Women, Educational Policy-Making and Administration in England

Authoritative women since 1880

Edited by

Joyce Goodman and Sylvia Harrop

Routledge Research in Gender and History

Women, Educational Policy-Making and Administration in England

The role of women in policy-making has been largely neglected in conventional social and political histories. This book opens up this field of study, taking the example of women in education as its focus. It examines the work, attitudes, actions and philosophies of women who played a part in policy-making and administration in education in England over two centuries, looking at women engaged at every level from the local school to the state.

Women, Educational Policy-Making and Administration in England traces women's involvement in the establishment and management of schools and teacher training; the foundation of the school boards; women's representation on educational commissions; and their rising professional profile in such roles as school inspector or minister of education. These activities highlight vital questions of gender, class, power and authority, and illuminate the increasingly diverse and prominent spectrum of political activity in which women have participated.

Offering a new perspective on the professional and political role of women, this book represents essential reading for anybody with an interest in gender studies or the social and political history of England in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Joyce Goodman is Reader in the History of Education at King Alfred's College, Winchester.
Sylvia Harrop is a Senior Fellow in the Education Department of the University of Liverpool.
Both editors have written widely on gender and education, and are currently co-directing a research project on 'Women and the governance of girls' secondary schools 1870–1997'.

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Contents

Illustrations

Plates

Tables

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Joyce Goodman and Sylvia Harrop
February 2000

Abbreviations

AAM	Association of Assistant Mistresses
AHM	Association of Head Mistresses
BA	British Association (for the Advancement of Science)
BERA	British Educational Research Association
BGS	Blue Girls' School, Chester
BFSS	British and Foreign School Society
CC	Consultative Committee of the Board of Education
CHS	Clifton High School
CR	*Contemporary Review*
CRO	Cheshire Record Office
CSWSG	Consolidated Sunday and Working Schools for Girls, Chester
DES	Department of Education and Science
DNB	*Dictionary of National Biography*
EWR	*Englishwoman's Review*
FR	Fonthill Road School, Liverpool
GP	General Purposes Committee
GPDSC	Girls' Public Day School Company
HMI	Her (His) Majesty's Inspectors
HT	Harpur Trust
IC	Industrial Schools Committee
ILP	Independent Labour Party
ISCHE	International Standing Conference for the History of Education
KEVI	King Edward VI Foundation, Birmingham
LCC	London County Council
LEA	Local Education Authority
LivSB	Liverpool School Board
LJFCS	Ladies' Jubilee Female Charity School, Manchester
LMA	London Metropolitan Archives
LMS	Lower Mosley Street Schools, Manchester
LSB	London School Board
LTC	London Trades Union Council

MCGHS	Manchester High School for Girls
MCN	*Manchester City News*
MCR	Manchester Central Reference Library
MG	*Manchester Guardian*
MoE	Minutes of Evidence
MSB	Manchester School Board
MSBL	Member of the School Board for London
NC	North Corporation Schools, Liverpool
NLEL	National Labour Education League
NS	National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church
NUET	National Union of Elementary Teachers
NUT	National Union of Teachers
NUWSS	National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies
NUWT	National Union of Women Teachers
NUWW	National Union of Women Workers
OC	Office Committee
PRO	Public Record Office
PCTUC	Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress
RACS	Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society
SBC	School Board Chronicle
SBCP	Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor
SMC	School Management Committee
SMOC	School Management and Organisation Committee
SWSG	Sunday and Working Schools for Girls, Chester
SWTC	*Schoolmaster and Women Teacher's Chronicle*
TEB	Technical Education Board
TES	*Times Educational Supplement*
WEC	Wesleyan Education Committee
WEU	National Union for Improving the Education of Women of all Classes (Women's Education Union)
WL	Walton Lane Board School, Liverpool
WLGS	Women's Local Government Society
WSJ	*Women's Suffrage Journal*

Frontispiece Women's rights, Lydia Becker with Joseph Bright
Source: Mary Evans Picture Library

1 'Within marked boundaries'
Women and the making of educational policy since 1800

Joyce Goodman and Sylvia Harrop

> It is not for the public good that those who are educating far more than half the school population of the country should be denied opportunities of contributing their special knowledge and experience…to the administrative side of education…. There is food for thought as well as room for improvement in a position such as this.[1]

In her Presidential Address to the Head Mistresses Association in 1919, Miss Reta Oldham pointed out that although women were 'admitted to possess considerable organising and administrative gifts' no woman, so far as she was aware, occupied an administrative position at the Board of Education and no Local Authority employed a woman Director of Education. Although she saw the recent appointment of Miss Clement as Assistant Director of Education for Warwickshire as 'a hopeful sign in the right direction', she told the assembled headmistresses that this had to be balanced by the fact that applicants for the post of Education Organiser to the Middlesex County Council had recently been told that women were ineligible to apply. Miss Oldham urged the headmistresses present 'to be zealous in using, and in reminding others to use, their privileges as local government voters'.[2]

Miss Oldham's Presidential Address presented an inter-war strategy to redress what has been termed the 'glass ceiling', an expression which has by now made its way into the dictionaries, being defined as: 'an indistinct but unmistakable barrier on the career ladder, through which certain categories of employees (usu. women) find they can see but not progress'.[3] The 1990s have seen a growing output of books (largely by women) on women in administration and management, especially as regards the 'glass ceiling'.[4] Standard texts on the history of educational policy-making and administration, on the other hand, often omit or marginalise the contributions of women. Yet, as Carol Dyhouse's revisionist account *Girls Growing Up in Victorian and Edwardian England* and her study of Miss Beale and Miss Buss both illustrate, education was one of the areas of public life where women achieved a measure of both status and authority'.[5] Patricia Hollis, Annemarie Turnbull and, more recently, Jane Martin have explored the ways in which women exercised authority within what was essentially a male

world of local government politics; while Felicity Hunt has examined the gendered politics of the Board of Education and other educational authorities.[6] These studies form part of a more recent trend, evident in Britain, Australasia, Canada and the United States, which aims to take account of the emergence of modern forms of educational administration in terms of gender; to revisit the role of education in relation to notions of professionalisation, career, bureaucracy, citizenship and the state; and to reconceptualise the notion of educational leadership itself.[7] Jill Blackmore's *Troubling Women: Feminism, Leadership and Educational Change* illustrates just how important a historical perspective is for understanding the gendered nature of leadership in contemporary educational contexts.[8]

This volume brings together current research, much of which has not been published before, and other material scattered in journals and theses. Its aim is to examine the activities of women at various levels of policy-making and administration, from the local school to that of the state. From the late eighteenth century onwards, as part of their philanthropic endeavours, women played a part in the establishment and management of schools and of teacher training. The setting up of school boards enabled women to pursue their work in and for education within a broader political context. Their activities as members of educational commissions and government committees, and as inspectors and heads of pupil-teacher centres, illustrate the diversity of views, policies and strategies which were adopted by women fulfilling such roles, both within and outside the sphere of state activity. These activities also highlight the questions of gender, power and authority, which were implicit in the work of women from the early days of philanthropic school managers to the later women ministers of education.

From the above, it will be clear that we are using a much wider definition of policy-making than Hughes, who regards policy-makers as 'those who hold the ultimate power over decision-making', that is, 'usually elected politicians'.[9] A major focus of historians researching policy-making has been on the activities of the state.[10] Yet policy can be made, discussed and influenced at many levels, local, regional and national, by individuals and groups: in educational terms in the school, local school board, professional committee or national conference, Board of Education committee, Royal Commission or parliament. In taking a wider view, we follow Ball, who argues that serious attention needs to be given to the play of state power within 'disaggregated, diverse and specific (or local) sites'. In Ball's view, the state is 'a product of discourse, a point in the diagram of power and a necessary but not sufficient concept in the development of an "analytics of power", which can only operate on the basis of other, already existing power relations, like racism and patriarchy'.[11] Similarly, Jane Kenway sees the state as 'a composite of micro powers', 'an apparatus of social control which achieves its regulatory effects over everyday life through dispersed, multiple and often contradictory and competing discourses'.[12] Much, though not all, of the discussion in this book operates at the level of what Hunt has termed

'organisational policy': the middle level of decision-making which intervenes between government policy and actual school practice where, Hunt claims, decisions about the aims of education are found and the means of achieving those aims can be explored.[13]

'Policy', like 'administration' and 'leadership', is a highly gendered term that has often been related to activity in the public, or semi-public, arena in sites to which women have had no or limited access. At the level of the state, this was one consequence of legally regulated civic disabilities. In contrast, the everyday decisions taken and implemented at the level of the school by women teachers and governors have been written out of the definitions of such terms.[14] The concepts through which issues of policy-making and administration have been 'thought', and the sources through which historians have sought to identify policy-makers and administrators, have contributed to the absence of women in historical accounts. This absence illustrates Ball's contention that when it comes to policy-making only certain voices are heard as meaningful or authoritative. According to Ball, policy issues inhabit two very different conceptualisations: policy as text and policy as discourse, which are implicit in each other. In his view, because policies are set within 'a moving discursive frame which articulates and constrains the possibilities and probabilities of interpretation and enactment', there are real struggles over the interpretation and enactment of policies and these are represented differently by different actors and interests.[15] As he comments: 'Policy as discourse may have the effect of redistributing "voice", so that it does not matter what some people say or think and only certain voices can be heard as meaningful or authoritative'.[16] In terms of education, such processes have not only shaped the making of educational policy. They have resulted in a repetition whereby the views and actions of women and women's organisations working for educational change have been written out of the historical record.

As editors, we share Hughes' desire 'as a feminist [to] try to rediscover the voices and achievements of women who became educational policy-makers'.[17] Hughes goes on to state that she will try to assess 'whether they were feminists or women who believed in separate domestically oriented rules for women', but this alternative poses a dichotomy that is by no means clear cut.[18] This book describes and assesses the work, attitudes, actions and philosophies of many women, a fair number of whom do not fit comfortably into sociological categories. By one measure they might appear to be one sort of feminist; by another they do not. Essie Ruth Conway, for example, one of the longest-serving members of the Consultative Committee (see Chapter Nine), second woman president of the National Union of Teachers (NUT), with its predominantly male executive, principal of a large mixed Liverpool elementary school, campaigner for elementary schools and their teachers, and for equal pay for men and women, was an opponent of women's suffrage. Her position was by no means unique. While she espoused anti-suffrage, other women who figure in the book did not, yet, neither did all of

them openly espouse feminism. Some argued for the widening of women's sphere in the realm of educational policy-making on the basis of 'duty', some on the basis of a professionalism that contained notions of both equality and difference, while others argued for the extension of women's activity on the basis of domesticity. There is considerable debate about what constitutes feminist activity and whether recent definitions of feminism can be applied to the past.[19] Maggie Andrews notes:

> What is within the boundaries of the feminine is always considered to have less status and power and is always subordinate and marginal—women always remain as 'Other'. I perceive feminist history as part of the process of challenging the boundaries of the socially constructed role of women in our society—a process which through struggle will create for women a different notion of the normal and natural and a different tradition of being female.[20]

As feminist historians, we are concerned to challenge both the 'marked boundaries' and the process of boundary construction that constituted the space for women in educational policy-making and administration, and devalued and wrote out of such definitions many of women's educational activities. We agree with Andrews that feminist women's history must be concerned with a history of struggle, either covert or overt, over space for human agency.[21] While, on the one hand, the question of who qualifies as 'feminist' is the subject of debate, on the other, we are cognisant of the critique of Adler, Laney and Packer and Blackmore that analytical distinctions need to be made between 'women' and 'feminists' when it comes to issues of management. As Blackmore notes, contemporary feminist 'women's leadership' literature conflates 'being female' with 'being feminist', with the result that there is no differentiation between leadership as practised by women in general and feminist women in particular.[22]

In the light of the recognition of different 'feminisms' and the debate about what constitutes feminist activity, questions of difference are very relevant to the issues discussed in this book.[23] The women represented here are from different cultural, ideological and political backgrounds—as well as different social classes—and worked in different social, political and economic contexts. Several issues relate to questions of national identities. For example, early nineteenth-century women school governors constructed themselves as 'authoritative' by drawing on ideas of national interest and portraying themselves in antithesis to representations of women in France and in the British colonies. 'Whiteness', therefore, is a taken for granted aspect of power in these representations which requires further analysis. Issues of national identity sometimes run covertly through discussions, as when the Woman Inspectorate was set up in the context of Social Darwinistic discourse. While issues of gender may be fragmented on lines of 'difference', overarching themes related to gender do, nonetheless, emerge from the chapters in the book.

At the end of the nineteenth century there seemed to be signs that women would begin to take their place as members of government and other bodies. The representation of women on Royal Commissions on Education, beginning with the Bryce Commission of 1895, and on the Consultative Committee (Chapter Nine), together with the growing insistence on 'the necessity for the trained mind' in local and central government, seemed to indicate a place for the new educated professional woman, 'expert' in her own field, and especially in education.[24] However, the contributions to this volume illustrate that the notion of progress is an elusive and even dangerously misleading one as far as women and policy-making are concerned. Uncertainties, limited advance, or even reversal of a situation seemingly won, can all contribute to the trope of the 'heroic' fairy tale, as women are portrayed pushing forward against insuperable odds, taking three steps forward and one back. Biklen argues that the story of heroes, fighting against almost impossible odds, is a modernist tale and one that assumes a linear relationship between consistent institutional historical memories and the purposes of education. It labels women's and men's activities as heroic in a different way: 'women can become heroes just by defying the odds'.[25] As the chapters illustrate, the situation was far more complex. Ball notes that focussing analytically on one policy or one text can result in overlooking the way the enactment of one may simultaneously inhibit or contradict or influence the possibility of the enactment of the others.[26] If, for example, women were seen as experts, then it was as 'internal experts', whose contribution was in teaching rather than administration, which was not generally regarded as a female skill or interest: a view still propounded to the Tomlin Commission in 1930 by a reasonably sympathetic male inspector representing the Board of Education Inspectors' Association (Chapter Eight).[27] As Joyce Goodman and Sylvia Harrop illustrate, the Board of Education's encouragement of the appointment of women governors was underpinned by a drive to promote the domestication of the schoolgirls' curriculum in the light of Social Darwinistic discourses and the foundation of the Woman Inspectorate, which proved constraining for women. (Chapters Three and Eight).

Biklen maintains that one of the underlying premises of the 'heroic' model is isolation from others. Yet, as several of the chapters in this book illustrate, women's networks underpinned their educational activities. Female networks have formed an important aspect of feminist revisionism in many areas of history.[28] The focus on women's organisations and on women's self-representations has been a key part of research on women's networks. So, too, have the biographical approaches adopted by Jane Martin in her recent study of the women of the London School Board. Biographical methods and network analysis are crucial in bringing lesser-known figures like Anne Davies and Florence Melly of the Liverpool School Board more clearly into focus (Chapter Four). Since biographical approaches similarly locate key figures like Lydia Becker and Emmeline Pankhurst in the social and political networks

within which their educational work developed, they countermand the masculinist tropes of the heroic individual, without undermining the important achievements of key women. While not based on a realist stance to issues of 'voice' and 'experience', biographical approaches also bring into question the concepts of the 'public' and the 'private', and add substance to the debate around the issues of separate spheres.[29]

The nine chapters here are grouped under four general headings, covering a wide range of areas. The long history of women's involvement in the management of schools is shown by Joyce Goodman's chapter covering working-class schools from 1800–61, and by the following chapter by Goodman and Sylvia Harrop on women governors in middle-class girls' schools from 1870–1925. Goodman's chapter challenges existing interpretations of education in the period as one of apathy and neglect in the governance of schools for the 'lower orders'. She argues that women were to be found actively engaging in the management of education at this level, that their supervision of schools was unremitting, and that they developed a distinctive and a-bureaucratic management style despite their legal disabilities. At the same time, like Blackmore, Goodman is critical of the assumptions of the 'women's leadership' literature, seeing particular management styles as part of material and cultural conditions.[30] Goodman argues that the growth of an educational bureaucracy, and the increasing incursion of the state into education through the century, proved detrimental to the ability of women school governors to exercise authority in the way characteristic of earlier female management practice. Nevertheless, she argues that the early nineteenth century should not be read as a 'golden age' of women managers.

The opportunities for the new women governors of the middle-class girls' academic high schools founded from the second half of the nineteenth century varied from one type of school to another. One crucial factor here was whether the women were joining, under new legal arrangements, what were in effect existing and long-standing boys' schools—as under the Endowed Schools' Act—or whether they were part of a new enterprise for which individual women and women's groups had campaigned. This related to the articulation and practice of governance around notions of citizenship. Headmistresses' representations of governors as 'amateurs' and head teachers as 'experts' provide examples of tensions between different groups of women. While the gender make-up and responsibilities in the early years of governorship of schools are usually clear, patterns as the schools developed are much more difficult to establish from existing records. Chapter Three uses case histories to indicate the complexities of representation, responsibility and gender in the governance of girls' schools as a basis for further research on the subject.[31]

Local government provided early opportunities for women to become involved in the democratic process in the late nineteenth century; in particular, the eligibility of women to be elected to the newly-founded school boards after the 1870 Education Act was of immense importance. Nevertheless, as historians have shown, women's membership of boards was often small,

and even non-existent. Joyce Goodman's chapter on the school boards of Liverpool and Manchester demonstrates that simply counting the numbers involved can be misleading, and that different management structures were of importance. In Manchester, despite the prominence of women on the school board, overall the participation of women in the management of elementary education in the city fell; in Liverpool, however, where the board followed the earlier tradition of voluntary school management and delegated its authority to its local schools, many non-elected women, often from families well known in the civic and commercial life of the city, participated in school management. The situation of school boards and the management of elementary education is, therefore, more complex than current accounts may suggest and requires further research.

The abolition of the school boards by the 1902 Education Act constituted a watershed for political and feminist women, since the act disqualified previously enfranchised women as voters, political candidates and as elected representatives. Jane Martin's chapter examines the struggle to secure female representation on the new body, the London County Council, against the background of the work of women members of the London School Board, the largest and most powerful organ of local government then in existence. The twenty-nine women who served on the board were working in a male-dominated bureaucracy where the organisational practices, prevailing culture and underpinning ideology were all masculinist. While promoters of women in local government anticipated that they would act to improve the lot of women generally, individual women members often took different views on subjects and displayed contradictions in their support, or otherwise, for issues relating to women. Through the stories of seven board members, Martin shows how they created empowering identities and self-representations; and how these politicised women provided the core feminist opposition to the proposals to disenfranchise women under the new act. Although she concludes that the women board members were not 'significant change agents' in the politics of schooling, their presence was sufficiently 'troubling' to cause their exclusion from the new educational bodies being set up; through limiting women to co-opted status, this condemned them to the margins for nearly a decade.

Careers in teacher training and inspection provided differing fortunes for women. Wendy Robinson's study of pupil-teacher centres reveals a very different type of elementary teacher than those often portrayed. She shows how women centre teachers developed independent and autonomous careers, and created an important professional niche for themselves in elementary teaching and teacher training. These teachers represented the elite of the elementary teaching profession in terms of status, qualifications, and cultural and intellectual ambition, and a significant number became principals of centres. Nevertheless, their careers show intriguing patterns, in and out of the school sectors, often in horizontal rather than vertical directions with a high incidence of geographical mobility. The study also

offers an interesting insight into class attitudes and values as school boards and Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), whose views carried considerable weight in educational policy-making, made (largely unsuccessful) attempts to introduce into the centres 'intellectual ladies', to bring a higher 'tone' and culture. This superior middle-class attitude towards elementary teachers was strongly held in parts of the Board of Education, as is evident in Chapters Eight and Nine.

In 1885 a number of women elementary teachers from a wide geographical range of schools, urban and rural, board and voluntary, were invited to give evidence to the Cross Commission on the Elementary Acts. Angela O'Hanlon-Dunn argues that the direct knowledge and actual experience of these witnesses played a significant role in the conclusions drawn by the Commission in its Final Report, particularly in areas in which female teachers were specially concerned, such as infant education and domestic subjects. Their influence was particularly evident in the recommendations of one of the Minority Reports, where several of the women were mentioned by name. O'Hanlon-Dunn argues that the new Code of 1890 contained general principles which the women elementary teachers had advocated, and that they had played a part in making social reform an increasingly important item on the education agenda in the 1890s. The impact of these schoolmistresses on the commission was an important factor in proving the necessary and valuable contribution made by women within a rapidly developing education system, and in making it clear that they were more than competent to play a role in determining policy. Through their negotiation of institutional structures, existing social discourses and power relationships, these extraordinary women from ordinary backgrounds were successful in finding a 'voice' for those who were directly involved in the work being discussed.

Women inspectors, first appointed in 1893, were very much entering a men's world, unwelcome to their male 'colleagues' and unrecognised as capable of equal work. Joyce Goodman and Sylvia Harrop examine the fortunes of women inspectors up to the Second World War through the changing arguments for professional recognition employed by the women themselves and other supportive women's groups. Arguments based on women's incorporation as citizens on the basis of the 'communion of labour' were made in the 1870s, as pressure grew for women to be included in the inspectorate. By 1905–7 the argument had shifted towards notions of professionalism and ideas of individualism, liberalism and merit. This was the time when a separate women's inspectorate was formed, headed by a new Chief Woman Inspector. Thus, as Zimmeck argues, women could be and were seen as 'different', set apart in their own sphere, and no longer a challenge to the male HMI. What is more, the first Chief Woman Inspector, Maude Lawrence, was a major hindrance to women's progress in the service. By 1930, women inspectors giving evidence to the Tomlin Commission were pressing for equality of opportunity in pay and advancement in the service,

though they were divided on the relative merits of segregation and aggregation. The latter, when it came in 1934, proved detrimental to them. The long-sought 'open competition' proved to be more open for men than women. This chapter shows clearly that, although the women inspectors were well qualified, highly motivated, and contributed in important ways to the work of the inspectorate, their impact was highly constrained. They were the 'other', the just about tolerated intruders into a men's club, doing largely 'women's work', and not counting as real members: in 1928 Norwood could still describe inspectors as 'one body of men'.[32]

The women on the Consultative Committee made up a formidable and assured body of women already powerful and influential in many educational institutions and organisations. Unlike the women inspectors and some school governors, women were included on the Committee from its foundation in 1900. They were chosen as individuals representing different areas of education, and selected for their professional expertise in the field. Apart from the two representatives from the NUT they were firmly upper and middle class, and predominantly single. Sylvia Harrop argues that these women were full and equal members of the Committee in every respect but one: they never formed more that one-quarter of its membership. Despite the fact that on average women served longer than their male counterparts, that their contribution was clearly valued and that they were regarded as professionals equal to the men, they appeared to be subject to a hidden 'quota'. Harrop discusses the background of each of the seventeen women who served on the Committee and shows that, although they championed the cause of girls' and women's education and training, they placed these issues in a wider context; there is little evidence of them working together as a pressure group. Rather, they represented the views of their professional organisations, and their contacts and networking crossed the gender divide. They played a full part in what became, especially after the First World War, 'a major part of the policy-making apparatus', whose reports often proved too radical and progressive for the taste of its parent body but formed the basis of major policy reform in the 1940s.[33]

When the first women were appointed to political office in government, education was the most likely portfolio, since education was seen as one of the least prestigious posts; and appropriate for women, whose expertise in the subject had already been established on school boards and Local Education Authorities. In the last chapter of the book, Robin Betts examines the careers of four very different women, one of whom became parliamentary secretary to the Board of Education, and the others secretaries of state to the Ministry of Education. He explores the way in which the politics of gender framed the interaction between the scope and power accorded to the Ministries and the opportunities for policy-making given to these women ministers. The chapter considers how far they made use of the often limited opportunities given to them to wield power and how their actions were related to the profile of education within government. Betts shows that,

while as ministers they had to cope with conflicting interests and financial restraints, attitudes towards them as women varied. Gender was an issue in their treatment by colleagues and officials, but it rarely appeared to be an issue in the policies they sought to take forward. When the last minister examined, Margaret Thatcher, herself became Prime Minister, women were not favoured with ministerial posts: their opportunities for educational policy-making were worse at the end of the twentieth century than they had been before and after the Second World War.

These ten separate chapters relate closely to each other. Some, like those by Robinson and O'Hanlon-Dunn, challenge existing views, in this case on the character, qualifications and standards of elementary teachers at the end of the nineteenth century. All extend existing knowledge regarding, for instance, pupil-teacher centres, the activities of women's pressure groups, women witnesses to commissions, women on school boards and on the Consultative Committee and women governors of elementary schools and girls' academic high schools. While some of the women cited here are already well known, others are not. A number of themes recur. Many chapters deal with women entering, or attempting to enter an established men's world. Here they were faced with difficulties and opposition on many fronts. Many men found women's intrusion into their world 'troubling' (Chapter Five); attitudes regarding women's so-called real and proper place in life often arose from fears that they were threatening men's space, jobs, futures and superiority. Then there were the social realities: as one male inspector put it, a woman could not smoke a pipe together with a male colleague, in informal situations (Chapter Eight). The experience of women inspectors illustrates that they were regarded as 'supernumerary…representing abnormal needs' and that girls' needs were viewed as 'deviant'.[34] However well-trained, well-educated and highly motivated the 'new type of woman, strong, just and capable' might have been, space and opportunities were not going to be ceded in most places without a struggle, especially where power and policy-making were concerned.[35] This position applied to women as a whole. The issues were territorial and psychological, as is shown clearly in the chapters by Betts, Martin, and Goodman and Harrop.

Various male strategies were employed to limit the participation and influence of women. First, there was the question: how many women? Terms used included a 'sufficient' or 'adequate' number, or 'due proportion' of women', but no attempt appears to have been made to quantify these, even by women's pressure groups (Chapter Nine). The question of 'quotas' is still, of course, hotly debated among such groups today.[36] Then, which women? As Jane Martin's discussion of Mary Bridges Adams illustrates, potential troublemakers tended to be excluded. Linked with this strategy was one of co-option rather than regular status for women, as a means of controlling their selection and the responsibilities they might be permitted. Another favourite strategy was to limit women's positions and responsibilities to separate women's sectors or branches, as with the inspectors, or to

'women's jobs' (governors). There was also a prevalent male opinion that women should be attached to areas linked to teaching and the curriculum rather than to administration, to which it was thought they were not really suited (Chapter Eight). In addition, there was the long-lived objection from those in power—mainly men, but also women such as Maude Lawrence—to women having equality of pay with men: a constant reminder of who made the decisions, and a way of belittling the hard work and often selfless contribution to their profession of many women.

Of course, there were men who were supremely supportive of the arguments that women should participate in educational policy-making and administration. Men like Joseph Payne, William Ballantyne Hodgson, Henry Hobhouse, Henry Roby and Joshua Fitch were undoubted allies where women and the question of policy-making and administration were concerned. Roby became a governor at Manchester High School, Hobhouse urged Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy to press for women inspectors, Fitch 'rejoiced over every fresh opportunity of applying women's peculiar power and influence to the public service.... He felt...that from the point of view of the public service woman was a newly-discovered national asset'.[37] While acknowledging the importance of such support, our decision to focus in this book on women as policy-makers was a recognition that, currently, women exist as shadowy figures on the margins of the history of educational administration and policy-making. We set out to begin to establish their importance in this field. Similarly, our decision to include issues relating to headmistresses in chapters where this was relevant reflected our wish to focus on areas of women's activity in education where little published research has been available. We hope this will lead to a re-evaluation of the relative importance of types of educational institutions in the process of policy-making and a reinterpretation of phases of educational history. We also hope that the volume will form the basis for further research on the issues examined here.

Notes

The title of this chapter, 'Within marked boundaries' is taken from a term used by D.E.Smith, 1987, of the Canadian situation, quoted in M.Hughes, '"The Shrieking Sisterhood": Women as Educational Policy-Makers', *Gender and Education,* 1992, vol. 4, no. 3, p. 258.

1 Miss Reta Oldham OBE, Headmistress, Streatham Hill High School, Presidential Address to the Association of Headmistresses, 1919, Association of Headmistresses (AHM) *Annual Report,* 1920.
2 Ibid.
3 *Chambers Dictionary,* New Edition, Edinburgh, Chambers Harrap, 1993.
4 See especially, M.J.Davidson and C.L.Cooper, *Shattering the Glass Ceiling: The Woman Manager,* London, Paul Chapman, 1992, the contents of which are very relevant to discussion in this volume.
5 C.Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England,* London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1987, p. 23.

6 P.Hollis, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government, 1865–1914,* Oxford, Clarendon, 1987; A-M.Turnbull, '"So Extremely Like Parliament": The Work of the Women Members of the London School Board, 1870–1904', in The London Feminist History Group (eds), *The Sexual Dynamics of History,* London, Pluto Press, 1983; J.Martin, '"Hard-headed and Large-hearted": Women and the Industrial Schools, 1870–1885', *History of Education,* 1991, vol. 20, pp. 187–202; J.Martin, 'Entering the Public Arena: The Female Members of the London School Board, 1870–1904', *History of Education,* 1993, vol. 22, pp. 225–40; J.Martin, *Women and the Politics of Schooling in Victorian and Edwardian England,* London, Leicester University Press, 1999. F.Hunt, *Gender and Policy in English Education 1902–1944,* London, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991.

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8 J.Blackmore and J.Kenway (eds), *Gender Matters in Educational Administration and Policy.*

9 M.Hughes, "The Shrieking Sisterhood", p. 255.

10 See, for example, N.Daglish, *Education Policy-making in England and Wales. The Crucible Years, 1895–1911,* London, Woburn, 1996.

11 P.Rabinow, *The Foucault Reader,* Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1986, p. 64, quoted in S.J.Ball, *Education Reform: A Critical and Post-structural Approach,* Buckingham, Open University Press, 1994, p. 22.

12 J.Kenway. 'Feminist Theories of the State: To Be or Not To Be?', in M.Blair, J.Holland, with S.Sheldon (eds), *Identity and Diversity: Gender and the Experience of Education,* Clevedon, Multilingual Matters, 1995, p. 134.

13 F.Hunt, *Gender and Policy in English Education 1902–1944,* p. 11.

14 J.Blackmore and J.Kenway (eds), *Gender Matters in Educational Administration and Policy,* pp. 44ff.

15 S.J.Ball, *Education Reform,* pp. 15, 23.

16 Ibid., pp. 16, 23.

17 M.Hughes, "The Shrieking Sisterhood", p. 255.

18 Ibid.

19 M.Andrews, *The Acceptable Face of Feminism: The Women's Institute as a Social Movement,* London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1997, p. x. See, for example, the work of Sue Morgan: S.Morgan, '"The Secret and Method of Purity": Sexual and Moral Education in the Writings of Ellice Hopkins', unpublished paper, History of Education Society Conference, Winchester, 1999; S.Morgan, 'Private Virtue, Public Witness: Women, Religion and Sexual Morality', unpublished paper, University of Portsmouth, 1999; S.Morgan, *A Passion for Purity: Ellice Hopkins and the Politics of Gender in the Late-Victorian Church,* Bristol, University of Bristol Press, 1999.

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21 Ibid., p. 5.
22 S.Adler, J.Laney and M.Packer, *Managing Women: Feminism and Power in Educational Management,* Buckingham, Open University Press, 1993; J. Blackmore and J.Kenway (eds), *Gender Matters in Educational Administration and Policy,* p. 57.
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26 S.J.Ball, *Education Reform,* p. 19.
27 For the view of women as teachers rather than administrators, see K.J.Brehony, '"The School Masters' Parliament": The Origins and Formation of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education 1868–1916', *History of Education,* 1994, vol. 23, no. 2, p. 191.
28 M.P.Ryan, 'The Power of Women's Networks', in J.L.Newton, M.P.Ryan and J.R.Walkowitz (eds), *Sex and Class in Women's History,* London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983; M.Vicinus, *Independent Women,* London, Virago, 1985.
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30 J.Blackmore and J.Kenway (eds), *Gender Matters in Educational Administration and Policy,* p. 50.
31 A three-year research project, 'Women and the Governance of Girls' Secondary Schools in Britain, 1870–1997', directed by Sylvia Harrop and Joyce Goodman, is currently being funded by the Spencer Foundation.
32 C.Norwood, *The English Educational System,* London, Benn's 6d. Library, 1928, p. 5.
33 K.J.Brehony, "The School Masters' Parliament", p. 171.
34 F.Hunt, *Gender and Policy in English Education 1902–1944,* p. 61.
35 On the 'new type of woman', see C.S.Bremner, *Education of Girls and Women in Great Britain,* London, Swann Sonnenschein, 1897, p. 223.
36 For example: 'mechanisms are essential for overcoming the discrimination that women face. It is not that women cannot succeed on their merits, but that without mechanisms in place women are not given the chance to try'. *Towards Equality,* London, Fawcett Society, Winter 1999, p. 8, regarding 'Making Politics Work for Women'.
37 A.L.Lilley, *Sir Joshua Fitch. An Account of his Life and Work,* London, Edward Arnold, 1906, pp. 160–1.

Part I

Women and school governance

2 Women governors and the management of working-class schools, 1800–1861

Joyce Goodman

> It must, I think in the first place be admitted, that Female Charity Schools require such a variety of minute attentions in order to their answering the ends of their Institution, that they ought always to be regulated and superintended by Ladies. A Committee, composed of Gentlemen, meeting once a month, however adequate it may be to the perfect good management of a similar Institution for Boys, can have no idea of the various particulars respecting their clothing, habits, and employments, trifling in the detail, but important in the amount, that ought to form a part of the fixed regulation of a School for Girls.[1]

Catharine Cappe's contention in 1805, that women of the 'middling sort' had a role to play in managing the education of the female poor, is upheld by evidence from the committee minutes and reports of local schools and from the annual reports of the voluntary education societies in the early decades of the nineteenth century.[2] This chapter will consider women's claims to a position of authority in schools for the female poor, and will examine women's management practice in the light of the social position of women and the changing administrative structures of education. The chapter will also consider some of the contradictions of women's approaches to the management of female education during this period for both female pupils and women governors themselves.

Women, authority and the education of the poor

The growing involvement of women in the governance of early nineteenth-century schools was part of wider developments in British society at home and the expansion of the British colonies abroad.[3] Against the background of fears of social unrest resulting from the French revolution and the recurrent rumblings of the Napoleonic Wars, evangelical writers like Hannah More saw women's philanthropic work for the education of the poor as a crucial means by which both rich and poor alike were to be reformed and the social tensions of the period managed.[4] Women basing their educational philosophies on Locke's ideas of *tabula rasa* and Hartley's theories of

association, and spanning the Scottish Enlightenment and the rational dissent of Unitarianism, joined with those from Anglicanism, with educational philosophies based on original sin, in seeing education as a crucial means by which society at home and abroad might be reformed, and in portraying an important role for women in that reformation. Catharine Cappe, Priscilla Wakefield, Elizabeth Hamilton, and groups like the Ladies Committee for the Education and Employment of the Female Poor portrayed educational activities with the female poor as the patriotic duty of British women. Against the backdrop of the wars with France, work in education was seen by them as one of the ways in which they could actively participate in shaping national character and national interest, at a time when notions of Englishness were being re-defined in the aftermath of the French Revolution and in the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft.[5]

Women eager to carve out a role in the developing educational provision for the poor claimed that practical experience of education gained in the family provided women with educational skills that men simply did not possess. The Anglican Sarah Trimmer was well known for establishing Sunday schools and schools of industry for the poor at Brentford and for advising Queen Charlotte on the setting up of royal Sunday schools and schools of industry at Windsor.[6] She noted in her *Oeconomy of Charity:*

> The task of early education in all families naturally devolves upon mothers: and those who discharge this duty are consequently particularly qualified to open the understandings of poor children…. Accustomed to instruct their own families, women acquire a pleasing and easy method of communicating knowledge, which is more engaging to the young and ignorant than the graver methods generally employed by learned and scientific men.[7]

By the early nineteenth century, philanthropic educational work for the children of the poor was being seen as a particularly suitable occupation for women.[8] Women like Catharine Cappe argued that educational work with girls should only be done by women, with their superior knowledge of the female sex. Women's educational work was located within the more general shifts in society from the 1750s onwards towards more humanistic forms of control which accompanied the rise of evangelicalism.[9] 'Care' for the poor was expressed through a whole range of pedagogical activities which were meant to 'guard, guide and educate, with the aim of transforming individuals into good persons and decent citizens'.[10] The pedagogical relations of 'care' constructed power in complex ways, empowering women and reworking relations of authority and the institutions of society, both in Britain and the British colonies.[11]

The work of women school governors was also situated within the shift in the locus of authority from the private sphere of household and family to the public one of local or national government, a shift which affected the education and training of children and young people.[12] The sporadic

expansion of the charity-school movement of the eighteenth century, and the establishment of the day schools of the voluntary education societies in the nineteenth century, supplemented or replaced the often cursory learning that poor children received in the home or the local dame school. As the century progressed, schools increasingly availed themselves of state aid, with its requirement for inspection and its gradually growing bureaucratic forms of educational administration. In the early decades of the nineteenth century, however, the administrative structures of education were embryonic, and still sufficiently local in character to be compatible with contemporary constructions of 'suitable' interaction and activity for women.

Shifts in the management of wealth formed one facet of the changing exercise of authority in society. The move to the joint-stock financing of associated philanthropy widened the social composition of those contributing to and managing philanthropic educational ventures.[13] Changes in the management of wealth also impelled the move to provide for unmarried daughters through annuities and for married women through marriage settlements which culminated in the Dower Act of 1833.[14] The result of these related changes was not only an expansion of philanthropic educational initiatives for the poor, and a widening of the social composition of those involved, but also that more women were able to contribute to charitable ventures in their own right and so fulfil the conditions for eligibility to stand for a committee. Factors at many levels, spanning issues of class, gender and nation, the embryonic nature of educational administration and the growing importance of notions of 'care', interacted to enable women to take an active role in the management of education for the female poor at the start of the nineteenth century.

Committee women

Women became involved in the education of the poor in a variety of ways. Some women simply set up informal day or Sunday schools in their back kitchens or outhouses.[15] For women like Catharine Cappe, experience of managing and teaching in the familiar domestic environment was later transferred to more formal committee situations.[16] Individual charitable women also established, financed and managed schools of varying types in premises outside their own homes.[17] Some, like Sarah Trimmer, became famous nationally both for their educational work and for their writings about education for the poor. Others came from the landed gentry. Lady Olivia Sparrow's day schools were praised by government inspectors, while the Dowager Countess Spencer took instruction in flax spinning so that she could assist in her school when the teacher was ill.[18] Some women managed their schools themselves, while others set up committees to help. The Dowager Countess Spencer chaired the first committee meeting of the Sunday schools founded in the Abbey Parish of St Albans, and was a member of the ladies' committee of the National Society and a lady visitor of the National Society's

model school at Baldwins Gardens.[19] Women from the families of clergy, particularly those within cathedral hierarchies, often worked with male members of their families in establishing and administering schools.[20] Sisters like Hannah, Martha and Patti More, the Misses Franks of Campsel and the Misses Hussey of Sandhurst also worked together in establishing and supervising schools for the poor.[21]

Women also managed schools as members of formal school committees, or acted as lady visitors working in conjunction with male committees in schools which were sometimes affiliated to the national parent bodies of the voluntary education societies. Between 1800 and 1809, The Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor noted schools administered by ladies' committees at Clapham, Kendal, Leeds, Kensington, Edinburgh, Chester, Dublin and Cheltenham.[22] Between 1812 and 1820, the National Society regularly reported on schools administered by ladies' committees or served by lady visitors, as did the British and Foreign School Society between 1800 and 1833.[23] From its earliest days, the latter advised that a local girls' school should be under the management of a female committee, which was to conduct the school according to the general rules of the society and report regularly to the general committee.[24] In 1844 Mr Fletcher, Government Inspector for the Northern Division, noted in his report that British schools in his area usually had a ladies' committee which took care of the girls' and infant schools.[25] The Wesleyan Education Committee, influenced by the teaching of David Stowe, preferred local Wesleyan schools to be mixed.[26] Nonetheless, between 1848 and 1860 this committee reported on mixed schools, girls' schools and infant schools supported by ladies' committees or with lady visitors.[27] As the government grant and inspection system developed, inspectors' reports illustrate that some female school committees and their teachers successfully negotiated the grant system after the 1830s.[28]

Schools run by committees operated with a variety of management structures. Some, like the Blue Girls' School at Chester, were run by women as relatively autonomous concerns.[29] Others, like the Ladies Jubilee Female Charity School at Manchester, were run by dual male and female committees, with the men taking the overall responsibility for the financial affairs of the school while the women dealt with the day-to-day supervision from another committee, ostensibly mirroring the prescriptive domestic ideology of early nineteenth-century society.[30] Other school committees developed more complex management structures. The Unitarian Lower Mosley Street School in Manchester, where Elizabeth Gaskell was a committee member, was administered during the 1830s by five committees responsible for different aspects of the school, with female committees for the girls' and infants' schools, while the committee of the evening schools was a joint undertaking.[31]

The amount of authority exercised by women in dual-committee structures varied from school to school. Some women, like those of the Suffolk District National Society, acted as lady visitors and only inspected the needlework.[32] In other schools, as at the Manchester Juvenile Refuge and School of Industry,

women acted as collectors, raising the necessary finance for the school.[33] In some dual-committee structures, women effectively ran the school, while being subordinate to a male committee under the terms of the constitution. At the York Grey Coat School, Catharine Cappe recorded how the women of the committee worked unstintingly on a rota that changed every six weeks. During their allotted period they visited the school at least once a week, minutely inspecting every aspect of school life, from the girls' reading, spelling and spinning to the produce grown in the garden and the food served to the girls. They recorded their observations in the minute book, signed all the bills, oversaw the matron's accounts and sold the girls' spinning work to local manufacturers, in addition to administering a female friendly society for the girls as they left the school. Yet, as Catharine Cappe bitterly complained, any new uninformed member of the male committee had the power to veto their decisions, a situation which she noted with regret had caused several of the women to resign.[34]

In contrast, where schools had been set up by groups of charitable ladies, women often took overall responsibility for the regulation of the finance and the management of the staff and pupils, as well as for the various charities they might attach to the school. At the Chester Blue Girls' School, in addition to managing the affairs of the school, the women organised a clothing club for the girls and supervised two charities for the support of 'aged spinster women' in the city. Under the terms of wills left by two former school committee members, these two charities were to be administered at the school committee meetings.[35] This more extended role was also in evidence in schools taken over by women from men. In 1816, the committee of the Blue Girls' School took over the management of the Chester Sunday and Working Schools for Girls from the male, largely ecclesiastical committee, with whom they had previously been working in a subordinate advisory capacity as lady visitors. The women amalgamated the working schools into one day school, which they affiliated to the National Society, before going on to erect a new building for their pupils.[36] In such situations, women made decisions relating to buildings and the investment of stock, supervised the school's personnel and both the hidden and formal curricula, as well as dealing with the girls and their parents. In Chester, women from these two school committees were committee members for the Lying-in Charity and the Penitentiary, and so took their part in the more general 'management' of the female poor across the city. In York, the women of the two schools of which Catharine Cappe was a committee member looked after the future welfare of the girls when they left school through their female friendly society, which provided sick benefit, maternity benefit, relief when out of work, and finally an old age pension.[37] The sixty women of the Kensington Ladies' Society for the Care of Schools and the Promotion of the Welfare of the Female Poor visited the charity school, the workhouse school, the Sunday school and the school of industry, and met once a month at each others' homes to discuss the schools, cases of distress among women and maternity cases.[38]

The minute books of the Chester Infant School Society illustrate that the exercise of authority by women could be seen as problematic. When the Chester infant schools were erected in 1826, women raised the necessary finances for three school buildings.[39] Despite the existence of female expertise in educational management in the city and the financial support of the women, the schools were administered from their inception by a committee of twenty-four men. By 1855 attendance at committee meetings had fallen to such an extent that several meetings had only one member present. To remedy this situation, the male committee added women visitors to the management structure, with a remit restricted to making recommendations about the daily management of the schools to the all-male committee. When it came to writing the annual report in 1856, the Lord Bishop and the five assembled clergy directed the secretary 'to expunge all references to the work of women' from the report.[40] Women belonging to more than one school committee in Chester operated within and across a range of management hierarchies structured around gender, as well as negotiating shifts in authority between male and female committees.

