they need is *vocational preparation*.

In July of 1976, an experimental program was launched under the title "Unified Vocational Preparation." The term "unified" was used because, as the government statement issued at the time said,

> at least part of the trouble is attributable to the separate development of education and training. For many young people entering the world of work, the only available supplement to minimal on-the-job training has been part-time further education of a kind which is associated in their minds with school and which they are inclined to reject as being no longer appropriate for them. To engage their interest and win the support of their employers, a new and unified approach is required.

The experiment, known as the UVP program, offered funds to bodies wishing to provide experimental schemes for young workers in the target group. A small payment was also made available to employers to allow their young employees to take part. Since the inception of the program, over 160 experimental schemes have been run covering shops, offices, hotels, a fruit and vegetable market, food processing, the chemical and engineering industries, paper packaging, and the Post Office, among others. Industrial training boards and local authority colleges have both responded to the invitation to organize schemes.

We have learned a great deal from the UVP program. Among the main lessons are these. First, youngsters in this group span a very wide range of ability which has often not been recognized during their formal schooling. Second, motivation to learn can be dramatically increased when the youngster sees how the program relates to his or her needs at the work place. Third, new learning styles are needed. Many of these people are suspicious and hostile towards teaching methods that remind them of school. To arouse their motivation, we need to start from the actual experience of the young people themselves. Participative teaching methods, group discussions, project work, games and simulations, and the teaching of specific problem tackling techniques all have a part to play. It follows from this that the teachers also need to develop new skills.

The content of most UVP schemes has tended to reflect four overlapping areas:

1. *Induction*—to the job, to the organization, to the industry, and to working life generally.
2. *Basic job skill and knowledge*—covering a wide range of employer-specific job skills and transferable skills, especially those which are relevant to changing employment patterns. Young people need to be adaptable, and their initial vocational preparation should lay the groundwork for that both by developing skills and by promoting understanding of the industrial and economic context and their role in it.
3. *"Social" skills*—those skills needed when dealing with other people, both at work and in private life. At work they include getting on with work mates and working as a member of a team.
4. *"Life" skills*—those skills required in daily life; e.g., familiarity with essential services, handling money, etc.

Although the UVP program is continuing until 1981, the last government felt that sufficient information had been learned from Unified Vocational Preparation and from the Youth Opportunities Program (which have some elements in common) to enable them to offer proposals in a major consultative paper in April 1979 under the title "A Better Start in Working Life." The new government has said that it would welcome views on this document which contains the following main proposals:

1. The government should make a commitment to the progressive development of soundly based systems of vocational preparation for all young employees who have just left school.
2. "Traineeships" for young people in their early months at work should be developed and formally recognized in the same way as apprenticeships. These traineeships, typically of about three to six months in duration (though some would be longer), would provide vocational preparation in an integrated program of education and training both on and off the job. A certificate recording the content and coverage of the program would be issued on completion of the traineeships.
3. The traineeships should be provided in a joint enterprise between the training and the education services. The industrial training boards (ITBs) would be the natural focal point for developing the traineeship programs for their sectors. The local authority further education colleges would have a vital role in the program, especially in providing the off-the-job element of vocational preparation.

The consultative document went on to make other points about finance, machinery, and timing.

We shall not know until the end of this year what the government's response to the program has been nor, indeed, what outside bodies that have been consulted think of the proposals. Nevertheless, they are significant in my view because they represent the first occasion on which central government in Britain has formally recognized the possibility of the eventual introduction of systematic vocational preparation for all young people.

Skilled Young People and Craft Apprenticeship

For as long as most people can remember, there have been shortages in the supply of highly skilled people of one kind or another needed by industry. In its 1977 report entitled "Training for Skills," the Manpower Services Commission observed that shortages in traditional skills are liable to occur in spite of high levels of unemployment. They pointed out that many factors other than inadequate training make it difficult to find the right person for a vacancy at the right time and in the right place. Such factors include employment legislation, pay relativities, increased fixed labor costs, and so on. The report showed that a widespread consensus emerged from the surveys the MSC conducted of employers and unions. Most people regarded as particularly important (1) the systematic entry of young people into long-term training and associated further education; (2) the encouragement of training and retraining opportunities for adults; and (3) the need for the form, content, and duration of training to be based on satisfying both industry's needs and those of the individual.