Property law and the management of school finance

Even in those schools where women acted in an autonomous manner, one consequence of nineteenth century property law was that female and male governors were located differently in relation to the management of school finance. Under common law, the effect of 'couverture' was that a married woman could not act in a legal capacity and so was not able to bind herself by contract.[41] As a result, a married woman could not act as a trustee in her own right. Trustees were generally appointed to be responsible for the property in which the school was housed, and they dealt with investment of a school's surplus funds.[42] Because one of the main functions of trusteeship was in relation to the school and its building, financial liability could be contracted personally by trustees upon a school's account. Technically, a single or widowed woman could act as a trustee, but once she was married, if she was unprovided for under the law of equity, a woman lost contractual capacity; if she wished to act as a trustee she had to have her husband's name added to the trust deed, and he had to give permission for all her acts as a trustee.[43] Under these circumstances, a body of trustees might be required to consider the views of an individual not of its own choosing, and this may have operated as a powerful disincentive to the appointment of single women to trusteeship. It may have held particular consequences for the management of endowed schools, where the management was generally vested in trustees. Single women, widows, or married women in receipt of a marriage settlement and provided for under the rules of equity, had more scope to regulate financial affairs. Whatever their status in respect of property, however, 'couverture' affected the ability of committees of women running schools as independent concerns

to manage their finances without recourse to men. Once a school had become successful and had surplus capital to invest, men were often incorporated into the management structure as trustees.

In the 1820s, the women committee members of the Consolidated School at Chester attempted to invest surplus funds by purchasing £100 of 3 per cent consols on behalf of the school in the names of Jane Hesketh, Sarah Susannah Mainwaring, Lydia Potts and Elizabeth Thackeray as trustees. At the following committee meeting, they were informed by the secretary 'that married Ladies could not act as Trustees on the purchase of Funds in the Bank of England as ordered at the last Board'. The women proceeded to name male family members as trustees to act upon their behalf in matters of investment.[44] Where women governors appointed male trustees to act on their behalf, it was officially the women, as elected committee members, who remained in charge of the management of a school's finance. Trustees were supposed to carry out the wishes of the women on whose behalf they acted, not take decisions in their own right.[45] This left women in a curious position, making the 'rational' decisions about finance but unable to effect the more 'public' aspects of investment themselves. Conversely, male trustees were able to effect decisions they were not empowered to make. During the building programme at the Consolidated School in Chester between 1853 and 1854, the male trustees carried out the women's wishes, dealing with the workmen, architect, lawyers and Ecclesiastical Commissioners. The men provided the estimates and the information on which the women based their decisions, but it was the women, as elected governors, who had the authority to take the decisions and who ordered the necessary stock to be sold to finance the building. At times, the women vetoed the suggestions of the male trustees and withheld payment to the builders until the work was completed to their satisfaction.[46] Although the women governors held the authority to make decisions relating to the finance, their dealings with men in economic affairs were limited to a small circle of those personally known to them.

Similarly, many of the official links between girls' schools and outside bodies were managed by men, particularly the local clergy. Examples of women, especially Nonconformist women, managing external 'public' relationships and acting as correspondents, secretaries and treasurers can be found in the records of voluntary education societies. Fifteen of the ninetytwo schools visited by the British and Foreign School Society's Inspector in and around the City of London in 1833 had a female secretary, and there was the occasional woman treasurer.[47] Fewer women in comparable positions can be found in the Wesleyan Education Committee reports.[48] At the National Society, Miss Nicholson of Clifton-on-Dunsmoor National School proved an extremely active school correspondent, successfully negotiating with the society in 1849 for grants for the rebuilding of a parish school accommodating 140 children. She requested advice and building plans for the new school from the National Society, organised the solicitor to send the necessary

verification proving that the school had been opened free from debt and carried on a correspondence with the society in her quest for suitable teachers. The note written by the society's officer on the application for aid, which refers to Miss Nicholson as 'him', illustrates, however, the novelty of a woman fulfilling this task.[49]

Despite their legal difficulties, and despite views of appropriate social interaction for middle-class women, some women school governors, like Miss Nicholson, did gain experience in managing investment, in passing accounts and in dealing with estimates from workmen.[50] Some female committees dealt with the maintenance of buildings and took advice on investment themselves, before deciding upon a particular course of investment and advising their trustees accordingly.[51] In many instances, by assiduous solicitation of subscriptions, by careful attention to the knitting and needlework of the girls (which could be sold), and by running charitable bazaars to meet large-scale building programmes, women were able to support their schools themselves. In 1810, the women of the Blue Girls' School decided to erect a new 'convenient and substantial Building' in which to house their school. A special appeal for subscriptions was set afoot and a Charitable Assembly or bazaar held in the Exchange at Chester. Although this raised sufficient funds to cover the estimates for the work, the actual expenditure exceeded the estimates and a second appeal for funds to meet the deficit was made.

> The Ladies making up the account of the money expended in building and furnishing the House…are concerned to find, that owing to the increased price of labour and of Timber and other materials, though procured upon reasonable terms, the expenses they have unavoidably incurred, considerably exceed the money collected and received for the above purpose.[52]

In 1827, the British and Foreign School Society noted that women had paid off the debt remaining from the building work of the new girls' school at Bloomsbury and Pancras (built in 1822) and that the school was self-supporting, stating, 'The ladies have been able to meet the whole expense of their schools.'[53]

School records illustrate the financial skills that some committees of women did indeed possess. If their schools were to prosper, women running schools of industry like those at York had to make economically sound decisions when investing in spinning wheels and raw materials, and when dealing with local manufacturers. As Catharine Cappe's ten different sets of calculations for managing the finance of the York Female Friendly Society illustrate, women running female friendly societies had to draw up comprehensive financial plans if their societies were to remain viable for the length of time required to provide girls with pensions in their old age.[54] At the simplest level, subscription and donation lists from schools illustrate the way that women often consciously gave their money to those schools where women took the major share in management.[55] The activities of women

school governors provide a qualification to views enshrined in property law and in nineteenth-century patterns of property ownership, that nineteenth-century middle-class women were non-economic beings who lacked the rationality required for the active management of property or funds.[56] Their activities also point to the need to investigate the daily practice of women, rather than relying on prescriptive or legal description. For the activities of women school governors crossed the nineteenth-century categories of 'public' and 'private' associated with the construction of masculinities and femininities in complex ways.

Women school governors' management practice

Catharine Cappe noted that while men might manage with a committee meeting for a boys' school once a month, stricter regulation of a girls' school was necessary because the period spent in the school constituted the whole of a girl's education. This was not, she argued, the case for boys, who continued to learn a trade when they were apprenticed, whereas girls simply became menial household servants.[57] Many female committees organised complex rotas for the inspection of schools, which often occurred on a weekly basis and sometimes daily. In 1804 in Leeds, where women managed a number of industrial schools, the women committee members were expected to act for a week at a time on a rota basis. They were to inspect their appointed school twice a day in person, or by proxy, and visit the homes of the poor who were seeking admission to the schools for their children.[58] Sarah Mainwaring wrote in the Visitors Book of the Chester Blue Girls' School in 1814: 'I have during the last month visited the school always twice a week and sometimes oftener and have invariably had reason to admire Mrs Parrys and the general conduct of the Girls and their improvements.'[59] At Doncaster National School in 1820, the women visited every day, while at Lower Mosley Street Schools in Manchester, two women acted as visitors each week on a rota system.[60]

Closer supervision of girls' schools than of those for boys was related at a practical level to the gendered division of labour within the middle ranks of society itself; for women had time at their disposal for supervising their schools, while men were often too busy in commerce or industry to have the necessary time for frequent visiting. The close supervision of girls' schools also formed part of the pedagogical strategies of surveillance which lay at the heart of 'care'. As Annemieke van Drenth has argued, the gendered and pedagogical relations of 'care' formed a new disciplinary force in the nineteenth century, characterising evangelical philanthropic work in general and the work of women in particular. The relations of 'care' worked through strategies which paid attention to identity, the inner self and self-examination. In the relations of 'care', aspects of power, identity, surveillance, subjection and subjectivity were interrelated in a process in which personal contact between carer and cared for and notions of morality played key roles.[61]

The moral behaviour of their pupils was a central concern for female school committees. The founders of the Manchester Ladies Jubilee Female Charity School wrote:

> The moral depravity, ignorance and almost unparalleled contempt of modesty and orderly conduct among the labouring class of females in this populous and manufacturing town, cannot have escaped the notice of the most inattentive observer…. [T]he notoriety of seduction and prostitution, the scandalous outrages to decency and decorum, which are exhibited daily in our streets by whole crowds of Female children demand the vigorous exertions of every Friend to religion and Virtue.[62]

Women governors often aimed to transform their charges in terms of the respectable femininity thought necessary in domestic servants and the wives of the poor. The pedagogical relations between female committees and pupils were framed in terms of surveillance and evaluation of the girls, which began from the time of their entry to a school when a girl's family background might be inquired into publicly.[63] The frequent visiting of schools by female committees enabled the personal assessment of the character of each girl to be ongoing. Reward and punishment systems illustrated in a very visible form a committee's evaluation of the 'character' of each girl. At the Consolidated School, the girls paid regularly into the fund for clothing, but conferral of the clothing remained a privilege bestowed upon girls by the ladies' committee at their meetings.[64] Clothing was recalled if a girl's misbehaviour was thought to warrant it. When girls left the school, the committee's assessment of each girl's behaviour and 'character' determined precisely which garments she might take with her and which she had to leave behind.[65] The clothes provided the girl with the very necessary 'outfit' for service, and so played a part in determining the type of servant a girl might become. Girls were often expected to appear before committees after being in service for one year, and then at decreed intervals later, and committee women applied for references as to former pupils' 'characters' from their employers.[66] Writers like Hannah More continually stressed that sexual immorality, libertinism and 'degradation' were characteristics of the French which had led to the 'horrors' of revolution in France.[67] Women governors' face-to-face management style and stress on morality operated in terms of power which related to class, gender and nation at a level that was wider than the individual or the school.

Many aspects of domesticity suffused the pedagogical relations of women governors' management style. The boundaries between home and school were blurred as women governors employed the skills and values they used in their own homes to manage schools. They paid special attention to honesty, sobriety, industry, chastity, quietness, gentleness, compassion, cleanliness and neatness, gendered and classed characteristics central to the smooth running of the well-ordered home, and thought to be desirable to foster in domestic servants and future wives.[68] In some schools, the school rules and dress

mirrored those of domestic service. Similarly, boundaries between teaching and managing were not sharply defined. At Wands worth National School, as well as cutting out the sewing articles in their own homes, the women who inspected the school attended for two hours each morning and each afternoon to assist with the needlework and knitting.[69] The Misses More both taught and supervised in their Sunday schools, and the Misses Hussey alternately taught and 'officiated' in their National School at Sandhurst in the 1820s.[70] Male committees of the period invariably ranked men according to station and ecclesiastical office when recording who was present, whereas female committees did not sharply differentiate committee roles. In England, committees lacking titled women were often noted in alphabetical order, and very few chairpersons were noted in the minutes.[71] Offices, too, were frequently rotated in alphabetical order.[72] Where distinctions between women committee members did occur, they were likely to be on the basis of age. At the Ladies Jubilee Female Charity School in 1812, the constitution of the school required the casting vote to be given to the oldest woman present when there was a stalemate on the committee.[73] In 1816 the female committee structure of the newly constituted Chester Consolidated School made a distinction between the married women 'directresses' and the 'young ladies', who acted as 'inspecting visitors'.[74]

At one level, these managerial relations of 'care' appear in line with claims of contemporary feminist writers on educational management that women managers developed a distinctive management style, less concerned with hierarchy and bureaucracy than men.[75] Other aspects, however, support Jill Blackmore's critique of the notion of a 'female' management style: that it focuses on the similarities among women in their ways of seeing, knowing, organising and leading, and treats women as a homogenous group, without differences in class or ethnicity.[76] In the early nineteenth century, the face-to-face, local and particular nature of women governors' exercise of 'caring power' formed one means by which early nineteenth-century women played a part in constructing the class relations of society.[77] The tensions of class embodied in the pedagogical relations of 'care' are clearly evident in the complaints of ladies' committees about the dishonesty and rudeness, lying and 'want of subordination' of their female pupils, and in the actions of the girls who, with the contrivance of their parents, absconded from the schools where they boarded.[78] Women governors' management practice mirrored the writings of women educationalists of the period, many of whom, like Priscilla Wakefield, Hannah More, Sarah Trimmer, Clara Reeve, Mrs West and Miss Hatfield, viewed education in terms of confirming status hierarchies between the female rich and poor.[79]

Women school governors and the development of bureaucracy

As the century progressed, the face-to-face relations exercised by women in female pedagogies of 'care' were eroded by the rise of bureaucratic forms of

management, which formed a facet of the growth of state activity itself. The development of state and local government in the nineteenth century was accompanied by administrative reform at many levels and by the increasing power of paid officials, some of whom came to wield great power. The gradually expanding bureaucratic administrative machinery was part of the reorganisation of state and local government on the grounds of efficiency and merit.[80] Where female education was concerned, the rise of bureaucracy had both favourable and unfavourable aspects.

Feminist writers have argued that the practice of bureaucracy is gendered and that this holds consequences both for the nature of organisational practice and for the different modes of organisational action on the part of women and men.[81] It has been argued that notions of bureaucratic management occupy an abstracted conceptual space, detached from the local and particular, and separable from particular individuals who filled particular roles.[82] Notions of bureaucratic management, therefore, embody constructs at variance with the face-to-face relationships and fluid boundaries which characterised the gendered practices and power relations of 'care'. Some feminist arguments about organisational practice and bureaucracy rely upon sharply defined binary categorisations of the 'public' and the 'private' and of rationality.[83] Bipolar constructions of this type, however, are brought into question by the location of women governors across both 'public' and 'private', particularly in respect of the management of finance. Nonetheless, the face-to-face relations which underpinned women's exercise of 'caring power' in the early nineteenth century were at variance with the newly developing forms of authority. Records of the Consolidated School and the Lower Mosley Street School, both of which adopted mixed committees and more sharply defined committee roles, illustrate the slow but inexorable marginalisation of women, as committees became dominated by men.[84]

This marginalisation was not an uncontested process, however, as the minute books of the Ladies Jubilee Female Charity School demonstrate. From 1842, changes in the management of the school moved it towards a more bureaucratic management structure. By 1856, a report reorganising the management was presented to the Ladies' Committee by the Assistant Committee of Gentlemen. Detailed duties for the school's teachers and matron were outlined, delineating their respective roles and their relationships to the various committees on different matters. The respective duties of the committees were redefined, and revised timetables and diet sheets for the pupils were published. It was now no longer the oldest person present who had the casting vote at meetings but the president of the meeting, which in joint committee meetings was a man. A new mixed House Committee was established and became effectively an executive committee, taking over the day-to-day running of the school, with the matron and teachers reporting to it. It took over many of the duties of the ladies' committee, but in practice reported to the male assistant committee. These developments, in which

roles, duties, authority relationships and boundaries for interaction were clearly defined, initially worked to the detriment of the women managers. They formally undermined the women's role in the school in respect of decision-making and lessened their contact with the pupils and staff, and hence their opportunities to exert their authority in the face-to-face manner they had previously practised. These changes culminated in a disagreement between the two committees over the way the school was being managed. In a series of letters, the women argued that 'tradition' decreed that they should have the chief role in the management of the education of girls. Following resignations from both female and male committees, the women committee members resumed much of their former authority in the school and reverted to many of their former management practices, dispensing with the House Committee.[85]

Some of the contradictions implicit in women's relational pedagogy of 'care' are made visible by the shift to bureaucratic forms of management. During the dispute at the Ladies Jubilee Female Charity School, arguments about the women's right to manage were interlocked with the ideals of a school founded for the production of 'private' domestic servants. In this situation, the a-bureaucratic, face-to-face management relations of 'caring power' empowered the women governors, while simultaneously engendering the identity formation and 'docile body' of the future domestic servant. At both the Blue Girls' School and the Ladies Jubilee Female Charity School, where these types of management strategies flourished for decades, the schools remained geared to the vocational training of domestic servants. In contrast, schools moving to more bureaucratic, mixed committees, where women were liable to experience a loss of numbers and of power, widened the curriculum for the female pupils. The Lower Mosley Street Girls' School provided one of the widest curricula for girls in the city of Manchester and the Consolidated School eventually developed into a higher grade school.[86]

Bureaucratic shifts also involved a gradual realignment of the relations between philanthropic 'lady managers' and elementary school teachers. In the early years of the nineteenth century, some female school committees sent their prospective teachers to the Chester Consolidated School to acquire a cursory training: 'The Ladies of Penrith having sent Miss Robinson to learn the system, the Committee of this school this day examined her and think her quite Mistress of the plan and competent to conduct a school'.[87]

With the advance of the government grant system from 1833, the official apprenticing of elementary teachers via the pupil-teacher system from 1842 and the gradually increasing training of the elementary teacher, such practices were no longer appropriate. Female elementary teachers also began to acquire a more professional, though contested, identity. In 1857, the women of the Lower Mosley Street School found it necessary to assure their subscribers that the teacher in the girls' school did not see their visits as interference.[88]

The incursion of the state in its many guises into education compounded issues of authority for women governors. While some individual women

and female committees did successfully negotiate the government grant system, and a few avenues were open to women to influence those who actually wielded state power, property law and notions of 'couverture' which did not recognise the civic existence of women meant that no woman could wield power in her own right as an elected or appointed official of the state.[89] Through a variety of interrelated developments, the growth of the state bureaucracy progressively distanced women from the centre of the educational decision-making process. As the Committee of Council gradually took on a more proactive role in regulating the governance of schools, debates about the constitution and *modus operandi* of governing bodies were carried on between the male officials of the state and the men in positions of power at the head of the voluntary education societies. Such debates often hinged around questions of denominational control, which masked questions of gendered power. Over time the bureaucratic approach to educational management came to be adopted as 'management practice', with the consequent undermining and 'silencing' in management theory, as it developed, of the types of non-hierarchical committee relationships employed by women in early nineteenth-century female schools.[90] By the early twentieth century, the development of bureaucratic forms of management and an associated model of masculinity defined in terms of 'the rational, unemotional, logical and authoritative aspects of human behaviour' had constructed administration as a 'masculinist enterprise' in opposition to the 'feminine' enterprise of teaching.[91]

Conclusion

The extent of the activities of women governors in those schools where women acted in a largely autonomous manner illustrates that some women exercised considerable authority in schools in their localities. In some schools women governors gained access to the 'rational' management of funds, although *de jure* this was denied to them. Some women also managed the external and 'public' face of their school. Women governors in early nineteenth-century schools for working-class girls did not simply reverse and revalue the bipolarities through which women's subordination in society had been constructed. Rather, they exercised authority in a manner which crossed the boundaries of 'public' and 'private' in complex ways.

Yet, to conclude that the early decades of the nineteenth century were a 'golden age' for women governors would be misplaced.[92] Women largely administered the education of girls and infants. Even here, in some schools, notions of the 'private' and their encoding in property law confined their opportunities for action and kept them focussed inward on the institution with a very restricted role, responsible to an all-male committee. Furthermore, women's pedagogy of 'caring power' held ramifications for the construction of gendered relations of class, which resulted in working-class girls receiving a restricted curriculum. In some schools, the rise of

bureaucracy led to a widening curriculum for girls, but the loss of women from governing bodies. Nonetheless, whether women ran a school as a relatively autonomous concern or were responsible to a male committee, school governance did represent an exercise of female authority outside the home. The managerial activities of women school governors endorse Amanda Vickery's contention that historians should question the ideological power of the 'separate spheres' rhetoric in the confinement of women in this period, as well as its role in the making of the middle class itself.[93] Women governors' exercise of 'caring power' supports Linda Colley's conclusion that the conservative backlash resulting from the French Revolution may well have provided greater opportunities for female participation in public life. Indeed, the early nineteenth-century view that 'domestic affections' extended into the public and national arena located women governors' pedagogy of 'care' as a wider form of 'active citizenship' than that formally recognised by the state.[94]

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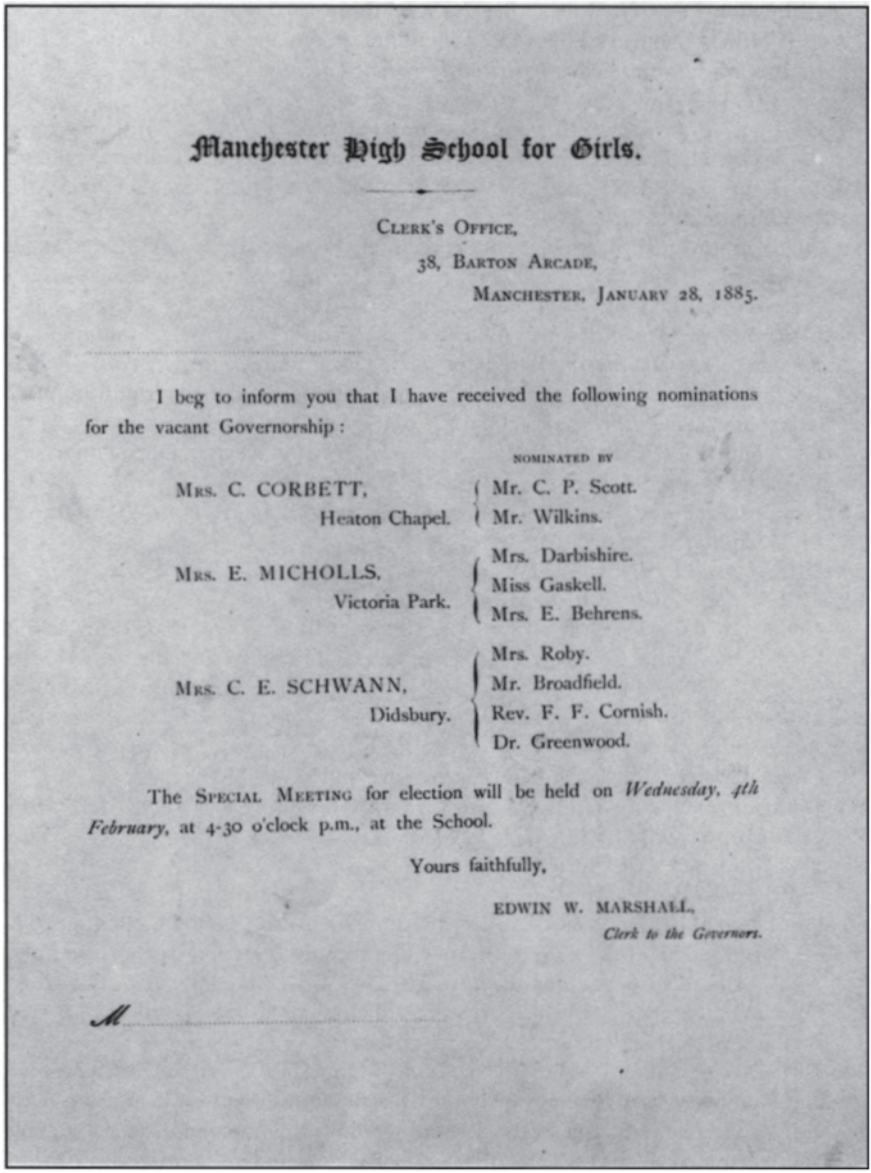

Manchester High School for Girls.

CLERK'S OFFICE,
38, BARTON ARCADE,
MANCHESTER, JANUARY 28, 1885.

I beg to inform you that I have received the following nominations for the vacant Governorship:

	NOMINATED BY
MRS. C. CORBETT, Heaton Chapel.	Mr. C. P. Scott. Mr. Wilkins.
MRS. E. MICHOLLS, Victoria Park.	Mrs. Darbishire. Miss Gaskell. Mrs. E. Behrens.
MRS. C. E. SCHWANN, Didsbury.	Mrs. Roby. Mr. Broadfield. Rev. F. F. Cornish. Dr. Greenwood.

The SPECIAL MEETING for election will be held on *Wednesday, 4th February*, at 4-30 o'clock p.m., at the School.

Yours faithfully,

EDWIN W. MARSHALL,
Clerk to the Governors.

Plate 1 Manchester High School, Notice of Election of Governors, January 1885
With acknowledgement to the Governors of Manchester High School

3 Governing ladies

Women governors of middle-class girls' schools, 1870–1925

Joyce Goodman and Sylvia Harrop

> Mrs. Mallet…alluded to the excellent work performed by women in the field of secondary education…because women are among the Governors, and leave teachers free to carry out original and practical ideas.[1]

By the time Mrs. Mallet spoke at the Women's Liberal Federation Annual Council Meeting in 1899, academic high schools for girls had been established in most parts of the country. The new girls' high schools were conceived as 'public', managed by boards of governors, rather than owned by the private individuals who had formerly provided the bulk of middle-class girls' education.[2] The foundation statutes of most of the new girls' schools required women to be governors, but practice differed greatly from school to school. There was considerable opposition to the idea of women governors in some of the endowed schools providing education for girls under the Endowed Schools Act of 1869.[3] The question of women's membership of governing bodies was still a point of much discussion in the 1890s. At the 1893 Conference on Secondary Education, Arthur Sidgwick argued strongly that women be allowed to serve on governing bodies.[4] In Wales, the Association for Promoting the Education of Girls stressed that an adequate female representation on the governing bodies of girls' schools was crucial. In the pamphlet, *The Position of Women on the Governing Bodies of Educational Institutions,* prepared for the Association in 1899, Dr Sophie Bryant showed a 'deficiency of women governors' and argued that there was insufficient power in the hands of women.[5] Witnesses to the Bryce Commission called for women governors not only on every governing body dealing with the education of girls, but also on the bodies that administered education locally.[6]

The pattern of women's involvement as governors of girls' secondary schools since the late nineteenth century is complex, but it is clear that the new forms of organisation and governance of girls' education afforded a number of women scope for the exercise of 'active citizenship'. This chapter explores the opportunities for women governors from the 1860s to the late 1920s, by examining the governance of four girls' secondary schools. Two of these, Clifton High School and Manchester High School, were associated with the nineteenth century women's movement. The other two, King Edward VI High School at Birmingham and the Harpur Trust's Bedford High School, were established

on long-standing foundations which also administered boys' schools and middle schools for girls. The chapter looks at the position of women governors in the early foundation of the four schools, the socio-economic background and intellectual and political networks of the women governors, their roles on the governing bodies, and the changing relationships between women governors and headmistresses. The chapter ends by briefly discussing the consequences for women governors of state intervention in girls' secondary education.

Girls' education and women governors

Arguments that women should have their share in the governance of girls' secondary education were often based on the need to improve the education of middle-class girls. The rhetoric of many of those calling for women to be appointed governors built on notions of 'active citizenship'. As Jane Rendall illustrates, political notions of 'active citizenship' were reworked by liberal intellectuals from the 1850s onwards by interweaving the abstract notion of equal rights and their attendant responsibilities with notions of altruism, duties, service and the idea of individuals acting together for the public good.[7] The call for women to become school governors on the grounds of their responsibilities for other women and girls linked both 'altruism' and 'character' to ideas of 'duty and social responsibility'. However, as the four case study schools illustrate, many factors, including different administrative structures and differing local political configurations, were important in the ability of women to play their part as governors.

At both Clifton and Manchester High Schools women were included in their own right on the governing body from the start. Both high schools were established in cities where the earliest societies for women's suffrage were active, and both owed their foundations to Associations for Promoting the Higher Education of Women, set up respectively in 1878 and 1867.[8] These established courses of lectures for women and encouraged the participation of women in the Cambridge Higher Local Examinations.[9] The Bristol and Clifton Association for Promoting the Higher Education of Women was linked to the Women's Education Union (WEU), under whose auspices the Girls' Public Day School Company (GPDSC) was founded.[10] The Manchester Association for Promoting the Higher Education of Women resisted affiliation to the GPDSC but had a short-lived connection with the North of England Council for the Higher Education of Women.[11]

The establishment of a high school for girls in Bristol was held up by the battle to reform the city's four existing educational endowments.[12] Eventually, however, the way was clear to found Clifton High School in 1877. This was set up as a proprietary high school for girls, following the pattern of Cheltenham Ladies College and the schools of the GPDSC.[13] The Scheme for the school provided for a Council of not less than fifteen nor more than thirty members, all of whom were required to be shareholders at the time of their election. Of these: 'One third at least shall, so far as is practicable, consist of women'.[14]

The one-third proportion of women governors was consistent with the GPDSC Council, the offshoot of the WEU, to which the Bristol and Clifton Association for Promoting the Higher Education for Women was affiliated.[15]

In Manchester, the Association for Promoting the Higher Education of Women appointed a Provisional Committee to set in motion plans to found a girls' high school. This committee consisted often women and eleven men, the high proportion of women reflecting the centrality of Manchester to the formation of the nineteenth-century women's movement.[16] The Provisional Committee was empowered to raise funds through donations and subscriptions. It engaged a headmistress, secured suitable premises and prepared a scheme for the organisation and management of the school.[17] By 1874, Manchester High School for Girls was up and running, with branch schools founded at Pendleton in 1885, and in North Manchester in 1892.[18]

Although the 1873 Provisional Committee of Manchester High School drew up a constitution and rules and held its meetings 'in proper form', it was 'a purely voluntary affair'.[19] In 1877, the committee was given legal existence when Articles of Association for incorporation under the Joint Stock Companies Acts were registered. These stipulated that 'Twenty of the Trustees may, and at least ten shall be women. Husband and Wife may be Trustees at the same time'.[20] Trustees were to be nominated by the Corporation of Manchester, the School Board of Manchester, the Corporation of Salford, the School Board of Salford, Girton College and Owens College. The Council governing the High School was to consist of not less than fifteen members who were to be drawn from the trustees. Although the constitution of the Association stipulated the number of trustees who were to be women, there were no clauses relating to the gender composition of the Council. One effect of university co-options, coupled with the political co-options, some of which were from bodies to which women did not have access, was that by 1877 the number of women on the Council had dropped to eight, whereas there were now fifteen men.[21]

Manchester High School was an immediate success, and the school sought 'permanence and development' by making claims on the funds of an existing endowment, the Hulme Trust.[22] The governors were initially unsuccessful in their bid for a share of the Hulme Funds because the school was constituted as an Association. This meant that the Charity Commissioners were unable to recognise the school as a charitable foundation eligible for a share in endowment funds.[23] In the quest for Hulme Trust funds, the Association was dissolved in 1880, and Manchester High School was turned into a trust. The 1880 Trust Deed was expressed in terms of the legal and civic rights of women. The Council was now to consist of:

> not more than twenty-four nor less than eighteen members, half of whom may and one-third of whom shall, so far as may be deemed practicable or desirable, be women. Husband and wife may at the same time be members of the Committee, and the acts of any married woman as a

> member of the Committee shall be as valid as if they were the acts of a femme sole.[24]

The scheme finally approved in 1883 provided for a perpetual succession of governors and safeguarded the rights of women to seats on the governing body.[25] The Hulme Trust appointed two women among their four representative governors.[26] The governing body of the High School now consisted of nine women and eleven men.[27] In practice, formalising the committee structure through these negotiations resulted in fewer women on the governing body than had been the case in the early days of the Provisional Committee deputed from the Association for Promoting the Higher Education of Women.

Both the King Edward VI Foundation and the Bedford Harpur Trust developed an academic and quite wide-ranging education for middle-class girls. The (male) governors of the King Edward VI Foundation told the Schools Inquiry Commissioner in 1868 of their desire to provide education for middle-class girls, but it was not until 1883 that the girls' high school was opened. Similarly, the all-male Bedford Harpur Trust informed the Schools Inquiry Commissioners that the experiment of setting up academic education for middle-class girls could not be tried under more favourable circumstances than at Bedford; but here, too, there were delays.[28] As events at Birmingham and Bedford illustrate, while the trustees of existing foundations might be keen to provide an academic education for middle-class girls comparable with that provided for boys, this was not necessarily synonymous with a desire for women governors. Issues of local and civic power might well result in tensions when it came to the appointment of women governors.

At Birmingham, the appointment of women governors became caught up with wider questions of political and denominational representation on the governing body itself. In the context of a struggle for control between the Birmingham City Council and the King Edward VI Foundation, inclusion of women represented a further erosion of the power of the existing governing body. As a result, the governors informed the Endowed School Commissioners that it was 'undesirable that women should form part of the governing body'.[29] A revised scheme for the King Edward VI Foundation received the Royal Assent in 1878.[30] The scheme accommodated 'the Dissenting elite, who were…making Birmingham a leader in municipal and educational reform', but did not admit women as governors.[31]

At Bedford, the extension of secondary education to girls became embroiled in debates about free education and accusations of robbing the poor of their charitable 'rights', as well as in arguments in defence of the boys' grammar school.[32] When the scheme for the governance and organisation of the Harpur Trust was debated by the trustees in 1871, there were objections to the inclusion of women as governors and calls for a subordinate ladies' committee. When finally elected, the (male) governing body of the Harpur Trust appointed eight of its members as Governors of Girls' Schools. These, in turn, co-opted five women governors with 'special

but equal responsibility for the girls' schools only'. This was the strategy advocated by the Endowed Schools Commissioners for the governance of girls' secondary schools within mixed foundations. The *Bedford Mercury* noted that this was 'an excellent method of getting rid of the feminine difficulty'.[33] It was 1910 before King Edward VI High School and the four other schools for girls supported by the foundation had women governors and 1918 before women were full members of the Harpur Trust.[34]

Women's membership of governing bodies

Both Joyce Pedersen and Carol Dyhouse argue that one of the most striking features of the new girls' secondary schools was the extent to which they were sponsored by, organised by, patronised by and controlled by men.[35] Accounts and reminiscences of the foundation of the four case-study schools support this view. Miss C.L.Kennedy attributed the impetus for the formation of Manchester High School to her father Rev. Kennedy, Rector of Ardwick.[36] Similarly, the daughter of Lieutenant Colonel Arnold Pears portrays the prime movers in the establishment of the Clifton High School as her father and Dr John Percival, Headmaster of Clifton College.[37] Hutton describes T. H.Green, Assistant Commissioner for Birmingham, as the 'parent' of King Edward VI High School.[38] When the girls' schools at Bedford were opened, Samuel Whitbread gave much of the credit for the foundation of the schools to Dr Storrar.[39] The 'founding fathers' of these four schools were networked with women and men, often within their own families, working within the wider movement for the reform of both middle-class and working-class female education. As the relationship between Storrar and Francis Buss illustrates, involvement with networks of activist women did not necessarily mean that these men shared the wider vision of some of the women.[40]

Women members of the early governing bodies were a mixture of those working for the wider reform of middle-class girls' education and local women. At Bedford, Miss Mary Ewart and Miss Eleanor Smith, both with wider links to reform of female education, worked alongside three local women, Mrs Sophia Higgins, Mrs Kilpin and Mrs Emma Matilda Hillier, as well as members of the local aristocracy.[41] Several women from the family of the Duke of Bedford were involved with Bedford High School, and 'lesser' titled women included Lady Isabella Whitbread, sister of Samuel Whitbread, MP for Bedford and sometime chair of the Harpur Trust.[42] At Clifton High School the aristocratic element was represented by Julia, Countess of Ducie.[43] As with supporters of women's higher education, the governance of middle-class girls' education was largely a middle-class affair. Indeed, in the early days of girls' secondary education, women governors with wider links to the reform of education for women and girls often had links to the same groupings of Lancashire liberal manufacturers, Unitarian reformers, 'liberal intelligentsia' and party political networks that Gillian Sutherland has identified supporting women's higher education.[44]

At Bedford High School, Mary Ewart represented the Lancashire liberal manufacturing provincial group, which provided important support for women's higher education. The daughter of William Ewart, MP, Mary was benefactor to Newnham and Bedford Colleges and to the Camden and North London Collegiate Schools.[45] Within the Lancashire liberal grouping, the Winkworths provided a key link between the governing bodies of the Manchester and Clifton Schools and to networks at the forefront of educational reform for women. Catherine, her sisters Susannah and Emily, their brother Stephen and his wife Emma (neé Thomasson), were part of a wide-ranging educational network which extended through many friends, who represented diverse sides of the nineteenth-century movement to reform women's lives and their education. These included Harriet Martineau, Emily Davies, Mary Gurney, Emily Shirreff, the Gaskells, Cloughs, Arnolds, Sidgwicks and F.D.Maurice.[46]

Unitarian women were important members of early governing bodies, working closely with women and men from a range of denominations. There was clear Unitarian involvement in the governing body of Manchester High School. Members of the Cross Street Unitarian Chapel with places on the early committee included Mrs Harriet Darbishire and her husband Robert Dukinfield Darbishire, and Miss Margaret Emily Gaskell, daughter of Elizabeth Gaskell and William Gaskell, minister at Cross Street. The Manchester branch of the Ewarts also attended Cross Street Chapel, where the worshippers included the elite of Manchester's commercial and manufacturing community.[47] Manchester High School's governing body included women from Manchester's thriving German and Jewish middle-class manufacturing families. This reflected the ethnic complexity of Manchester and of its high school, which took a large number of pupils of foreign or Jewish extraction.[48] Women on Manchester High School's governing body from German and Jewish families were involved with wider provision of education in the city. The Behrens family founded a memorial scholarship at the Jews School in Derby Street, Cheetham Hill, which brought its head girl to the high school.[49] Anglicans were also represented, with preferments resulting in both Mrs Eraser and Mrs Glazebrook, along with their husbands, respectively Bishop and Dean of Manchester, moving from the committee of Manchester High School to the committee of Clifton High School, where they worked alongside members of the Quaker Fry, Pease and Sturge families.[50]

At Clifton High School two married couples, the Percivals and Wollastons, were members of the network of the 'liberal intelligentsia' that actively supported women's higher education. Sarah Wollaston was the daughter of the painter Richmond and prior to her marriage lived in Ambleside, where she was part of the group around Anne Clough. Her husband, George Wollaston, who served with her on the governing body of Clifton High School, lectured on botany for the Bristol and Clifton Association for Promoting the Higher Education of Women, and was a master at Clifton College under John Percival.[51] At Bedford Mrs Marion Phillpotts, one of the first women co-opted as a governor of girls' schools, was related through marriage to the Jex-Blakes,

identified by Sutherland as central members of the 'liberal intelligentsia'. Marion Phillpotts' husband, James Surtees Phillpotts, was headmaster of Bedford Grammar School, and her daughter Bertha Surtees Phillpotts succeeded her cousin Katharine Jex-Blake as Mistress of Girton and became a member of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education.

Party political alliances were also in evidence. At Birmingham, both Miss Gertrude Dale and Mrs Grace Kenrick came from families active in education and politics in the city. With the Chamberlains, the Kenricks formed part of the 'aristocracy and plutocracy of Birmingham'. Beatrice Webb noted: 'They stand far above the town society in social position, wealth and culture, yet they spend their lives as great citizens, taking an active and leading part in the municipal, political and educational life of their town.'[52] Mrs Rachel Scott, member of both Manchester High School Committee and the Manchester School Board, was chair of the Executive of the Lancashire and Cheshire Union of Women's Liberal Associations from its formation in 1893, and its President from 1900 to 1903. In contrast, Mrs Josephine Birley at Manchester came from a staunch Tory family with a long tradition of educational work in the city.[53]

Within these groupings were supporters of women's suffrage, as well as anti-suffragists. Among the many examples of girls' school governors working for women's suffrage was Manchester governor Margaret Ashton, chair of Withington Education Committee, a foremost campaigner for women's suffrage and Manchester's first woman councillor; Manchester High School's representative on Bolton High School Committee, Sarah Annie Lees, was similarly active. Marjorie Fry, appointed to the governing body of King Edward VI High School in 1909, also spoke at a meetings for women's suffrage.[54] Among women governors openly supporting anti-suffrage was Margaret Ashton's sister, Marion Bryce (neé Ashton). A governor at Manchester High School, and on the executive of the anti-suffrage Women's National Liberal Federation, she was married to 'one of the most prominent anti-suffrage leaders in the Liberal Party'.[55]

The development of secondary education for girls and higher education for women led to gradual changes in the composition of secondary school governing bodies, as highly educated women became governors. This strengthened intellectual networks between the governing bodies of the girls' schools and the women's colleges. Marjorie Fry had been a student at Somerville and was Warden of Birmingham's University Hall.[56] Mrs Rachel Scott (neé Cooke), Girton pioneer and supporter of women's higher education in Manchester, was the Girton representative on the Manchester High School committee.[57] There were strong links to Girton and Newnham Colleges through the women governors at Bedford High School. Mrs Marianne Frances Latham (neé Kensington) was Mistress of Girton from 1875 until her marriage in 1884 and member of Girton College and of its Executive Committee from 1885 to 1924, as well as Life Governor Under the Charter 1924–6.[58] Katharine Jex-Blake, Mistress of Girton from 1916 to 1922, became one of the first women governors to be appointed at Bedford as a governor of the Harpur Trust in her own right.

As girls' secondary education developed, an important new group of women governors were the 'old girls'. Some of these, like Mrs Mary Tout (neé Johnson), who became a governor at Manchester High School in 1900, were highly educated. A pupil at Manchester High School from 1886, Mary Tout (Johnson) went to Owen's College in 1892 on a Lady Whitworth exhibition, gaining a first class honours degree in History in 1895 and an MA in 1898 before working at the University in research. She married a University professor and co-governor of Manchester High School. In addition to becoming a governor of Manchester High School (1900), she became representative governor of Oldham Hulme Schools (1903), of Saint Cuthbert's School Withington (1904), and a member of the Withington Education Committee (1903). She went on to hold office in many women's organisations and educational bodies.[59]

Headmistresses also joined governing bodies, although the Association of Headmistresses (AHM) preferred that former headmistresses should not become members of governing bodies of their own old schools. Some former headmistresses became high school governors when they went to work in higher education. When Miss Major moved from the headship of King Edward VI School to become Mistress of Girton, she joined the governing body of the Perse School, eventually becoming chair.[60] Some serving headmistresses joined governing bodies of other schools. Miss Sara Burstall, second headmistress of Manchester High School, was a member of the Council of Cheltenham Ladies College for twenty years and represented the governing body of Manchester High School on the Manchester Education Committee.[61] By 1903, 459 co-opted women out of a total of 6,804 serving members of Education Committees were playing their part in the governance of the girls' secondary schools set up under the 1902 Education Act.[62] By 1905 this included forty-five members of the AHM.[63]

As teachers and parents became members of governing bodies, this provided another important route into secondary school governance for some women. Some early school constitutions expressly prohibited staff becoming governors. At Clifton, no headmistress, assistant mistress or master of the school was to be a member of the Council.[64] In 1919, Miss Oldham of the AHM called for high-school teachers to become governors.[65] At Bedford, the teacher representatives were highly educated women from Girton and Newnham, while local women were elected as parent representatives. This resulted in the highly educated Marianne Latham and Adela Adam serving alongside local and aristocratic women such as the Duchess of Bedford, Lady Owen-McKenzie of Tempsford Hall, Lady Ampthill and Mrs Prothero, whose husband, like those of the titled women, was a Harpur Trustee.[66]

Gender, power and governing bodies

Dyhouse claims that one result of the involvement of men in the new girls' schools was that male power was pervasive in their governance. 'No matter

how chivalrous, or enlightened…[men] may have been, the facts of power and control remain clear'.[67] School histories and accounts from staff and pupils tend to support this view, for women governors often appear only fleetingly in the early histories of the newly founded girls' schools and in the autobiographies and reminiscences of their 'pioneering' headmistresses, teachers and pupils. This absence is partly a result of the way 'celebratory' accounts of middle-class girls' schools written by 'old girls' have focussed largely on the headmistresses and teachers who shaped their lives.[68] Some headmistresses' reminiscences also suggest that women governors did little more than the domestic 'housekeeping' of their institutions.

In contrast, secondary-school governance could provide a surprisingly 'public' exercise of 'active citizenship' for women. Schools regulated under the Endowed Schools Acts were required to post public notice of elections to governing bodies to give opportunities for objections from the general public to the candidature. Notice of all candidates for election to the governing body of Manchester High School had to be 'affixed to or near a principal outer door of the Town Hall' for a period of fifteen days.[69] Committee minutes illustrate that women were not always comfortable with the visibility that some aspects of governance engendered. Women needed to be conversant with the 'rituals' of governance, which drew on the organisational structures and practices of Western democracy, with elections, formal meetings, resolutions, debates and committee business.[70] When Augusta Anson, as first-named co-optative governor at Manchester High School, was required formally to set in motion the calling of the new governing body of the school in 1884 she requested Leonard Tatham 'to see to the discharge of the obligation thrown on her by the new scheme'.[71] Catherine Winkworth, too, described herself as 'a person unused to this sort of work'.[72] As Deem, Brehony and Heath argue, there was a difference between the formal rights of citizenship, which permitted women to become governors, and substantive citizenship, 'the rights that citizens are able to exercise as opposed to those they formally possess.'[73] Both Catherine Winkworth and Augusta Anson illustrate Carole Pateman's contention that 'subjective political competence' within governance structures was an important aspect of women's ability to participate in governance.[74]

Within the four high school governing bodies, demarcations between men and women reflected the consequences of women's legal disabilities as well as aspects of 'active citizenship' built around gendered concepts of property and employment. Honorary secretaries were often women: at Manchester Miss Kennedy, Matilda Vernon, Matilda Roby (for twelve years), Mary Tout and Rachel Scott for the Prep School; while at Clifton, Catherine Winkworth and Mr Pope held the position of honorary secretary jointly. Chairs were overridingly male although, in the early days before the constitution of Manchester High School was formalised, Augusta Anson chaired two meetings of the Provisional Committee in the presence of both Principal Greenwood and Professor Wilkins of Owen's College.[75] Legalities, including

schemes of schools and Articles of Association as well as Memorials to the Charity Commissioners, were generally drawn up by men.[76] It was generally men who visited the Charity Commissioners or the President of the Committee of Council on Education, even at Manchester High School.[77]

Men predominated as treasurers and in the whole area of finance, as might be expected, although women did act as trustees for the investment of funds for scholarships. Lady Whitworth was trustee for the Whitworth scholarship at Manchester, while the Duchess of Bedford and Lady Isabella Whitbread were trustees for the £1,000 donated to Bedford High School by a governor, Miss Martin, to found the Jane Benson scholarship.[78] School committees were empowered by their schemes to purchase property and to borrow on behalf of the school. For legal reasons, building sub-committees were often the preserve of men.[79] At Manchester, Augusta Anson and Matilda Vernon made the initial enquiries about the properties thought by the committee to be possible buildings for the first school.[80] It was R.D.Darbishire and Edward Donner, however, who made the recommendations about the advisability of purchase and negotiated with the owners and Edward Donner signed the necessary paper work and took legal responsibility for the building.[81] The Building Committee convened for the Prep School Extension at Manchester High School in the 1880s was primarily composed of men, but it did include both Rachel Scott and Matilda Roby.[82]

Women appear to have been largely incorporated into sub-committees to inspect sewing, and into house and boarding-house committees, although men were also members. These committees made the less educational decisions and made the least demands on resources. At Manchester the House Committee dealt with accounts, wages of ancillary staff and repairs to the fabric of the building. House committees should not be seen automatically as constraining, however. The Clifton House Committee was charged with buying the school desks, gas fittings and pianos, as well as engaging servants, but it also drew up a scheme for placing the management of the school on an entirely new footing and presented projections for increasing revenue by opening a Junior School.[83] In this respect, it functioned essentially as an advisory finance committee, dealing with the allocation of both money and staff.

Deem, Brehony and Heath illustrate that school governing bodies deal with two kinds of resources: allocative (including capital and human resources) and authoritative, including ideologies, space, time and information.[84] They argue that because interests are represented on governing bodies and decisions over resource allocations take place on them, the governance of schools is essentially a political activity. This is reflected in the case-study schools, where key areas of finance, staffing, sites and buildings were predominantly the preserve of men, with women most commonly found on committees that made fewer decisions. At the Bedford Harpur Trust, the fact that all appointments as governors of girls' schools continued to be framed until 1918 as (male) appointments from the (male) Harpur Trust preserved for men key areas of decision-making about the overall finance of

the Harpur Trust, the sale of sites and buildings, and investment policy, all of which impinged upon the money available for girls' education.

As schools prospered, sub-committees often grew in number but access to these was not random.[85] The opening of sub-committees and areas of responsibility to women governors was undoubtedly assisted by the increasing appointment to governing bodies of women who had a university education or held university appointments. By 1922 Katharine Jex-Blake was signing reports from the School Committee at Bedford to the Harpur Trust as a whole, and these took seriously the concerns of the girls' schools, as well as allowing women access to the management of boys' education.[86] She eventually became chair at Bedford, as well as at the Perse School.

Headmistresses and governing bodies

By the twentieth century, the AHM was arguing that each girls' school needed its own governing body. At the annual meeting of the Association in 1916, the headmistresses of three county secondary schools for girls, Miss Morant, of Kentish Town, Miss Tucker of Fulham and Miss Huskisson of Harrow, pressed for each school to have 'a real governing body with definite powers', which they argued would lead to high standards in education.[87] They called for governors to consist, in the main, of people who had some actual experience of secondary education, and advocated that there should be at least one university representative on each governing body. Despite the fact that highly educated women governors were being appointed to the governing bodies of girls' schools by this time, members of the AHM consistently maintained that headmistresses, as professionals, should be responsible for the entire internal arrangements of their schools, rather than the 'amateur' members of the governing body.[88] For example, when it came to appointing the teachers, Miss Robertson, headmistress of Christ's Hospital, argued in her paper to the Association in 1905 that a governing body largely composed of men was not well-suited for selecting a staff of women. She claimed the job for headmistresses on the basis of male presence in the governance of girls' secondary schools but also on the basis of headmistresses' professional expertise.[89]

The call for headmistresses to take full control of the internal organisation of their schools was in line with practice in endowed schools, where endowed-school headmistresses, like endowed-school headmasters, were responsible for the whole organisation, management and discipline of their schools. Responsibilities were laid down in the trust deed, which regulated the composition of the governing body, its powers and those of the head, the curriculum, and the requirement for an independent examiner who would report the findings to the governors.[90] At Birmingham, where headmistress Edith Creak was responsible to an all-male governing body antithetical to women governors, she largely had the freedom to develop her school in the way she wished. Nevertheless, while she apparently exercised freedom in respect of her own school, it was Mr Vardy, headmaster of the boys' school,

and not Edith Creak who gave evidence to the Bryce Commission and was the governors' representative on the Education Committee.

In the absence of a scheme like that of the Endowed Schools Commissioners, the governors at Manchester High School gradually developed their working relationships with the head and the teachers.[91] The governing body included university professors and HMIs, who brought expertise, power and status from their university and inspectorial posts to their task of governance. This framed relationships between the headmistress and the governors in particular ways, and resulted in the paradox that in the early days of Manchester High School a governing body with a high proportion of women, and of individuals committed to the promotion of women and their rights, exerted more control over the actions of headmistress Elizabeth Day than did the all-male governing body at Birmingham over Edith Creak. Eventually, in 1889 Miss Day questioned the extent to which she could exercise her professional judgement.[92] In contrast, Elizabeth Day's successor, Sarah Burstall, with a degree from Girton College and the experience of travel to America as a Gilchrist Scholar, appears to have thrived on the support she gained from the inspectors and the university governors. Believing strongly in the advantages arising from a close connection between secondary and higher education, she wrote how she had seized the opportunity which the constitution of the governing body and the geographical proximity of the school and the university afforded.[93]

It is possible that the early foundation of Manchester High School may have led to caution in the desire to ensure that the new enterprise was expedited with success. However, Sarah Burstall stresses that Manchester High School was 'the creation of a body of citizens'.[94] This link between school and community may have provided an early example of the principles of consultative management, constitutive of the social model of participatory democracy.[95] In this model, 'it is the community that acts to provide the conditions for citizenship and citizenship is attained through political involvement'.[96] As Gerald Grace remarks, a notion of real community management of schooling can come into direct conflict with the interests of heads' professional autonomy.[97] At Manchester High School, where the governing body provided management expertise, as well as the opportunities for the practice of 'active citizenship' for women governors, the result may well have been to curtail the authority of the first headmistress. While at Birmingham there were similar links to the university community, the Endowed Schools Scheme for King Edward VI High School structured the possibilities for action, both for the headmistress and the governors.

Headmistresses were not unaware of the disadvantages they experienced in relation to their governing bodies, and there are many examples of heads getting into difficulties with their governors. After building up King Edward VI High School, Edith Creak found herself in this situation. Partly as a result of deteriorating health, she caused conflict with her staff, complaints to the governors when she aired her political views in school, and criticism from

the governors after a poor inspection report for the High School.[98] Winifred Vardy concludes that the result of her difficulties with the governing body was that when she left the school, 'little was done to mark her retirement, and she seemed to pass into obscurity for the few years before her death without the honours that were her due.'[99]

It was the difficulties between headmistresses and their governing bodies that had led to the formation of the Head Mistresses Association in 1874.[100] From the start, the Association stressed that headmistresses should have full control of the internal organisation of their schools and that governing bodies should consult headmistresses.[101] The amount of contact between governors and headmistresses varied enormously. As late as 1921, the AHM was still arguing that the right of a headmistress to be consulted by the governors 'in such a manner as to give her full opportunity for the expression of her views' could only be adequately safeguarded by her personal attendance at governors' meetings. They forwarded a resolution to this effect to the Board of Education and to the chairs of the governing bodies of schools represented on the Association.[102]

The state and women governors

Like the AHM, the Board of Education argued that the establishment of governing bodies for secondary schools would lead to high educational standards. In its report for 1905–6, the Board's ideas about what constituted 'good' secondary schooling were reflected in its policy on what constituted good governance.[103] Board of Education policy was clearly to promote women onto governing bodies. Like the AHM, the Board noted that every governing body should contain a proportion of members who were 'qualified by experience of Higher education to supply well-informed criticism upon, and intelligent encouragement of, the School work; and in the case of girls' Schools or Schools including girls, it shall include one or more women.' The Board commented that 'it has not yet become general, though on every ground it is desirable', that women should have seats on each governing body.[104] The following year, the Board noted that particular attention had been given during inspections to the inclusion of women in the governing bodies of schools attended by girls.[105] The push from the Board of Education for women governors around 1905 was consistent with the influence of Social Darwinistic ideology and in line with Board of Education policy for the domestication of the schoolgirls' curriculum in the wake of the Boer war:[106]

> As a matter of fact there is one woman on the Committee, but it is desirable that the presence of women on the Committee should be definitely arranged and, having regard to the size of the committee, and the proportion of the girls in the school, it would seem proper that the number of such members should not be limited to one or two only…. In this connection the subject of Domestic work needs further and increased attention before it can be considered as having an educational value

> comparable with such practical subjects as are dealt with in the boys schools.[107]

As some governing bodies of girls' secondary schools worked to produce the optimum education for their pupils but lacked the necessary finance, they were impelled into closer relationships with the state. Schools like Manchester High were already in line with Board of Education requirements regarding women governors.[108] In other cases, application for grant aid from the Board of Education led to women being appointed governors. Some schools, especially those where girls' schools had been added to existing foundations, resisted as long as they could.[109] Only when changes in the constitution of a governing body were a necessary condition of obtaining grants from the Board of Education did King Edward VI and the Harpur Trust comply with requirements for women governors.[110]

The 1907 Board of Education Regulations for secondary schools meant that when King Edward VI Foundation applied in 1909 for grant aid to enable them to meet the costs of improving their accommodation for girls and their facilities for science teaching, the Scheme for the governance of the foundation had to be amended. The Board of Education required that one of the co-optative governors and one of the representative governors appointed by the City Council should be a woman.[111] At Bedford, moves towards the Board of Education were a result of the governors wishing to build laboratories and provide for domestic science at a time when the Harpur Trust was still heavily in debt from building work. Initially, by applying for a lower grant, the governors avoided the revision of their scheme that would have been necessary had they applied for the higher grant.[112] By 1917, however, the attention of the Board of Education was drawn to the constitution of the Girls' Modern School. This was administered along with Bedford High School by the Governors of Girls' Schools. The Board informed the Harpur Trustees that for the Girls' Modern School to comply with the Regulations for Secondary Schools and so qualify for grant aid, the Harpur Trust needed 'to consider whether the governors of the trust should not also be the governors of the girls' schools'. Although the Harpur Trustees prevaricated, in 1917 they agreed to admit women as members of the full Trust body.[113] It was not, however, until December 1918 that the first women attended a meeting of the Harpur Trust itself.[114] On the one hand, state intervention in the secondary education of girls fostered the domestication of the schoolgirls' curriculum while, on the other, it provided an important impetus to the appointment of women as secondary school governors.

Conclusion

It is clear that even after half a century of girls' academic secondary schools and the legal requirement for women to be among their governors the proportion of women on governing bodies was still small, and women's power, on the whole, extremely limited. Few women had become chairs or

gained membership of key sub-committees. In 1899 Miss A.E.Carpenter stated that male domination of governing bodies was to be attributed to the prevalence of the belief that men were better equipped to deal with the key issue of financing the schools.[115] This view continued to the 1920s, and indeed was still prevalent at the end of the century.[116] It was linked to received ideas of 'women's work' not only found among men, but also accepted by some headmistresses. On the occasion of the Jubilee of Wakefield High School in 1928 Miss McCroben, headmistress from 1894 to 1920, thanked 'the Lady Governors' for their 'invaluable' work, noting: 'they have taken charge of the cleaning, been responsible for the Hostels, etc.'[117]

Aspects of professionalism, at variance with the lay woman governor's practice of 'active citizenship', also impinged on questions of governance. As the example of Miss Day at Manchester illustrates, changing notions of citizenship held the potential to encroach upon headmistresses' professional autonomy. When Mrs Mallet, a member of the Women's Local Government Society and a former high-school teacher, alluded to the 'excellent work' performed by women governors, who left teachers free to carry out their 'original and practical ideas', she drew on the distinction between the amateur governor and the professional teacher and headmistress propounded by the AHM.[118] As Deem, Brehony and Heath illustrate, the tensions between lay governors and professionals, and aspects of citizenship which structured women's experience on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century governing bodies, still impinge on the gendered relations of contemporary governing bodies and their relationship to the state today.[119]

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Part II

Women and educational administration at local government level

4 Women school board members and women school managers

The structuring of educational authority in Manchester and Liverpool, 1870–1903

Joyce Goodman

> The Elementary Education Act…was from the beginning intended by its framers to include women in all its provision. Women have not only the right to vote, but to sit on the School Board, and to be elected to any official position in connection with the work of which men are eligible…. Political freedom begins for women as it began for men, with freedom in local government.[1]

When Manchester went to the polls on 26 November 1870, Lydia Becker became the first woman elected to a school board, three days prior to Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and Emily Davies in London. Four women in Manchester and two in Liverpool served on the school board between 1870 and the abolition of school boards under the 1902 Education Act. Both the Manchester and Liverpool school boards consisted of fifteen members. Both boards were highly politicised and conscious of denominational issues, and both provided education in cities where populations spanned extremes of wealth and urban poverty.[2] The Manchester School Board attracted high profile women: Lydia Becker from 1870 to 1890, Rachel Scott between 1890 and 1896, and Mary Dendy, co-opted during 1896 and 1897 and elected to the last board, when she served alongside Emmeline Pankhurst from 1900 to 1903. Liverpool School Board women Anne Davies and Florence Melly are less well-known today. The Liverpool School Board, formed in 1874, continuously co-opted Anne Davies from 1879 until her election in 1884, and she remained on the Board until her death in 1898.[3] Davies was followed by Florence Melly, who served until 1903. Becker, Scott, Davies and Melly were sole women on fifteen-member boards, in contrast to Dendy and Pankhurst, who served on the Manchester board together.

This chapter examines the political and philanthropic backgrounds the women brought to their service on the boards, and traces the links to some of the key policies they promoted. Manchester and Liverpool developed different systems for managing their board schools. In Manchester this was based on new forms of civic government, while Liverpool drew on older traditions of voluntary management. The chapter also considers the consequences for the exercise of authority by women of the differing management structures for elementary education devised by the two boards.

Prior to standing for election, Lydia Becker caused controversy at the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1869 with a paper outlining her views on the equality of intellect between women and men.[4] Convinced in 1866 by Barbara Bodichon's arguments for women's suffrage at the National Association of the Promotion of Social Science, Lydia Becker worked with Jacob Bright to exploit the fortuitous casting of the vote by Lily Maxwell in the Manchester by-election of 1867.[5] She also campaigned for reform of the Married Woman's Property Acts. By the time she stood for election to the Manchester School Board in 1870, she was editor of the *Women's Suffrage Journal* and a recognised leader of the women's suffrage movement.[6] When members of the Manchester Women's Suffrage Society took their seats in the public gallery of the Council Chamber in May 1870, sections of the press described them as a 'compact mob of the disciples of Lydia Becker'.[7] To prevent antipathy towards women's suffrage undermining her chances of election to the School Board, Lydia Becker conducted a deliberately low-key campaign. Unlike Elizabeth Garrett Anderson and Emily Davies in London, she had no supporting committee, gave no speeches and held no meetings. In order to prevent opposition to her candidature from forming, she published her manifesto only ten days before the date of the election. Criticised by the press for her lack of experience of education, she was elected in the November on a platform that appealed directly to Manchester women: 'Experience has proved that the education of girls cannot be properly regulated and that it has never been adequately cared for by corporate bodies consisting only of men.'[8]

By the time Rachel Scott took her seat on the Board in 1890 she was an experienced school manager, a governor of Manchester High School and a former member of the Ladies' Committee of the Lower Mosley Street Schools. Between 1870–1873 she was one of the first students to attend Emily Davies' College at Hitchin, the forerunner of Girton, and in 1873 was the first woman to attempt the Classical Tripos at Cambridge. Having settled in Manchester in 1874, she organised the Manchester and Salford College for Women between 1877 and 1883 and, under the auspices of the Manchester Association for Promoting the Higher Education of Women, worked to open university education in Manchester to women. This was achieved in 1883. She contributed articles to the *Manchester Guardian,* where she was a familiar figure, working with her husband, C.P.Scott, at the *Guardian* offices from early evening until the early hours of the morning.[9]

Emmeline Pankhurst was inspired at fourteen by a suffrage address given by Lydia Becker.[10] After school in Paris, she returned to Manchester and in 1879 married the radical lawyer Richard Pankhurst. She was an executive member of both the Manchester Women's Suffrage Society and the Married Woman's Property Committee. While the family lived briefly in London she was involved with Annie Besant in the Match Girls' Strike but, having given birth to a fifth child in 1890, turned down a request to stand for election for Annie Besant's seat on the London School Board. Back in Manchester, she became active in the Manchester Central Branch of the Independent Labour

Party (ILP). She was a candidate at the 1891 triennial election, when Rachel Scott headed the poll, but as a result of labour splitting its vote by fielding three candidates, she was not elected. Successfully returned a few weeks later as Guardian of the Poor for Chorlton, she worked to improve the conditions of the women and girls in the workhouse. By 1897 she was a member of the National Executive Council of the ILP. In 1898, needing to earn her living after the death of her husband, she resigned her unpaid position as Poor Law Guardian, and became Registrar of Births and Deaths for Gorton. In 1900, she was successfully elected to the School Board on the United Education Party ticket, in an alliance of Progressives and United Trades and Labour Party candidates.[11]

Mary Dendy came from a tradition of educationists. Her uncle, Charles Beard, was a foremost proponent of higher education in Liverpool, and she was related to John Relly Beard, who taught at Owen's College, and to Mary Shipman Beard, headmistress of the progressive Ladybarn House and later co-worker with Michael Sadler in the Department of Special Inquiries.[12] Educated at Bedford College, Mary Dendy travelled to Australia before returning to Manchester where she and her sister Helen, better known as Helen Bosanquet of the Charity Organisation Society, were founder members of the clubs for working girls and boys begun in 1885 at the Collyhurst Recreation Rooms.[13] Another sister, Sarah Louisa Dendy, assistant mistress at Manchester High School and Honorary Secretary of the Manchester Girls' Club Workers Union, was deeply interested in social welfare and for a time lived in the model dwellings at Ancoats.[14] During her co-option to the Board between 1896 and 1897, Mary Dendy developed the work for the feebleminded for which she would become well-known, personally inspecting 60,000 children in Manchester board schools. Continuing this work when out of office between 1897 and 1900, she was the first woman to address the Manchester Statistical Society, and became Honorary Secretary to the Lancashire and Cheshire Society for the Permanent Care of the Feebleminded.[15] Her successful election in 1900 reflected the growing recognition of her expertise in the area of 'dull and defective' children.

In Liverpool, Anne Davies was deeply involved in charitable societies. A Welsh Calvinist and Sunday school teacher, she was a school manager prior to taking office in 1880. From early 1876, she was a member of the council of the Liverpool Pupil Teachers' College. This was established by the Liverpool Council of Education in 1874, a voluntary body of 'leading citizens' which provided educational services which could not legally be performed by the school board.[16] Anne Davies was a member of bands of hope and temperance missions, the Children's Country Holiday Fund, the Ladies Sanitary Association, the Home for Welsh Servants, the Royal Society for the Care and Protection of Animals and the National Society for the Care and Protection of Children.[17] Similarly, Florence Melly had educational experience prior to taking a seat on the Board. A manager of Harrington Street School before the age of twenty-three, she was the founder of the Harrington Elder

Girls' Society and, along with her relative Eleanor Rathbone, was a 'Friendly Visitor' for the Liverpool Central Relief Society, where she was the honorary secretary for the Toxteth District Committee.[18]

On both the Manchester and Liverpool Boards women were generally members of school-management and industrial-school committees, evening-school committees and sub-committees dealing with pupil teachers. They were largely sidelined from committees dealing with finance and sites and buildings, although Lydia Becker and Emmeline Pankhurst both served for a time on Manchester's Sites and Buildings Committee, and Mary Dendy on the Finance Committee. The school-board women gained access to the middle level of educational policy-making, which lay between government policy and educational practice. Termed 'organisational policy' by Hunt, this was concerned with the aims of education and their transformation in the curriculum, the structure of the examination system and the content of schooling.[19] The women largely advocated policies which built upon and developed their political and philanthropic activities prior to their election. As a result, in some areas they promoted similar policies, though based on different analyses, while on other issues their policies differed.

Lydia Becker worked consistently to minimise the impact of practical domestic training on girls. She thought a moderate amount of needlework useful as a training for the hand and eye in the earlier standards but advocated the 'excision' of compulsory sewing from the curriculum for girls.[20] She described the new Code in 1877 as 'a specimen of masculine legislation in women's sphere…framed by one who was a fanatic in needlework'.[21] Scathing of the 'doctrinaires' introducing practical cookery into the elementary curriculum, she decreed that practical cookery 'violates the principles which should govern the instruction given in elementary schools, namely, that they are not technical schools for handicraft art, but institutions for training the intellectual faculties.'[22] Although the Manchester Board initially resisted the introduction of practical cookery into the elementary school, she witnessed the expansion of domestic subjects during her last years on the Board.[23] Like Elizabeth Garrett Anderson in London, Lydia Becker did agree with some limited teaching of theoretical domestic economy.[24] She argued from a liberal feminist point of view that the lessons on food and its preparation, clothing and materials, the warming, cleaning and ventilation of dwellings, washing materials, rules for health and for managing income and expenditure made domestic economy a subject equally suitable for boys:[25]

> Men would be better husbands and fathers if they took more interest in their homes…. [T]he present arrangement fosters the…evil of leading men to…look down upon girls as persons bound to domestic servitude. Anything which tends to encourage men in the notion that women were made to be their servants, tends to depress the status of women socially, to retard their moral and intellectual development, and to check the progress of the people towards a higher and fuller life.[26]

A keen advocate of science for women, in prize day speeches she urged that girls should be taught the science of everyday things alongside boys, resulting in early arguments for what was to become 'household science':[27]

> A woman could not cook without dealing with chemistry; a knowledge of mechanics was useful in saving labour in lifting weights and cleansing articles of domestic use; and some notion of the common elementary physiological laws was requisite to enable women to keep their children in health.[28]

Lydia Becker claimed that it was more important that a mother should learn how to keep her child alive and well, than that she should be able to make it a frock.[29] Her views were consistent with the drive by Ladies' Sanitary Associations to spread knowledge of public health among working-class women.[30] Mary Dendy and Emmeline Pankhurst were members of the subcommittee which introduced the teaching of infant care to girls, during the period when the Committee on Physical Deterioration was taking evidence. For Mary Dendy, the question of infant care was part of a wider Social Darwinist and Eugenic agenda, while Emmeline Pankhurst, as Guardian and then Registrar, had witnessed first-hand very young unmarried mothers leaving the workhouse with two-week-old babies and had dealt with girls as young as thirteen coming to register the births of their children.[31] Influenced by Social Darwinism, sectors of the labour movement were developing statist approaches to the care of children.[32] Emmeline Pankhurst's view, that when women had the vote they would see that mothers could stay at home and care for their children, was consistent with socialist feminist policy for protective employment legislation.[33]

Both Lydia Becker and Emmeline Pankhurst campaigned to improve pay and conditions for women teachers and to uphold the right of women teachers to teach boys. The all-male executive of the Manchester Board Certificated Assistant Teachers Association told the Board in 1897 that it was not in the best interests of boys to be taught by women, a policy that Emmeline Pankhurst opposed when she unsuccessfully voted for a woman to head a new mixed board school.[34] Critical of the fact that low-paid women teachers received no remuneration for the extra work involved in teaching sewing and domestic science, Pankhurst prompted the board to reconsider the question of the salaries paid to girl pupil teachers.[35] Looking at the teaching profession from both a socialist and feminist viewpoint, she thought it reflected the sexual divisions of 'working people of the lower grades', where men had all the advantages.[36] Elected with the support of Manchester workers, within days of her election she successfully advocated fair trade contracts for employees of firms contracted to the Board. This required employers to pay the standard rate of wages to the whole of their workforce, to observe the hours of labour recognised by the local employees' organisations and to allow the workers to join trade unions.[37]

Lydia Becker's liberal feminist arguments for improving the pay of women

teachers were based on a critique of the application of political economy to the question of teachers' salaries:

> School boards…fixed the scale of remuneration for teaching girls lower than that for teaching boys; the reasons…being that it was cheaper to teach girls than boys, as a school mistress' wages are lower than those of a school master. And if it be asked…why this should be, when the commodity purchased by the usage is…of the same value; the reply is that since…the school mistresses can be had cheaper, the laws of supply and demand required that she should receive less…. It is the fate of women to find this supposed rule of political economy alleged as a reason for keeping down their remuneration, while on the other hand, some other rule than that of economical science is brought in to prevent their having the benefit of supply and demand, when that way would tell in their favour.[38]

Becker attacked the Board's practice of charging lower fees to girls than boys, arguing that until school mistresses were educated and paid as well as school masters, it was impossible for girls to be educated as well as boys.[39] She demanded an open market for women's labour, the right to compete freely for all educational positions and the chance to displace men in the education of boys up to thirteen years.[40]

Lydia Becker, Rachel Scott and Emmeline Pankhurst were all advocates of abolishing school fees on a Board with a long tradition of remitting fees to school children. Manchester School Board designated some schools as free schools but held out until the twentieth century before making all its elementary schools free.[41] In Liverpool, where some school managers openly rebelled over the issue of free schools, Anne Davies supported free schools in areas where parents were particularly poor.[42] In presenting their case for the abolition of school fees, Lydia Becker and Rachel Scott drew on the liberal middle-class traditions of the women's movement. Lydia Becker, a member of the Birmingham National Education League, founded in 1867 on a policy of free, universal, compulsory education supported by the rates, was keenly aware of the 'domestic difficulty' of girls kept at home to mind the baby and run errands.[43] Her arguments for free, compulsory education were analogous to those of the Married Woman's Property Committee: girls' poor attendance was the result of 'the law of the maintenance of wives', the Poor Law Guardians' policy of not giving parish relief to the family of a man earning good wages, and the plight of widows unable to afford childcare.[44]

Rachel Scott reworked in terms of the working class, arguments that had been used in the campaign to reapportion educational endowments to middle-class girls:

> A great deal had been said about free education undermining the independence of the English people…. It was not to be found in the wealthy and the professional classes, whose sons took scholarships at Harrow and Eton and at the Universities. There were plenty of men with thousands

> a year who boasted that their sons' education had not cost them a penny after the age of twelve or thirteen years…. The original intent of the donors was to help poor lads, but it was not poor lads but only the wealthy who filled the expensive preparatory schools which were the great nurseries of the future holders of scholarships.[45]

In response, Rev. Nunn claimed Scott was giving no encouragement to the thrifty and thoughtful parent. Rather, the result would be that the idle, the improvident and the vicious would 'throw themselves upon the community'. Emmeline Pankhurst's advocacy of the abolition of school fees was in line with socialist policy. In voting for fees to be abolished, she implemented the policy of her supporters in the Manchester and Salford Trades Council, which pressed the Board for education to be free.[46]

Anne Davies and Lydia Becker both promoted temperance, with Becker prompting the Manchester Board in 1875 to petition Parliament not to 'sanction any extension of the hours during which intoxicating liquors may be sold.'[47] Anne Davies, a member of the Ladies Temperance Association, proposed in 1889 that the Liverpool Board should petition Parliament in favour of a bill for Sunday closing. The Board agreed on the grounds that parents drank money that would otherwise be devoted to their children's education.[48] She counteracted arguments that temperance fell outside the remit of the Board in 1889 and again in 1892, when the Board petitioned Parliament in favour of a bill to prevent the sale of alcohol to children under sixteen years of age and to stop children being used to deliver drink.[49] Some Board members felt that more harm might be done to children by their mothers and fathers going to the pub and staying there for hours. Anne Davies urged, however, that to send a girl aged thirteen to sixteen years to the public house for beer was more dangerous than at any other age and that as children were committed to industrial schools until the age of sixteen, the Board was quite within its province in supporting such a proposal. The writer of Anne Davies's obituary noted that she possessed a 'thorough-ladyness…that left nothing to be desired', which it would be pleasing to see imitated 'in this roystering age of women's rights.'[50] Yet, as Margaret Barrow has illustrated, advocacy of temperance through education formed one avenue by which women's 'rights' were advanced.[51]

Through their respective industrial-schools committees, Lydia Becker, Mary Dendy and Anne Davies all worked for children thought to be neglected, with both Lydia Becker and Anne Davies working to prevent injustices. In 1872, Lydia Becker protested that twelve-year-old Thomas Gleave and his mother had not been given a full hearing before the Board. Character references were produced and Lydia Becker gave her evidence, but witnesses testified to the mother being a drunkard and the home unsuitable, and Gleave was not released.[52] Anne Davies, a member of the Liverpool Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, criticised the punishment of children by confinement in the coalhole at the industrial school. Aware of the difficulties that had beset the London School Board as a result of the allegations of ill-treatment of

industrial-school children made by Elizabeth Surr and Helen Taylor, Mr Oulton supported her, arguing that the Board was laying itself open to 'a very grave risk of scandal', and the punishment was prohibited.[53] Industrial-school committees illustrate the contradictions of preventative discourses, particularly those associated with the regulation of sexuality.[54] Anne Davies was on a subcommittee that supported the emigration of children to Canada in order to separate them permanently from parents thought to be bad influences.[55] Lydia Becker visited industrial schools and training ships to ensure Manchester children were being well treated, but she also reported on the 'special' industrial schools to which girls could be sent when compulsorily removed from parental homes in Manchester's brothels. Equal rights feminism and suffrage provided the justification for women like Lydia Becker to argue on the one hand, from an equal rights liberal feminist point of view, for a scholarship ladder for girls and on the other, to participate in preventative politics.[56]

Women's role in the development of policy for both industrial and 'special' schools illustrates the interaction of voluntary activity and local government, in what Koven calls the 'borderland zone' of policy-making.[57] Koven argues that local and central government initiatives built on the 'experiments' of voluntary societies, with the result that voluntary activities were absorbed, copied and modified as local and central government increased their spheres of activity. In Liverpool, voluntary activity was incorporated into expanding local government provision through Florence Melly's advocacy of provision for children with physical disabilities. Classes for these children had been begun by the Invalid Children's Aid Society under the auspices of the Kyrle Society, of which Florence Melly's sister, Eva, was a member. The classes were transferred to the Victoria Women's University Settlement, where Eleanor Rathbone was on the committee.[58] In 1899, at Florence Melly's suggestion, the Industrial and Special Schools Committee of the Liverpool Board formed a sub-committee, consisting of two medical men and two women nominated by the Victoria Settlement, to assist the Board develop provision for 'defective, epileptic and crippled children'. The sub-committee proposed the establishment of four new centres and the continuance of the classes being run by the Victoria Settlement at a school in Shaw Street.[59] As Martha Vicinus argues, women's settlements did pioneering work for the handicapped, but the expansion of government services meant that some settlers ended as volunteers working for the state and its agencies.[60]

Mary Dendy's work for 'dull and defective' children in Manchester illustrates a complementary model of voluntary and local government provision. While working at the Collyhurst Recreation Rooms, Dendy's attention was attracted to a girl of 'defective' intellect. Spending time in schools and playgrounds, Dendy was 'struck by the number of children who were unable to hold their own either at work or play'. On the Board, she instigated an enquiry into similar cases in an effort to induce the Board to establish special schools.[61] Her report was accompanied by case notes compiled by Dr Shuttleworth, former Medical Superintendent of the Royal Albert Asylum and a member of

the Departmental Committee on Defective and Epileptic Children.[62] With the Chair and Clerk of the Manchester School Board, Mary Dendy visited the London School Board's special schools and held discussions with Dr Shuttleworth, General Moberly, Chair of the sub-committee on the education of the blind, deaf and dumb, and Mrs Burgwin, Superintendent of Special Schools.[63] In Manchester Dendy identified 495 children whom she thought needed special education, continuing her investigation while out of office.[64] During this period, the Board agreed to establish special classes.[65] Back on the Board in 1901, Dendy, with Pankhurst, was a member of the sub-committee which appointed the staff of the Manchester Board's special schools and employed Jane Dickens to supervise special education in Manchester.[66] By 1902, having come to the conclusion that special day schools were not 'going to solve the problem', Dendy was involved with both the development of school board provision for the more 'educable' children in the Manchester special schools, and the voluntary provision for severely afflicted children at the Sandlebridge schools. These were built by the Lancashire and Cheshire Society for the Permanent Care of the Feebleminded, of which she was honorary secretary.[67] In 1902, Dendy examined the list of children admitted to the Boards first special school.[68] In the same year, plans for the Sandlebridge schools built were passed by the Board of Education and the Manchester School Board sent their first children.[69] Voluntary provision at Sandlebridge for severely afflicted children complemented local government provision for the more 'educable'.[70] Mary Dendy's work illustrates tensions similar to those found in the preventative discourses of prostitution, in which work for the feebleminded was closely implicated.[71] On the one hand was her view that the feebleminded needed permanent institutional care based on contemporary eugenic theory and fears of social deterioration, while on the other, she was a member of both the Suffrage Society and the Women's Liberal Association.[72] Emmeline Pankhurst's connection with 'special' education was congruent with the group of Labour members heavily involved in the social hygiene movement who, like Pankhurst, later shifted politically to the right. Indeed, members from her power-base in the Manchester and Salford District Trades and Labour Council went on to petition in favour of the Mental Deficiency Bill of 1913.[73]

The management of elementary schools under the two school boards differently structured the 'borderland' where policy development occurred in the two cities. The 1870 Education Act restructured school management, designating school boards as the major units for school management. Under Section 15 of the Act, school boards could delegate powers to bodies of local managers for their schools. This was not mandatory, however, and two different models of educational management under school boards developed.[74] The Liverpool Board delegated its powers to local managers and selected the first body of managers for each school. These managers then co-opted members to vacancies as they occurred. Over the period of the School Board over 700 individuals, the majority non-elected, served as managers of forty-five Liverpool schools, in a system that drew on the tradition of voluntary school

management.[75] At the opposite end of the spectrum was the newer concept of civic management of education adopted by the Manchester School Board, which managed its schools almost entirely from central board offices.[76]

The Liverpool Board claimed that its managers were some of the busiest people in the city, who brought to the schools 'the general intelligence and knowledge of the world derived from the discharge of their other duties.'[77] The Board looked for managers 'by reason of their methodical habits, knowledge and tact…fitted for the work', which they rated over 'technical knowledge of education'.[78] In 1874, the Board stipulated that school committees were to consist of a maximum of six men and two women, raising the number of women in 1877 to three and in 1886 to four.[79] The Board encouraged the appointment of women managers, who they regarded as 'likely to advance the interests of a school'.[80] In fact, they saw the lack of women managers at a school as 'a drawback to the efficiency of the managers'.[81] Outside Liverpool, with the exception of London, numbers of women managers under school boards were low. By 1876, in the 1,249 board schools in England attended by girls, excluding London, only 221 women managers had been appointed.[82]

A network of women managers from families interested in education developed across the Liverpool board schools, as exemplified by Florence Melly's own relatives in the philanthropic families of Rathbone, Holt and Melly. Ruth Jennings has traced three generations of Rathbones, who provided around twenty managers of Liverpool schools during the period of the School Board, of whom twelve were women.[83] Liverpool's first woman board school manager, Elizabeth Rathbone, a former committee member of the Hibernian Schools, brought to the management of Liverpool schools her experience in the apprentice-house of the Greg's Mill at Quarry Bank.[84] Aged eighty, she made suggestions for the amendment of the 1870 Education Bill to W.E.Forster.[85] Four children of Elizabeth Rathbone's eldest son, the MP William Rathbone, became school managers. Her second son, Samuel Greg Rathbone, was Chair of the School Board from 1873 to 1893, and at different periods manager of Bond Street, Queen's Road and Pleasant Street schools. All five of his daughters, and three of his sons and a cousin were school managers, as was Philip Rathbone, Elizabeth Rathbone's third son, along with Philip's wife and five of their eleven children. Rathbone women were dispersed around the city's schools. Elsie Rathbone, involved in William Rathbone's scheme for nurse training, was a manager at Ashfield Street School, while at Granby Street, Eleanor Rathbone followed previous members of the family.[86] Rathbones worked alongside a number of women from wealthy banking and merchant families, some of whom were involved in philanthropy. Those like Emma Holt, Margaret Tabor, Alice Dophine, Maude Royden and Eleanor Rathbone were active in a range of organisations for the higher education of women, suffrage, settlement work, poor relief and much more.[87] Some like Eleanor Rathbone, Maude Royden and Fanny Calder, a manager at Granby Street, later attained national prominence far greater than Anne Davies and Florence Melly on the School Board.[88]

The Liverpool Board maintained that it attracted managers of calibre because it gave them wide powers.[89] The Board not only devolved to its managers responsibility for furniture, books and apparatus, payment of bills and school fees, but also staffing needs. They assessed the latter on a yearly basis in conjunction with HMI and the Board's Inspector, before recommending their choice of staff to the School Management Committee for appointment. By 1894, managers drew up special rules covering the grouping of children, the use of rooms, the duties of teachers, playgrounds, enquiries about absence, prizes and the closing of the school doors.[90] They were to report to the Board on the general efficiency of the school every six months. The Board expected managers to ensure that schools ran 'in conformity with the regulations of the Board under the Elementary Education Act'.[91] General Rules sent to managers in 1874, and *Suggestions to the Managers of Public Elementary Schools,* in 1880, laid down managers' duties in respect of the conduct of committee business, the school building and its contents, finance, staffing and formal reporting to the Board. 'In short', they were 'to act as representatives of the Board, subject to the regulations'.[92]

The Board kept control for itself over a range of key issues: the hours allotted to teaching, the scope and nature of religious instruction, the main secular instruction, the books allowed in the schools, the appointment of the head, the maximum salaries to be paid to staff, the sex of teachers for girls, infants and senior boys, fees and the rules governing corporal punishment.[93] Managers' decisions regarding buildings, equipment, staffing and fees had to pass through the Board for approval. The Board's inspectors examined the schools and reported to the Board, providing mechanisms through which it kept control of the schools.[94]

Detailed instruction to managers on how to observe different lessons were contained in *Suggestions to the Managers of Public Elementary Schools*.[95] When the Education Department complained to Holy Trinity School about the transfer of a female pupil teacher to work under the master in the Senior Boys Department, Florence Melly, as chair of managers, confirmed the appointment on the grounds that lady managers frequently supervised.[96] Women managers carried out Board decisions to close or amalgamate schools, dealing with the conditions that beset elementary schools nationally: poor buildings, children who stole, complaints from parents, overzealous use of corporal punishment, overcrowded classrooms, a board slow to carry out building works, pupil teachers not up to the mark and teachers who evaded Board regulations.[97] Minna Rathbone, chair of managers at Chatsworth Street School, and co-manager Christina Bingham, dealt with a catalogue of problems with the Head of the Infants Department between 1893 and 1896.[98] Women managers carried out both the policies of the Board and of the State 'at a distance'.[99] Yet, within these parameters, some took steps to engage in organisational policy-making.