The "Training for Skills" report proposed a four-stage process. First, industry and commerce would draw up realistic plans to assess their manpower needs, particularly areas threatened by serious skill shortages. Secondly, the MSC would bring together for joint action the industrial training boards if a particular skill shortage affected several industries. Third, the ITBs and other competent organizations would identify cases in which, in their view, the achievement of key training objectives would be possible without additional help. Where it could be shown that a sector was seriously tackling its training problems and making full use of all the means available to it, the MSC would consider whether additional funds could be made available to enable key training objectives to be achieved.

As a result of the program for action set out in the report, there has been a very substantial reappraisal of training needs by much of industry and commerce. How far additional funds will be available in the future from the MSC in support of this area will only be known when the new government's expenditure plans become public, but we can be fairly sure that they will want to rely more upon the self-interest of industry in training sufficient numbers of skilled people, reserving the "Training for Skills" machinery as a back-up.

Concern about the entry of young people into long-term training also stimualted a major training board, the Engineering Industry Training Board, to publish proposals last year for wide-ranging reforms of craft apprenticeship in their industry. In its Information Paper 49, the EITB observed that the present annual intake of engineering craft apprentices of about 21,000 was insufficient to meet the need for fully trained flexible craftspeople in the future. The EITB wanted to find ways of reversing the decline in the intake of apprentices. The paper suggested that one of the reasons for declining recruitment was that sixteen-year-old school leavers were deterred by the prospect of a four-year apprenticeship. (Craft status at present depends only on time served.) The EITB therefore suggested that *performance* should be the criterion for achieving craft status. It recommended that as quickly as young people could get through the required tests they should be recognized as competent craftspeople and paid at the craft rate (subject to reaching a minimum age of eighteen).

From the educational viewpoint, an interesting aspect of the proposals was that the amount of time needed in the early part of training might be reduced by bringing some work into the last stage of secondary education. This would apply particularly to mathematics, applied sciences, technology, and craft practice. Although there was a great deal of strong support for the principle of improving the relationship between school and industry to achieve better continuity in the learning process, concern about the practicality of the proposals was widespread. It was felt that the education system did not have the teachers, the expertise, or the equipment to take on the job of offering courses of the kind proposed by the board. For example, schools were reported to be seriously short of craft teachers even for the limited number of craft courses offered at present. Other observers felt that it was not possible for the education system to develop in the trainees the right attitudes about some aspects of the world of work such as discipline, getting to work on time, and safety. A further criticism was that work done at school should be broader in concept than a program aiming at a specific vocation. Some felt that encouraging youngsters to choose their career too early could be a serious mistake. In spite of these criticisms, it is interesting to note that, through the EITB's consultations, a number of local schemes came to light whereby schools and local firms were cooperating in assessing training needs and in making appropriate adjustments on both sides.

Other aspects of the proposals ran into difficulty. Trade unionists were not convinced that competence testing could be a complete substitute for a defined period of apprenticeship. They were also worried that any change which resulted in the shortening of the period of apprenticeship might lead to a decline in craft standards and consequently in the status of craftspeople. Although the EITB is now reconsidering its stance, I think we can expect other proposals for the reform of apprenticeship as changes in the organization and technological pace of industry increasingly reveal the need for change.

I have tried to give you a brief overview of a number of problems which are of concern to us, at present, in England. I hope it has given you some insight into where our worries and also where our hopes lie.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Question: I need some additional information and clarification about MSC and CSE and GCE. Would you please explain these abbreviations?

First of all, the MSC stands for the Manpower Services Commission, which was set up in 1973. It is a tripartite body in the sense that the commissioners represent industry employers, industry trade unions, and local government in three more or less equal parts. There is also a representative of the professional teachers, the teachers most concerned with vocational education training. The Manpower Services Commission is charged primarily with the promotion of training and placement. But lately, because of the great interest in youth unemployment, they also have been given the task of providing programs that will enable youngsters and also adults to come out of unemployment into productive occupations by giving them the opportunities for training or retraining that they need.

The MSC has three main operational divisions. The one responsible for placement is called the Employment Services Division. This division runs the job centers which are located in every major town and many minor towns; there are some thousands of them around the country. These centers are similar to your state employment offices. Employers notify the centers of vacancies and people can go in off the street, look at the vacancy offers, and follow up any that look promising.

The second major operational division is called the Training Services Division. This is the one responsible for industrial and vocational training policy, and it maintains very close relationships with the industrial training boards which I mentioned several times during my talk.