During the dispute with its managers over the issue of free education, the Board was quite clear on 'the impossibility of the Board permitting the

Managers to use their official position in antagonism to the policy of the Board'. The Board, however, expressed itself willing 'at all times…to give every consideration to the suggestions made by the Managers'.[100] When a deputation of managers waited on the Board in 1884 to request changes for female pupil teachers, particularly in their hours of work, the result was a conference for teachers and managers to consider the conditions of employment of all the Board's pupil teachers.[101] However, the deputation of women managers and head teachers who appeared before the Board in 1893 to object to the plan for a mixed school under a master was less successful. The deputation was the outcome of a meeting of women managers, heads and others, who were concerned at the way mixed schools were detrimentally affecting the career prospects of women teachers.[102] The deputation outlined a range of arguments against large mixed schools, which had been aired at the meeting. These ranged from the harmful effects to girls as a result of ignoring 'the barrier of reserve between the sexes, which could not be broken down without disastrous results'; the absurdity of the alleged refining influence of girls on boys in mixed schools 'when the neighbourhood and the class of homes from which the girls in question were taken into account'; the loss of women teachers' influence over girls 'because they were overshadowed by the men teachers'; and the issue of why women should be debarred from reaching the highest positions in the Board Schools.[103] Undaunted, the Board went ahead with its plans for large new mixed schools.

While this suggests a limited scope for women managers to develop policy, as Vicinus argues, women brought to bear on their work in local schools the particular philanthropic and political beliefs developed through other work.[104] In Liverpool this included involvement with the Settlement, District Relief Societies, and Health and District Nursing Societies. Furthermore, Fanny Calder was aided by the position of women in the management of Liverpool's schools in developing national policy for the domestic curriculum. Convinced, like Eleanor Rathbone, that charitable effort on the part of the well-to-do was limited and believing that the poor needed to help themselves, Fanny Calder developed domestic education for elementary schoolgirls on the basis that 'the standard of life and morals' among the poor would be raised as decent food prevented illness and stopped people thieving from hunger. She founded the Liverpool School of Cookery in 1875, with a general committee of fifty-eight women drawn from well-known Liverpool families. The executive of the Liverpool School of Cookery decided that the best approach lay with children, and began their first classes for school children in the local church school.[105] The introduction of cookery classes into board schools came through Miss Hope, an executive committee member, who with Miss A.Rathbone was a manager of North Corporation School. In 1876, they introduced fortnightly practical lessons in cookery given by teachers from the School of Cookery.[106] Miss Hope also organised lessons for fifty children from Bevington Bush Board School.[107] Fanny Calder's general scheme of cookery instruction for elementary schools, based on experimental cookery

teaching in Leeds, Liverpool and London, was submitted to the Board of Education, and grants for cookery were begun in 1882.[108] In similar fashion, she introduced laundry work at Granby Street School in 1888, the year she became a manager at the school.[109]

Board school management in Liverpool built upon the essentially philanthropic model of voluntary societies. This created space for women as officers of the Board as well as managers. The Liverpool Board's employment of women attendance officers reflected the philanthropic model in which working-class women were employed in Bible, sanitary and national health societies, under the guidance of middle-class women.[110] At a more 'professional' level were women Board inspectors: Miss Bailey, appointed in 1874 to inspect the sewing and infants' departments, Miss Tucker, and Miss Yelf, who held the joint appointment of female Board Inspector and principal of the Board's Pupil Teachers' College.[111]

In contrast, the more bureaucratic approach to management in Manchester, set in place over the first five years of the Board, provided fewer spaces for women. Initially, Manchester was divided into five educational districts, with Board members responsible for the collection of educational statistics and for District Committees, to which representatives of voluntary schools were invited. Where there was a lack of school accommodation, district committees were empowered to enter into negotiations for suitable buildings. As each school was transferred to the Board, the model of management, the appointment of teachers and details and regulations were to be decided.[112] During 1871 Lydia Becker seconded a proposal for a management structure for the board schools, which built on the existing Divisional model. Divisional Committees were to consist of three members of the Board and three inhabitants or ratepayers of each division, and Divisional members were to have the same rights as members of the Board, with the exception of taking the chair.[113] When the Sharp Street School was transferred to the Board, however, it was placed under the School Management Committee, with managers to be appointed by the Board.[114] During 1871, the Board committee structure was made 'more uniform and systematic', but schools established by the Board were still 'to be managed either by the board or by managers appointed by the Board.'[115] By 1873, schools transferred to the Board were being managed by separate committees consisting of three members of the Board, with the Clerk acting as Correspondent and visiting board schools in order to report to the managers.[116] In 1875, one committee to manage all the board schools was established as a sub-committee of the General Purposes Committee, and members were allotted to each school as managing visitors.[117] Regulations for the management of the schools were published, and an inspector with clearly defined roles and responsibilities employed.[118]

The development of Manchester's inspectorate was a consequence of the increasing complexity of educational administration and the consequent greater demand for expertise.[119] It was also indicative of the expert 'bureau-professional regimes' associated with changing views of citizenship.[120]

Manchester's first board inspector attended managers' meetings, kept the managers' minute books and carried out managers' instructions under the supervision of the Clerk. He prepared statistical returns and costings, examined, supervised and advised the pupils, pupil teachers and assistant teachers, and visited prospective teachers in their schools, in addition to organising and supervising the evening schools and Science and Art classes.[121] Once a year, he presented a full report to the Board on the schools.[122] As the work grew, the city was sub-divided and additional inspectors appointed.[123]

Manchester inspectors carried out tasks undertaken by Liverpool's lay managers. Like the latter, they were to ensure the rules of the Education Department and the regulations of the Board were adhered to and that school staffs were efficiently managed. They were to recommend appointments to the School Management Committee and to check registers and requisitions for books, apparatus, and stationery.[124] By 1887, they supervised fuel and light, caretakers, repairs to buildings, structural alterations, decorating, prize distributions and audits of stock.[125] Bureaucratic roles and responsibilities based on expertise were differentiated more clearly in 1889, when inspectors were relieved from attendance at committee meetings in order to spend as much time as possible in the schools.[126] While women organisers were appointed for domestic subjects, the Board resisted attempts by Lydia Becker and Rachel Scott to appoint women attendance officers.[127] Sarah Chappell was appointed in 1882 as Female Enquiry Officer to deal with female industrial-school cases, but when she retired she was not replaced.[128]

Rev. Nunn told the Cross Commission in 1887 that Manchester schools were too numerous for the managers to visit regularly, but that managers did do so from time to time.[129] In the 1890s, visiting rotas were drawn up, with Rachel Scott, Mary Dendy and Emmeline Pankhurst responsible like other members of the Board for specific groups of schools.[130] The Board rejected on 'civic' grounds the suggestion from the Social Questions Union of Manchester and District in 1893 that the Board should appoint persons other than members of the Board as managers of board schools.[131] The Board argued that by managing its schools itself it was fulfilling the duties placed upon it by 'fellow citizens'.[132] In response, the *Manchester Guardian* called for 'persons directly drawn from the class who use the school' to be appointed managers.[133] With sole responsibility for management located in the Board, as schools transferred, the numbers of lay managers fell. In addition, under the Board's system of visitation, whole areas of the city's elementary schools were without women managers. When the Lower Mosley Street Schools transferred to the Board in 1880 the Ladies' Committee, which had run the girls' school from 1836, was incorporated into the main committee. The newly-formed committee now concentrated on providing evening classes and social clubs.[134] While women were losing their places as managers of elementary schools, they increasingly found outlets through the expansion of the Manchester Girls' Club Workers' Union and the Manchester Recreative

Evening Classes Committee. Here they had scope to develop policy, but in a more limited sphere.

As Lydia Becker argued, elected office under the 1870 Education Act was a key political step for women. In both Manchester and Liverpool it gave women a mandate to press for the development of educational and social policy for women and girls, the poor, 'neglected' children and those in need of 'special' education. Nevertheless, board school management in the two cities illustrates paradoxes where the question of women's citizenship is concerned. In Liverpool, with a model of school management based on the structures of voluntary philanthropy, many women managers had the opportunity to influence the daily experience of children in school, supported by women attendance officers and Board inspectors. As managers in Liverpool schools, they performed tasks which, under the growing 'bureau-professional' structure of Manchester's model of civic management, were the concern of Manchester's board inspectors, who were for the most part men. Considering both elected school board membership and voluntary local management in the two cities illustrates the complexity of policy-making for women in the 'borderland zone'. It also raises questions about both the extent and the containment of female political power.

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5 'Women not wanted'

The fight to secure political representation on Local Education Authorities, 1870–1907

Jane Martin

There are nine women on the London School Board.
There will be none on the Authority, if the Bill passes.
Of course they will not be wanted!
The half-a-million children in the Schools want them, especially the hundred thousand who are between three and five, and the blind, the deaf, the crippled, and the mentally defective children.
The pupil-teachers (of whom four to one are girls) want them.
The women-teachers want them.
Everybody says they want them.
But the Education Bill does not want them.
There are 180 centres for cooking, 138 centres for laundry work, and twenty-five centres for housekeeping which will have to get on without women on the Authority.
So will the industrial schools, the residential homes, and the boarded-out children.
The Education Bill wants the London County Council to take the place of the School Board.
No woman can be a member of the London County Council so no woman can occupy the places from which the nine women now on the School Board are to be turned away.[1]

This chapter examines the breaking up of the London School Board (LSB)—the largest and most powerful organ of local government then in existence—and the struggle to secure female representation on the new body, the London County Council (LCC). Previous historians have discussed the debates over the Cockerton Judgement of 1899 and the drafting of the 1902 Education Act.[2] Less has been written about the gender politics of educational change; Patricia Hollis's *Ladies Elect: Women In English Local Government 1865–1914,* first published in 1987, has become a classic, while a few other historians focus upon the gender/power relations in educational administration.[3] Here I tell the story of seven women whose participation in the political conflict is little known: Mary Bridges Adams, Margaret Eve, Ruth Homan, Susan Lawrence, Emma Maitland, Ellen McKee and Hilda Miall-Smith. These women left very little personal testimony. Their involvement can be traced through the documents left by the Women's Local Government Society (WLGS) (annual reports, pamphlets and minute books), the official records of the LSB and reports in the educational, local and national press. Through their stories and perspectives it becomes possible to uncover past visions of women in educational leadership to reveal what has

been lost, erased, or distorted. To do so requires an examination of the way that women created empowering identities and self-representations both within and against the dominant male narratives. Such dynamics will be explored here in the lives of some of the last women elected to serve on the LSB: the webs of friendships and shared values, as well as party politics. The effectiveness of their political struggle and the obstacles and limitations they faced are examined by looking at their aims, visions and actions.

The chapter will assess the role of women in the bureaucratic formation of the London school system before moves to undermine the LSB in the 1890s, when female exclusion became a real possibility. The question of education reform and the response of the LSB will be explored by means of two case studies: first, the alternative possibilities championed by Mary Bridges Adams and second, the views promulgated by the other six women. The social and political networks of this second grouping will be traced to the Women's Local Government Society (WLGS), a London-based organisation established on a non-party basis to advocate women's rights in local politics. Using publicity materials like the policy-making and channelled energy, resources and time towards the fight to ditty quoted at the start, it argued that women *were* wanted in educational safeguard this bastion for women in local politics. These politicised women provided the core of the feminist opposition to the proposals to disenfranchise women as voters, as political candidates and as elected representatives.

Radicals and femocrats: the women members of the London School Board

Established under the terms of the 1870 Education Act, the LSB was one of the first public bodies in England to admit women on the same terms as men. The biggest and most dynamic of the 2,500 school boards in England and Wales, it was a pioneer in abolishing school fees, providing pupils with free school meals and other health benefits, and broadening the curriculum for working-class children.[4] Twenty-nine women served on the LSB, which was overwhelmingly dominated by middle- and upper-class men, including excolonial administrators like Lord Lawrence and Lord Reay, and hereditary peers like the Duke of Newcastle and the Hon. Lyulph Stanley. Ruling dynasties like the Cecils were also represented in the person of Evelyn Cecil, nephew of Robert Gascoyne-Cecil, Marquess of Salisbury, leader of the Conservative Party from 1881 to 1902 and prime minister in 1885–6, 1886–92 and 1895–1902.[5] Successful election entitled the person to use the letters MSBL (Member of the School Board for London) and this cachet could form a focus of individual ambition. For men in this period it could provide a stepping-stone to Parliament, whereas for women it might connote both status and competence. Educational administration provided opportunities for getting attention, enabling a small group of generally wealthy and well-connected women to promote their participation in local affairs and extend

their general influence. Margaret Cole had experience of the LCC in the twentieth century, and noted the necessary qualifications of 'time-to-spare and of financial position' for persons available to stand for election.[6] Then, as now, public service was weighted on the side of the leisured with private incomes, or such resources as financial security, flexible working hours, public networks and social status. As a minimum, a member of the LSB would attend the public sitting of the Board every Wednesday afternoon during session, as well as fortnightly meetings of two other committees and two or three sub-committees. Indeed, there is evidence that members spent two or three days a week at the Board offices on the Embankment, while constituency work made further inroads into their time: a heavy burden in a period when elected officials were not entitled to draw out-of-pocket expenses or recoup lost earnings.

Not surprisingly, the nature and structure of the LSB were hinged on understandings of the male-as-norm. Overall, the intricacies of procedure followed the precedent of the House of Commons, and as David McKie recently observed in an article on the future of the House of Lords:

> The Commons is a very masculine place, designed by men for men to perform in, especially, perhaps, those skilled in the dormitory rough and tumble of public schools. Strong and intelligent women, who in a better system would have been on the Commons front benches decades ago, do not altogether regret that, unable to get themselves nominated in winnable Labour seats, they have ended up in the Lords. You're not jeered at, or shouted down if you can't make yourself stentorian. You're not so subjected, apart from the over-egged compliments, to sexual teasing or innuendo. It is easier there to develop a serious argument, coloured by party allegiance, perhaps, but not drowned in it. The courtesy may sometimes be cloying, but better that than the rough house.[8]

Women were working in a male-dominated bureaucracy with a particular set of organisational practices that were not of their own making, and where the prevailing culture and underpinning ideology were masculinist.[9] The reference to the debating level in the House of Commons implicitly recognises structural differences in upbringing and education that indicate the kinds of resources less available to women than men. Analysis of fragmentary biographical data on 109 male members of the LSB shows fourteen products of the old-established public schools, while three attended new proprietary boarding schools founded after 1840.[10] In total, three graduated from London University, twenty-three were products of Oxbridge, and another ten had masters' degrees. This contrasts with the experience of the twenty-nine female members, of whom six were educated at home in the 1840s and 1850s, while only three went to boarding school. Educational biographies suggest women members were better educated than others of their sex and class, but were not inculcated into the same

modes of behaviour as the ex-public-school males they served alongside. Patriarchy has persisted through changing circumstances, and the institutionalised lower status of women in public and political life has endured to the end of the twentieth century. But what lessons can we learn from the past? Was the atmosphere of the LSB rather closer to that of a Commons debate or the House of Lords in the 1990s?

First elected in 1876, Florence Fenwick Miller has supplied a vital record which, while it may not be wholly representative, is illuminating.[11] She rebelled against the fraternalism that sought to exclude women from cultural practices, refusing to decline an invitation to attend the Lord Mayor's banquet in 1880 and choosing her own male escort to take her in to dinner. Coverage of the Board's public sittings in the *School Board Chronicle* does not indicate female members were shouted down; but they were patronised and the more independent, assertive women were jeered. When Elizabeth Surr raised legitimate concerns over issues of cruelty and mismanagement of the Board's industrial schools, her critics charged her with being too concerned with emotions.[12] The gendered pattern of power was evident in the proportions of women members and the dominance of men in decision-making positions (see Table 5.1); but it is noteworthy that the House of Commons did not match the lowest level of female representation on the LSB (just over 4 per cent) until the General Election of October 1964.[13]

Not until the General Election of 1 May 1997 did the percentage of women MPs exceed the 18 per cent of women returned to the LSB in 1879. None the less, the environment of the LSB was intransigently masculinist. The three most powerful posts (chair and vice-chair of the Board and chair of the School Management Committee) were always held by men, and only

Table 5.1 School Board election results, 1870–1900

Date Elected	*Women candidates*	*Women elected*	*Total members*
1870 November	3	2	49
1873 November	4	2	49
1876 November	4	4	50
1879 November	12	9	50
1882 November	7	7	52
1885 November	8	3	54
1888 November	7	4	55
1891 November	6	3	55
1893 July*	1	1	(1)
1894 November	13	4	55
1887 November	8	8	55
1900 November	12	9	55

*By-election to fill a vacancy caused by the resignation of Mr Spinks

Sources: *School Board Chronicle,* 1870–1904

Table 5.2 Women members who have held School Board Office

Date when first took office	*Name*	*Office*
1882	Rosamond Davenport Hill	Chair, School Management Committee Sub-Committee on Cookery
1883	Helen Taylor	Chair, Educational Endowments Committee
1885	Rosamond Davenport Hill	Chair, Industrial Schools Committee Sub-Committee on Brentwood School
1887	Augusta Webster	Chair, School Management Committee Sub-Committee on School Libraries and Rewards
1889	Margaret Ashton Dilke	Chair, School Management Committee Sub-Committee on Needlework
1891	Annie Besant	Chair, School Management Committee Sub-Committee on Laundry
1893	Rosamond Davenport Hill	Chair, School Management Committee Sub-Committee on Instruction in Cookery, Laundry-work, and needlework
1896	Ruth Homan	Chair, Industrial Schools Committee Sub-Committee on Gordon House Girls' Home
1897	Ruth Homan	Chair, Domestic Subjects Committee
1897	Rosamond Davenport Hill	Chair, Industrial Schools Committee Sub-Committee on Upton House School
1898	Emma Maitland	Chair, School Management Committee Sub-Committee on Requisitions and Stock-Taking
1898	Margaret Eve	Chair, Industrial Schools Committee Sub-Committee on "Davenport Hill" Boys' Home
1899	Ellen McKee	Chair, School Management Committee Sub-Committee on Schools for Special Instruction, for the Deaf and for the Blind
1900	Margaret Eve	Vice-chair, Evening Continuation Schools Committee
1901	Ruth Homan	Vice-chair, Industrial Schools Committee
1902	Hon. Maude Lawrence	Chair, School Management Committee Sub-Committee on Schools for Special Instruction, for the Deaf and for the Blind
1902	Margaret Eve	Vice-chair, Evening Continuation Schools Committee
1902	Hilda Miall-Smith	Chair, General Purposes Committee Sub-Committee on Tea for Members on Board days
1902	Hon. Maude Lawrence	Chair, Special Sub-Committee of General Purposes Committee to draw up a shortlist of potential candi dates for the post of Medical Officer
1902	Emma Maitland	Vice-chair, Special Sub-Committee of General Purposes Committee to draw up a shortlist of potential candidates for the post of Medical Officer

Sources: School Board for London, *Minutes*, 1870–1904; School Board for London, *Reports*, 1887–1903.

one woman became chair of a permanent standing committee. Ten of the twelve women office-holders were limited to administering the feminine—managing domestic subjects and child welfare—apparently in obeisance to conventional ideas about women's skills and interests. This is graphically illustrated by Hilda Miall-Smith's office as chair of the sub-committee that organised tea for members on Board days (see Table 5.2).

A study of the twenty-seven women who served one term or more suggests that they had differing conceptions of their role within political institutions. Some resisted the masculine ethos and culture of male fraternity, while others were more conformist, both personally and politically. The former are defined as Radicals because they demonstrate a capacity to understand the lives of the poor and a willingness to adopt an independent line. Only six, Annie Besant, Mary Bridges Adams, Frances Hastings, Florence Fenwick Miller, Honnor Morten, Henrietta Muller and Helen Taylor, were Radicals (see Table 5.3). By contrast, the four longest serving female representatives—Rosamond Davenport Hill (eighteen years), Margaret Eve (thirteen years), Ruth Homan (thirteen years) and Alice Westlake (twelve years)—were Progressive Party loyalists. They gave high priority to their role as party representatives and won promotion to middle-ranking appointments. At the age of fifty, for instance, Homan, the widowed daughter of a former Lord Mayor of London, became vice-chair of the industrial schools committee in charge of the schooling of outcast children.[14]

Australian and New Zealand scholarship uses the term 'femocrat' to refer to feminists appointed to work in women's affairs and women's units in the state apparatuses and bureaucracies.[15] Here femocrats are so defined because the British suffrage movement was crucial to their political candidature, but once elected the women show a tendency for tailoring issues to the politically acceptable. This leads us on to the problematics involved in any attempt to study the relationship of women to power in political institutions. Of course, those ambitious for success recognise that recruitment by patronage is based on criteria of acceptability, and it comes as little surprise to find male politicians more receptive to those who did not use forms of resistance to change the political culture. The next section provides a historical overview of educational policy-making on the LSB.

An analysis of voting records through the period 1877 to 1885 shows the femocrats Rosamond Davenport Hill and Alice Westlake supporting efforts to make the girls' curriculum gender-specific, whereas the radicals Frances Hastings, Florence Fenwick Miller, Henrietta Muller, Elizabeth Surr and Helen Taylor did not. In 1885, Hastings and Taylor took a distinctive stand when they sought to reduce the LSB requirements that girls in Standards IV and above take a course of twenty lessons in cooking.[16] However, it was the needlework requirements that provoked the most lengthy debate. All four serving women members of the 1876 Board agreed that they were too high and severely jeopardised the girls' academic training, but Florence Fenwick Miller, Henrietta Muller and Helen Taylor stand out

Table 5.3 Radicals and femocrats: women members of the London School Board (sample=27 women who served one term or more)

Women members	*Year first elected*	*Service on division*	*Categorisation*
A. Besant	1888	Tower Hamlets	Radical
M. Bridges Adams	1897	Greenwich	Radical
J. Chessar	1873	Marylebone	Femocrat
A. Cowell	1873	Marylebone	Femocrat
E. Davies	1870	Greenwich	Femocrat
R. Davenport Hill	1876	City	Femocrat
E. Dibdin	1897	Finsbury	Femocrat
M. Dilke	1888	Lambeth	Femocrat
C. Elder	1897	Westminster	Femocrat
M. Eve	1891	Finsbury	Femocrat
E. Garrett	1870	Marylebone	Femocrat
F. Hastings	1882	Tower Hamlets	Radical
R. Homan	1891	Tower Hamlets	Femocrat
M. Lawrence	1900	Westminster	Femocrat
S. Lawrence	1900	Marylebone	Femocrat
E. Maitland	1888, 1894	Marylebone, Chelsea	Femocrat
E. McKee	1897	City	Femocrat
H. Miall-Smith	1900	Marylebone	Femocrat
F. Fenwick Miller	1876	Finsbury	Radical
H. Morten	1897	Southwark, Hackney	Radical
H. Muller	1879	Lambeth	Radical
M. Richardson	1879	Southwark	Femocrat
E. Simcox	1879	Westminster	Femocrat
E. Surr	1876	Finsbury	Radical
H. Taylor	1876	Southwark	Radical
A. Webster	1879, 1885	Chelsea	Femocrat
A. Westlake	1876	Marylebone	Femocrat

Note: Where two dates are given this signifies a break in the service.

Source: *School Board Chronicle*, 1870–1904

as the most persistent female opponents of school gender training. First, they objected to the amount of time girls had to spend on domestic subjects like needlework. Second, they attacked the value of what was being taught because it was usually more ornamental than practical. Third, they wanted the girls to have the same opportunities to cultivate their intelligence as the boys.[17] Taken together, they were resistors who sought to challenge the status quo that rendered the expansion of the girls' curriculum gender specific. By the same token, they were marginalised voices who did not enjoy hegemony over the dominant ideas, values and 'social rules' that shaped aims and practice in educating girls. The lasting legacy belonged to the femocrats Rosamond Davenport Hill and Ruth Homan, who presided

over the huge expansion in the teaching of domestic subjects from their sphere of influence within the LSB bureaucracy (see Table 5.2). Speaking at the opening of the Paragon Domestic School, Homan articulated the class- and gender-differentiated views shaping London's state elementary schools from their origins in the 1870s:

> They did not expect to turn out highly-trained cooks, laundresses, and thoroughly good housekeepers from the school; but what they would aim at was to give them such a good foundation in domestic training that they would be able to improve upon it as they grew older.... They also aimed at teaching the dignity of labour, and to show girls that it was not beneath their dignity to learn and do housework, and that it was better than becoming a clerk. The work also had its value in the direction of temperance reform, for there would be no inducement for a man to go outside his home if its comforts were better. This they sought to bring about by making the children orderly, methodical, and hygienic.[18]

The rationale for supporting the education of working-class girls and women was couched in terms of improved child-rearing and home-making. It facilitated the capacity for educated middle-class women, like Ruth Homan, to establish themselves as 'experts' in the 'pedagogy of the feminine.'[19]

Promoters of women's local government work anticipated that women in leadership would act to improve the lot of women generally. Throughout, female members took an active interest in Board policy as it impacted on London's women teachers, but is it possible to presume a unity of purpose and political intent? The discussion will focus on three issues crucial to the women who made teaching a career: pay, promotion, and the right of married women to continue to teach, if they wished to do so.

The invisible exclusion of women from head-teachership quickly emerged, as it became routine for the male-dominated School Management Committee to appoint male leaders of single-sex schools in the same building. Contrary to the Board regulations these appointments were not submitted to the full Board for confirmation. In these circumstances, Florence Fenwick Miller exposed the barrier to female promotion and thwarted an attempt to disallow the employment of married women teachers with young families, but failed to overturn a proposal that the Board receive three months' notice of maternity leave.[20] Gradually the regulations defining the position of married women teachers grew more stringent. By the 1880s, those who took confinement leave had to arrange for their own replacement and pay her out of their own salary. Whereas serving radical women opposed the policy change, femocrats did not. Far from it. Alice Westlake led the attack on the employment of married women teachers when a member of the School Management Committee. Unlike Westlake, who was a party woman, Fenwick Miller, Surr and Taylor clung to their independence and refused to be drawn in to the dominant masculinist codes. They asserted their feminism through

the voting system, as well as helping launch the Metropolitan Board Mistresses' Association to support and protect women teachers.[21] They also tried to pass an equal pay motion to bring the salaries of women teachers into line with those of men.[22]

At the turn of the century, concern about the feminisation of the teaching profession can be detected in policy debates at the LSB. In response, the School Management Committee proposed commitments to raise the salary scales for male pupil teachers but not for female pupil teachers, as well as offering young men the inducements of free books and stationery. This was the topic of heated debate. It prompted the *Board Teacher* to comment that for once the Hon. Lyulph Stanley (Progressive Party leader) 'is deserted by all but one of his most loyal supporters—the Lady Progressive members.'[23] The editorial continues:

> The vice-chairman is almost in tears at the introduction of 'the dangerous animosity of sex.' He is not prepared, he declares to see in London the American System of one man at the head of a school, with a staff of women fleeting through into marriage.[24]

It is highly revealing that the image portrayed is of women teachers as a poor investment, moving quickly out of the labour market. In response, the majority of serving female members challenged the disparity between men's and women's salaries, even if they also accepted (and not all did) that men were the primary breadwinners. These contradictions alert us to the problems involved in any attempt to presume a unity of purpose and political intent among activist women. Radicals and femocrats each gained ground by tapping into dominant discourses of femininity, since women in leadership were particularly vulnerable to criticism and isolation:

> That the female element of the School Board for London has proved an unqualified success is more than the most ardent advocate for the extension of the suffrage to women would maintain. A very considerable proportion of the women who have been elected on previous Boards have been wordy spouters, that have been kept in order with difficulty by the chairmen, who have not done their work in the committees but have merely talked to the outside public through the reporters.[25]

Media treatment of Florence Fenwick Miller and Helen Taylor suggests the gendered forms of communication acceptable in the public arena. The editorial fails to mention that they represented poor and heavily-populated divisions that created difficulties for them, since their constituency work was particularly time-consuming. Their disruptive voices are the main concern. Desirous to act as organisational and social change agents they rebelled against the dominant organisational practices and policy agenda and this left them vulnerable to attack.

The undermining of the London School Board

In August 1901 the radical liberal Charles Masterman described the LSB as 'probably the best hated body in England.'[26] Overall, its Progressive policies antagonised the Conservative governments of 1895 and 1900, but the push to extend the scope of elementary education was especially controversial. These attitudes were given hope by the publication of the Bryce Report in 1895, which recommended that 'the County and County Borough Councils, operating through Education Committees should control all secondary education and that higher grade and evening classes run by the School Boards should be transferred to them.'[27] Sir John Gorst, education spokesman for the Conservative government in the House of Commons, favoured the abolition of the school board system and was prepared to resort to extra-parliamentary methods to pave the way to legislation. The favoured tactic was to curtail the work of the higher grade institutions provided by the School Board, and in 1897 Gorst advised the Science and Art Department that grants to arts and science schools might be distributed by competent local authorities concerned with secondary-school supervision. As anticipated, both the School Board and the Technical Education Board (TEB) applied to become the grant-distributing authority of national Science and Art payments for London. On Boxing Day 1898, Robert Morant from the Education Department passed on evidence which threw doubt on the legality of the School Board's position, and the Science and Art Department accepted the application of the TEB.[28] Gorst then took steps to have the School Board's position challenged at the next local government audit. A test case was brought by Camden School of Art, and after a long legal battle the Courts of Appeal endorsed the ruling of Cockerton, the district auditor, that much of the School Board activity in the development of higher grade and evening schools was unsanctioned and illegal.

The local-administration issue raised the possibility of female disenfranchisement if directly elected school boards were abolished in favour of multi-purpose bodies. The omens were bad. In 1899 the London Government Act made it illegal for women to stand for election to the new metropolitan boroughs, and suffragists were divided on the question of education reform. Seven of the nine female representatives on the LSB protested their exclusion and their struggles are the focus here.

Mary Bridges Adams and the National Labour Education League

Unlike the other women, Mary Bridges Adams (née Daltry, 1855–1939) was a woman of working-class social background who was drawn by the eight-hours movement into socialist politics. She received an elementary education but stayed on at school as a pupil teacher, becoming a teacher and head teacher in the urban centres of Birmingham, London and Newcastle.[29] In 1887 this politicised, single, professional woman married Walter Bridges

Adams, who held similar views and encouraged her political education. Two years later she gave birth to a son, and the family settled in Greenwich where Mary's political activity led to her adoption as a Labour candidate in the 1894 elections to the LSB. Her experience of working and living in the poorer districts of Birmingham and Newcastle prompted her to back the socialist demand for state provision of school meals; she also advocated the expansion of the elementary curriculum and different teachers for the evening continuation schools from those teaching in the day. This time Mary failed to win the division for Labour, but three years later there was a different outcome. Sponsored by the newly-established Progressive Election Committee, including the Royal Arsenal Co-operative Society (RACS), sixty trade organisations and the London Nonconformist Council, she succeeded in capturing the fourth Greenwich seat. The result reflected the strength of the Woolwich Labour Party, attributable to the position of the Royal Arsenal as the sole major employer, and the influence of voluntary associations such as the RACS, which fostered a spirit of self-improvement through its Education Committee and Women's Guilds. Woolwich was peculiar in being a working-class community dependent on a single industry which offered a large proportion of skilled artisans relatively stable employment.[30]

In October 1897 Mary attended a meeting of the RACS Education Committee to discuss the work of the LSB. This prompted the committee to co-ordinate her election campaign with a publicity campaign of its own in support of the evening schools.[31] Once elected, she joined the Evening Classes Committee, and when the Cockerton Judgement was upheld in December 1900 was prominent in organising local opposition to Conservative education policy. Her first action was to enlist the support of the RACS Education Committee and the Educational Association of the Co-operative Union, and a meeting under their aegis was planned for 23 March 1901. It involved Stewart Headlam (chair of the Evening Classes Committee) and the Hon. Lyulph Stanley as the main speakers. That same month the RACS sent a petition to the House of Commons calling for the judgement to be reversed, and pledged £25 towards the cost of an appeal to the House of Lords. Again, at Mary's request, they sent a copy of the resolution to the LSB, along with a strongly-worded message of support. In May, the Education Committee sent delegates in two deputations to the Board of Education, and worked together with the Woolwich Trades and Labour Council to organise a protest meeting that took place on 26 June 1901. The platform speakers were Mary Bridges Adams, Keir Hardie and Stewart Headlam, who called on the government to withdraw their Education Bill proposing the destruction of the school board system, and to legalise the work condemned by Cockerton.[32]

In November 1901 Mary launched the National Labour Education League (NLEL) to co-ordinate the trade unions' campaign against government education policy. London teachers usually joined the National Union of Elementary Teachers or the Metropolitan Board Teachers' Association; but at this time Mary was coming to the fore in the Gas Workers and General

Labourers' Union, which broke the pattern of the craft traditions and moderate politics of the old unionism and recruited workers of all kinds. Here again, the general secretary, Will Thorne, was to the forefront of a circle of trade union associates that included George Barnes (general secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Engineers), Richard Bell (general secretary of the Amalgamated Society of Railway Servants), C.W.Bowerman (general secretary of the London Society of Compositors) and W.C.Steadman (general secretary of the Barge Builders' Union). In the nearest approach to a Labour educational programme at this period, the League had five main objectives. In essence, it aspired, first, to publicise trade union views and, second, to develop an alternative approach to educational provision. The third objective was to strengthen and develop the educational side of the labour movement. The fourth was to free popular education from the control of sectarians and political 'wirepullers', a popular epithet for political leaders. The final objective was to eliminate social distinctions in education and to secure by legislation a national education system reorganised along the lines of age-defined stages through which every child should go.[33]

It is briefly worth considering the reference to political wirepullers. Writing in Keir Hardie's *Labour Leader,* Mary accused the Fabian Society of splitting the opposition to Conservative education policy, hinting at the 'campaign of permeation and persuasion' pursued by Sidney Webb (chairman of the TEB, who drafted the influential *The Educational Muddle and the Way Out*).[34] The NLEL's demand for 'education first, machinery second' was also reminiscent of William Morris's critique of Webb's version of a comprehensive municipal socialism. Webb was committed to establishing a framework for national reforms, and Morris argued his mistake was 'to over-estimate the importance of the mechanism of a system of society apart from the end towards which it may be used.'[35] Mary skirted Fabianism under his influence, and in later life she wrote that she had 'the blessing and good wishes of William Morris when she began her work for educational reform.'[36] She did not betray his trust. He had written in March 1886: 'Education towards Revolution seems to me to express in three words what our policy should be'.[37] Mary appealed in a similar vein to socialists to bestir themselves during 'the Education Crisis' of 1901:

> speaking as one who has had opportunities of seeing behind the scenes, I believe that there is at present a deliberate and determined attempt to curtail even the meagre educational opportunities at present within the reach of the children of the industrial classes. The reason is not far to seek. Privilege must inevitably succumb before an educated democracy.[38]

The League's original Appeal was signed by three Lib-Lab MPs (Richard Bell, Thomas Burt and Charles Fenwick), three members of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress (Will Thorne, J.Ward and Sam Woods), seven Labour members of the LCC (C.W.Bowerman, Ben Cooper,

Will Crooks, S.Dew, H.Gosling, W.C.Steadman and H.R.Taylor), Alex Wilkie (a member of the Newcastle School Board) and Ben Jones (honorary secretary to the Parliamentary Committee of the Co-operative Union), as well as Alexander McLeod, Thomas Arnold and Henry May of the RACS. A circular was sent out to trade unions inviting them to join the League, and by 15 November Mary was able to announce, at a meeting convened by the Northern Counties Education League, that forty-five trade unions had already done so. A week later the League met in London and the co-operation of the Parliamentary Committee of the Trades Union Congress (PCTUC) was secured for a proposed conference in January 1902.[39] However, the PCTUC turned down her request to use their office as a covering address.[40]

On 24 March 1902, Arthur Balfour introduced legislative proposals to the House of Commons intended to transfer the powers and functions of the school boards to council committee administration, to build up a state-supported system of selective secondary schools, and provide further assistance for the religious schools. The scheme was opposed by an alliance that included feminists, Liberals, Nonconformists (because voluntary schools were going to be rate-supported under the proposed legislation) and socialists. Mary assumed a prominent role, travelling and speaking away from home. In April 1902, she wrote a pamphlet calling for popularly-constituted school boards and absolute equality of opportunity. She also forecast that most of the revenue raised from local taxes would be spent on secondary education for middle-class children.[41] At a co-operative conference organised by the RACS Education Committee on 10 May, she invoked the principle 'No representation, no taxation':

> Parents were invited to entrust their children to people who did not dare to face them at an election. None but gentry or well-to-do tradesmen could attend County Council meetings, except in County Boroughs, and the chief landowner could always decide who should be made the public representative among the managers of his local school. It was sheer lunacy to call this popular control.[42]

In solidarity, the RACS distributed 200 leaflets produced by the NLEL, as well as publicising the conditions of membership. The LSB secured a stay of execution, but the bill was passed on 18 December 1902. Symbolically, the London Education Bill was introduced to Parliament in June 1903, on the very day the 1902 Act came into effect. The NLEL and the LSB sent deputations to the Board of Education, and Mary was a delegate for both groups.[43] At that time the London Progressive Education Union, the Metropolitan Free Church Federation, the Metropolitan Radical Federation, the National Democratic League and Woolwich Trades Council planned a mass meeting at Hyde Park. Writing to James Ramsay Macdonald (secretary of the Labour Representation Committee), Mary explained her absence as a delegate of the NLEL:

> What appears today in the Liberal Press under the heading 'Hyde Park Demonstration,' will surprise many Trade Unionists who have watched with sympathy and interest the growth of the national labour education league. Let me state that I have absolutely no part in what I regard as a betrayal of the organised workers and the children of the Democracy into the hands of wire-pulling politicians and sectarians whom after nearly six years work as the direct representative of Labour on the London School Board, I cannot regard as the friends of Trade Unionism, or of the DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLE OF EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL.[44]

In her absence, the list of 100 speakers included nonconformists, politicians, trade unionists and members of the WLGS.[45] Margaret Eve, Ruth Homan, Susan Lawrence, Emma Maitland, Ellen McKee and Hilda Miall-Smith were all at Hyde Park to put the case for representation for women on any future education committees. It is their protest that will be considered next.

Women in leadership and educational change

A certain sort of social background was an advantage when embarking on a public career, and these women were part of a social-cum-intellectual circle who carried on public debate from a position of centrality in the capital city. Their stories show also the overlapping membership of women's organisations.[46] The six women all belonged to the WLGS. Emma Maitland and Ellen McKee both served on the executive in the 1890s, and in the early years of the twentieth century they were joined by Ruth Homan and Susan Lawrence.[47] Ellen McKee emerged from an obscure background. A Poor Law Guardian for Marylebone in the early 1890s, she took over Rosamond Davenport Hill's City seat on the LSB in 1897. Nothing is known of her lifestyle, but the collective biographies of Margaret Eve, Ruth Homan (1850–1938), Susan Lawrence (1871–1947), Emma Maitland (1844–1923) and Hilda Miall-Smith (born 1861) show the background characteristics of activist women.

Both Ruth Homan and Hilda Miall-Smith were politically very well connected. Ruth's father was Sir Sydney Waterlow, co-founder of the printing house of Waterlow and Sons and one time Liberal MP, Alderman, Sheriff and Lord Mayor of London. He was a friend of several early members of the School Board, including Thomas Huxley and the vice-chairman Sir Edmund Hay Currie. Ruth's younger brother, David Waterlow, married one of Emma Maitland's daughters and he also became a county councillor and Liberal MP. Hilda was the niece of the nonconformist minister James Allanson Picton, another early School Board member, and of the nonconformist leader Rev. Edward Miall, MP.

Emma Maitland (neé Rees), who grew up in South Wales, was, like Homan, a Liberal by birth and upbringing. She married early in life, moved to Kensington and went on to have six children, and did not play a major role in public work until her eldest daughter was running the family home in

Hampstead. As a young woman Emma attended one of the first drawing-room meetings to discuss the issue of women's suffrage and campaigned for Elizabeth Garrett, whose Marylebone seat she inherited in 1888. Defeated by a Moderate candidate in 1891, three years later she was returned at the head of the poll in Chelsea and went on to hold the seat until her retirement in December 1901. A loyal Liberal, Maitland was president of the women's branch of the Hampstead Liberal and Radical Association, and soon acted as a delegate from this local society to the national conventions of the Women's Liberal Federation. By 1890 she was vice-president of the national organisation.[48]

Only Hilda Miall-Smith and Susan Lawrence were educated at the new feminist schools and colleges. Hilda went on to University College London after a secondary education at Frances Buss's North London Collegiate School and Queen's College. One of the first women graduates to receive a BA, she trained as a high-school teacher at the Maria Grey Training College, serving at South Hampstead High School and afterwards at the North London Collegiate.[49] Susan was educated at Francis Holland School and University College London, where she won the Rothschild scholarship for pure mathematics in 1893. She then went on to Newnham, where she took the mathematics tripos in 1898. Like Margaret Eve, who taught at Croydon High School for seven years, Hilda and Susan had links to the interests of middle-class academic girls. Unlike the other five women, Susan was born into a strongly Conservative family and represented the Moderate party on the Board.[50]

Anxious to protect women's right to an elected place on local education authorities, past and present women members of the LSB struggled to win support in a society which was far from favourably disposed towards feminism. This collaboration is best illustrated by a WLGS leaflet entitled 'Women on School Boards', in which Rosamond Davenport Hill argued the case for direct female involvement, with the support of notes by Eve, Homan and Maitland. Alice Westlake also came out of retirement to speak at WLGS meetings. Almost inevitably, the London-based WLGS relied heavily on the extensive experience of these prominent women, exploiting their capacity to lobby party organisations and local community groups. As a hard-working Liberal party worker and member for Marylebone, for instance, Hilda Miall-Smith was active at meetings of the Enfield, Finchley, Marylebone, Tottenham and Wanstead Women's Liberal Associations, Kentish Town Literary Society, and Kentish Town Parish Church Institute. Not only the elected women protested. So did unsuccessful female candidates like Jane Brownlow, who campaigned on a Progressive party ticket in Finsbury in 1894. Jane was prominent in the Women's Liberal Federation and defended women's educational work at a number of important meetings in the capital, including those held at the Pioneer Club for Women (of which she was a member), and others organised by the Hampstead Liberal and Radical Association.[51] Nonetheless, some key suffragists declined to endorse the campaign. Millicent

Garrett Fawcett, leader of the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies, was uneasy, arguing that the WLGS should put the needs of children above the rights of women.[52] Emily Davies was similarly compromised by her support for Conservative education policy. Tensions surfaced at the 1902 meeting of the National Union of Women Workers (NUWW), when Annie Leigh Browne, a leading figure in the WLGS, pressed the significance of elected status: reminding her audience that co-opted women were dependent on male sponsors and excluded from the 'body that raises the money.'[53]

Shortly after her resignation from the Board, Emma Maitland joined a WLGS Sub-Committee on the 1902 Education Bill from which Annie Leigh Browne and Mary Kilgour organised a petition and conference to consider strategy and tactics. Prominent male supporters like Sir Joshua Fitch and James Bryce MP lent respectability to a meeting at the Westminster Palace Hotel which unanimously adopted a resolution, seconded by Alice Westlake, condemning the Bill. The next proposal set out the strategy and tactics for the agitation and was seconded by Jane Brownlow. There were two main aspects to the campaign: first, the decision to launch an appeal for funds; second, the establishment of a centre for publicity, lines of communication and the winning of influential parliamentary allies through meetings, petitions, articles and lobbying. Resisting pressure to stop when the government promised women might be co-opted as specialists, Ellen McKee was among the signatories to a WLGS letter to *The Times,* Ruth Roman addressed a protest meeting at St James' Hall, and Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, Emily Davies and Alice Westlake were among those who petitioned the Local Government Board.[54]

Outraged at the injustices of the 1902 Act and determined to protect the position of women on the metropolitan authority, the WLGS concentrated heavily on winning parliamentary notice in the months preceding the London Education Act. Hilda Miall-Smith won the support of her local MPs and represented the WLGS in a deputation to the Board of Education. On this occasion she was accompanied by Mary Bridges Adams and Ellen McKee.[55] In addition, Hilda spoke at local meetings organised by London's women teachers, while Ruth Homan addressed a national demonstration of the Women's Liberal Federation. She and Florence Fenwick Miller also protested in the national press against the exclusion of women. None the less, the 1903 Education Act transferred the powers and functions of the LSB to council committee administration. The LCC Education Committee was composed of thirty-eight men and five co-opted women, but these did not include the Radical Mary Bridges Adams from the 1900 Board. By contrast, the Femocrats Margaret Eve, Ruth Homan and Susan Lawrence were co-opted on to the new body, as was the Hon. Maude Lawrence. The fifth co-optee was Sophie Bryant: the first woman DSc in the country, second headmistress of the North London Collegiate School, one of the first women to serve on an Education Royal Commission, member of the London TEB and active in the Women's Liberal Federation.

Conclusion

Recognition of the dilemmas facing authoritative women is essential if we are to understand the terms in which management of change take place. In common with the 101 Labour women elected to the House of Commons on 1 May 1997, women members of the LSB were subjected to media speculation, focus and interest, and an expectation that they would make a difference. However, this chapter supports contemporary research by Blackmore indicating the danger of conflating the experience of being female into being feminist, and of essentialist presumptions of 'sameness' amongst politically aware women.[56] On balance, these women were not significant change agents in the politics of schooling, but their very presence was 'troubling' to the dominant masculinist codes. Herein lies the significance of the peremptory exclusion of previously authoritative women. As Mary Hughes explains:

> co-options are supposed to enhance the experience and expertise of committees, but co-optees do not have the authority or public support of elected members; in this instance they could not fight for resources at finance committees nor steer their proposals through the full Council.[57]

The contestation around the Education Acts of 1902 and 1903 resonates with what Joyce Goodman describes as the powerful/powerless contradiction surrounding women's claims to power on the Bryce Commission.[58] Deprived of a legitimate place as elected officials, women protested against their containment on the margins of the political state, suggesting their experience was contingent, humiliating. Hence, Ruth Homan's exclusion from debate on the best method of teaching cookery in London's schools was central to Susan Lawrence's critique of the gender politics of educational reform at the 1905 meeting of the WLGS.[59] Seeking to maintain a space and opportunity for women, Lawrence indicates the dilemmas for women in leadership as she recognises Homan's expertise as former chair of the Domestic Subjects Committee on the LSB and President of the Association of Teachers of Domestic Science.[60]

The struggle was officially won in 1907, with the passing of the Qualification of Women (County and Borough Councils) Act, but women did not serve on the multi-purpose authority until the 1910 elections. Susan Lawrence was one of two female candidates who were successful at the polls; the other was Henrietta Adler. Of the seven women who form the focus of this research, three others continued their public participation: Ruth Homan and Hilda Miall-Smith on Boards of Guardians, Mary Bridges Adams in the labour movement. In 1908 Ruth Homan acknowledged that the stakes were high, both for their own possibilities as women and to improve the lot of humanity generally: your reward for engaging in public work lies in a life full of interest and zest, and the satisfaction you may feel that you have been

able to help those who are so handicapped by life's difficulties that they cannot help themselves.[61]

Notes

1 'Women Not Wanted', *The London Education Bill,* Women's Local Government Society, May 1903, London Metropolitan Archives. The nine women were Mary Bridges Adams, Margaret Eve, Ruth Homan, Edith Glover, Honnor Morten, Maude Lawrence, Susan Lawrence, Ellen McKee and Hilda Miall-Smith.
2 See, for example, R.Betts, *Dr Macnamara 1861–1931,* Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1999, pp. 136–143; B.Simon, *The Two Nations and the Educational Structure 1780–1870,* London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1980, pp. 208–35.
3 P.Hollis, *Ladies Elect: Women in English Local Government 1865–1914,* Oxford, Clarendon, 1987; J.Martin, '"Hard-headed and Large-hearted": Women and the Industrial Schools, 1870–1885', *History of Education,* 1991, vol. 30, pp. 187–202; J.Martin, 'Entering the Public Arena: The Women Members of the London School Board, 1870–1904', *History of Education,* 1995, vol. 22, pp. 225–40; J.Martin, *Women and the Politics of Schooling in Victorian and Edwardian England,* London, Leicester University Press, 1999; A-M.Turnbull, '"So Extremely Like Parliament": The Work of the Women Members of the London School Board, 1870–1904', in The London Feminist History Group (eds), *The Sexual Dynamics of History,* London, Pluto, 1983, pp. 120–33.
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Part III

Women teachers, policy-making and administration in elementary education

6 Women and teacher training

Women and pupil-teacher centres, 1880–1914

Wendy Robinson

For ambitious working-class and lower-middle-class women of the late nineteenth century, elementary-school teaching offered one of the few occupational opportunities which boasted access to an extended academic education, specialised training, financial independence, career development, respectability, professional identity and public service. By 1900 women and girls represented over 75 per cent of the total elementary teaching force.[1] School teaching, in spite of all its subsequent negative historical connotations around status ambiguity and contested professionalism, was a potentially empowering career choice for young women. Not only was it an important avenue of social mobility, but it also offered women a respected position in the public world of work. The feminisation of elementary school teaching and its implications for teacher status, pay and conditions of service have been well documented by feminist historians and sociologists of the teaching profession.[2] Such important accounts have failed, however, to explore in any real depth the experiences of one important sector of the feminised teaching profession: those who were responsible for the training of would-be women teachers in the late nineteenth-century pupil-teacher centres.

Rather like the pupil-teacher centres themselves, centre teachers have received limited attention in standard histories of the elementary teaching profession. This chapter will draw upon an original database, detailing information on the educational backgrounds and career development of 153 centre teachers, of whom eighty were women and seventy-three men.[3] Women teachers in the pupil-teacher centres represented the pinnacle of the elementary teaching profession, in terms of status, qualifications, cultural and intellectual ambition. As individuals with specific personal and domestic circumstances, they remain fairly elusive figures. Nevertheless, by piecing together evidence from a range of sources, it has been possible to construct a clear picture of their professional development within the centre system. Focussing upon the qualifications, career patterns and position of women teachers in the pupil-teacher centres, this chapter suggests that ambitious women centre teachers demonstrated an active commitment to developing independent and autonomous careers, and carved out for themselves an important professional niche in the world of elementary education and initial

teacher training. Women teachers working within the elementary school system have often been represented in a negative light. This account of women centre teachers, whose work was an integral part of the elementary school world, challenges such stereotypes.

Women centre teachers in context

The pupil-teacher system, established in 1846, offered bright working-class elementary school pupils aged from thirteen or fourteen years an apprenticeship in initial teacher training. They worked as apprentice teachers in schools under the expert guidance of experienced practitioners, while at the same time receiving further academic instruction.[4] By the late 1880s and early 1890s pupil-teacher centres had been established across the country to offer pupil teachers more systematic and organised courses of academic and professional instruction. Under the centre model, pupil teachers spent up to half their time engaged in practical teaching activities in school, the rest of their time being spent in the centre where they received academic and some professional instruction. At the close of the apprenticeship, trainees were expected to compete for Queen's Scholarships, which enabled the best students to enter residential training college and acquire full certificated status. Those pupil teachers who failed to enter training college continued teaching in an uncertificated capacity. Pupil teaching of this kind formed the backbone of elementary teacher training and supply right through the remainder of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century.

The majority of the staff at these centres had previously been elementary-school teachers, but had extended their own education to include higher certificates and even degrees in specialist subjects. A combination of highly qualified subject teachers who were well versed in the mores of the profession and serving head teachers who could offer up to date relevant practical guidance, they offered the potential to empower young teachers with the necessary framework for their continued professional development. This had the effect of significantly raising academic and professional standards.

By the 1890s there was considerable pressure to reform the pupil-teacher system, which was regarded by many educationalists and HMI as outdated and unsatisfactory. In particular, the continued exploitation of young people, whose own personal education continued to be compromised by their work as teaching personnel in elementary schools, was questioned. Major government inquiries, including Cross, Bryce and a special Departmental Committee Report in 1898, sought the introduction of an improved system of secondary education for prospective teachers, and a later starting date for any form of apprenticeship or school-based training. By the turn of the twentieth century, moves towards a transformed system of university-based initial teacher training and the relocation of pupil teachers into proper secondary schools marked the end of reform through the pupil-teacher centres.

Women centre teachers: academic and professional profiles

The dual function of pupil teaching was to ground apprentices in both professional and academic preparation. This was consistent with, and reflected in, the qualification profiles of centre teachers. From the start of the centre system, teachers involved in centre work were required to demonstrate evidence of their professional expertise as well as academic achievement. This, it could be argued, was an essential part of their two-fold responsibility towards pupil teachers. An analysis of the educational background of actual or prospective women centre teachers from 1880 to 1910 suggests two distinctive patterns of recruitment. The first, consistent throughout the whole period under review, featured the steady employment of high-quality male and female teachers drawn from within the elementary tradition. The second pattern, emerging towards the end of the nineteenth century, attracted a different type of recruit whose educational background and training had been outside the elementary tradition.

In the main, however, women centre teachers were drawn from within the elementary tradition. Throughout the 1880s, the new centres appealed to the highest-achieving members of the elementary-teaching profession. Centre teachers were often highly ambitious, career minded and committed to their personal educational and professional development. Evidence from the sample of centre teachers studied indicates that 93 per cent had passed through the traditional route into elementary-school teaching: that is to say, they had been pupil teachers, subsequently undertaken college training and then gone on to serve in elementary schools. It was common for centre teachers to have earned high positions in the Queen's Scholarship examination, which then allowed them to spend the maximum amount of time in training college and to gain certificated status after three years. They had already established themselves as successful professionals within the elementary-school world, often having been involved at the cutting edge of innovative developments in progressive elementary-school work in higher standards, evening schools and special pupil-teacher tuition. Furthermore, in addition to their professional experience, women centre teachers and their male colleagues boasted impressive academic credentials. At a time when the elementary-teaching profession was under attack for its narrowness, ignorance, lack of culture and inadequate training, centre teachers, like their colleagues in the parallel higher-grade school movement, demonstrated an impressive professional command and commitment to the acquisition of further academic qualifications, thereby challenging prevailing negative stereotypes of their profession.

As the centres expanded during the late 1880s and 1890s, it became increasingly common, if not mandatory, for centre teachers to demonstrate proof of further academic study, in addition to their professional teaching qualifications. Indeed, in 1888, to encourage their centre teachers to continue with their academic studies, the London School Board offered an extra yearly

pay incentive of £15 to those teachers holding a BA or BSc degree.[5] A majority of the centre teachers in this study—68 per cent of women and 73 per cent of men—either held university degrees or were engaged in higher degree work. Significantly, the figures for men and women centre teachers during the period under review are broadly comparable, suggesting that women centre teachers were almost as likely as their male colleagues to hold a degree or to be in the process of working towards one.

With the expansion of University Day Training Colleges after 1890 it became easier for teachers to combine degree work with their initial elementary training, and this was clearly reflected in the qualification profiles of centre teachers.[6] School boards and centres were keen to support centre teachers who were willing to pursue further academic study in their own time, allowing them time off work to sit exams, or even to take longer sabbaticals for extended periods of study. In 1903 Miss E. Hitcham, a long-serving senior mistress, took an extended period of unpaid leave to become a full-time student at the Victoria University. For at least two years prior to this move she had been engaged in a part-time correspondence course with the University, working towards an inter-BA qualification.[7] Between 1905 and 1908 Miss Thomas, an assistant at London's Deptford centre, worked part-time towards her degree at London University. Over this period she was granted time off work to attend matriculation, inters and final examinations. Her high level of commitment to her studies was demonstrated by her application for one year's unpaid leave to enable her to concentrate her energies on her final honours examinations. It was assumed by the centre that she would resume her employment on completion of her degree.[8] The willingness of these women centre teachers to pursue academic qualifications while in post, and sometimes to request extended periods of study leave, not only serves to demonstrate their high intellectual aspirations and commitment, but also raises important questions relating to finance and status.

The available evidence does not contain information on the financial circumstances of individual teachers, but the fact that a few were recorded as taking unpaid leave raises questions about such teachers' ability to support themselves financially while undertaking full-time degree work. The majority of female centre teachers were unmarried, and so could not call upon the financial support of a husband. It is possible that they were supported by their families, but more likely that, as independent working women, they were able to save sufficient funds to finance their access to opportunities for further study in higher education. A lack of immediate family commitments might have freed the necessary resources of time and income for them to pursue further study. As women and as teachers, women centre teachers had a vested interest in improving their academic status. As graduates they were rewarded with higher rates of remuneration and, furthermore, were able to participate in the higher education culture of the universities.

Women centre teachers: patterns of career mobility

In exploring patterns of career development in the lives of women centre teachers, two areas of particular interest have been identified: the high incidence of geographical mobility among centre teachers, and the links between centre careers and other fields of educational work.

One of the most striking observations from information on the employment of women centre teachers is the extent to which they were prepared to relocate and travel for the sake of their teaching careers. It was common for centre teachers, both male and female, to move around the country taking positions at a number of different centre institutions. Furthermore, those teachers who moved around the centre circuit were more likely to obtain headships or extended positions of responsibility within the centre structure, or even to embark on more ambitious educational careers. From the sample studied, it is clear that over one-third moved around the country in pursuit of career development. The proportion of geographically mobile male and female centre teachers is equal, with 35 per cent of women centre teachers involved in career relocations and 35 per cent of men. While there were some fairly minor relocations through internal promotion or moving into neighbouring districts, the majority of career moves demanded relocation over substantial distances.

There were, however, clearly marked differences between men and women centre teachers in relation to their reasons for relocation. Whereas 52 per cent of the men relocated to new centres in order to take up management positions, only 18 per cent of women were specifically recorded as having been promoted to the position of principal. With the exception of Mrs Bannister in London's Stepney centre, the promotion of women to the position of principal of a centre did not occur until after the 1898 Departmental Committee Report. This recognised that many centres were only nominally 'mixed', since they had an overwhelming majority of female pupils, and recommended that more women be appointed as centre principals.

One problem with understanding the differential between men and women teachers in terms of promotion to principalships of centres is the uncertainty as to whether the women teachers were really moving because they had been promoted to greater positions of responsibility. Most centres were headed by male principals, who were often assisted by a senior mistress. In some cases the senior mistress might have been referred to as a headmistress or female director. This is exemplified by the case of Miss Beisegel, who was involved in setting up the Worcester centre under the headship of Mr Campbell. At a later stage Mr Campbell remembered with gratitude the hard work and support of Miss Beisegel, whose time at the Worcester centre was only brief because of her subsequent promotion to the Nuneaton Centre. It is unclear whether, on this occasion, she was promoted to the role of senior mistress, headmistress or specialist instructor.[9]

Perhaps the most puzzling finding of this analysis of career mobility within

the centres is that 42 per cent of geographically mobile women centre teachers moved to apparently similar positions in new centres. This compares with only 12 per cent of men centre teachers who moved for this reason. For example, in 1903 Dora Marsden left Colchester to take up the duties of assistant mistress at the Altrincham centre.[10] After four years in this position, aged 26, she was appointed principal. She later abandoned her promising career in education for full-time service in the women's suffrage movement, subsequently gaining prominence for her activities in the Women's Social and Political Union.[11] Also in 1903, Miss Beattie moved from an assistantship at the Carlisle centre to one at the Whitehaven centre.[12] In 1904 Miss Weaver of the Barnsley centre moved to the Worcester centre, thus filling the vacancy caused by the promotion of Miss Beisegel to Nuneaton.[13]

What motivated these women to leave existing positions without the apparent incentive of promotion is unclear. It is possible that they exchanged general teaching duties for more specific curriculum responsibilities; Miss Gilt, for example, left her position as general assistant mistress of the Colchester centre in 1903 to take up a position as French teacher at the Wolverhampton centre.[14] Sari Biklen's research on nineteenth-century American women teachers suggests that a crucial motivation for women teachers to negotiate career moves centred on conditions of work, teaching environment, facilities, and student performance.[15] A similar pattern can be observed in the career choices made by independent and autonomous women centre teachers. Clearly, the centres varied, and those controlled by the larger urban school boards ranked higher in terms of facilities, size and, perhaps most importantly, salary scales. On the other hand, voluntary centres, that is to say those centres organised by the principal religious societies or individual enterprise, tended to be smaller, less well organised and poorly funded. While women centre teachers were commonly paid a lower rate of remuneration than their male colleagues, centres were inconsistent in their practice of this inequality.[16] This could explain in part why women teachers moved around the centre circuit, and would also explain the popularity of some of the larger urban centres, particularly in London. In 1904 Miss Oslar, an assistant at Stepney Church centre in London, successfully applied for the post of assistant mistress at the Colchester centre with a salary of £90 per annum. Unhappy with this salary, she attempted to negotiate an increase of a further £5 per annum and, when this was refused, she declined the position. This case demonstrated the extent to which centre teachers were ready to negotiate their careers independently. They were prepared to move around the country if their centre positions were going to be improved, but only if the right financial terms were agreed.[17] In addition, there often existed within the centres a particular grading of staff, denoting an in-centre hierarchy. The demarcation within centres of junior and senior assistants, first, second and third masters or mistresses might explain why some of these women chose to move. Another possible reason for relocation could have existed outside immediate career considerations and have concerned domestic or social needs. It is clear in the case of Dora Marsden that the

motivation for her relocation from Colchester to Altrincham was mixed. At that stage she was keen to pursue her academic career, but was also anxious to move closer to her mother and to Manchester University, where she had completed her training and where many of her close friends in the suffrage movement still worked. To identify one single factor among women centre teachers for their geographical mobility fails to do justice to the apparent complexity of the situation.

Women centre teachers were also more likely than their male colleagues to make more than one career relocation, with some making three or even four moves. The career structure of Mabel Williamson involved four separate institutions, only two of which were centres. She moved in 1907 from being assistant mistress at Middlesbrough Senior Girls' School to the Gainsborough centre, and after two years transferred to the Louth centre. In 1910 she became an assistant mistress at Barnsley High School.[18]

As well as a significant proportion of women centre teachers developing their teaching careers within the centre world, there is further evidence to suggest that the centres provided a springboard for women to positions of responsibility in higher education or overseas schools. For teachers moving into these new fields of educational work, time spent in the centre environment was clearly an important stage in their career development. Mrs Bannister, for example, was appointed as principal of the London County Councils Moorfields Day Training College when the Stepney centre was closed in 1908. She subsequently became a local inspector of schools before retiring from educational work in 1918.[19] The career development of centre teachers gives some clues to the important question of the status relationship of the centres to the training colleges on the one hand, and the secondary schools on the other. An obvious career connection existed between the centres and the training colleges, with former centre teachers moving into the training college sector. In 1884 *The School Board Chronicle* reported that Miss Sarah J.Yelf, former principal of Liverpool Pupil Teachers' College and subsequent principal of the Liverpool Training College for Mistresses, had been elected onto the governing council for the Pupil Teachers' College.[20] Advancing from successful positions in the centres to more specialist lecturing roles in training colleges might seem to have been an obvious progression in the career patterns of some ambitious centre teachers. One puzzling aspect of this career relationship between the centres and training colleges, however, was a two-way flow between the sectors.

As might have been expected, there are examples of centre teachers moving away from the centres and into lecturing posts at the training colleges. But at the same time, there were equal numbers of existing training college lecturers seeking to move into the centres. Ellen Louisa Melville was promoted from her position as principal of the Cleethorpes centre to become Mistress of Method at the City of Leeds Training College. Prior to her post at Cleethorpes, she had been an assistant Mistress of Method at the Day Training Department of Leeds University.[21] In 1901 Miss Grace I.Erith was appointed as head teacher of the Kendal centre. Prior to taking up this position she had

been Mistress of Method and teacher of French at the Darlington Training College.[22] In 1899 Miss M.E.Whittaker, who was also employed at Darlington Training College and had experience of teaching at the Swindon centre as well as at London's famous Fleet Road Board School, applied for two vacant assistantships at the Stockwell and Deptford Centres.[23] Another curious case of the two-way movement between centres and training colleges can be seen in the chequered career of Miss E.D.House, who moved from being principal of evening classes at Leeds Central Higher Grade School to become an assistant mistress of the Wiltshire centre. She later became Mistress of Method and lecturer in education at Derby Training College. With this experience behind her, it is strange that in 1904 she moved to London to become an ordinary assistant at the Hackney centre.[24]

Evidence suggests that, for the most part, those lecturers who relocated into the centre world were drawn from similar educational backgrounds to the centre teachers, but it is unclear why college lecturers wanted to move into the centres. Perhaps their existing posts were temporary or part-time, or they had personal reasons for relocating to different parts of the country. Alternatively, this two-way movement between centre and training college might have reflected a much closer relationship between these two different stages of initial teacher training than has previously been recognised. Rather than being entirely separate from each other, or even in competition, the centres and training colleges were essentially involved in the same training process, and were thus able to benefit from a cross-fertilisation of ideas and personnel. Clearly there were overlaps between the functions and long-term goals of these different institutions, where teaching skills and professional knowledge were transferable. The skills and experience of women centre teachers were just as applicable in the context of the training colleges as they were in the centres. Women teachers involved in the initial teacher-training process, either in the centres or in the training colleges, clearly found important career opportunities within this world. Their movement between institutions suggests an independent negotiation of career development.

A number of women centre teachers extended their career ambitions overseas, usually to outposts of the British empire. Willingness to emigrate into totally unfamiliar environments is indicative of the type of ambitious highly-motivated woman career teacher involved in centre work. In 1900 Miss E.R.Perkins, assistant at London's Stepney centre, became headmistress of a school in South Africa.[25] In the same year, Miss Jenner from the Bristol centre also moved to a South African school as headmistress.[26] In 1912 Agnes Ramsden, whose career had included periods at Leeds Central Higher Grade School, and the Folkestone and Sherborne centres, became Senior Mistress of the Westwood Girls' School in Trelawney, Jamaica.[27] As well as engaging in travel purely for career purposes, a number of women centre teachers also travelled for pleasure. Centres positively encouraged their staff to take overseas trips, and were willing to facilitate foreign travel by granting longer holidays. In March 1892 Miss Hickling, an assistant mistress at the Deptford

centre, requested an extension of the Easter vacation to join the Toynbee Hall party on a visit to Rome.[28] In 1903 Miss A.Yeldham of the Peckham centre took an extra ten days' unpaid leave so as to achieve maximum benefit from her planned holiday to Canada.[29] In 1900 Miss Taylor, an assistant at the Bristol centre, visited Rome during the vacation. The Bristol magazine recorded 'a splendid evening' in which Miss Taylor gave a talk about her travels. In the following year, Miss Taylor's travels took her to Brittany, and her colleagues and students heard about her adventure in another evening talk. By the turn of the century it was also becoming increasingly common for some centre teachers to have spent extended periods of time abroad prior to appointment at a centre.[30] Such was the case at the Workington centre, where Miss H. Fisher had spent a year at Chartres, and Miss M.Walton a year at Utrecht.[31] Such an image contradicts the negative, dull stereotype of nineteenth-century women elementary school teachers who were frequently criticised for their low level of academic qualifications and professional ambition.

Travel, either at home or abroad, for work or for leisure purposes, was clearly an important part of the lives of some women centre teachers. Historically, travel has symbolised freedom and independence. In the context of gender and professionalism in the identities of late nineteenth-century women centre teachers, travel and a willingness to be geographically mobile are clearly significant. This suggests that the teachers must have been relatively unfettered by domestic commitments, and that they enjoyed a degree of autonomy and independence.

Expectations of centre teachers extended well beyond their contracted teaching obligations to embrace a wide range of extra-curricular sporting and cultural activities with centre students. At the same time as seeking to broaden the cultural and social horizons of their pupil teachers, many centre teachers, both men and women, were keen to widen their personal educational development. Women centre staff frequently took the initiative in organising museum trips, theatre visits, excursions and, as suggested earlier, even holidays in the pursuit of their own and their students' broader educational development. The shared experience of cultural and educational social activities encouraged the development of close ties between centre students and staff. The rare autobiographical accounts of centre life provide an insight into the relationships which developed between staff and their students, and the benefits accrued from extended centre activities. Miss Gladys Imlach, assistant at the Liverpool centre, was remembered with vivid fondness by her former student Daisy Cowper. Miss Imlach regularly invited groups of her students, including Daisy, to tea at the Yemen cafe in Bold Street, or even to her home to discuss the delights of lyrical poetry and the works of Keats.[32] Ellen Wilkinson's recollections of time spent as a pupil teacher at the Manchester centre focussed particularly on the influences of various centre teachers. Her French mistress particularly stood out in her memories, as did Miss Sweeney, a teacher who organised and ran a drama group and inspired the students to study and perform plays.[33] Centre teaching clearly

offered ambitious women teachers more than just paid employment. In many ways it could be argued that these extra-curricular activities, in which friendships were built up with other teachers and students, provided a certain way of life with valuable intellectual and cultural rewards for the women who had risen through the ranks of the elementary teaching profession.

Women centre teachers: conflict, professional ambition and social class

By the late 1890s, there is evidence to suggest the influx of a new type of non-elementary teacher into the centres. The new group of centre teachers was composed mostly of women drawn from prestigious girls' schools such as Oxford, Dulwich and Tunbridge High Schools. Frequently, they had been educated at Cambridge, either at Newnham or Girton, but had not received any formal teacher training either through the pupil teacher system or in a training college. School boards adopted the term 'intellectual ladies' when dealing with such women, and were largely supportive of their applications for positions in centres. The background to this change in policy towards the employment of centre teachers can be traced in the 1898 Departmental Committee on the Pupil Teacher System, which provides relevant clues about the changing attitudes at the turn of the century of representatives of centres, school boards and HMIs towards the suitability of certain groups of teachers for employment in the centres.

The general consensus of the 1898 Committee was that the centres should rethink their staffing policies in order to raise their overall cultural and educational tone. Working on the assumption that the centres had previously been largely staffed by elementary teachers, albeit well-qualified and highly motivated, many witnesses to the 1898 Departmental Committee faced an educational dilemma. On the one hand, the centres might well benefit from the introduction of teachers from outside the 'narrow' regime of the elementary tradition. This change, however, might go against much that the centres represented in terms of their commitment to both the professional and academic preparation of pupil teachers being primed for work within the elementary sector. Indeed, the wisdom and practicability of employing centre teachers to whom the elementary-school world was alien was seriously questioned. Debate over the issue of appropriate centre staffing in the 1898 Report reflected three different views. First was the view that the centres, in order to support a high level of culture and an atmosphere of learning, should be staffed mainly by secondary-trained and university-educated staff. A second group argued that, while it was desirable for the centres to attract a more cultured type of teacher, this was not always practical because of a potential mismatch between their expectations and practical experience and the professional ethos of the centres. The third group believed that centres should remain the preserve of well-educated elementary trained teachers.

An exponent of the first view was Mr Airy, a prominent member of the Birmingham School Board, who had been involved in the establishment of

Birmingham's centre system. He argued that suitable centre staff should possess qualifications other than, and in addition to, knowledge of elementary schools. He desired the appointment of candidates with some knowledge of elementary schools, but stressed that they did not necessarily need to be trained and experienced elementary school teachers. He was anxious that women from Newnham or Girton should be encouraged into centre teaching.[34] His opinion was supported by that of Miss Joyce, principal of the Manchester Day Training College and former superintendent of the Manchester centre. She differentiated between the qualifications of teachers leading the centres and ordinary centre assistants and maintained that centre principals should be more than just ordinary elementary teachers; they should be able to demonstrate some knowledge and experience of elementary schools, but combine this with an extended personal education and wider teaching practice. Conceding that centres should employ a minority component of specially chosen elementary teachers, she recommended that a staff of four or five teachers should include two carefully picked elementary-trained teachers. Subscribing to the negative general stereotype of elementary school teachers, she advised that they should be carefully chosen to be 'above average in manner, acquirement and cultivation of mind and with a wider education than the ordinary elementary teachers'. Ideally, she would have preferred the bulk of centre staff to be made up of teachers with experience of university work and higher- or middle-school teaching. Miss Joyce's plan for centre staffing endorsed conventional stereotypes of elementary and secondary teachers. She classified elementary teachers as business-like, accurate and methodical and, rather patronisingly, viewed their particular contribution to the centre in terms of their systematic thoroughness and, above all, their intimate knowledge of the pupil teachers' needs and home conditions. She feared that too many elementary teachers on the centre staff would 'run the groove' and have a narrowing, dulling effect on the life of the centre. The presence of other teachers with wider experience and greater personal culture would, however, counteract these negative effects.[35]

The second view offered a variation on Miss Joyce's hard-line approach and was put forward by three of London's centre teachers: Mrs Bannister, Miss Rolleston and Miss Gee. Significantly, these women, who taught in London's only single-sex girls' centre, all subscribed to the view that elementary-school teaching should attract girls from more middle-class backgrounds. The issue of centre staffing, however, caused them grave concern. Mrs Bannister drew attention to the growing preference of centres for employing women teachers from more 'cultured' and highly educated backgrounds, and told the Committee that she believed this to be a move in the right direction. Nevertheless, while she felt that staff who combined higher degrees with an elevated social background would attract a higher class of pupil teacher into the centres, she was unsure about their value for the practicalities of training pupil teachers in the art of teaching. Ideally, she required centre staff to have passed through a teacher-training college and

to have proved their ability as classroom teachers. She qualified this judgement with the following statement: 'We often find that graduates offer themselves for vacancies at the pupil teacher centres but they are nearly always thrown out because they can give no guarantee that they are able to teach.'[36] Her own experience of non-elementary trained teachers in the centres varied, and she recommended that if centres were going to employ such teachers extra care should be taken in the selection procedure. A period of probation in which the new types of teacher could prove themselves capable of withstanding the pressures of centre life was recommended as a solution.

A third view on centre staffing supported the retention of elementary teachers in the centres. Mr G.Whitely, chairman of London's pupil-teacher sub-committee, was personally in favour of adopting a broader staffing policy for the centres but stressed that this was at odds with the expectations of many centre principals, who specifically requested properly qualified and experienced staff.[37] Mr T.Ryder, principal of the Leicester centre, summarised the crux of the problem over the employment in the centres of more cultured, non-elementary trained teachers. He argued that there existed a huge gulf between the lives of those professionals who were immersed in the elementary tradition and those who were entering it from the other world of secondary schools and higher education. He offered the following illustration of his point: 'We had an application for an appointment from a lady at Cambridge who was a teacher in a secondary school. But she did not exactly want to do the work that we required. She wanted to lecture for an hour or two per day.'[38]

It is significant that this particular view on centre staffing was advanced mainly by male centre principals, who were more forceful in their belief that non-elementary trained teachers were incompatible with the work of the centres. However, the prevailing attitude of the women centre teachers interviewed by the 1898 Departmental Committee was in sharp constrast to this opinion. In line with the Committee consensus they all hoped that the centres would attract more 'respectable' middle-class girls, and were clearly anxious about specific gender-related issues associated with the health, workload, discipline and culture of female pupil teachers. Opposing, in principle, the notion of mixed centres, they argued that these were responsible for lowering the overall tone and reputation of training. They would have been comfortable with a much closer connection between the girls' secondary or high schools and the centres.

To suggest the existence of a clear-cut gendered division in the long-term agendas of men and women centre teachers would be misleading, in view of the small sample of women centre teachers who were given a public voice. Furthermore, those women centre teachers who gave evidence at the 1898 Departmental Committee might be regarded as being unrepresentative by virtue of their career patterns and educational backgrounds. Prominent women centre teachers who gave evidence before the 1898 Departmental Committee included Mrs Bannister, principal of the London's Stepney centre, Miss Joyce, former principal of the Manchester centre and London centre assistants, Misses Gee

and Rolleston. By the time they gave evidence to the 1898 Committee, both Mrs Bannister and Miss Joyce had already secured important positions of responsibility within the centre world as centre principals. Significantly, the other two women, Misses Gee and Rolleston, belonged to that rare new type of centre teacher drawn from a more middle-class educational background. The position of this group of women centre teachers does, however, add an interesting dimension to an understanding not only of the gendered nature of centre teaching, but also to the curious movement of women from secondary schools into the centres. Their desire for single-sex centres and a closer affiliation with the girls' high schools and secondary schools might have been motivated by personal career ambition. By promoting single-sex centres these women teachers were staking a claim to future positions of responsibility, because women were much more likely to obtain headships within a single-sex institution. The centres, in this sense, might have been viewed, alongside the girls' secondary and high schools, as representing one of the few possible avenues of enhanced career opportunity for educated women.

There is little information on the number of non-elementary trained teachers actually appointed to the centres. Changes in patterns of application for new centre posts, however, are apparent during this period; so that even if non-elementary teachers are not found to have been employed in the centres, they frequently appeared in the application process. School boards, who were keen to incorporate them into centre life, viewed these 'intellectual ladies' as a cut above the normal class of teachers and students in the centres. The attraction of employing Cambridge-educated women or former high-school teachers lay more with the potential of their influence over the personal characteristics and demeanour of centre life than with their teaching ability. The London School Board took great pains to make allowances for the lack of teaching experience among women with such impressive educational and cultural credentials. There were a number of cases in which they were appointed to the centres on the understanding that they would be given a trial period to prove their worth. One such was Miss A.T.Dodd, who applied in 1895 for a vacant post at the Peckham centre. While the subcommittee responsible for her appointment applauded the extent of Miss Dodd's admirable intellectual qualifications, they were anxious about her relative lack of experience in teaching large classes and, moreover, the particular class of students to be found in London's centres. Miss Dodd was, however, given the opportunity to prove her worth, and was sent to undergo a period of probation at the Stepney centre under the watchful supervision of Mrs. Bannister. Unfortunately, neither Mrs Bannister nor the Board Inspector found Miss Dodd suitable. According to Mrs Bannister, 'she could not teach and was never likely to acquire the power'. Even though her lessons were carefully prepared and delivered, she lacked the knack of teaching and the committee were advised that 'there is too little of the power of her knowing whether the instruction is telling, and of varying its course according to the needs of the pupils'. During her probationary period Miss Dodd was found to be slowly acquiring the art of class

management, but she just could not keep abreast of the demands of centre life. Still making special allowances because of her outstanding intellectual ability, the London School Board employed her, but only on supply.[39]

Women with previous experience of high-school teaching were unused to the longer hours, greater workload and, in particular, the different social class of students found among pupil teachers. A significant proportion of the women teachers who succeeded in their applications for centre posts suffered mental or physical breakdowns and were forced to relocate to the secondary sector. In 1904 Miss Hobman, educated at the Mary Datchelor School and trained at the Home and Colonial College, was forced to resign from her appointment at the Sutton centre after only two weeks because she found the work too much of a strain. In addition, she complained that the salary was insufficient to compensate for her extensive travelling commitments between London and Sutton.[40] Likewise, in March 1897 Miss Rolleston, educated at Oxford High School and Newnham College, was forced to resign from the Marylebone centre because 'she did not feel strong enough to conscientiously fulfil all the duties which devolve upon a woman teacher at a centre.'[41] Interestingly, Miss Rolleston resigned soon after she had given evidence to the 1898 Departmental Committee.

Aside from the practical implications associated with the employment of non-elementary teachers in the centres, the fact that they attracted a number of high school teachers and Cambridge-educated women raises the important question as to why such women preferred to work in the centres and not the potentially more prestigious girls' secondary schools. The timing of this development by the 1890s and the typical characteristics of the new type of woman centre teacher resonate with Frances Widdowson's research on women teachers. Widdowson draws attention to the late nineteenth-century feminisation of the elementary-teaching profession and the progressive embourgeoisement of elementary teaching by the First World War. She suggests that between 1890 and 1910, elementary-school teaching offered an attractive career opportunity to girls from professional middle-class backgrounds, largely because of the limited career opportunities in other fields.[42] In spite, however, of concerted efforts on the part of leading high-school headmistresses, such as Miss Soulsby and Miss Cooper, to encourage their girls into elementary-school teaching, the successful and widespread integration of high-school educated women into the elementary tradition was an exception rather than the rule. Widdowson's thesis provides a helpful insight into the emergence of the new group of women centre teachers, but is also misleading because it implies that a teaching career in an elementary school would have been perceived as a last resort for middle-class professional women. This fails to explain why so many of the new class of women teachers who applied for posts in centres were not looking for first appointments but were already established teachers in the more prestigious secondary world of middle-class girls' high schools. Furthermore, in the keen competition for posts at the centres, these women were prepared to undergo rigorous periods of probation to prove their worth.

What motivated these women to seek work in the centres is unclear. One possibility is that their existing teaching positions were insecure or temporary and that, in contrast, centres offered better security and more competitive rates of pay. Alternatively, they might have taken a genuine interest in the work of the centres. Perhaps, by virtue of their commitment to providing higher standards of education of a more secondary type for their pupil teachers, these were not so rigidly distinguished from the high-school world as might be assumed. Yet this was not reflected in the 1898 Departmental Committee Report, which clearly differentiated centre and secondary school provision and made clear social class distinctions between the two fields. What is evident from the high failure rate of this new type of centre teacher, however, is that from the perspective of the centres they were unsuited to the work.

Conclusion

Tracing the academic and professional qualifications, career profiles, commitment and broader cultural activities of late nineteenth-century women pupil-teacher centre teachers demonstrates that centre teaching offered bright, ambitious women an important means for developing independent and autonomous careers. As women and as teachers drawn from predominantly elementary-school backgrounds, women centre teachers carved out for themselves an important professional niche, and constructed a particular type of professional identity which was inspired by an impetus to raise academic, professional and cultural standards among pupil teachers. This commitment was not only reflected in their work with prospective teachers, but also extended into their personal lives. As Copelman's study of London's women elementary teachers has begun to uncover hitherto unexposed aspects of women elementary teachers' lives and work, so this account of women centre teachers contrasts with many of the more negative, historical representations of women elementary school teachers, who have traditionally been regarded as under-qualified, geographically static and unambitious.[43] The question then arises as to whether such women were representative of the whole elementary teaching force. The answer remains elusive at the present time, precisely because of the difficulty of investigating in full the stories of individual women teachers whose tracks are at best partial and at worst non-existent. Only when more detailed research into individual women teachers' life stories is carefully accrued and compared can the issues of representativeness and common patterns be more fully engaged with.

Clearly, the pupil-teacher centres attracted the elite of the female elementary teaching profession and encouraged women teachers, along with their male colleagues, to expand their educational and professional horizons. Involvement with the centre world enabled many women centre teachers to exercise considerable autonomy and independence over their career development through travel and geographical mobility. Opportunities made available to women through the centres did not, however, suit all women who were seeking

a professional career. Women centre teachers had to demonstrate their ability to withstand the rigorous practical demands of centre teaching: the long hours, hard work, constant contact with students, and a willingness to participate in extra-curricular activities. The 'intellectual ladies' from more middle-class, non-elementary school backgrounds were often incompatible with the life of the centres, and their presence there created conflict. Significantly, their incompatibility with the centres was directly connected to their lack of a certain kind of professional identity and of a knowledge and understanding of the specific world of the elementary school and the elementary school teacher. Nevertheless, in the opinion of many HMIs, school board officials and middle-class commentators, whose views carried considerable weight as educational policy was being centrally and locally determined, these 'intellectual ladies' were the preferred choice of instructor for the pupil-teacher centre. In terms of cultural transmission to pupil teachers and the knock-on effect this would have in schools, some considered these women—at ease with a certain kind of high culture, with a broad liberal education and a superiority of 'tone'—as more suitable teacher educators than those who had been immersed in the particular culture and traditions of the elementary school world and who had proved their success within it.