The third division is called the Special Programs Division. This is the one that implements the Youth Opportunities Program which I mentioned as well as certain other programs for people with special needs.

The MSC has grown very rapidly in the six years of its existence. It is now an organization with a very large budget, and I think it has achieved an important position in the system. Its future will depend to some extent on the review of certain quasi-governmental agencies being conducted by the present government. There is some opposition by the present government to large-spending public agencies, but I think the MSC has a fairly secure future.

As for the two other abbreviations, the CSE stands for the Certificate of Secondary Education; the GCE is the General Certificate of Education. The one which may be familiar to some of you is the second of those, the GCE. This examination has two levels—the ordinary level, normally taken at sixteen, and the advanced level, normally taken at eighteen. It is a national system in the sense that it is available all over the country and has national recognition, although it is operated by regional examining boards. The General Certificate of Education has been the route taken by youngsters in the upper 25 percent or so of the ability band, those who are going into the universities or other higher education or into certain more sophisticated types of employment. The CSE, the Certificate of Secondary Education, was introduced to provide for the needs of lower-level ability groups—those roughly between the twenty-fifth and sixtieth percentiles of ability. The CSE offers

less demanding examinations in a different range of subjects. The schools also have the option of setting their own examinations subject to external validation in the CSE "mode three."

I think it is interesting to compare our national examination system with the situation you have here. The problem we have faced with the national examination system is that the schools tend to concentrate rather too much attention on the demands of the examinations because this is the main manner by which their performance can be judged. The inspectors of my department will be putting out a report later this year suggesting that schools need to be somewhat less exam-oriented. By contrast, in the States you seem to have the opposite problem (at least this is what I heard in California). That is, there is no national system by which the performance of the schools can be judged and through which individuals can compete with one another. Consequently, there seems to be a lack of confidence in the quality of high school graduates and differences of opinion about what a graduate certificate actually means or whether it has any meaning at all. So I think we have different experiences, both of which have their problems.

Question: Did the teachers in your experimental Unified Vocational Program come from teacher preparation institutions, or did they come from business, industry, and labor?

The great majority of them have come from the education side. Most were teachers who had been working in the colleges of further education—the local authority colleges—which play a major part in our vocational education system. But there have also been some teachers coming in from industry. Very often, in fact, there has been teamwork with the teachers from the education side planning the program jointly with the people concerned with training and staff development within industry.

Question: One of the recommendations you cited in regard to the same program was that the traineeships should be provided jointly by the education sector and the training sites. Who would be responsible for governance of the programs? And since the program intends to motivate learners through relating more to their needs, who would be responsible for mediating the situation between the two agencies so that learner needs are met?

That is a very good and leading question. Although the details have not yet been worked out, the concept we have is that the industrial training boards and the colleges would work together to devise individual programs at the local level, but they would do so within the broad framework of guidelines laid down nationally by the industrial training boards and by national representatives of the education service. There might well be some kind of national advisory body serving as a watch-dog to ensure that these programs become neither too education-oriented nor too industry-oriented. There would have to be monitoring of that kind.

As for mediation between the two agencies—well, I hope it never comes to mediation. By and large we find in our existing system, in which responsibilities are distributed among a range of bodies, that people can and do work together without coming into serious conflict. But if there were trouble, then the national machinery, the sort of national committee which I mentioned a few moments ago, would be the body through which we would attempt to mediate. But in practice, the peacemaking would be done "behind the scenes" since that is where most effective mediation is done.

Question: Isn't it possible that you could have a collaborative effort between education and industry and still totally neglect the needs of the learner? In other words, education and industry could agree on the norms of the program and socialize the learner to those norms.

Yes, I think one has to admit that risk and be sensitive to it. However, this is the kind of problem you can only work on in the early stages of an ongoing program. I hope that we could identify this problem early on, if it were to exist, and that this would be one of the bugs we could get out of the system if it were found.

Question: It seems to me that it would be fairly easy to think of this as a problem simply of structural unemployment. There is a presumption that the economy is generating enough jobs to take care of the job seekers, providing that they are "properly trained." Supposing that education did its job superlatively, beyond your wildest dreams, and did everything perfectly—do you have any estimates about the number of remaining unemployed?