Notes

1 F.Widdowson, *Going Up Into the Next Class: Women and Elementary Teaching 1840–1914,* London, WRRC, 1980, p. 7.
2 See for example: G.Partington, *Women Teachers in the Twentieth Century in England and Wales,* London, NFER, 1976; F.Widdowson, *Going Up Into the Next Class;* S. Biklen, *School Work: Gender and the Cultural Construction of Teaching,* New York, Teachers College Press, 1995; D.Copelman, *London's Women Teachers: Gender, Class and Feminism 1870–1930,* London, Routledge, 1996; A.Oram, *Women Teachers and Feminist Politics 1900–39,* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996.
3 For a detailed account of the history of the pupil teacher centres see W.Robinson, 'The Pupil Teacher Centre in England and Wales in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries: Policy, Practice and Promise', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 1997.
4 See: L.G.E.Jones, *The Training of Teachers in England and Wales: A Critical Survey,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1924; R.W.Rich, *The Training of Teachers in England and Wales During the Nineteenth Century,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1933; A.Tropp, *The School Teachers,* London, Heinemann, 1957; P.H.J.H.Gosden, *The Evolution of A Profession,* Oxford, Blackwell, 1972; H.C. Dent, *The Training of Teachers in England and Wales 1800–1975,* London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1977; D.Copelman, *London's Women Teachers.*
5 London Metropolitan Archives (hereafter cited as LMA), SBL 736, 22 October 1888.
6 University Day-Training Colleges were set up for the training of teachers in universities from the 1890s. For further details of their history see: J.B.Thomas, *British Universities and Teacher Education: A Century of Change,* Lewes, Falmer Press, 1990.
7 Durham County Record Office, E/St/28, 9 June 1902, p. 19; 14 August 1904, p. 33.
8 LMA, EO/DIV 6/CLY/LB/2, 10 February 1908, p. 21.

9 *The Schoolmaster,* vol. 67, no. 1758, 9 September 1905, p. 483.
10 Essex Record Office, Colchester Branch, E/ML 98, 22 December 1904, p. 41.
11 See L.Garner, A *Brave and Beautiful Spirit: Dora Marsden 1882–1960,* London, Avebury, 1990.
12 Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle, SSB/4/120, 17 August 1904.
13 *The Schoolmaster,* vol.68, no. 1758, 9 September 1905, p. 483.
14 Essex Record Office, Colchester Branch, E/ML 98, 28 November 1904, p. 31.
15 S.Biklen, *School Work*.
16 As with all elementary teaching posts during the school board period, rates of pay for women and men centre teachers clearly varied between localities. Salaries varied between £90 for women and £120 for men in Middlesbrough, £100–130 for women and £130–170 for men in Brighton, and £170–175 for both women and men in London. See East Sussex Record Office, Lewes R/E4/1/193.
17 Essex Record Office, Colchester Branch, E/ML 98, 9 December 1904.
18 For more information on the educational background and career of Mabel Rawson Williamson see Lincolnshire Archives Office, SR 378/9/3.
19 See W.Robinson, '"Willing and Able to Teach": Sarah Jane Bannister and Teacher Training in Transition 1870–1918', in M.Hilton and P.Hirsch (eds), *Practical Visionaries: Women, Education and Social Progress 1790–1930,* London, Pearson 2000.
20 *The School Board Chronicle,* vol. 32, 13 September 1884, p. 251.
21 Lincolnshire Archives Office, SR. 125/9/5.
22 Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle SSB/4/120, 23 October 1901.
23 LMA, SBL 795, 6 November 1899.
24 LMA, SBL 747, 18 May 1903.
25 LMA, SBL 748, 7 March 1904.
26 Bristol Record Office, *Quarterly Magazine of the Bristol Pupil Teacher Centre,* vol. 1, March 1901, p. 46.
27 Dorset Record Office, S87ciii/i/i.
28 LMA, SBL 738, 28 March 1892.
29 LMA, SBL 747, 31 May 1903.
30 Bristol Record Office, *Quarterly Magazine of the Bristol Pupil Teacher Centre,* vol. 1, March 1901, p. 39.
31 Cumbria Record Office, Carlisle, SSB/4/120, 2 October 1904. This might have reflected a change of policy at some of the training colleges, where some third-year students were given the opportunity to spend a year abroad (see R.W. Rich, *The Training of Teachers in England and Wales During the Nineteenth Century,* Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1933, p. 216).
32 Brunel University Library, TS 182 Daisy Cowper, 'De Nobis', 1964.
33 'Ellen Wilkinson', in the Countess of Oxford and Asquith (ed.), *Myself When Young: By Famous Women of Today,* London, Frederick Muller, 1938, pp. 399–416.
34 Departmental Committee on the Pupil Teacher system, Report and Minutes of Evidence 1898 (hereafter cited as 1898 Departmental Committee), vol. 2, 4 March 1897, pp. 150–1.
35 Ibid., vol. 2, 8 March 1897, p. 155.
36 Ibid., vol. 2, 4 February 1897, p. 16.
37 Ibid., vol. 2, 18 February 1897, pp. 82–91.
38 Ibid., vol. 2, 13 May 1897, p. 404.
39 LMA, SBL 741, 13 December 1895.
40 Surrey Record Office, Kingston upon Thames, C/ES/89/1, 8 October 1900.
41 LMA, SBL 742, 29 March 1897.
42 F.Widdowson, *Going Up Into the Next Class*.
43 D.Copelman, *London's Women Teachers*.

7 Women as witnesses

Elementary schoolmistresses and the Cross Commission, 1885–1888

Angela O'Hanlon-Dunn

The Cross Commission was set up with a broad agenda: 'to inquire into the workings of the Elementary Education Acts, England and Wales'.[1] The women elementary teachers who appeared as witnesses were both 'ordinary and extraordinary' in terms of their own educational progress and the wider recognition they achieved for their efforts.[2] They had set out from the humble origins of the pupil-teacher system, to appear as witnesses in one of the most significant surveys of education in the latter part of the nineteenth century. The taking of evidence from women elementary teachers was indicative of the growing involvement of women in the work of the Royal Commissions during the nineteenth century. Middle-class women had submitted unsolicited evidence to the Newcastle Commission (1858–61), had appeared as witnesses before the Taunton Commission (1864–7), and had been appointed as commissioners and assistant commissioners to the Bryce Commission (1894–5). Working-class women had provided evidence to earlier commissions investigating children's employment in the mines and the Poor Law. This chapter focuses on the giving of evidence by the women elementary teachers to the Cross Commission. It looks at the responses of the women teachers to the 'realities' of their daily work, their negotiation of institutional structures, existing social discourses and power relationships, and at the use that was made of the women's evidence.[3]

The workings of the Commission

Forster's 1870 Education Act had originally been designed to supplement, not supplant, the voluntary system. However, the voluntary schools had found it increasingly difficult to compete with the better-funded more progressive board school system and feared being squeezed out. The Cross Commission aimed to address these fears and, in the process, to evaluate progress in education. It was unusual compared with other commissions in two ways. First, a detailed outline of issues in the 'exhaustive' 'Syllabus of Points for Inquiry' was provided for the 'guidance' of the commissioners in order to ensure that the procedure was adhered to precisely.[4] Second, the whole process of taking evidence was centralised, with witnesses travelling to the Commission to give evidence. This differed from other commissions, where 'itinerant commissioners' at times

implemented the main remit in prejudicial terms. Sophie Hamilton highlights the way in which commissioners interviewing working-class women often did so with clear 'gender implications'.[5] In the Cross Commission, the comprehensive setting out of the questions was a recognition of the explosive nature of the voluntary-versus-board question, and the detailed syllabus of questions indicated the importance attributed to the first full review of the Elementary Education Acts.

The men who acted as Commissioners represented the highest levels of government, the clergy and business. Some, like T.E.Heller, a founding member of the National Union of Elementary Teachers (NUET) and its General Secretary between 1873 and 1891, and George Shipton, who had actively campaigned to further the cause of trade unionism and had become Secretary of the London Trades Union Council (LTC) in 1873, had direct experience of state education.[6] Distinguished men from outside education were invited to give their views, as well as those concerned directly with educational provision. The Commission also called as witnesses HMIs, public-school heads and elementary teachers. Twenty-four headmasters, representative of the various Christian denominations, were called, including Robert Wild, headmaster of the Byron and Bright School in Bromley by Bow and President of the NUET from 1883 to 1884.

Of a total of 151 witnesses to the Cross Commission, eighteen were women. Some were distinguished in public life, with essentially philanthropic concerns; some were school managers, or members of school boards; while others were heads of teacher training colleges.[7] Eight of the women witnesses were elementary teachers, representing board and voluntary schools in both urban and rural areas. Mrs Elizabeth Burgwin and Miss Alice Whittenbury were headmistresses of schools managed by the London School Board (LSB). The other six taught in voluntary institutions: Miss Constance Fox, Mrs Sarah Jane Knowler, and Miss Elizabeth Ann Randal in Manchester, Dibden (Hampshire), and Heigham (a suburb of Norwich); and Miss Charlotte Neath, Miss Sarah Napper and Miss Emma Martineau Castle in the country villages of Ditton (Kent), Rochford (Worcestershire) and Duncton (West Sussex).[8] While the schools under the LSB, in which Mrs Burgwin and Miss Whittenbury worked, were non-denominational, all the remaining women worked in schools supported by the Church of England, with the exception of Miss Fox, who taught in a Catholic school.

The women elementary teachers who gave evidence

Elizabeth Burgwin (1850–1940) exemplified the 'ordinary' woman who rose from humble origins through the educational system to attain a position of considerable influence.[9] In 1870, shortly after completing her apprenticeship, she married Thomas William Burgwin, a butcher, although from the 1890s, she lived alone.[10] In 1874 she became headmistress of Orange Street Board School, situated in one of the poorest districts of London. Here she committed

herself to improving conditions for the children. Thomas Gautrey, a member of the LSB who had known her in the 1870s, described her as 'an iconoclast and a realist'.[11] During her time at Orange Street, the Inspectors' reports commented on the 'admirable spirit' and the 'utmost pains' which were taken for 'the benefit of the poor girls' attending and noted the quality of her management which ensured that the 'school continue[d] to be conducted with as much wisdom as zeal'.[12] Mrs Burgwin was a prominent union activist and the first woman elected to the NUET executive committee in 1885. Like other women entering the public sphere during this era she was included in the union hierarchy, but given specifically 'female' areas on which to focus. Her evidence to the Cross Commission indicates that she did not regard this as a subordinate role; for throughout her career she 'fought especially for improved conditions for girls.'[13] Because of her significant public profile she left behind a good deal of archive material, in contrast to the other female elementary school witnesses, who remain elusive to varying degrees. While school log books, managers' minutes and inspectors' reports provide the chief sources of evidence about these witnesses, as official documents they rarely include any personal comment. The women's evidence to the Cross Commission is the only recorded source of their opinions and experiences.

The women elementary school teachers who appeared before the Cross Commission had substantial experience in education. At the point when Miss Whittenbury gave her evidence to the Commission, she had been teaching for twenty-four years.[14] She had worked at Sydney Road Board School in East London since its opening in 1882, having previously worked for the LSB since 1875.[15] Mrs Sarah Jane Knowler (b.1843) was headmistress of Dibden National School, where she had been teaching for twenty-two years. Miss Napper had taught for almost seventeen years, eight as headmistress at Rochford Church School. Miss Neath was headmistress of Ditton National School and had taught there since April 1876.[16] She had been 'in education' since 1867, and had spent her time exclusively in voluntary schools.[17] Miss Randal (b.1855) had been teaching for seventeen years and had been headmistress of St Philip's National Girls' School for six years. Miss Castle (b.1856) had begun teaching at Duncton School in October 1880. Miss Fox was the most recent recruit to the profession, having been appointed headmistress of St Patrick's Infant School, Manchester, (for boys only) in 1885.[18] However, during her training she had 'taken part in the management of schools in Liverpool' where she had experienced the full age range of elementary education.[19]

Most of the women had entered teaching via the usual route of apprenticeship as pupil teachers; the exceptions were Miss Neath, who had trained in several schools as an assistant, and Miss Castle, who had attended a private school and had never been a pupil teacher. Miss Castle was unusual in that she told the Cross Commission that she was mostly self-educated, having left school at the age of twelve, at which point she had 'studied school management, and planned out how all the schools in England could be managed'.[20] When Heller asked her why she had taken up teaching, she

responded simply 'for the love of it'.[21] All the women had attained their certificates, but only two had attended college (possibly as a consequence of the limited availability of Queen's Scholarship places). From 1850 to 1851, Miss Randal had trained at the Home and Colonial Training College, a progressive institution which viewed the role of women in teaching as a predominantly nurturing role.[22] Between 1881 and 1882, Miss Fox trained at Notre Dame College, Liverpool.[23]

Apart from Mrs Burgwin, only three other women were members of the NUET: Miss Knowler from 1871 to 1883; Miss Castle from 1871 to 1873 and again in 1886, and Miss Randal in 1885 and 1887–8.[24] This reflected the overall pattern in women's membership, since the union was male dominated in the late 1870s and 1880s despite women's majority in the teaching profession. This resulted partly from the lack of encouragement for women to take an active role in the union and partly from the actual terms of the membership policy.[25] These were issues the union would address in the 1890s, as a means of increasing membership and consolidating its influence.

The educational experiences of these women differed; but these differences were probably more significant between urban and rural schools than between voluntary and board schools. In general, the urban schools could boast better facilities and support, regardless of their status. The plight of the small rural board schools was often just as desperate as their voluntary counterparts.[26] Rural teachers, who were predominantly female, faced a greater variety of obstacles: the number of children, sometimes thirty or forty; a 'score of subjects' divided into 'almost as many different stages as she has pupils'; and the problem of irregular attendance. This was exacerbated by the distances the children had to go to school, the inclemency of the weather and seasonal demands for labour.[27] In addition, teachers in rural schools often experienced extreme poverty, low pay and isolation. This resulted from their peculiar social position, and was also a consequence of being cut off from contemporary developments in education, as few were members of the union. These factors often worked to lower the children's attainments, affecting the grant the school received, which in turn decreased the rural teacher's salary.[28]

Despite their differences and difficulties, these women all gained good HMI reports and represented themselves as committed teachers. Inspectors' reports were very positive for Miss Whittenbury's period in her school. One inspector asserted that the school 'had begun remarkably well under Miss Whittenbury and will no doubt be very successful'. Later reports applauded 'the bright teaching' and 'the careful superintendence of the Head Teacher'.[29] During the time Miss Randal was at St Philip's, HMIs almost always referred to it as 'a truly excellent school'.[30] Inspectors' reports for Miss Neath's school between 1884 and 1887 were generally positive: overall 'tone and order' were 'very good'; there was a 'good level of efficiency' throughout the school; and the infant class had been 'carefully attended to'.[31] In 1887, the inspector noted that the girls' arithmetic was 'less satisfactory' than the previous year, though the needlework had gone from 'satisfactory' to 'praiseworthy'.[32] This reflected

the difficulty women teachers experienced in trying to balance the academic curriculum with the demands made by practical work. Inspectors' reports represent Miss Castle as a teacher with a strong sense of her vocation.[33] However, in 1888, despite a good report overall, there were some criticisms. Miss Castle felt these were 'false', and she decided to leave.[34] Her subsequent departure in July 1889 followed a glowing inspector's report, which noted that the 'general condition of the school' and 'the affectionate respect' of pupils reflected 'the very highest credit on Miss Castle and her work' (a judgment provoking two exclamation marks from Miss Castle, whom, it appears, was unable to restrain herself from highlighting the inconsistencies in inspectors' reports).[35] From 1882, Miss Castle had set up a night school. In most smaller boards and rural environments evening schools were impractical, but it was a resource she believed helped to produce a 'lasting effect'. The Commission acknowledged that she was a 'great enthusiast' in her profession.[36]

Miss Napper is the most elusive of the witnesses. No records were kept for her school until 1927, so there are no log books to build up a broader picture of her school life. Nor do any log books survive for Mrs Knowler's or Miss Fox's schools. Nevertheless, the evidence provided by the Commission paints a positive portrait of their commitment. Miss Napper represented herself to the commissioners as a caring teacher who succeeded in securing the affection of her pupils, since the children 'really love[d] coming to school'. In addition, she knew many had kept up with their education, since she had received 'letters from scholars that had left [her] long ago'.[37] Miss Fox was committed to stimulating 'intelligence' as opposed to merely instilling facts, aiming to 'develop the children's power of putting their thoughts together'.[38] The commissioners pointed out that considering the difficulty of securing attendance in rural areas, Mrs Knowler's school grant reflected 'very good teaching'.[39]

The evidence of the female elementary teachers

All elementary teachers, female and male, were affected by the system of payment by results introduced by Robert Lowe in 1862, and almost all were opposed to it. In her evidence to the Commission, Mrs Burgwin stated that the system of payment by results was the chief cause of 'overpressure'. She asserted that it could not be 'impartially administered', and undermined teachers' integrity 'so long as the earning of money is supposed to be the only motive which impels teachers to give of their best'.[40] Miss Castle condemned a system which encouraged teachers to get up to 'all manner of dodges' to secure sufficient passes in the examination; Miss Whittenbury felt that it was 'very wrong'; Mrs Knowler concurred with a statement made by a commissioner, which observed that the system did not allow them to do justice to the education of children.[41] Miss Napper, a relatively inexperienced headmistress of a small village school, was the only female elementary teacher who approved of payment by results.[42]

Where girls were concerned there were particular pressures, both on the

pupils and the teachers, which resulted from the implementation of the domestic curriculum in elementary schools. As Carol Dyhouse has argued, there were conflicting feelings about the imposition of what some saw as a very narrow domestic curriculum, resented by the working classes themselves.[43] While none of the female elementary teachers opposed the needlework requirements *per se,* the majority spoke about the pressures imposed by the demands of needlework teaching and agreed on the need for modifications to certain aspects of the curriculum, particularly with a view to making the teaching of needlework more practical. Mrs Burgwin highlighted the inappropriateness of certain kinds of needlework which were 'too fine' and 'must hurt their eyes'. Instead she advocated the teaching of 'ordinary' needlework, so that the work could be 'useful'.[44] She pointed out that 'very little needlework' was done at home since 'the machine does so much of the work'. As a result, she felt that 'too much is asked of the child'.[45] In contrast, Miss Castle felt the requirements were not sufficiently demanding, and stated unequivocally that 'needlework is all wrong throughout the country, every bit of it'. As a result, she felt the system 'cannot turn out a good servant or good wife, so far as needlework is concerned'.[46] Mrs Knowler was unusual in that she had found no difficulty fitting in needlework, since she felt needlework was more important than geography or grammar because it was practical and most of the girls went into domestic service, the largest single employment market for women, particularly in rural areas.[47]

Mrs Burgwin, however, was a pragmatist with an eye on the realities of payment by results. Whereas some of the female teachers commented on the unsuitable nature of arithmetic for the average child, she indicated how the problem was exacerbated for girls who sacrificed so much time to needlework. She suggested that leaving out specific aspects of arithmetic 'would make the standard fair for girls'.[48] This was reinforced by the evidence of Mrs Knowler, Miss Neath and Miss Napper, while Miss Randal indicated that sacrifices had to be made in other areas of the curriculum to accommodate needlework.[49] Miss Fox, who taught only infant boys and did not teach sewing pointed out that, though unaffected by these restrictions, had she been required to teach needlework, she 'should find it much more difficult' to fulfil the remaining demands of the curriculum.[50] Their concern was not just with their pupils; most of the women stressed the additional burden imposed on the teacher by needlework, even in the larger, better-staffed board schools. Mrs Burgwin pointed out that the additional preparation imposed in trying to juggle the standards and meet the needlework requirements did not necessarily equate with greater efficiency in teaching and learning. Miss Castle suggested that 'some inspector' should be 'put into the school for one day to see how he can manage fifty children at needlework and 20 boys…divided into three or four standards.'[51]

The women teachers placed their concerns about overpressure for teachers and pupils within the wider context of the welfare of the child. In common with some of the other women, Mrs Burgwin pointed out the pressures on the

girls who 'take the place of the mother of the family'. She had felt 'obliged to open a creche', since many had been staying at home to look after siblings.[52] She asserted with conviction: 'the girls that I turn out…will never be content to live the same kind of life as that which their mothers have led'.[53] Miss Castle was prepared to call upon outside agencies and personal contacts to ensure the welfare of her students, while Miss Napper described how, in wet weather, when the children arrived, the teachers 'take care of them and dry them well'.[54] She was keen for children to be given rewards for attendance.[55] This concern for children's welfare encouraged the adoption of progressive approaches. Like most of the women teachers giving evidence, who were supporters of kindergarten methods, Miss Whittenbury believed that 'infant schools ought to be a place of amusement, to a certain extent, as well as instruction'. She felt that the kindergarten system should be 'more freely used', and gave a practical outline of how the work could be organised.[56] Despite the lack of resources for rural schools, Miss Castle, Miss Napper and Mrs Knowler taught kindergarten or had made provision for infant education.[57]

The women teachers who gave evidence were also concerned about the moral influence of education. Mrs Knowler felt education was a 'good' influence, which had an impact on children's future lives; similarly, Miss Fox commented that 'generally the children turn out very well'.[58] The commissioners concluded that Mrs Burgwin had given 'a striking sketch of the change for the better that [had] taken place in the neighbourhood within her own experience'.[59] In her opinion, school was a 'centre of humanising influence'. She felt that 'no other voluntary agency could have grappled with such a large amount of poverty' to produce this 'social result'.[60] This emphasis on the 'social' outcome and 'humanising' influence of education reflected a nineteenth-century view of education as a 'rescue from the abyss'. Anna Davin refers to the 'missionary zeal' which Mrs Burgwin had brought to this 'civilising task'.[61] However, Dina Copelman points out that women teachers originated from a labour aristocratic' or lower middle-class culture, which was less constricted by gender and class divisions of labour and role. She suggests that the nature of their work ensured varied social contexts and all kinds of cross-class/gender encounters.[62] This unique form of public positioning created a more complex perspective. Therefore, women teachers did not necessarily seek merely to 'civilise' the masses; instead their focus can be interpreted as a stress on the value of education for the overall good of the individual.

The Commission was concerned to take evidence about the relative merits of the existing pupil-teacher system and to assess the need for additional provision. Mrs Burgwin spoke of the tremendous strain imposed on her as a pupil teacher. She regarded the years spent as a pupil teacher as 'the hardest period of life a girl can possibly have'. She pointed out that, while the centre system had relieved some of the pressure on pupil teachers, students attending pupil-teacher centres should not be employed as 'responsible teachers', sentiments shared by Miss Whittenbury.[63] Mrs Burgwin agreed 'most decidedly' that for a teacher 'the education and cultivation of the home life', followed by

a college training, was preferable to the 'mechanical preparations' of pupil teachers.[64] Rural teachers like Miss Castle and Mrs Knowler thought the system of training was irrelevant since, as Miss Randal had pointed out, it was difficult to get the 'right' candidates in rural areas.[65] Their priority was not the form of provision for training, but the urgent demand for additional staffing. Miss Castle stated that it was 'utterly impossible' to run a small school with one teacher, a sentiment echoed by Mrs Knowler.[66] Struggling to meet the demands of the Code and having been immersed in the system themselves, they appeared to find it difficult to envisage another route.

The rapid expansion of education during this era had resulted in a general concern that 'overpressure' was becoming a common experience among teachers. In July 1886, the inspectors had noted that although the 'discipline and general tone deserve the highest praise, Miss Castle seems only too apt to overwork herself'.[67] At the Commission, NUET Secretary Heller suggested she was 'overtaxing [her] own strength'.[68] The health of Miss Whittenbury was a matter which was also raised at the Commission as a further example of the pressures of the profession.[69] She had been ill prior to her appearance and a few months later was suffering from 'nervous exhaustion'.[70] Miss Randal told the Commissioners that she 'arranged all of [her] work out of school time' since the 'difficulty of managing the standards is very great'.[71] Miss Napper, too, reported that she had experienced 'the feeling that you can never do what you ought to do, you can never overtake your work'. She felt it was not so much the pupil, but 'the teacher who is overpressed'.[72] Mrs Knowler felt that she had 'suffered very much' as a result of the strain on her health imposed by the demands of work.[73] Whether discussing the system of payment by results, the domestic curriculum, the double burden carried by schoolgirls, arithmetic, or teachers' everyday lives, much of the discussion returned to the question of 'overpressure' for students and teachers alike.

The giving and taking of evidence

The appearance of the women elementary teachers before the Commission must have been a memorable experience for them, both personally and professionally. They had to travel to London to the Education Department in Whitehall where, judging by the transcripts of their evidence, they were interviewed on average for an hour (the shortest interview was about ten minutes, with the longest lasting approximately two and a quarter hours). In presenting their evidence they were, on average, faced by seventeen out of the twenty-three Commissioners. There are no personal recollections of this experience from the women themselves. The only references to their appearance at the Commission appear in the log books of Miss Whittenbury and Miss Randal. Both recorded just the basic fact of their actual attendance, while for Miss Castle and Miss Neath it was a welcome 'holiday' from the usual pattern of work.[74]

Analysis of the interaction between the women teachers and the male

Commissioners suggests a diverse treatment of women by the Commissioners and a diverse response from the women. Mrs Burgwin was experienced in presenting her ideas at union meetings, and was able to answer criticism with concrete facts and develop her arguments with shrewd political skill. Near the beginning of her examination by Viscount Cross, she quoted from a pamphlet produced by another commissioner, Sydney Buxton, (a Liberal MP and Member of the LSB), from whom she took 'the liberty respectfully to differ', since it maintained that securing attendance depended on the teacher.[75] In the manner of her response, she conveyed the impression of an exchange between equals. Buxton appeared interested to learn her alternative and she suggested liberty of classification' (allowing the teacher some flexibility in categorising pupils).[76] They exchanged views as professionals within the LSB, who were equally well informed about current concerns. Later, when Buxton referred to evidence suggesting that teachers were motivated merely by finance in securing attendance, Mrs Burgwin revealed close knowledge of the matter by quoting the offending phrase, apparently heard by an inspector from a teacher, who regarded children as 'a grand little earning machine'. She felt that it had been given an 'exaggerated construction', adding that such a mercenary attitude was to be deplored and suggested that 'he must have been a man, I think'.[77] Mrs Burgwin appeared confident in challenging the substance of evidence which was contrary to her professional experience; and she did not restrain herself from criticising the weaker male elements in the profession.

Dr Rigg, a representative of 'ultra Wesleyan Toryism', adopted a more provocative manner in the questioning of Mrs Burgwin.[78] He challenged her views about 'liberty of classification' and suggested that teachers could not be trusted with such responsibility, provoking Mrs Burgwin to remark that he expressed himself in a 'very hard and fast manner'. Undeterred, she substantiated her argument by direct reference to HMI instructions.[79] This did not entirely satisfy Rigg, who subsequently introduced what he hoped might be a more contentious area: the gender of head teachers for mixed schools. When Mrs Burgwin commented that it would be 'quite as fair' to appoint either a male or female head, he replied that he 'thought she would come to that'.[80] Although her views were not as predictable as Rigg cared to suggest, Mrs Burgwin had maintained throughout her career that entry to positions of authority should be based on individual merit. She promoted women's entry to the union, but did not support the imposition of a 'rule' regarding the inclusion of a 'definite number' for office: instead she preferred women to put themselves forward for the executive 'in the ordinary way they have done hitherto'.[81] In answer to Rigg, she stated firmly that she had tried to speak from 'personal experience' but on this particular subject she could not speak 'personally'.[82]

Commissioner Heller, General Secretary of the NUET, questioned Mrs Burgwin as a respected professional colleague. Their shared vision of education became apparent, as they jointly developed a more philosophical perspective about the aims of education. She agreed with his statements that

education had a 'humanising influence', and that this 'social result' was one of the most important factors in education. Yet it was something that had no formal 'recognition' in the present system. She established her belief that education should be seen as something which was not just concerned with examination passes. Rather it was about developing expectations and, ultimately, improving social conditions. Such a view was supported by commissioner Shipton, General Secretary of the LTC, who wished to see the state take more responsibility for social welfare. He described her practical philanthropic activities as 'a work of love'.[83]

What Miss Castle lacked in political skill, she made up for in zealous defence of her independent outlook. Heller began by acknowledging her keen sense of vocation, but he was anxious to investigate her 'definite views' of the prevalence of malpractice in securing examination success which she claimed to have observed in some of the London schools. He stressed that 'the Commission will be obliged to take notice' of such a statement and would need, therefore, to 'get at the area over which [her] observation extended'. She responded bluntly: 'It is done and I know it to be done'.[84] Despite strenuous diplomatic endeavours on Heller's part to enable her to give a less damning judgement, she would acknowledge only that she did 'not know to what extent' the problem existed.[85] In this interchange, Heller tried to illustrate that the pressures placed on teachers, including herself, were an indictment of the pressures the Code placed on them.[86] He suggested that while she was to be congratulated upon her devotion, it might be desirable for her to 'exercise a little caution' if she were to put herself forward as 'the standard for all teachers'. Miss Castle partly acquiesced.[87] She seemed oblivious of the way her sweeping assertions could be used to reinforce a negative stereotype of the elementary teacher, even of those who were, like herself, highly committed.

Cardinal Manning clearly orchestrated the interview with Miss Fox. Manning was the most prominent religious proponent of support for voluntary and, specifically, Catholic education on the Commission. He established immediately with Miss Fox that her 'purpose' was 'to state the special difficulties which attach to poor Roman Catholic schools'.[88] He frequently put questions to her in the form of statements, which she then went on to develop.[89] Where he felt her argument could be misleading, or was not entirely explicit, he clarified her point: 'Therefore your objection is not solely to the loss of fees…but to the loss of education by the children?'[90] He also synthesised her key points: 'Therefore your point is to prove the inefficiency as well as the odiousness of the present mode of obtaining fees from the Guardians.'[91] Despite Manning's dominance, Miss Fox conveyed a great many of her own personal observations. She revealed a detailed appreciation of the environmental factors influencing the children's education: the poverty of the parents, in addition to sickness as a result of poor food and badly ventilated homes. She offered a critical evaluation of the arithmetic and grammar syllabus: the latter she thought 'completely useless', and in her opinion both needed modification.[92]

A similar strategy can be seen in Heller's questioning of Mrs Knowler, who appeared uncertain and found it hard, at times, to give specific details and to expand on her statements. Her responses were often monosyllabic or punctuated with qualifying phrases like 'I think'.[93] Heller recognised her difficulty and led her through a number of specific questions before summing up on her behalf that she 'would like more freedom' to classify the children.[94] His approach ensured that, despite her lack of experience in such circumstances, her evidence would be fully documented. He offered her the opportunity to 'prepare at [her] leisure…a paper' identifying the areas where she felt the Code was deficient.[95] This reflected the status that was to be given to the practical experience of individual teachers, since it was teachers who had to live with the Code.

At several points in the interviews it is clear that various partisan factions on the Commission attempted to manipulate the evidence of the women to their own ends. This was particularly the case when it came to issues of voluntary versus board schools. The strategies adopted by the male commissioners depended on the responses of the women, which varied. Where witnesses were confident, like Mrs Burgwin or Miss Castle, the outcome could not be assured. In contrast, the less confident Mrs Knowler was easily led, and her descriptions of her experiences were framed according to the agenda of the interviewer. Although the experience of giving evidence must have been daunting for some of the women, it did, however, provide them with a platform and a 'voice'. When asked if she had ever spoken of her ideas on education to anyone, Miss Castle responded that she had 'never spoken about it before to anyone until [she] came here now'.[96]

The recommendations of the Cross Commmision

The Cross Commission *Final Report* was published in August 1888. It consisted of two main reports: the Majority Report, which reflected the views of mainly voluntarist supporters; and the Minority Report, presented in two parts, which reflected the views of men who were regarded as educational liberals. The essential difference between the two Minority Reports lay in the degree of change which was seen as desirable. The final part of the overall report included a section of 'Reservations', containing the individual view-points of those commissioners who found themselves out of step with their colleagues on particular issues.

In the Majority Report there was no direct acknowledgement of the evidence of the female witnesses in any of the chief recommendations; nor of any other witnesses for that matter. Instead, the Introduction to the Majority Report commented in general on the 'remarkable solidarity which characterised the testimony' offered by the elementary teachers overall.[97] However, the Minority II Report was more specific in its direct referral to evidence from the witnesses in general, and put forward the views of teachers. In the Introduction to the Majority Report, the Commission drew attention

particularly to the 'special value of female teachers'.[98] Canon Warburton (HMI) expressed a 'great belief in schoolmistresses' and noted that he 'was often astonished at their success in the maintenance of discipline by moral power, even among elder boys'.[99] While his qualifying remark might be seen as patronising, it was nevertheless meant as a positive appreciation of the ability of women teachers. Mr Sharpe (HMI) admitted that '*ceteris paribus,* women are better teachers'.[100]

Despite the disparity of opinion in the final reports, there were some broad areas of agreement about modifying payment by results, raising standards and improving facilities.[101] The Minority II Report used the evidence of eighteen male and six female teachers to substantiate arguments about the inadequacy of the current system. The women teachers' evidence was quoted directly to support the overwhelming feeling of dissatisfaction that was experienced by teachers.[102] In addition, teachers were to have greater freedom to classify children and a large fixed grant.[103] The Majority Report acknowledged that needlework, 'one of the most important branches of a girl's education… should be practical and efficient'.[104] Though this report did not refer explicitly to the female teachers' evidence, it had taken into account their arguments that the demands of needlework restricted time for arithmetic. The solution they recommended was 'modifying the arithmetical requirements of the Code in the case of girls'. This report asserted that the standards in arithmetic should be based on 'sound educational principles', and suggested 'graduating them so as to meet the industrial requirements of different districts'.[105]

Despite the lack of impact the women may have had with regard to the chief recommendations of the report, their influence was shown in other areas. The Minority II Report aimed to illustrate the value of a 'good' education in producing a positive moral influence. Eleven teachers were mentioned in the recommendations referring to the more abstract and philosophic questions about the value of education. Three of these were women. When it came to practical aspects of the curriculum and staffing, the evidence of Miss Whittenbury and Miss Castle figured in the prestigious company of Matthew Arnold and Robert Wild. Their evidence was used to support the recommendations for realistic staffing in elementary schools and to call for a reduction in teacher-pupil ratios wherever practical.[106] Although the Minority II Report acknowledged the conflicting evidence regarding evening schools, the evidence of Miss Castle was mentioned. She was thought to provide 'a practical account of the work we wish to see encouraged, especially in our villages'.[107]

The impact of the Cross Commission

General principles which the women elementary school teachers had advocated to the Cross Commission, particularly with regard to the importance of the overall welfare of the child, were gradually substantiated in the new Code of

1890. This contained two main principles: to eliminate 'the bald teaching of facts' leading to exams, and instead to work toward the 'development of interest and intelligence'. This, it was hoped, would contribute to the 'increased happiness' of the children and the teachers in their work.[108] A general fixed grant replaced the standard subject grant and so began the dismantling of payment by results. The emphasis was on rewarding a good moral 'tone' and on the provision of a 'happy, cheerful school'.[109] The importance of elementary education as more than just teaching came to be increasingly recognised during the 1890s. The women witnesses had played a part in making social reform an increasingly important item on the agenda.

The domestic curriculum for schoolgirls was increasingly expanded in the wake of the Commission. As Dyhouse has illustrated, the government had already begun an expansion of domestic subjects before this period through the provision of grants: domestic economy had been made a compulsory subject in 1878 and grants were made available for cookery in 1882.[110] This expansion continued with grants for laundry in 1891 and hygiene in 1894, supported by appointments of full-time inspectresses for needlework and cookery, with the latter also taking responsibility for laundry work.[111] Some of the women elementary teachers who gave evidence to the Cross Commission acknowledged the importance of the domestic curriculum for the future roles of the girls they taught, although for some the realities of rural schools precluded the implemention of the domestic curriculum in full. One consequence of the women's complaints about overpressure was that in 1892 a modified scheme of work was introduced for arithmetic in schools where there were fewer than sixty pupils.[112] The LSB's Special Committee on the Modes of Instruction (1887–8) also produced a review of the curriculum, in which a key consideration was whether Sloyd (a Swedish system of practical handicrafts) could replace needlework for girls.[113]

Although infant education had not been highlighted specifically in the Cross Commission, subsequent legislation reflected the interest in kindergarten methods that had been expressed by the women elementary school witnesses. The 1891 Education Bill extended the grants that had been recently made available for children aged between five and fourteen to include children of three to five years.[114] In 1895, greater recognition was afforded to Froebelian kindergarten methods, when additional grants were given in an attempt to facilitate the transition from constructive play in the infant school, to the more rigorous demands of the senior school.[115]

Important issues raised in both the Majority and Minority Reports impacted on the working conditions and prospects of women teachers, and particularly on aspects of training for elementary teaching. The Majority Report did not favour the demise of the pupil-teacher system, since 'it would keep out of the professions many of a class who, especially in the case of women, are amongst its most efficient members'.[116] It was also a cheap and reliable source of teachers, who were predominantly female. The Minority

Report, in contrast, portrayed the pupil-teacher system as 'the weakest part of our educational machinery' and emphasised 'the greatness of the need for better training'.[117] The aim of those contributing to the Minority Report was to create a coherent, properly regulated and more professional system of training, from which women, who were acknowledged as a major force in teaching, would benefit. Such recommendations influenced the provision of pupil-teacher centres in the 1880s and by 1890 there were additional grants for day training colleges.[118]

Although the women teachers, like their male counterparts, had produced a heavy indictment of payment by results in their evidence to the Cross Commission, the final reports did not go so far as to demand its entire abolition. Nevertheless, the Commission contributed to the eventual demise of the system. The teacher-based recommendations of the Minority Report led to the dismemberment of payment by results which began in the Code of 1890. This achievement was described by the *Schoolmaster* as 'easily the biggest thing ever done for the children of this country'.[119] It increased teachers' freedom to pay more attention to the overall welfare of the child and the fulfilment of individual potential, as opposed to meeting the requirements of rigid standards. This freedom, in turn, enabled the curriculum to widen and facilitated the growth of kindergarten teaching, physical education and school visits to museums and art galleries.

Postscript

At a personal level, the future careers of the women who appeared before the Cross Commission took different tracks. Elizabeth Burgwin's appearance before the Commission was part of her rising educational profile in the 1890s, which continued into the early twentieth century. After a special request from the LSB, she assumed the role of Superintendent of Schools for Special Instruction in 1891.[120] In 1897, she was chosen as one of seven members of the Departmental Committee on Defective and Epileptic Children to consider future policy.[121] This was a tribute to her efforts in reforming the treatment of the mentally handicapped. In 1905, she appeared as a witness before the Royal Commission on the Care and Control of the Feeble-minded, as well as presenting evidence to the Inter-Departmental Committee on Medical Inspection and Feeding of Children Attending Public Elementary School.[122]

Miss Fox went to Port Elizabeth, Cape Colony in 1894 to train teachers in several convent schools.[123] Miss Neath, Miss Napper and Mrs Knowler returned to the challenges of their daily lives as teachers. Although single at the time of giving evidence, Miss Randal married the master of St Philip's Boys' School, Joseph Holford, towards the end of 1891.[124] This shared commitment to a professional life created the familiar dilemma for working women of managing home and school. In 1901 Mrs Holford retired, stating that the 'difficulties of my home life prevent me being a good Teacher'. At a

valedictory presentation her colleagues, managers and past pupils acknowledged her 'hard and conscientious work' and said that they had Valued highly the marked ability and self denying efforts' during her twenty-one years of service'.[125] The following year, 1902, Miss Whittenbury, 'forced by ill health', retired under the strain about which she had testified to the Commission.[126] Whatever trajectory their future careers took, in giving their evidence these eight women elementary teachers had played their part in opening up elementary education at a national level under the 1890 Code. Their voices highlight the range of views and contradictions experienced by this group of ordinary yet extraordinary women.

Notes

1 Introduction to *Final Reports,* Royal Commission on the Elementary Education Acts (Cross Commission—hereafter Cross), HMSO, 10 March, 1886, p. vi.
2 D.M.Copelman, *London's Women Teachers: Gender, Class and Feminism 1870–1930,* Routledge, 1996, p. 201.
3 Biklen argues that it is important to be aware of the 'realities' of daily life so as to prevent accounts of teachers' lives and work falling into the trope of 'heroism'. S.K.Biklen, *School Work: Gender and the Cultural Construction of Teaching,* New York, Teachers College Press, 1995, p. 5.
4 Cross, *Final Report,* Introduction, A. See also Syllabus of Points for Inquiry, *Final Report,* 1888, pp. ix–xi.
5 S.Hamilton, 'Images of Femininity in the Royal Commissions of the 1830s and 1840s', in E.J.Yeo (ed.), *Radical Femininity,* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1998, p. 81.
6 A.Tropp, *The Schoolteacher,* London, Heinemann, 1957, p. 112, footnotes. See also *Board Teacher,* 1 January 1891, p. 6.
7 These women included: Miss Rosamund Davenport-Hill, prominent member of the London School Board (LSB); Lady Stevenson, school manager for LSB; Mrs Fielden, wealthy educational philanthropist; Miss Agnes Lambert, interested in establishing school banks to educate the working class; Mrs Millicent Garrett Fawcett, member of the Women's Suffrage Committee; Miss Mary Elizabeth Headdon, member of the Association for the Promotion of Housewifery; Miss Fanny Calder, honorary secretary of the Liverpool Training School of Cookery; Miss Lydia Manley, Headteacher and Mistress of Method at Stockwell Training College; Miss Francis Trevor, Principal of Bishop Otter College; Madame Bergman Osterberg, Principal of Hampstead Training College.
8 Miss Randal's name is spelled Randall in the list of witnesses to the Cross Commission. However, in the log books of her school, she is referred to as Miss Randal, the spelling that is adopted here.
9 Mrs Burgwin presented her evidence on 24 November 1886, Cross, Minutes of Evidence (hereafter MoE).
10 P.Horn, 'Elizabeth Miriam Burgwin: Child Welfare Pioneer and Union Activist', *Journal of Further and Higher Education,* 1990, vol. 14, no. 3, p. 49.
11 T.Gautrey, *'Lux Mihi Laus': School Board Memories,* London, Link House Publications, 1937, p. 138.
12 Orange Street Board School, Inspection Reports, 18 May 1885; 6 June 1888; 15 May 1886, London Metropolitan Archives, LCC/EO/PS/12/01/012/1–52,
13 T.Gautrey, *'Lux Mihi Laus',* p. 138.

14 Cross, *MoE,* p. 67, Q. 15541–4.
15 Ibid., p. 69, Q. 15683. See also Sydney Road Infant School, Log Book, 27 November 1882, London Metropolitan Archives, EO/DIV4/SID/LB/10.
16 Ditton School, Log Book, 28 April 1876, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone, C/ES 118/1/1.
17 Cross, *MoE,* p. 170, Q. 19339.
18 Notre Dame College Log Book, 'Schools and Situations', 1885, Provincial Archives Office, Liverpool, MPTCI Box 2.
19 Cross, *MoE,* p. 349, Q. 51534–7.
20 Ibid., p. 175, Q. 19581–2; p. 179, Q. 19681–5; p. 180, Q. 19745–7.
21 Ibid., p. 185, Q. 19941–7.
22 National Society, Index of School teachers, 1812–55, Church of England Record Centre London. Also J.Martin, *Women and the Politics of Schooling in Victorian England,* London, Leicester University Press, 1999, p. 57.
23 Notre Dame College Log Book, 'Schools and Situations', 1885, Provincial Archives Office, Liverpool, MPTCI Box 3.
24 National Union of Teachers, *Annual Reports,* 1871–88, NUT Library, London.
25 H.Corr, 'Sexual Politics in the National Union of Teachers, 1870–1920', in, P. Summerfield (ed.), *Women, Education and the Professions,* Leicester, History of Education Society, Occasional Publication No. 8, 1987, p. 53.
26 R.Betts, *Dr Macnamara 1861–1931,* Liverpool, Liverpool University Press, 1999, p. 109.
27 *Schoolmaster,* 31 March 1894, pp. 582–3.
28 Ibid.
29 Sydney Road School, Inspection Reports, 1885 and 1896, London Metropolitan Archives EO/PS/12/547/1–40.
30 St Philip's School, Log Book, 24 November 1883, p. 189, Norfolk Record Office, PD 152/95.
31 Ditton School, Log Book, 7 April 1884 and 21 April. 1886
32 Ibid., 4 May 1887.
33 Duncton School, Log Book, 5 July 1886; Diocesan Inspectors' Report copied into the log book, 16 April 1888, West Sussex Record Office, E69/12/1.
34 Ibid., 3 July 1888. Miss Castle dated her entry below the report as 8 July 1889; however, all other indications point to this being 1888.
35 Ibid., June 1889.
36 Cross, *MoE,* p. 184, Q. 19879; p. 191, Q. 20121.
37 Ibid., p. 165, Q. 19088; Q. 19235.
38 Ibid., p. 351, Q. 51602.
39 Ibid., p. 156, Q. 18667.
40 Ibid., p. 116, Q. 17122.
41 Ibid., p. 115, Q. 17109; p. 178, Q. 19649; p. 68, Q. 15581; p. 156, Q. 18653.
42 Ibid., *Minority Report II,* p. 328.
43 C.Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England,* London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, p. 90.
44 Cross, MoE, p. 115, Q. 17097–8; p. 117, Q. 17182–3.
45 Ibid., p. 117, Q. 17187; Q. 17182.
46 Ibid., p. 176, Q. 19609; p. 177, Q. 19632; p. 178, Q. 19648.
47 Ibid., p. 160, Q. 18859–60; C.Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England,* pp. 82–3.
48 Cross, *MoE,* p. 156, Q. 18660; p. 351, Q. 51586; p. 114, Q. 17088.
49 Ibid., p. 156, Q. 18670–4; p. 169, Q. 19266; p. 171, Q. 19374; p. 195, Q. 20266.

50 Ibid., p. 352, Q. 51640.
51 Ibid., p. 119, Q. 17226; p. 177, Q. 19632.
52 Ibid., p. 117, Q. 17188.
53 Ibid., pp. 120–1, Q. 17298.
54 Ibid., p. 177, Q. 19639; p. 163, Q. 19022–3.
55 Ibid., p. 163, Q. 19081.
56 Ibid., p. 69, Q. 15616–7; p. 70, Q. 15664.
57 Ibid., p. 182, Q. 19813–819; Q. 19160–1; p. 162, Q. 18933–943.
58 Ibid., p. 160, Q. 18868; *Minority Report II,* p. 303.
59 Cross, Minority Report II, p. 303.
60 Ibid., *MoE,* p. 121, Q. 17311–313.
61 A.Davin, *Growing up Poor: Home, School and Street in London 1870–1914,* London Rivers Oram Press, 1996, pp. 134, 141.
62 D.M.Copelman, *London's Women Teachers,* p. xv.
63 Cross., *MoE,* p. 118, Q. 17199; p. 113, Q. 17057–60; p. 67, Q. 15554–5.
64 Ibid., p. 118, Q. 17201.
65 Ibid., p. 195, Q. 20262–3.
66 Ibid., p. 176, Q. 19603; p. 159, Q. 18812–14.
67 Duncton School, Log Book, 5 July 1886. Extract copied from Inspector's Report.
68 Cross, *MoE,* p. 187, Q. 19991.
69 Ibid., p. 69, Q. 15658.
70 Sydney Road Infant School, Log Book, 10 November 1886, 25 May 1887, 12 June 1901.
71 Cross, *MoE,* p. 194, Q. 20219; Q. 20231.
72 Ibid., p. 164, Q. 19045; p. 169, Q. 19285.
73 Ibid., p. 157, Q. 18723–4.
74 Sydney Road Infant School, Log Book, 11 November; St Philip's School, Log Book, 6 December 1886, p. 189; Duncton School, Log Book, 8 December 1886; Ditton School, Log Book, C/ES 118/1/2 10 December 1886.
75 Cross, *MoE,* p. 113, Q. 17062.
76 Ibid., p. 116, Q. 17136.
77 Ibid., Q. 17136; Q. 17144; Q. 17146.
78 *School Board Chronicle* (SBC), 16 January, 1886, p. 65.
79 Cross, *MoE,* p. 124, Q. 17414–5; p. 125, Q. 17427.
80 Ibid., p. 125, Q. 17433–17434.
81 *Schoolmaster,* 25 February, 1899, p. 365.
82 Cross, *MoE,* p. 125, Q. 17434.
83 Ibid., p. 121, Q. 17311; Q. 17313–4; Q. 17306–9.
84 Ibid., p. 186, Q. 19943; Q. 19952–61.
85 Ibid., p. 186, Q. 19971–3; Q. 19776–7.
86 Ibid., p. 186, Q. 19971; Q. 19988–93.
87 Ibid., p. 187, Q. 19991–4.
88 Ibid., p. 349, Q. 51539.
89 Ibid., Q. 51542–3.
90 Ibid., Q. 51546.
91 Ibid., Q. 51551.
92 Ibid., p. 350, Q. 51580; p. 351, Q. 51586; Q. 51600.
93 Ibid. See uncertainty of her responses to Heller's earlier questions, p. 158–9, Q. 18786–10.
94 Ibid., p. 159, Q. 18821–3.
95 Ibid., Q. 18810.
96 Ibid., p. 185, Q. 19942.

97 Cross, *Final Report,* Introduction, p. 2.
98 Ibid., *Majority Report,* p. 87.
99 Ibid.
100 Ibid.
101 Ibid., pp. 220–1.
102 Ibid., *Minority II Report,* pp. 328–30.
103 Ibid., *Majority Report,* pp. 220–1.
104 Ibid., p. 216.
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106 Ibid., *Minority II Report,* p. 309.
107 Ibid., p. 321.
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110 C.Dyhouse, *Girls Growing Up in Late Victorian and Edwardian England,* p. 89.
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114 G.Sutherland, *Policy Making in Elementary Education: 1870–1895,* p. 305.
115 Ibid., p. 330.
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119 *Schoolmaster,* 18 March 1899, p. 483.
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124 St. Philip's School, *Managers' Minutes,* November 1891, p. 20.
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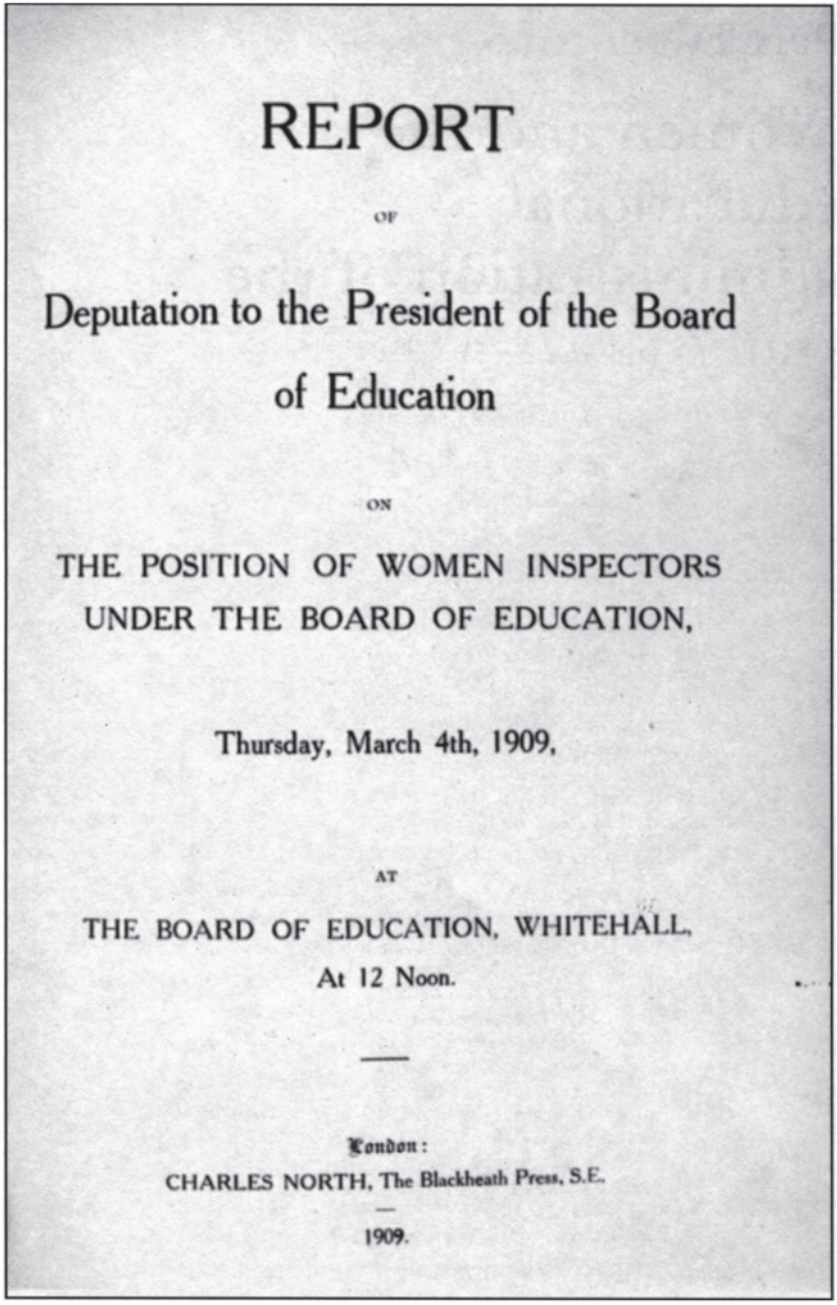
Part IV

Women and the educational administration of the state



REPORT

OF

Deputation to the President of the Board of Education

ON

THE POSITION OF WOMEN INSPECTORS UNDER THE BOARD OF EDUCATION,

Thursday, March 4th, 1909,

AT

THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, WHITEHALL,

At 12 Noon.

London:
CHARLES NORTH, The Blackheath Press, S.E.
1909.

Plate 2 Report of the Deputation to the President of the Board of Education, 1909

8 'The peculiar preserve of the male kind'

Women and the education inspectorate, 1893 to the Second World War

Joyce Goodman and Sylvia Harrop

> I trust you will succeed in introducing female Inspectors of schools. Every step of this kind will break down something of the enormous barrier of prejudice which deprives us of the services of women in so many relations of life.[1]

In the early nineteenth century some women travelled the country inspecting and organising schools on behalf of their respective voluntary societies.[2] However, it was men who were employed as inspectors by the voluntary education societies when they developed their models of inspection. When Her Majesty's Inspectorate was established in 1839 to superintend the allocation of monies to promote public education, early HMIs were all male and many of them were clergymen.[3] Women's initial exclusion from the Inspectorate resulted partly from its establishment on models of inspection developed early in the nineteenth century by the voluntary education societies, which drew on diocesan structures for the inspection of their schools, replete with male hierarchies of bishops, clergy and laity.[4] Their exclusion was exacerbated by civic disabilities, which made state employment for women particularly problematic prior to reform of the Married Woman's Property Acts. Furthermore, HMIs were expected to be graduates, generally from Oxbridge, yet in the early days of the Inspectorate women were debarred from the universities.[5]

HMIs were influential figures. The grant structure of elementary education meant that an Inspector could 'make or break' a school. In a position to bring pressure to bear for alterations in the administration of education, inspectors were potential policy-makers.[6] It took forty-four years for women to gain access to this male preserve. When they were appointed to the Inspectorate in the late nineteenth century, it was in a restricted capacity and on terms of employment very different from those offered to men.[7] Women argued that this situation was detrimental to themselves, to girls and their education, but above all to the development of education as a whole. This chapter will examine some of their arguments about the employment of women as inspectors. It will focus on two key junctures: the 1870s, when the expansion of elementary education, and the election of

some women to school boards prompted a campaign for women to be appointed as inspectors; and the period immediately following the establishment of the Woman Inspectorate in 1905, when women's organisations argued that the reformed Inspectorate was inimical to women's professional development. The chapter will end by looking at the critique made by women inspectors themselves to the Civil Service (Tomlin) Commission in 1930 about their conditions of work.

The success of women in gaining access to school boards under the 1870 Education Act led to demands for women to play their part in the wider administration of education, particularly as inspectors. During the 1870s the need for women inspectors was discussed at meetings of the Social Science Association and memorials were sent to the Education Department praying for their appointment. A key figure in the campaign for women HMIs in the 1870s and again in the late 1890s was Elizabeth Wolstenholme (Elmy), a founder member of the Manchester Schoolmistresses' Association and of the North of England Council for Promoting the Education of Women, and a friend of Emily Davies. Along with Lydia Becker, Isabella Tod, Josephine Butler, Ursula Bright and Anne Ashworth, Wolstenholme Elmy took part in a deputation to W.E.Forster in 1870 to press for the appointment of women to the Inspectorate.[8] At a social science meeting at Newcastle in November 1870, she called on all women connected with educational societies or associations to memorialise the Committee of Council on Education for women to be appointed school inspectors to 'serve the state'.[9] In the 1870s, important support came from men like Endowed Schools Commissioner Arthur Hobhouse.[10] One memorial praying for women to be appointed to the Inspectorate was signed by seventy-two resident graduates of the University of Cambridge, led by the Vice-Chancellor.[11]

In the 1870s, arguments that women were 'specially qualified' to 'serve the state' as inspectors often drew on the notion of the 'communion of labour', which Anna Jameson used in the 1850s to argue for women's incorporation as citizens. Jameson maintained that men's and women's capabilities were different but complementary and that women's distinctive contributions were as important as those of men. In her view, 'specific needs and qualities that were "naturally female"' enabled women to articulate women's concerns.[12] She used the language of reciprocal rights and duties, and particularly stressed notions of work and of social responsibility, arguing that women needed access to employment and the professions, and to the administration of all institutions dealing with women and children. In her view, if women and men worked together in a 'communion of labour', each bringing their specific capabilities, they would together 'transform the character of the nation'.[13]

Elizabeth Wolstenholme's co-speaker at the Newcastle Social Science meeting, Miss Newsome, exemplified this approach. She argued that women had responsibilities to be fully involved in the administration of the 1870 Education Act. She envisaged the work of women inspectors and of women members of school boards as complementary. Women on school boards would

see to it that girls could benefit from the new education act by having the same requirements for attendance and the same teaching as boys, while women inspectors 'from their experience in a higher class of elementary teaching' would 'be of great practical value in directing and judging the schools'. She argued that male and female inspectors, working together, would also complement each other for the good of education and the country as a whole.[14]

Lydia Becker drew on the rhetoric of the communion of labour at the Domestic Economy Congress held in Manchester in 1878, where she told the audience that women were by nature and training fitted to superintend the work of others and were acknowledged to have keen insight into practical details: 'Their reports would probably note matters which might be overlooked by men, and the nation would learn with more fullness the working of the educational system if it looked through the eyes of women as well as men'.[15] During the 1880s, Becker intertwined notions of equality and difference with those of class in her arguments for the appointment of women inspectors. When the Cross Commission suggested in 1888 that women inspectors should be appointed on an experimental basis, but for infants and lower standards only, Becker regarded this as too restrictive. She claimed equality of opportunity for women as inspectors on the grounds that: 'Whatever girls are able to learn women are able to teach and test'. She argued that the policy of 'securing men of the highest culture and training' should be regarded as 'equally important in the opening of inspectorial opportunities to women'.[16]

The Board of Education was initially impervious to pressure for women inspectors. In the wake of the 1870 Act, the Inspectorate was expanded and re-structured to accommodate the growth of elementary education, but proposals for women inspectors were turned down on the grounds that HMIs were required to possess a university degree.[17] Faced with the lack of women HMIs and an expanding structure of elementary education, some school-board women stepped into the breach, inspecting elementary education in an unpaid capacity.[18] Women on the larger urban school boards campaigned for the appointment of women as board inspectors. From 1873 women were incorporated into the complex structure of inspection that developed under the London School Board and were appointed local inspectors by some urban school boards, most notably Liverpool, Salford, and Leeds.[19] Local board inspection, however, remained dominated by men.[20]

The first women appointed as inspectors at the Education Department were both temporary appointments and both for domestic subjects: Miss Emily Jones, appointed Directress of Needlework in 1883, and Miss Mary Harrison, appointed in 1890 for the inspection of cookery and laundry work. By the 1890s, when Miss R.A.Munday, Miss S.J.Willis, Miss Katharine Bathurst, Miss Edith Deverell and Mrs Marion Withiel were appointed to the Inspectorate, women were meeting the criteria for appointment to the Inspectorate of a university education, 'teaching experience and…an enormous amount of zeal for, and the desire to promote the interests of

education'.[21] The scarcity of good jobs for able educated women resulted in these women being well qualified and experienced for their posts, contesting previous accreditation strategies of professionalisation, which had worked to exclude women from the Inspectorate.[22] Despite their qualifications and experience, however, women inspectors worked under the supervision and control of male HMIs, with no opportunity to advance to HMI and take charge of districts. The well-documented troubles of the able but outspoken Kitty Bathurst illustrate what might ensue if a woman inspector overstepped the limits of her perceived place within the Inspectorate. Kitty Bathurst's forth-right comments about the conditions of some of the infant schools she inspected led Sir John Gorst to warn her of the harm she was doing to the cause of women in the Inspectorate: 'Your letter frightens me…everything will be spoilt and the last hope of any good being done by women Inspectors will be gone'.[23] In 1905 she was asked to resign.

Reviewing the position of women in the Inspectorate, Robert Morant, Secretary to the Board of Education, was concerned that none of the women inspectors dealt with elementary training colleges for women, or girls' secondary schools.[24] He also thought that the work of the women inspectors had been mishandled by the men under whom they had been placed:

> And this to such an extent that the Inspectorate generally pray that no more Women Inspectors be appointed; and to be quit altogether of those they have. The schools too, and the school authorities, have begun to feel very much in this way.[25]

The view that schools did not want women inspectors was not, however, upheld by an investigation carried out by a sub-committee of the Assistant Mistresses Association, which sought a range of views on the question of women inspectors from teachers working in rural and urban schools and from inspectors themselves. This sub-committee reported in 1904 that while not all teachers were in favour of having women inspectors, it was usually those working under the happiest conditions who had not felt the need for them. The report concluded that the need for women inspectors was most greatly felt in pupil-teacher centres and in science schools for girls.[26]

Morant's solution to the ambiguous position of the women in the Inspectorate was two-fold: first, women inspectors were to be attached to a divisional inspector and employed in tasks over a wide area for which they were seen as specially equipped; and second, they were to be renamed women inspectors, given the rank of HMI, and form part of a newly-established Woman Inspectorate under a Chief Woman Inspector.[27] In looking for a first Chief Woman Inspector, Morant determined to have 'a woman with a big name'.[28] In 1905 he hand-picked Maude Lawrence for the post. The daughter of Lord Lawrence, Governor-General of India and chair of the first London School Board, Maude Lawrence had herself served on the London School Board. Morant saw her role exclusively in terms of helping to achieve greater national efficiency through education.[29] Daglish asserts that his appointment

was soon vindicated: under Lawrence's leadership Morant's 'desired cohesiveness and efficiency' were achieved in a very short time.[30] Among the first tasks of the Woman Inspectorate was a survey of the work done in the Training Schools of Cookery, after which 'certain of the women Inspectors' were 'entrusted [with] the inspection of Domestic Subjects in the schools and centres under the Code'.[31] The woman Inspectorate also conducted investigations for the Report on 'Children under Five Years of Age in Public Elementary Schools', published in 1905, and the 'Special Report on the Teaching of Cookery to Public Elementary School Children' in 1907.[32]

Sutherland attributes the implementation of the Woman Inspectorate with a Chief Woman Inspector partly to Morant's sympathy for feminist aspirations.[33] Others saw his actions in a different light: by placing women inspectors under a woman chief, he was 'comforting their heart by raising them all at once to the position of HMI (contrary to the original intention) but in so doing…emphasised their inferior status'.[34] Dissatisfaction with developments respecting women inspectors was clear. Out of the employ of the Board, Edith Deverell, now Mrs Marvin, told the National Union of Women Workers in 1904: 'The question [of] what sphere women are to serve in School Inspection is still unsettled. The tendency is to circumscribe and narrow that sphere'.[35] Headmistresses of girls' secondary schools were similarly unimpressed, particularly with the status of women inspectors and the Secondary Inspectorate, where the Board had appointed a number of temporary 'occasional' and 'additional' inspectors chosen for their particular expertise. Sophie Bryant, headmistress of the North London Collegiate School, told the conference of the Head Mistresses' Association (AHM) in 1907 that at the end of the previous century there had been a hopeful view that women would gradually attain the position of inspector and would be seen by the Board of Education as educational experts. Recently appointed women, however, were only on yearly contracts and had no security of tenure whatsoever. Sophie Bryant was also critical of 'the unfavourable position of women under the Chief Woman Inspector, Maude Lawrence':

> It should be noted that the Chief Woman Inspector's salary is £400 a year, and the Chief Inspector's £1,200. This fact indicates, by a crude but useful test, the status assigned to women in the service of the Board by the limitation of posts for women to a special women's staff.[36]

Critical of the view that a 'women's staff' was meant to deal with 'that special work in inspection the necessary qualifications for which are possessed by women only', Sophie Bryant told the conference that she believed that the recent appointments to Miss Lawrence's staff indicated that the development of women's work in the Inspectorate was all to be along domestic economy lines. In addition, she also thought that there had been no development for women in the Secondary School Inspectorate since 1904. While two women secondary inspectors had remained upon the staff of the Chief Inspector, Mr Fletcher, no new women had been

added to the secondary branch. The additional work that needed to be done by women was managed by 'borrowing' from Miss Lawrence's staff. Despite the growth in the numbers of women at the Inspectorate, she thought that the prospects for women at the Board of Education had been brighter in 1904 than they were in 1907.[37]

By the early twentieth century, women attempting to gain power in the central state bureaucracy as inspectors were drawing on notions of professionalism to stake their claim. Alison Oram illustrates how women developed a gendered language of professionalism constituted through ideas of liberalism, individualism and merit which broadly equated to aspects of middle-class identity.[38] This focus on rights and equality, expressed through gender-neutral ideologies of professionalism, was exemplified by the Women's Emancipation Union, which memorialised the President of the Committee of Council of Education in 1892 and 1896 for women to be appointed to the Inspectorate on the basis of its policy of:

> Equality of right and duty with men in all matters affecting the service of the community and of the State. Equality of opportunity for self-development by the education of the schools and of life. Equality in industry by equal freedom of choice of career.[39]

Some members of the high-powered alliance of women's organisations, which waited on the Board of Education in 1909, drew on this language of professionalism. The deputation included representatives of professional organisations of women school teachers and heads, as well as women working to advance the cause of women in the administration of local government. As opening speaker, AHM President, Mrs Woodhouse, told the officials from the Board of Education (including Maude Lawrence):

> We are here…to express…our deep discontent with the small amount of school inspection work entrusted to women, with the official status and salaries of those employed and quite as much as anything else, with the method of their selection.[40]

Margaret Ashton of Manchester urged the Board to consider the appointment of women inspectors on the same basis, with the same opportunities and the same qualifications as men. Both Ashton and Mrs Byles, chair of the Women's National Liberal Association, argued that only by instituting equal opportunities of this type would it be possible to appoint the women best fitted for the work.[41]

The centrality of domesticity to the definition of women's work within the Inspectorate proved a key critique for some of the deputation. Miss Janet Case, speaking on behalf of the 1,900 headmistresses, mistresses, lecturers, examiners and inspectors in the NUWT, noted that in the inspection of elementary schools there were only eighteen women as against 244 men,

and all but five of these were limited to the inspection of domestic subjects.[42] Mrs Byles was scathing of the domestic qualifications of many of the women appointed to the Inspectorate since 1904 and of the narrowing of women inspectors' work. She had found the language of the 1905 Report of the Board of Education most auspicious, with a Chief Woman Inspector appointed to take over the whole of the cookery work, the women from the elementary and technical departments put under her charge, and six full inspectors added to her staff, but in her view the 1906 Report had represented a 'strong retrogression'. She thought that the 'inspection and enquiry into all matters needing the scrutiny and advice of a woman' noted in the 1905 Report had been narrowed down in the 1906 Report to domestic subjects. She concluded that while the numbers of women inspectors might be rising, their work was actually diminishing in scope.[43] Mrs Corrie Grant told the Board's officials that confining women inspectors to domestic subjects produced a narrowness that might explain the antipathy with which women inspectors were thought to be viewed by women teachers.[44]

Some in the deputation reiterated notions of the 'communion of labour' that had characterised the 1870s campaign for women inspectors. Mrs Byles argued that women inspectors were needed because: 'Men and women see things differently, appraise them differently. What administrators want is a stereo-scopic view of the schools for which they are responsible.'[45] By 1907, however, many of the arguments for women inspectors based on 'difference' were being expressed through the notions of service, within the female language of professionalism. As Oram highlights, women employed notions of professional equality alongside the rhetoric of their superior knowledge as women, which engendered a tension between professionalism and social maternalism.[46] Arguments of professionalism based on liberal notions of equality and on notions of service fused in the view of some members of the deputation that women inspectors were needed for the good of education itself, and ultimately for the good of the country. Both Mrs Woodhouse and Miss Case maintained that the appointment of women inspectors would facilitate the correlation of elementary and secondary education, an important concern of the Board at the time.[47] Margaret Ashton claimed that it was necessary for women to gain equal opportunities in the inspectorate for the welfare of the country.[48]

In reply, Walter Runciman, MP and President of the Board of Education was sympathetic to the argument that there were too few women in the Inspectorate. However, he was less sympathetic to criticisms of the domestic orientation of women inspectors' work, which was in line with Board of Education policy for the domestication of the curriculum in the wake of the Physical Deterioration Report. On the question of salaries he told the deputation that the hands of the Board of Education were tied by the Treasury, as well as by the laws of supply and demand, commenting that when it came to tenure, women inspectors were aware that they were only appointed for five years when they took up the post.[49]

By 1912 there were forty-eight posts for women in the Inspectorate. Reporting on the work of women inspectors in 1913, the AHM noted that five women inspectors assisted mainly in the inspection of infant schools, elementary schools for girls and mixed elementary schools; eleven inspected training schools for teachers of domestic subjects and special classes for adults in those subjects, along with centres and classes for elementary school children; two assisted in the inspection of training colleges for women and mixed training colleges; three were mainly employed in the inspection of secondary schools; and two were involved in the inspection of physical exercises under the direction of Dr Janet Campbell. All women inspectors assisted as far as they could in the inspection of day and evening schools and classes for girls and women.[50] A third of the women were graduates, with 'regular men's qualifications'.[51] In 1919, the number of senior posts for women was increased to seven and the posts were converted into the new higher rank of Staff Inspector.[52] In 1922, the Board of Education reported that there were seventy-five women inspectors in all branches of the Board's service on the staff of the Chief Woman Inspector.[53] On the retirement of Chief Inspector Fletcher in 1926, there was a re-organisation of the Inspectorate to bring it more in line with the principles underlying the 1921 Education Act.[54] The number of staff posts for women increased to eleven and, as part of the general re-organisation of the Inspectorate, women in posts of staff inspectorships were renamed divisional staff inspectors and were attached to, and worked under, a divisional inspector.[55] By the 1930s women were represented in the 'upper ranges' of the Inspectorate by the Chief Woman Inspector, who was still overseeing general disciplinary and supervisory duties as chief of the corps of woman inspectors.[56] The work of the Woman Inspectorate was still based on Robert Morant's minute of 1904, which laid down that the women inspectors were to be recognised as a separate section, to be used only for special purposes. The function of women inspectors was still 'as special advisers on the particular questions affecting women and girls, rather than on general educational questions which affected boys and girls indiscriminately'.[57]

Maude Lawrence's role—first as Chief Woman Inspector and until 1933 as Director of Women's Establishments at the Treasury—in confining the work of women inspectors should not be underestimated. Zimmeck describes Lawrence as a 'society' lady with 'few academic pretensions, little knowledge of pedagogy or departmental requirements, and above all no feminist axe to grind'. She argues that Morant 'imposed Lawrence and a batch of domestic-service and physical-training experts under her leadership on the existing Inspectorate of university-educated women who were already pushing hard for recognition as education professionals, and not without ructions.'[58] The derogatory term 'washtub women' applied to the inspectors by their male colleagues was used of these new domestic science appointees by some existing women inspectors, who viewed the new system with dismay. Zimmeck portrays Maude Lawrence as a 'paragon of inactivity' who confined herself

to penning laconic 'I agree's' to the programme of her male colleagues; and she attributes the award of the DBE to Lawrence in 1926 to her 'good behaviour'.[59]

By the 1930s, the emphasis in women's rhetoric surrounding the question of women inspectors had swung more firmly to the language of equal opportunity. This is exemplified by the arguments of five women inspectors, who gave evidence in person to the Royal Commission on the Civil Service (the Tomlin Commission) on behalf of the Women's Committee of the Board of Education Inspectors' Association. Miss Tann, appointed the first Woman Chief Inspector with special responsibility for primary education in 1945, acted as spokesperson.[60] The women inspectors gave evidence principally about three key issues related to the barriers of (male) professionalisation, which worked to deny women inspectors power in the central state bureaucracy: the structuring and limiting of women inspectors' work through the Woman Inspectorate; the marriage bar, which resulted in a regular turnover in women inspectors; and the question of equal pay.[61] All three issues were linked, for the disparities in the positions of men and women within the Inspectorate by the 1930s were partly a result of the differential avenues of promotion open to men and women and the requirement for women to leave on marriage.[62] The women inspectors wanted all grades, positions and types of work to be open equally to men and women in accordance with the general principle of equality of opportunity.[63] Miss Tann told the Tomlin Commission that this was based on the opinions of the sixty-five women inspectors who had returned the very detailed questionnaire which had been circulated to sixty-eight women inspectors.[64]

The marriage bar, instituted in 1894, had been upheld by the majority of the members of the MacDonnell Commission on the Civil Service, which reported in 1913, on the grounds that 'the responsibilities of married life are normally incompatible with the devotion of a woman's whole time and unimpaired energy to the public service'.[65] The subsequent Sex Disqualification Removal Act of 1919 specifically excluded the Civil Service, with the result, Zimmeck argues, that women civil servants from 1919 onwards were left with the same dilemma as previously: having to choose between their careers and marriage.[66] The Tomlin Commission was told that forty-one of the sixty women inspectors who had responded to questions about the marriage bar were in favour of its abolition.[67] Strong arguments were made against it, on various grounds, both for professional women in general and for those in the Civil Service in particular.[68] Despite agreeing that married women inspectors might be extremely useful in the inspection of infant schools, Maude Lawrence, now at the Treasury, was in favour of the retention of the marriage bar as a greater safeguard for the efficiency of the Civil Service.[69] Such views did not augur well for the women inspectors' request for the marriage bar to be abolished, which occurred only after the Second World War.[70]

Maude Lawrence provided a similarly implacable line when it came to

issues of equal pay. As Zimmeck notes, top civil servants were anxious to avoid any precedents for equal pay, which would imply equal value.[71] The case for unequal pay was made on the basis of the differential work of men and women inspectors. The issues of equal pay and the marriage bar were interwoven. The Treasury view was that because women were single they lived at home and, therefore, should only receive a 'single wage', whereas men with a family to support needed a 'family wage'.[72] Zimmeck describes the Civil Service as a 'system of organised inequality', in which people were defined as unequal because they were denied the opportunity to demonstrate that they were equal.[73] The organisation of women into the Woman Inspectorate meant that women did not gain the requisite experience for promotion, and their prospects were limited since they could only rise to the position of staff inspector.[74] In their statement about their position in the Inspectorate, the women inspectors noted that 'the inequality of responsibility which existed was due to restrictions imposed upon them by departmental arrangements, restrictions which they desired to see removed'. Even then, the differentiation in pay was unduly great, considering the important duties that woman now actually performed.[75]

The salaries of the women inspectors not only compared unfavourably with the salaries of the male inspectors, but also with those of male and female inspectors under the London County Council (LCC). The LCC had developed a powerful Inspectorate, whose elementary schools were rarely visited by HMI until after the Second World War.[76] Miss Tann described London as 'a great advance' on the Board:

> London gives its women inspectors complete equality of status and pay. There are three women district inspectors under the LCC who do the same work and receive the same pay as the men…. Birmingham employed a woman inspector and simply gave her one-third of the city…. Manchester also employs women inspectors on an equal footing with men.[77]

For Maude Lawrence, however, equal pay was not an issue.[78] She did not agree that a woman in the same rank as a man but being paid on the woman's scale suffered from a lack of status. She had not experienced it herself, and had not come across it with regard to others.[79] In her view, the difficulty was to decide what was equivalent value.[80] On the question whether there was any sound principle upon which work of equivalent value performed by a man and a woman in the same grade might not be equally remunerated, she stated: 'We have to remember that the economic value of women, rightly or wrongly, outside is not the same as yet as that of men'.[81] She was adamant that it would be a mistake to apply equal pay in the Civil Service until it had been established 'outside'.[82]

On the question of women's responsibilities, the women inspectors criticised the fact that they had never been incorporated into the main organisation of the Inspectorate. They were also critical of the way in which women enjoyed only delegated responsibility, with divisional and district

inspectorships held only by men.[83] They charted the differing degrees of responsibility afforded to women inspectors depending on the section of the Inspectorate in which they were placed. In the elementary Inspectorate, where a large number of women inspectors worked, all women were responsible to the (male) district inspector, who determined the quality and quantity of the work assigned to them.[84] They were critical of the fact that the woman elementary inspector was rarely consulted on questions of educational policy or on issues arising out of LEA proposals for the re-organisation of schools or building programmes. As a result, the woman inspector might well remain ignorant of official policy, of important changes in organisation and of alterations to the premises of the schools she inspected.[85] She was also mainly confined to routine inspection, which left her unable to take a share in the 'larger' questions of the administration of the district.[86]

In the opinion of the women inspectors, the position of the women in the secondary Inspectorate was somewhat better. A number of girls' secondary schools were assigned to the women secondary inspectors and they were the responsible officers for both inspection and reporting, acting as the Board's representatives with the governing body.[87] Unlike their counterparts in the elementary Inspectorate, they dealt with all 'references' concerning the schools assigned to them and were consulted about the building plans of all the girls' and mixed schools in their areas. They were actually in charge of the full inspections of all the schools assigned to them and usually of the full inspections of the 'great' public schools for girls, and men inspectors of all grades worked on their panels.[88] Nevertheless, the women secondary inspectors themselves found their position far from satisfactory. They were concerned that the Board had recently confirmed that full responsibility for the organisation of secondary schools in the district as a whole lay with the district inspector. He was, therefore, the Board's spokesman with the LEA and in all general matters of policy.[89] 'The…woman [secondary] inspector …has comparatively little opportunity of using any gift for administration which she may possess'.[90] Moreover, unless the woman secondary inspector had control of all the girls' schools within a given area, she did not have access to the LEA; if a man inspector wanted to communicate something to the LEA he would go straight to the local authority, but the woman inspector had to go through the male district inspector.[91]

The women inspectors considered the position of the seven women inspectors of technical and evening schools to be slightly better. These women inspectors had direct access to the LEA, but were none the less expected to notify the district inspector of any interview they proposed to have in case he wished to be present. One of the seven, a divisional woman inspector, held a post of special responsibility for technical education and was the 'responsible officer' of the Board throughout the country.[92] Since 1910 women inspectors of training colleges for women teachers had been given complete responsibility for all inspection and administrative duties in connection with their inspections. Nevertheless, when the same women inspected the university

training departments alongside men, the male inspector was in charge.[93] The position of the women inspectors of physical training was the same as that of the men inspectors, inspecting the subject in all grades of schools, classes and colleges, and acting as the responsible officers of the Board with the governing bodies and local authorities.[94] Inspectors of domestic subjects, who worked in all branches of the Inspectorate and in all types of school, were chiefly concerned with elementary schools, and had direct access to the LEA. Three of these woman inspectors were in charge of the inspection of the training colleges of domestic subjects, and one, a divisional woman staff inspector, acted as special adviser to the Board on all matters concerning domestic subjects.[95]

Relations with the LEA were a key issue for the women inspectors. They noted that the most common argument advanced against the claim of women civil servants for equal opportunity and equal pay was the alleged prejudice of the public against doing business with a woman official, though it was generally agreed that this prejudice was diminishing.[96] Maude Lawrence believed that prejudice against women had largely disappeared. In her view, this was a result of initially employing women in areas in which there could be no doubt of their suitability, 'that is to say, domestic subjects, needlework and infants' schools'.[97] However, Mr Hankin, representing the Board of Education Inspectors' Association, made two further important observations. Although he reiterated the view that a large amount of the work of the Inspectorate was equally suitable for women and men, he associated educational administration with men and curriculum developments more with women.[98] Moreover, in his view, women did not possess the channels of informal contact that were open to the men:

> As things are at present it is very much easier for men, than it is for a woman, to go and smoke a pipe with the director of education and discuss matters with him in an informal way…. The pipe…is a symbol of the sort of way one does discuss matters with the director, and of the psychology.[99]

Miss Tann countered that in the present organisation of the Board women had not had the opportunity to show their administrative abilities to the full, and pointed out that headmistresses appeared absolutely equal to the administrative task required by their posts.[100]

A second key issue highlighted by the women inspectors was in respect of policy-making. They noted that women had never been selected for any of the chief positions on the 'intellectual' side of the work. The staff inspectorships for subjects were only assigned to men and the chief examinerships of subjects, excepting needlework, domestic subjects and physical training, had never been assigned to women. They were also concerned that women were not as a matter of course called to conferences on educational and administrative policy (where inspectors got to know each other) along with their male colleagues.[101]

While the women inspectors called for all grades, positions and types of work to be open equally to men and women in accordance with the general principle of equality of opportunity, they were divided on how this should be achieved.[102] A majority was in favour of aggregation. They viewed this as necessary on the grounds that women constituted only 23 per cent of the Inspectorate. A smaller number saw a segregated Woman Inspectorate as a first step towards the ultimate ideal of aggregation.[103] Representatives of the AHM took the opposite view. On the basis of their experience that very few women were considered for the post of headteacher in a mixed school, and on the grounds of general attitudes towards women, they thought that 'if women and men were serving on the same staff it would have a very unfortunate effect', since the general attitude that it was difficult for women to have authority over a man was still very strong.[104] A contemporary, Dorothy Evans, noted that without segregation there would have been no new women appointed as inspectors after the First World War.[105]

In the view of the women inspectors, aggregation would require the reorganisation of the whole Inspectorate. They did not advocate particular posts being reserved for men or women, but recommended that a proportion of posts (approximately 10 per cent) should be reserved for women for a period, and that women should be specially promoted to posts of higher responsibility as vacancies occurred.[106] In their view, this meant that if a man and a woman came up for a vacant post, the man might need to be passed over in the cause of equality, a practice for which there were precedents in other departments. This they thought necessary to prevent complete aggregation being a bar to promotion as long as the numbers of women in the Inspectorate were small.[107]

Many of the women inspectors, however, thought the first step was an increase in the number of women inspectors.[108] One suggestion was that a committee of men and women should be set up to determine what posts should be reserved exclusively to men and women. Maude Lawrence deprecated this idea, and was adamant that women should not be promoted or transferred to positions of responsibility simply because they were women. She preferred the 'fair field and no favour' approach of open competition between men and women.[109] Describing herself as 'a person…who likes to move surely and even slowly', she thought that what was needed was to move step by step.[110] She was broadly in favour of the aggregation of women and men in the service, but thought women would probably have fewer posts under aggregation than might be set aside for them under segregation, and she thought that the top post should always be filled by a man. In her evidence to the Tomlin Commission, she professed never to have heard that the question of unequal pay, the marriage bar, or the slowness of promotion might be deterring women from wanting to enter the service. Furthermore, she did not consider it to be the job of the Civil Service to make itself 'more attractive' to women.[111] In altercations with the representatives of the London and National Society for Women's Service, the Duchess of Atholl, one of the

Tomlin Commissioners and formerly the first woman Secretary of State at the Board of Education, also defended the record of the Board against what she termed 'a rather serious charge…that the Board of Education refuses to employ women in the main educational administration of the country'.[112]

The Tomlin Commission recommended competition for posts and promotion on the grounds of merit.[113] In 1934 it was stated that 'women no longer deal with women's cases, and men with men's, but men and women are gradually becoming more interchangeable as staff units—a process which incidentally makes for greater economy of staff and improved efficiency'.[114] Yet, Felicity Hunt's analysis of the effects of aggregation shows Maude Lawrence's predictions about a reduction in women's posts under aggregation to be only too correct.[115] Rather than opening the avenues of promotion through staff inspectorships to higher inspectoral ranks, aggregation had three main effects, all of which were detrimental to the position of women in the Inspectorate.[116] First, the numbers of women inspectors fell; second, there were fewer senior women inspectors; and third, women's lower status in the Inspectorate was confirmed. Whereas in 1925 there had been sixtynine women inspectors, by 1940 there were only fifty; yet between 1935 and 1940 the number of men on the Inspectorate rose.[117] The marriage bar was reinforced in 1934.[118] The post of Chief Woman Inspector was abolished in 1938, when Miss Hammonds, who had been the first woman divisional inspector in 1936, was promoted to the post of Senior Woman Inspector.[119] In 1945, Miss F.M.Tann was appointed the first Woman Chief Inspector with special responsibility for primary education.[120]

In these years women HMIs provided important services to education. They contributed to the work of the Special Inquiries branch of the Board, which had been re-organised so that inspectors were members of the panels of subject experts through which the branch worked.[121] They also provided important evidence to the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education.[122] During the 1930s and early 1940s, women like Miss Hammonds were active in the development of the short-course system for teachers organised by the Inspectorate, which had been highlighted to the Tomlin Commission as an important aspect of the Inspectorate's work.[123] Some short courses were organised by the LEA and some by the Board, but Inspectors advised and assisted in both and often took entire charge.[124] Yet, in the same period, the work of some of Miss Hammonds' contemporaries continued to be marginalised.[125] At the Ministry of Education in 1948 the most responsible and best-paid posts were still occupied by men; and, with the exception of the medical department, women officials were still drawing lower salaries for doing essentially the same work.[126]

In describing the position of women in the Inspectorate to the Tomlin Commission in the 1930s, the women inspectors noted: In any review of the present position it should be explained that the Board's Inspectorate, which dates back to 1839, was originally an organisation for men only, into which women have never been incorporated'.[127] The women inspectors appointed

from 1905 were, in Sutherland's view, an 'exceptional group' with a 'battery of qualifications and/or extensive experience'.[128] Yet women's attempts to gain power by representing themselves through shifting languages of professionalism were made in the face of an established male-dominated bureaucratic organisation, hierarchies of elementary and secondary education and subject content, and perceived differences in gender-related skills and attitudes, all of which were bolstered by the actions of Maude Lawrence at Education and the Treasury.[129] Macnamara's explanation in 1906 for 'the proportionately few openings as Inspectors…for women': 'because so far British convention still largely deems these to be the peculiar preserve of the male kind', still largely held good at the end of the 1940s.[130]

Notes

1 Endowed Schools' Commissioner, Arthur Hobhouse to Elizabeth Wolstenholme Elmy, *Women's Suffrage Journal (WSJ),* 1 November 1870, p. 92.
2 E.L.Edmonds, *The School Inspector,* London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962, p. 18.
3 D.Lawton and P.Gordon, *HMI,* London, Routledge, 1987, p. 8; J.E.Dunford, 'Biographical Details of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools Appointed before 1870', *History of Education Society Bulletin,* 1981, vol. 28, pp. 8–21.
4 E.L.Edmonds, *The School Inspector,* p. 33; Catholic Poor School Society, *Annual Report,* 1851, p. 3; D.Lawton and P.Gordon, *HMI,* London, Routledge, 1987, p. 9.
5 On the dominance of Oxbridge, see J.E.Dunford, 'Biographical Details of Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools Appointed before 1870', pp. 8–21.
6 G.Sutherland, *Policy-Making in Elementary Education 1870–1895,* London, Oxford University Press, 1973, p. 5 4.
7 D.Lawton and P.Gordon, *HMI;* F.Hunt, *Gender and Policy in English Education 1902–1944,* London, Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991; G.Sutherland, *Policy Making in Elementary Education 1870–1895;* M.Zimmeck, 'We Are All Professionals Now: Professionalisation, Education and Gender in the Civil Service, 1873–1939', in P.Summerfield (ed.), *Women, Education and the Professions,* Leicester History of Education Society, Occasional Publication No. 8, 1987, pp. 66–83; M.Zimmerick, 'Strategies and Stratagems for the Employment of women in the British Civil Service, 1919–1939', *Historical Journal,* 1984, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 901–924.
8 Women's Education Union (WEU), Final Report, 1899, quoted in E.Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide 1866–1928,* London, University College London Press, 1999, p. 188, 190.
9 *WSJ,* 1 November 1870, p. 92.
10 Ibid.
11 *WSJ,* 2 January 1871, p. 6.
12 J.Martin, *Women and the Politics of Schooling in Victorian and Edwardian England,* Leicester, Leicester University Press, 1999, p. 20.
13 Ibid. For work and responsibility, see J.Rendall, 'Citizenship, Culture and Civilisation: The Languages of British Suffragists, 1866–1874', in C.Daley and M.Nolan, *Suffrage and Beyond: International Feminist Debates,* Auckland, Auckland University Press; S.Collini, *Public Moralists: Political Thought and Intellectual Life in Britain,* Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1991, p. 138.
14 *WSJ,* 1 November 1870, p. 92.