That is a big question. First of all, I think there is growing acceptance of the idea that what we have is structural unemployment, and we are seeing major and longer-term changes occurring in the labor market. There was great reluctance to accept this two or three years back, but I think that as the months go by, it becomes clearer that the situation is partly one in which the labor market is generating jobs that require medium and high levels of skill and that the number of jobs requiring little or no skill is diminishing quite rapidly. We can see this in our figures for job vacancies offered through the job center system which I mentioned earlier. And in principle, at any rate, we could go a long way simply by taking the people who are presently in the labor market with little or no skills and giving them the skills that are in demand from industry.

However, having done that, I think it is also very true that there are a number of other quite serious problems, apart from the level of training and education that is available. These are problems like the mobility of labor. We probably have a more serious problem of labor mobility than the United States has, although I suspect that you also have your problems. People are very reluctant to move from their home areas in order to get a job. Even when you give them various inducements to move, they still find it very difficult to break family ties.

There are also labor practice constraints and restrictions imposed by trade unions. There are pay and condition problems. In particular, at the present time, the differential between the skilled worker and the unskilled worker is a controversial issue. The tendency of the big unions, which represent unskilled workers, has been to push for higher pay levels which are now approaching the level of skilled worker pay. This has a demoralizing effect on the skilled worker who wonders, "What is in this for me? Rather than be a lathe turner I could drive a taxi, make as much money, and work my own hours."

I think these types of problems have to do mainly with the mismatch that is occurring in the labor market at the moment. But even if we had a perfect education and training system, I am sure we would still have a moderately serious problem of unemployment. However, as far as I am aware, nobody has estimated exactly what the numbers would be.

Question: In discussing the Youth Opportunities Program, you mentioned a very small number of students involved in community service. Are there obstacles to increasing youth participation in this area?

I am not so sure it is a question of obstacles. Let me put it this way: there has been a preference for giving youngsters in the program opportunities in the private sector because this seems to be important in terms of making these people feel they are getting a "real" work experience and not something artificially created by some welfare agency. I think that is the first important point to bear in mind. As I mentioned, 80 percent of the placement has been in the private sector.

The second point is that there is a limit to the amount of community service work that can be generated without the cost becoming prohibitive. If this part of the program becomes too large, special agencies have to be created just to run the community service element of the program. To put that in the broader context, there is a limited number of agencies—hospitals, old people's homes, and so on—in which to place participants in this program. There is a limited extent to which these agencies can provide useful experiences for unemployed young people and still carry on their essential functions. We wouldn't want to get into the situation where we were disrupting the work of the hospitals, the centers for the handicapped, and so on. So I think there are several legitimate reasons why community service has not been a bigger part of the program.

Question: As you probably have discovered in your travels in this country, we are concerned about the role of vocational education versus the role of the Department of Labor in the vocational training of young people. In your country, is there a similar problem of definition of appropriate roles between the educators and the Ministry of Labor?

Yes. In England we have traditionally been divided on this question. Essentially we have found ourselves in either of two different camps: (1) the people who see themselves as primarily on the education side of the divide, and (2) the people who find themselves primarily on the labor market side of the divide; and these are two quite different perspectives. They are, I suppose, both valid in their own way, and yet, historically, there has been mistrust, suspicion, and difficulty in working between the agencies, whether on the national level or the local level. I think this is improving quite rapidly in the sense that both sides are becoming increasingly aware that we are dealing with a common problem, and if we don't get together, the problem is going to get worse. Certainly it will not get better. I might add that the experimental program in Unified Vocational Education was a joint program involving my own department and the Department of Employment, and I think that is a good example of how we have managed to work together.

I think your question embodies the idea that there could be some kind of threat to the status of workers involved in vocational education training, that there are feelings of insecurity. The job is so big that we feel there will be plenty of room for everybody—that nobody needs to feel too threatened about his or her status. But there may well be tension as we get a greater consolidation and more cooperative efforts across the divide. It is inevitable that people on one side will compare their pay scales and conditions with people on the other, and they will see that they are different for various traditional reasons. We are going to have quite a lot of friction about that, and it will be an issue for the eighties, I am sure.

Question: To what extent is the immigration and emigration of the members of the labor force a problem in England? If you do have an expatriate group of people within your country, what services do they receive, if any, in terms of training and preparation for employment?

To answer your first question, emigration of native English abroad is relatively small and has been especially in the last few years because of world recession. Jobs have not been available in places like Canada, the United States, and Australia which traditionally have been places which English people have fled to, and it certainly is not having a critical effect on the supply of skills.

In answer to your second question about immigration, our immigration has been largely of people from the West Indies and Asia, and we have had programs to help them establish their knowledge of English to gain a foothold in the labor market. Again, immigration from these areas has been decreasing, partly because immigration in general has been slowing down because of restrictions imposed upon it. That is a hot political issue. I can say that, at the present time, we have a concern for offering ethnic minorities adequate education and training facilities. I don't think this problem is quite as acute as I perceive it to be in the States. During the 1980s we shall be turning more and more attention to these groups who will want to work their way up in the labor market. They will not be content with the relatively menial jobs that they took when they first entered the country. Of course, their children will be going through the education system and, as a result, ought to be able to command a better position in the labor market when they come of age.

Question: Assuming the resources are available to you, what would you say are your three most pressing research problems in the area of vocational education?

On the top of my list, I would have to put the teaching and learning styles needed to deal with the less able group. I think we are reasonably confident about how we train people for the high-level occupations, but we have a lot to learn yet about the most effective ways of offering learning experiences to young people in the less able categories, and that also includes the disadvantaged and the ethnic minorities as well as the lower levels of ability.

As for my second priority, I think I would want to look at the content of some of the existing vocational programs to see where they are outdated, because I think many of them do need to be regularly refurbished. Although there is a mechanism for doing this through the Industrial Training Board system, we need to take an independent look at just how effective this is and whether the training programs are really meeting the increasing demands that are being placed on them in terms of rapidly increasing technological change.

The third priority, and one that I would want to look at very closely, is the arrangements we have made for giving students, while still in school, a better idea of what working life consists of and better experiences in this area. I'm referring to the programs we have which are similar to your experiential programs. I think we are in great need of some systematic evaluation and appraisal of these programs, and we need to investigate other ways by which young people could, while still in school, be made more aware of working life and what that entails. I think we have a long way to go in this area.

Question: My question relates to the English elementary classrooms which were a model for the rest of the Western world, especially here in the United States. How is elementary education faring at the present time in Britain?

I don't want to sound too complacent about this, but I believe the experience has been successful and continues to be successful. We have concerns about the standards of math teaching in primary schools, and indeed at all levels; it is not just a primary school problem. We have an inquiry into the teaching of mathematics underway at the moment. That is a major national inquiry with an independent committee. But, in general, I think many of the primary school innovations established in the last decade or so have withstood the test of time well. Modern primary school education has shown itself to be more than just a passing fashion; the underlying concepts are sound. Some feel that we need to stretch pupils perhaps more than we do, that teachers don't have high enough expectations of them. This was a point made in the inspectors' report on primary education which came out in 1977. But by and large, I think we probably have fewer problems with that sector of the system than we do with the other sectors.

Question: What do you see as the likely outcome of the effort on apprenticeship reform you mentioned earlier—the Industry Training Board Paper 49? What do you consider some of the tradeoffs that ultimately may be made between time served and performance-based completion of apprenticeship?

In England we have a long tradition of compromise, and I think this is going to be a classic example of that. It seems to me that we are not yet ready to go completely over to a system which is so thoroughly oriented towards performance testing as that which was, I believe, proposed with a great deal of imagination by Joe Moon and his colleagues in the Industry Training Board. I think eventually we shall develop some system in which performance testing would play a larger part. We will probably have a system that enables craft apprentices to gain their terminal qualifications in less than the present four-year period—but not as quickly as the two years anticipated in that report—and that will, at the same time, depend partly upon the successful completion of measure tests.

The unions have a lot of worries about reducing periods of training, particularly at a time of high unemployment, because of the effect they believe this will have on the labor supply. I think this is one of the most interesting areas to watch in the next two or three years.

Question: Is the traineeship program that you spoke of, in essence, viewed as a substitute to the apprenticeship type of program?

The answer is no. It would stand alongside the apprenticeship system. We shall still need the high-level long-term training of highly skilled apprentices that occurs at the moment, but where we have a major gap in our system is with the less able youngsters who are going into the jobs that are, at the present time, relatively unskilled of that require only minimal skills. In the future, because of the structural changes in the labor market we were discussing, those jobs increasingly will require skill. I think a sort of hierarchy will develop with the long-term apprenticeships at one end and these shorter-term apprenticeships at the other. But certainly we would hope that many of the youngsters finishing the short-term traineeships proposed in "A Better Start in Working Life" would go on to other forms of education and training provision because there is, as I said earlier, that reservoir of talent we have not yet tapped of youngsters who have been turned off by school. Given the right conditions, these youngsters often show themselves to be capable of a lot more than we ask of them at the present time.

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