15 L.E.Becker, 'On the Teaching of Domestic Economy in Elementary Schools', *Proceedings of the Domestic Economy Congress,* Manchester 1878, pp. 20, 21.
16 *WSJ,* July 1888, p. 67, quoted in J.E.Parker, 'Lydia Becker: Her Work for Women', unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Manchester, 1990, p. 339.
17 D.Lawton and P.Gordon, *HMI,* pp. 12 and 86; G.Sutherland, *Policy Making in Elementary Education 1870–1895,* p. 56.
18 *Report of Deputation to the President of the Board of Education on the Position of Women Inspectors under the Board of Education, Thursday, March 4th, 1909,* London, North, 1909, p. 15.
19 For the LSB, see D.Lawton and P.Gordon, *HMI,* p. 87. For Liverpool, Salford and Leeds, see E.L.Edmonds, *The School Inspector,* pp. 170, 171.
20 Anon, 'School Inspectors', *The Common Cause,* 30 March 1911, p. 835. Walter Runciman noted in the House of Commons in 1911 that out of 123 local Inspectors, 109 were men and only fourteen women; and stated that in the view of the Board of Education, local Inspectors should be 'men of public schools and Universities'.
21 *The Schoolmaster,* 18 August 1900. On Miss Willis and Miss Munday, see D. Lawton and P.Gordon, *HMI,* p. 89.
22 G.Sutherland, 'Administrators in Education After 1870: Patronage, Professionalism and Expertise', in G.Sutherland, *Studies in the Growth of Nineteenth-Century Government,* London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972, p. 278; A.Oram, *Women Teachers and Feminist Politics, 1900–1939,* Manchester, Manchester University Press, 1996, p. 102.
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31 Board of Education, *Report 1905–6,* London, HMSO, 1907, p. 9, *1905–6,* p. 9.
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40 *Report of Deputation to the President of the Board of Education,* p. 4.
41 Ibid., pp. 10, 16.
42 Ibid., p. 10.
43 Ibid., p. 4.
44 Ibid., p. 8.
45 Ibid., p. 7.
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47 *Report of Deputation to the President of the Board of Education,* pp. 3, 10; J. Goodman, 'Constructing Contradiction: The Power and Powerlessness of Women in the Giving and Taking of Evidence in the Bryce Commission, 1895', *History of Education,* 1997, vol. 26, p. 287–307.
48 *Report of Deputation to the President of the Board of Education,* p. 16.
49 Ibid., pp. 16, 18.
50 AHM, *Annual Report,* 1913, p. 7. Various secondary source accounts differ as to the number of women inspectors at this point.
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53 Board of Education, *Annual Report,* 1922, p. 27.
54 Tomlin Commission, 26 March 1930, Statement submitted by the Permanent Secretary to the Board of Education, paragraph 37.
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61 On the marriage bar and turnover, see ibid., p. 96.
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69 Ibid., 14 October 1930, Q. 14828–9, 14842, 14884, evidence of the Hon. Dame Maude Lawrence.

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89 Ibid., paragraph 83.
90 Ibid., paragraph 84.
91 Ibid., Q. 9100, 9102, evidence of Miss B.M.Schooley.
92 Ibid., Statement upon the Position of Women Inspectors, paragraph 85.
93 Ibid., paragraph 86.
94 Ibid., paragraph 88.
95 Ibid., paragraph 87.
96 Ibid., paragraph 96; Q. 8678, evidence of Mr Hankin.
97 Ibid., 14 October 1930, Q. 14791, 14822, evidence of the Hon. Dame Maude Lawrence.
98 Ibid., 25 March 1930, Q. 9003, 8682, 8683, evidence of Mr Hankin.
99 Ibid., Q. 8936, 8937, evidence of Mr Hankin.
100 Ibid., 26 March 1930, Q. 9158, 9254, evidence of Miss F.M.Tann.
101 L.Clark, *The Inspector Remembers,* p. 36; Tomlin Commission, 25 March 1930, Statement upon the Position of Women Inspectors, paragraph 90.
102 Ibid., paragraph 95.
103 Ibid., Q. 9131, 9108, 9109, evidence of Miss F.M.Tann.
104 Ibid., 17 October 1930, Q. 15529, 15530, 15528, 15531, evidence of AHM.
105 D.Evans, *Women and the Civil Service: A History of the Development of the Employment of Women in the Civil Service, and a Guide to Present-day Opportunities,* London, Pitman, 1934, p. 40.
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112 Ibid., 15 October 1930, Q. 15359, evidence of London and National Society for Women's Service.
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114 D.Evans, *Women and the Civil Service,* p. 64.
115 F.Hunt, *Gender and Policy in English Education 1902–1944,* p. 60.
116 D.Evans, *Women and the Civil Service,* p. 121.
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118 Ibid., p. 61.
119 Ibid., p. 53; Miss Hammonds was daughter of Principal Hammonds of Bishop Otter College and had taught there before being appointed to the Inspectorate. She had been to Oxford. L.Clark, *The Inspector Remembers,* p. 23.
120 D.Lawton and P.Gordon, *HMI,* p. 99.
121 Tomlin Commission, 25 March 1930, Statement Submitted by the Board of Education Inspectors' Association, paragraph 29.
122 F.Hunt, *Gender and Policy in English Education 1902–1944,* p. 67.
123 Tomlin Commission, 25 March 1930, Statement Submitted by the Board of Education Inspectors' Association.
124 Ibid., paragraph 28.
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9 Committee women

Women on the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education, 1900–1944

Sylvia Harrop

> '[We] need hardly say here that we look upon the appointment of a Committee of experts, called together for the purpose of advising our State Executive for Education, as one of the greatest reforms of our times.'[1]

In 1899 the three existing educational departments of the government were merged to form the Board of Education, whose president had a seat in the Cabinet. At the same time, it was felt that the new body should have the benefit of expert educational advice in the form of a consultative committee. In 1895 the Bryce Commission had recommended 'that any consultative committee should exercise both a professional role and be of representative character', both of which suggestions were disregarded by the government when the committee was first set up in 1900.[2] In one very important respect, however, Bryce was used as a model for the new committee. It was the first government commission to include women, who were uniquely qualified to give advice on educational matters since they formed a large proportion of the country's school teachers and had proved influential educational thinkers and pioneers for girls' and women's education.

The Consultative Committee lasted forty-four years, though the advent of the Second World War meant that its last report was the Report on Secondary Education (The Spens Report) of 1938. During this time it produced seventeen reports, all but one of which were published, covering the whole range of state education from the under-fives to continuation schools, and such important issues as the curriculum and psychological tests. In the early years of the Committee some reports appeared at very close intervals; after 1920, they were published at intervals of between one and five years.

Seventeen women and seventy-two men served over this period. Some of the women's names are well known to readers of women's and educational history; most are not. It is almost certain that none of the women is well known for her work on the Consultative Committee, where all but one served for their professional expertise in the field of education. This chapter aims to restore these women to view and to examine their roles on the Committee. How were these few women chosen? Did they have a special contribution to

make? Were they champions of girls' education? Was gender an issue for them? Did they represent the views of the professional organisations in which many of them held senior positions? How did they function on a committee composed mainly of men? Did they work together as a pressure group? Kogan and Packwood have described the Committee's reports as having 'idiosyncratically liberal and child-centred characteristics'.[3] Can the female influence be detected in this description? Some of these questions are difficult even to attempt to answer, since what goes on in the committee rooms and corridors is rarely recorded, and historians are forced to rely on what source material is available. Nevertheless, the professional standing, appointments and committee work of these seventeen women provide an insight into their role as policy thinkers and formulators on what has been regarded as one of the most important of the government's standing advisory committees.[4]

The Consultative Committee formally came into being on 1 October 1900, with eighteen members. Its initial purpose, as laid down in the Act, was to frame regulations for the formation of a register of teachers, and to advise the Board of Education on the inspection of secondary schools and on any other matter referred to it.[5] By 1911 its only remit was to consider references from the Board of Education.

When the Committee's first membership is examined, the continuing influence of the Bryce Commission is evident: it included six former members of Bryce, including Eleanor Sidgwick and Sophie Bryant. There was, however, not a word about women in the original Bill to set up the new Board of Education for England and Wales, which let to strong representation from women's bodies for female membership. In the spring of 1899 the Head Mistresses' Association (AHM) sent a memorial to the government, arguing that 'a due proportion' of women was desirable, for the following reasons:

1. Because questions concerning the Education of girls will form an important part of the subject matter with which the Consultative Committee will be called upon to deal.
2. Because when women are not present the interests of girls are in danger of being overlooked.
3. Because a considerable proportion of the most valuable educational experience of the country is that of women, and it would be a public loss that such experience should not be utilized on the Consultative Committee.[6]

At their Annual Council Meeting in May 1899 the Women's Liberal Foundation passed a resolution regarding the Bill (then before the House of Lords) that the proposed Consultative Committee to advise the Board 'should be fully representative of the best educational thought and experience, and that no such Committee will be fully equipped for its work that does not contain an adequate number of women members'. It urged parliament to provide for the eligibility of women on the same terms as men and, moreover,

for positive discrimination, stating that some seats on the Committee should 'necessarily be filled by women'.[7] When pressed on this matter by Bryce in the Commons, Gorst—the vice-president of the Education Department—assured him that women were eligible under the Bill.[8] There was from dissatisfaction with the membership from many quarters from the beginning. *The Schoolmaster,* however, welcomed the three original women members.[9]

> As to the lady members of the new Committee, it would be impossible to do without the Principal of Newnham and the energetic head of the North London Collegiate School; and it is fitting that our great Training Colleges for Women Teachers should find representation.[10]

This last reference is to Miss Lydia Manley, the principal of Stockwell Training College. These three women served together until 1908, when Mrs Sidgwick resigned and was replaced by a new female representative of higher education, Miss Margaret Tuke, principal of Bedford College for Women. Lydia Manley died in office in 1911 and Miss Hannah Robertson of Leeds University was appointed in her place.

Sophie Bryant followed Miss Buss as the second headmistress of the North London Collegiate School. She strongly supported the establishment of the Committee, and was the leading contender for membership, agreed as suitable by all commentators.[11] Highly intelligent, with excellent academic qualifications, in 1884 she became the first woman to receive a doctorate (in philosophy) from London University.[12] Mrs. Bryant had a very clearly worked out educational philosophy, believing fervently not only in women's equal education, but also in the extension of equal educational facilities to all.[13] She had a wide knowledge of and interest in education far beyond girls' secondary schooling, for which she was appointed to the Committee. She sat on numerous educational bodies, and there is no doubt that she was held in high esteem.[14] In 1900 the *Journal of Education* stated that: 'A committee which includes Mr. Arthur Acland …and Mrs. Bryant cannot be brushed aside as a packed body of obscurantists and obstructionists'.[15] All these attributes were likely to commend her as a committee member, yet there were also other aspects of her life and character that might have counted against her had she been considered for membership a few years later. She was '[an] example of the New Woman which the Higher Education was to produce', a social and political animal involved in social and political movements; 'a champion of the pioneer', who 'seemed to have freed herself completely from conventionality'.[16] Above all, she was a democrat who did not and could not cloak her convictions: a fearless advocate of and worker for women's suffrage, though a suffragist rather than a suffragette.[17]

There is no doubt that Sophie Bryant was an experienced, accomplished and effective member of committees:

> In any Committee her presence was almost a guarantee of harmony. It was not that she was given to compromise. She was an able and persistent

> champion of her convictions, and she usually secured the vote in her favour; but she could always see a question from the other side, and it was the breadth of her sympathy, the clearness of her insight—that of a well-ordered mind—the thoroughness of her knowledge and the simplicity and attractiveness of her speech which, beginning by allaying all acrimony, generally ended in bringing the opposition over to her side.[18]

Eleanor Sidgwick already knew Sophie Bryant well. They had sat together on the Bryce Commission and were both members of the National Union of Women Workers. Mrs Sidgwick came from a distinguished and cultured aristocratic and academic background. She was a member of two leading political families: her mother was a sister of the third Marquess of Salisbury, the Prime Minister for several years in the 1880s; and her brother Arthur Balfour was Conservative leader in the Commons from 1895 to 1902 and Prime Minister from 1902–5. In 1876 she married one of Arthur's Cambridge friends, the philosopher Henry Sidgwick, a leading advocate of women's higher education and founder of Newnham College Cambridge, of which she became principal on the death of Anne Clough in 1892. Eleanor Sidgwick was a mathematician, and a founder member with her husband of the Society for Psychical Research, in which she played a leading part.

On the Consultative Committee she must have provided a marked contrast to Sophie Bryant. No conversationalist, she was 'shy and silence-loving'.[19] She had a sense of humour, but this was generally hidden from all but family and close friends.[20] Some called her cold and over-critical.[21] In fact, the practical demands of the business of committee work suited her: for her they 'provided very pleasant opportunities for getting to know people', as well as enabling her to apply her knowledge and use her formidable intellect in an arena where she was not in the company of her husband or eldest brother, to whom she invariably deferred in public.[22] She also possessed many of the necessary skills of a good committee member. She had remarkable powers of concentration, and her silence often meant that she was using her clear and logical mind to think something through. She carried her knowledge lightly, welcomed new ideas and was courageous in carrying them out.[23] When the question of the renewal of her membership came up in 1904 she was described as 'among the most valuable members of the Committee'.[24]

Lydia Manley is a much more shadowy figure than her two companions. She gave evidence to the Cross Commission in 1886, and appears to have been the first woman principal of a training college.[25] Re-elected to the Committee in 1907, she died in office in 1911. The secretary to the Committee wrote of her then as:

> a very useful member of the Committee, not merely as an expert on Training College questions, but indirectly through her practical experience of the product of Elementary and Secondary Schools. Her knowledge in fact was a detached and valuable check on that of, for instance, Mrs

> Bryant and Miss Cleghorn. It seems very desirable to replace her by some one whose experience would qualify her to play the same important role in future.[26]

She was, in fact, replaced by a representative of women's training colleges, Miss Hannah Robertson of the University of Leeds, who had a wide knowledge of girls' secondary education as well as of teacher training, and had been a member of the committee appointed to organise the London Day Training College (now the Institute of Education). She has been described as a woman of sound judgement, courage and common sense, who was 'sane, humorous and sympathetic'.[27]

Two important issues arise out of the letter quoted above: first, the desire to have members with practical experience of education; and second, the care with which members were chosen. By 1904 it had become clear to Morant, the secretary of the Committee, that new members needed to be active in school management or teaching.[28] The system for recommending new members appears normally to have been one of the president and the permanent secretary headhunting suitable people either known or suggested to them, balancing between 'interests', experience and suitability, and with a regard for geographical balance and for persons with the time available to attend meetings.[29]

By 1906 pressure from the National Union of Teachers (NUT) for representation on the Committee finally bore fruit, and it was decided to appoint one man and one woman. Confidential enquiries were made about Miss Isabel Cleghorn, headmistress of a Sheffield Council School and a member of the NUT Executive, asking whether

> she would be likely to act in a reasonable manner as a Member of an important Committee on which other Branches of Education would be in a majority—would she stand fairly and reasonably for the interests of Elementary but without tilting unreasonably or offensively against the interests of other grades of Education when put forward by other Members.[30]

(This wording was also used in the letter sent regarding the proposed male NUT member). The reply to this request was hardly favourable, describing Miss Cleghorn as 'tenacious' of her views, 'combative', 'sometimes unreasonable', and looking on most educational matters from a trade union point of view, though also 'in some ways moderate and capable of sound opinions'. Despite these comments, and a very hostile report from Mrs Marvin, a former woman inspector, Miss Cleghorn was invited to become a member of the Consultative Committee, 'a service which [the Board feels] you to be eminently fitted to undertake'![31] She went on to serve for nine years, during which time she became the first woman president of the NUT in 1911.

Miss Cleghorn's appointment could well relate to the furore following the 1906 Report on Higher Elementary Schools, which was heavily criticised by the NUT and those supporting a popular system of secondary schools for the masses. One telling criticism was that not one member of the Committee represented Labour, Co-operative Societies or organisations of that kind, and that it was 'permeated with a caste feeling' and 'endeavouring to limit the educational opportunities of the working-classes'.[32] In July 1906 the creation of two additional places for a male and female NUT member was being discussed by Board officials, and by November Acland was writing to Morant, saying that it was 'desirable to appoint an Elementary Woman [sic] at once'.[33] Miss Cleghorn became that woman.

When Eleanor Sidgwick resigned in 1908 there were four vacancies on the Committee, and the opportunity was taken to increase the number of women members from four to five, replacing one of the retiring men (two of whom were described by the secretary and president as being 'of no use at all') by 'some capable woman with considerable experience of continuative education for girls and women'.[34] Miss Maude Lawrence, the Chief Woman Inspector, suggested Miss Hermia Durham, Organiser of Women's Technical Classes under the London County Council. After leaving Girton Hermia Durham spent her whole life in public service, and was a woman of 'enthusiasm, industry and organising ability'.[35] Mrs Sidgwick was asked to suggest her own successor, and of the three names she proposed the president chose an academic, Miss Margaret Tuke, principal of Bedford College for Women. All these new appointees served until the First World War. Sophie Bryant, the longest serving woman member of the Committee in its first stage, retired in 1912 after two full terms of six years.[36] She was replaced by Miss Mary Douglas, headmistress of Godolphin School, Salisbury and one of the leading headmistresses of her day who, with Sophie Bryant, was a signatory to the memorial from the AHM in 1899.

These five women, representatives of girls' elementary and secondary schools, technical education, training colleges and higher education, tackled referrals on continuation schools, secondary schools and, for three of them, scholarships for higher education. Younger than the first three members, four were in their late forties when appointed, while Hermia Durham was only thirty-five. Again, they were women of standing in the educational world: in 1911–12 they included the presidents of both the NUT and AHM. They were all very busy professional women, largely from well-to-do families, who attended the monthly meetings of the Committee regularly, and there is no doubt that it was hard work. They had to attend one or two days' meetings every month except August, with a great deal of paperwork and reading to do in between.[37] The weight of work is indicated by the fact that three references were given to the Committee in April 1907 and two in June 1909.

Of any networking in the Committee there is little evidence. Hannah Robertson had a close association with Sophie Bryant, with whom she overlapped on the Committee for a year, at the North Collegiate School. It

is likely, however, that the women worked as much with some of the male members on the Committee as with their fellows: in other arenas both Hannah Robertson and Mary Douglas, for example, were well known to Acland and were colleagues of Michael Sadler, Robertson in Leeds and Douglas on the Teachers' Registration Council.[38]

The impact of the First World War meant that in practice the sittings of the Consultative Committee were suspended in 1916, although its last report, on *Scholarships for Higher Education,* was not published until 1917.[39] What contribution had its women members made to the Committee over the sixteen years of its existence? First, both as women—particularly as representing elementary schoolteachers—and as experts with professional experience, they satisfied the need recognised by government bodies both to utilise greater inputs of knowledge and experience and to give greater representation to social groups with an interest in education.[40] Through membership of their professional bodies, especially the AHM and NUT, they were used to discussing educational issues and to lobbying government departments. It is interesting that, apart from two whose terms were cut short by the war, the women members of the Committee served for much longer than the majority of their male counterparts. Since the presidents of the Board did not re-appoint members who were not considered to be making a worthwhile contribution, the long terms served by the women indicate that their work was valued; though this fact did not lead to an increase in their proportion on the Committee.

Another interesting fact is that these women did not constitute a 'neutral' or non-political body. Their cause was girls' and women's education, as part of the wider objective of improving the role and status of women. Several, as has been seen, held senior posts in teachers' organisations and most were active in a wide range of national and international bodies. They included suffragists like Sophie Bryant and Isabel Cleghorn, though officials appeared to become more nervous about women's political activities in the years just before the outbreak of war. In 1914 a report on Miss Helen Smith, a possible successor to Hermia Durham, stated that she had 'recently made a public appearance in some feminist connection' which 'might render her unsuitable'.[41] Zimmeck argues that, up to the First World War, senior male civil servants shied away from women graduates, those with real professional qualifications and those deemed to be 'feminists', who were seen as moving from their private feminine sphere into the public arena and, of course, to be challenging and competing with men.[42] A hint of this view can occasionally be seen among the male civil servants servicing the Consultative Committee, but in general the women concerned were regarded as professionals equal in expertise to their male counterparts.

What did the women members gain from their membership? First, a strengthening of their sense of status as education professionals. It was an accolade to be asked to join such a committee, where they had the opportunity to demonstrate their educational expertise and professionalism at government

level and were making a genuine contribution to the national educational debate. It is perhaps significant that from the beginning, unlike Bryce, the women members of the Consultative Committee were listed in the printed reports in the same form as the men, and in alphabetical order.[43] It is almost certainly largely thanks to the women members that the situation of girls and of their education was kept in the forefront of what was being discussed and recommended by the Committee.[44] Nor had they been appointed to an unimportant rubber-stamping machine whose reports were quietly filed away. The official view may have been that the Committee's function was to think, but even in its first phase, when its function was merely to respond to references from the Board, the Committee suggested radical changes and proposals, often in great detail.[45] The 1909 Report on *Attendance at Continuation Schools,* for example, was 'progressive in its aims', and the 1911 Report on *Examinations in Secondary Schools* was described as 'likely to have far-reaching influence'.[46] The Committee was engaged in 'arduous work for which they deserve the gratitude of the profession'.[47]

Another important factor for the women was the two-way process of discussion of the issues with their professional organisations, particularly the AHM and NUT. The debates at the AHM annual conferences, for example, enabled the committee member concerned to be able to go back to the Committee and speak with authority on the headmistresses' views. The value of the work of the Committee is indicated in the debate on the 1911 Report: this 'was important on account of the facts it contained, and for the evidence collected and the deductions and conclusions drawn forth'.[48] Conversely, girls' schools and women's training colleges were brought right into the midst of educational thinking: Mary Douglas notes that such work brought their schools 'into ever widening and deepening connection with large educational issues'.[49] Certainly the school governors concerned must have supported their headmistresses, since not only were they absent for periods on Committee business, but their salaries were being paid during this time.

As the war drew to its end in 1918 there was much discussion about the future of the Committee and of other Advisory Committees, and from 1920 onwards the newly reconstituted Consultative Committee reflected some of these concerns.[50] It had twenty-one members, with terms of office of six years, one-third vacating their posts every second year. Members could be reappointed, or invited to remain on the Committee until a particular reference was completed. The chairman was no longer elected from among members, but was now appointed by the president of the Board; the first being Sir Henry Hadow, Vice-Chancellor of Sheffield University, a member of the Committee since 1913.

The Committee may have been newly constituted, but in one respect at least there was no change: the proportion of women members remained the same. For only one report, on *Infant and Nursery Schools* in 1933, did the number rise from five to six, and in the late 1920s there were only four

women members. In all, nine women served on the Committee during its second phase. The first four were Miss Essie Ruth Conway, principal of Tiber Street Council School, Liverpool and the second woman president of the NUT, representing elementary teachers; Miss Emmeline Tanner, Headmistress of Bedford High School for Girls (and soon after of Roedean), representing secondary schools; Miss Freda Hawtrey, principal of Darlington College, and later of Avery Hill College, representing training colleges; and Miss Bertha Phillpotts, principal of Westfield College, London, universities. This was yet another impressive and formidable group of women. Bertha Phillpotts was 'a scholar of international repute', described by those who knew her as charming, unbookish, with a sense of humour and 'able to meet the most distinguished men on terms of equality'.[51] As a Cambridge Commissioner she played a large part in the admission of women lecturers from Cambridge colleges (including herself) to University Lectureships.[52] On the Committee the official view was that she took 'a sane and judicial view of social problems', and was a most valuable member. After four years, however, during which she had become Mistress of Girton, she resigned, presumably as a result of her heavy duties in Cambridge. A strong case was made for re-appointing her in 1930, but nothing came of it.[53]

By 1924 important changes had taken place in the way the Committee worked. The members were becoming increasingly frustrated at their inability to propose subjects for study rather than merely responding to references from the Board. A delegation met the president in February 1923 to discuss the situation, and for a year or so minds were concentrated on what the Committee was really about.[54] In 1924 Selby-Bigge, the Permanent Secretary to the Board, advised the new president that 'as a body of educational experts, the Consultative Committee would want to go thoroughly into things; it could not be instructed what to do like a departmental committee'.[55]

The new system aimed to keep members on the Committee until the current report they were working on was completed and, conversely, ask them to resign early if about to start a new reference. An attempt was also made to choose members with specific interests in future referrals, which should have made for an increase in women members: indeed, in 1928 it was decided to fill Mundella's vacant seat with a woman because of the nature of the next reference, on the education of younger children; and rather than appointing another headmistress 'the presence of a married woman not actively engaged in teaching but interested either socially or administratively in education and the welfare of children, might be a useful asset to the Committee'.[56] This led to the appointment of Lady Galway, a member of the Board of the Hospital for Sick Children and several other nursing bodies, and Chairman of the Committee of the Mothercraft Training Society, who served as a general member on the Consultative Committee for six years.[57] When she resigned in 1934 and Freda Hawtrey stepped down in 1932, neither was replaced by another woman.

The inter-war period proved extremely important for educational thinking,

and through its reports, especially the three Hadow Reports on *The Education of the Adolescent* (1927), *Primary Education* (1931) and *Infant and Nursery Schools* (1933), and the Spens Report on *Secondary Education* (1938), the Consultative Committee became a 'major part of the policy-making apparatus'.[58] The greater availability of minutes of the Committee's sub-committees, modern biographies and writings of and about its women members make it possible to assess more fully their contributions to its deliberations and reports in this period.

By 1920 Emmeline Tanner was already 'well known as a zealous educational reformer'.[59] She achieved a very distinguished career from modest beginnings, starting as a pupil teacher while studying part-time for a London external degree. While on the Consultative Committee she was headhunted by Penelope Lawrence to succeed her and her sisters as headmistress of Roedean. Innovative, forward-looking and an outstanding administrator, she combined a phenomenal grasp of detail with a great sense of humour, and proved herself an able negotiator and policy-maker on the AHM and other organisations. She greatly enjoyed the Committee meetings, which she attended regularly.[60]

Emmeline Tanner had a deep and growing understanding and experience of the issues being discussed in the references on *The Differentiation of the Curriculum* and *The Education of the Adolescent*. The Board ignored all of the former report, including a recommendation that women should be adequately represented on all bodies dealing in any way with girls' education (though without a definition of 'adequately'). For Emmeline Tanner the investigation for the Report 'clarified and reinforced the direction of her existing thought and practice'.[61] In her public speaking and thinking she both used the evidence given to the Committee and was influenced by it.[62] At the AHM conference in 1923 she based her presentation on the Report and examined the problem of a curriculum 'which may prepare a girl for full success in her life as woman, as mother, as citizen', in her view, the most urgent of the AHM's problems.[63] Her involvement with all the arguments leading to the 1927 Hadow Report, including selection and the importance of a broad and humanistic curriculum, again resulted in her guiding the AHM as it put together its response.[64]

Emmeline Tanner retired in 1930, and was replaced by another leading member of the AHM who became president during her term on the Committee, Miss (Dr) Dorothy Brock. Headmistress of Mary Datchelor's School, Miss Brock was described in the memo relating to her appointment as 'a fine Greek scholar, and a good musician', and 'a lady of wide and humane views on educational and sociological subjects'.[65] In many ways she resembled her predecessor, with a great sense of fun and enjoyment and dedication to her girls.[66] Her views and philosophy of education were expressed in contributions to two volumes published in 1928 and 1937. In the first, a chapter on 'The Girls' School' in Dover Wilson's *The Schools of England,* she picks out the abortive recommendation of the 1923 Consultative Committee Report

mentioned above and another of its conclusions, that 'The nation needs—and is not getting—the varied gifts of varied types of women, developed and disciplined', responding: 'It sounds so obvious: yet is it taken seriously?' She makes a strong plea and argument for girls and boys to be treated equally and for women to become fully involved in decision-making.[67] Her frustration at the lack of representation of women on committees and other bodies is apparent. Her essay in *The Head Mistress Speaks,* a collection by thirteen headmistresses of 'great public schools for girls', shows her to be a thinker and reformer, wanting to be 'in the van', but in step with public opinion and believing in evolution as opposed to revolution.[68]

Three of the women members in this period, Essie Ruth Conway, Freda Hawtrey and Lynda Grier worked on all three of the Hadow Reports, and Conway and Grier also on Spens. The three women were very different in background and style: Oxford-educated Hawtrey and Cambridge-educated Grier, both from privileged backgrounds, in contrast to Conway, the lower-middle-class elementary teacher. Essie Conway and Lynda Grier shared the longest terms of office of any women members of the Consultative Committee, fourteen years, and Miss Conway would have served longer had she not died in office. She was also by far the oldest woman member appointed, being fifty-eight in 1920, whereas her female contemporaries were all appointed in their forties. By then she had already carved out a prestigious career from pupil teacher through training college to principal of a large school. All her teaching career was in Liverpool, where her appointment as the only woman principal of one of the new experimental elementary schools enabled her to become involved in national policy-making as a member of numerous public bodies.[69]

Essie Conway was 'a woman with strong, high-minded principles, incredibly hardworking, ambitious and successful'.[70] She was a tenacious representative of the NUT, where she was a member of the Executive from 1910 and second woman president (after Isobel Cleghorn) in 1918, and of elementary teachers. She was a powerful advocate of union membership, especially for women, and of equal pay and conditions for men and women teachers. Her policy of working gradually for these goals inside the NUT meant, however, that she fell foul of the National Union of Women Teachers (NUWT), which wanted immediate action.[71] On the Consultative Committee she was clearly an impressive and effective member. Friends and colleagues spoke of her intuitive comprehension of essentials and 'the real enjoyment of activity which characterized all she did'.[72] A practical thinker, she was blunt but compassionate, and had the power of quick repartee. She engendered regard and respect among all with whom she worked: on her death, Selby-Bigge said that there were 'few whose honesty, sincerity and sagacity have left so deep an impression on my memory'.[73]

Miss Conway was very closely involved in all seven reports on which she sat, but particularly with the three Hadow reports. Though she signed the first report on *The Education of the Adolescent,* this was subject to the

reservation that full weight had not been given to the evidence submitted by the NUT.[74] Her fears that the governments preoccupation with secondary education could have a detrimental effect on primary schools were raised at meetings of the NUT, but were assuaged by what became the subject of the second Hadow report, *The Primary School*. This report supported her own views on the education of primary school children and on defining a new role for the 'elementary school'.[75] Hailed as a remarkable woman and a great educational leader, when Essie Ruth Conway died in 1934 it was said that 'no name was better known than hers in educational circles'.[76]

When appointed in 1920 Freda Hawtrey was also a distinguished figure in the educational world, with an established reputation as a training college principal. The word most commonly used of her is Vision', which she endeavoured to turn into action. She was a pioneer in teacher education: the policies she introduced, though 'revolutionary and highly innovative' at the time, were to become commonplace a generation later. She was also an autocrat with passionately held views, 'who could both charm and intimidate'.[77] A woman of a strong social conscience, she had an especial concern for the welfare of under-privileged children. Nursery schools were a particular interest, and the subject of the third Hadow report, on *Infant and Nursery Schools,* was thus close to her heart.[78] Though she signed the final report, she added her own special note, arguing that the model nursery schools proposed should be for children up to the age of seven, rather than stopping at five years of age.[79]

Hadow resigned in January 1934 and was replaced by Mr Will Spens, Master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge.[80] The papers of the Spens Committee give a clear view of its workings and of the contribution of its members. The women involved were Dorothy Brock, Lynda Grier, Shena Simon and initially, Essie Conway, replaced in 1935 by Miss A.E.Phillips, vice-principal of Avery Hill College. Lynda Grier had been a member since 1924, and was re-appointed in 1932 for a second full term of six years. Though representing universities, through her work with Michael Sadler she had an abiding interest in the field of secondary education, and a lifelong concern for those who had missed out on educational facilities and opportunities. In argument she relied on reason, was able to balance issues, and spoke with detachment and balanced judgment.[81] 'Lynda Grier brought to the Committee not only her academic expertise in economics, her interest in social questions and her administrative understanding, but a quality of stillness, an inner listening ascribed to her near-total deafness as a child'.[82]

Shena Simon was appointed in 1930 with Dorothy Brock. In the memo listing the various names proposed for the vacancies on the Committee, Mrs Simon is described as 'deeply interested in social and educational questions'. A member of the Manchester Education Committee since 1924, she had a 'profound and detailed knowledge of educational administration' and was adept on committees, 'if not somewhat formidable'.[83] While serving on the Committee she was a prolific writer in journals on educational issues.[84] It

appears that Lady Simon (as she became in 1932) was appointed on the recommendation of her old friend, R.H.Tawney, one of the Committee's most influential members, who resigned in 1931 after many years of service.[85] Tawney had represented labour and adult education, but Shena Simon was appointed as a representative of Local Education Authorities (LEAs), the first woman to be so appointed.

Her letters of the time give a fascinating entree both into the workings of the Committee and her own strategy. She functioned as a practised lobbyist and drew freely and regularly on Tawney's experience and advice.[86] She also worked closely with her LEA colleagues on the Committee, especially Sir Percy Jackson from the West Riding, who was one of its longest-serving members, and William Brockington, Director of Education for Leicestershire. She kept up a steady correspondence with the Chairman, Spens, asking questions, covering points at issue, and making sure that when she could not be present her views would be considered.[87] Shena Simon's vision for secondary education was of paramount importance to her; and the picture that emerges is of her single-mindedly battling to her own unswerving agenda, especially for the abolition of fees in secondary schools, and 100 per cent special places in all maintained and grant-aided grammar schools. The Committee obviously tried to work by consensus, but were not always able to agree to her strong arguments. She took Tawney's advice on when to compromise and when to stick out.[88]

The Spens papers also show the other women members playing a full part in the Committee's deliberations and proposals, especially through its several sub-committees, making comments, being asked to draft or re-draft sections, adding passages and closely questioning witnesses. Miss Phillips, a geographer, took a close interest in the proposals regarding her subject, as did Dorothy Brock in music and the classics. As a leading member of the AHM the latter also made a strong case for sixth forms. Moreover, she had a key role as Chairman of the Joint Committee of the four Secondary School Associations and of the Association of Directors and Secretaries for Education, which was engaged in considering the future of the School Certificate examination, in keeping the Committee informed of the Joint Committee's deliberations.[89]

The Consultative Committee reports under both Hadow and Spens were very largely progressive, radical and reforming.[90] Both were effective chairmen: Major speaks of Hadow's 'tactful handling of a strong-minded team', and Joan Simon of Spens' influence as being 'continuous and pervasive'.[91] In the end, despite the strong differences among the Committee members, the Spens Report was signed unanimously, and 'the battle for reform conducted during the 1930s, with so little success, was also waged within the Committee and brought to a positive conclusion'. The Committee did not function again after the issue of the Spens Report: vacant places were not filled, and no new references were made. The outbreak of war prevented any implementation of proposals from Hadow and Spens, but

when R.A. Butler was drafting his education bill in the early 1940s, he fully accepted the need for a system of free secondary education for all as outlined in the 1938 Report.[92] In January 1943, however, the journal *Education* reported that: 'In this period of educational ferment the Consultative Committee has been put to sleep'.[93] Despite Spens' efforts, there was a strong view in the Board of Education that the Committee had outlived its usefulness in its present form, and in 1944 it was finally abolished in favour of advisory councils under tighter ministerial control.[94]

What started 'in the nature of an experiment', with 'considerable doubt as to how it would eventually function', turned out to be a high-powered, hardworking group of educational experts who strove to address the important problems put before them.[95] Despite the fact that, through their reports, this committee of knowledgeable people was often trying to advance an educational policy that was too progressive for a negative Board of Education, and that it could, and did, have its advice ignored, it became an important influence on education.

Meeting one another regularly, the Committee built up a 'strong camaraderie'.[96] Members in the 1920s spoke of the feeling of solidarity and amity that grew quickly among them, of a lively company under a lively chairman (Hadow).[97] Many members knew one another already through friendships, work links and memberships of other bodies, including educational committees such as Burnham. These contacts and friendships crossed the gender divide. Because of these links, and their own positions of power and control in universities, colleges and schools, there is no sense of the women feeling intimidated as a minority on the Committee. Indeed, they were used to it. Moreover, many came from all-female institutions, and Emmeline Tanner may not have been alone in being at ease in and enjoying men's company.[98] What of the choice of women members? Some would argue that the very fact that they were nominated meant that they were respectable and 'safe' choices. The evidence, however, shows that the women appointed had strong and independent views and did not hesitate to express them. They undoubtedly included a number of suffragists, and women who were active members of political parties across the political divide. Most were connected with women's networks, and the AHM always had a representative on the Committee. It is interesting that, despite all the Committee's references being concerned with state education, no headmistress from a state secondary school was ever invited to serve. The women were firmly upper and middle class, except for the elementary/NUT representatives, Misses Cleghorn and Conway. Their position is particularly interesting. To the personnel of the Board of Education elementary teachers were seen 'as culturally and intellectually inferior', yet both Miss Cleghorn and Miss Conway served long terms on the Committee.[99] One other important point about the seventeen women members is that, apart from Eleanor Sidgwick, Sophie Bryant (who was in fact a widow in 1900 and had been married for less than a year before her husband died) Lady Galway and Shena Simon, they were all single. The pool of eligible married women

was undoubtedly small, but the want of married women was clearly felt, especially in the 1920s, when girls' life after school needed discussion, as in the 1923 report on the curriculum.[100]

There is clear evidence that the women gained from their membership, as has been shown above, and as their long terms of office indicate. Those who were not benefiting enough to give their membership priority over other demands, Bertha Phillpotts and Lady Galway, resigned. On the other hand, such long terms of service precluded other eligible women from the opportunity of sitting on the Committee. Mary Stocks, speaking of the period after the First World War, said that every government committee or Royal Commission had to include at least one 'statutory woman', but that the few women known about were used over and over again, 'though the country as a whole teemed with able and public-spirited women'. She accuses those in the corridors of power of neither knowing who these were nor taking trouble to find out.[101] This is not true of the names considered for the Consultative Committee, but the memo regarding Bertha Phillpotts in 1930 indicates a preference for 'the devil we know'.

Women were clearly good and effective members, who could hold their own in discussion and speak with weight from their recognised positions in the educational world. Since the permanent secretary and president of the Board chose the Committee members, it was in their power to increase the numbers and proportion of women—as happened on one occasion—but they appear to have had a notional or real quota in their heads. It is too easy, however, to become carried away by the false ideas of the inevitability of progress, and of just reward for work well and faithfully carried out. The inter-war years were not a time of advance for professional women. Zimmeck shows that in the Civil Service senior women made few real gains in this period, and that one could argue that their position was appreciably less advantageous than it had been before 1914.[102] A similar state of affairs was seen in academia, where there was 'effectively no change in the proportions of women teaching in British universities between the 1920s and 1970s'; in some places the situation was better before the 1920s.[103]

Women members were part of the Consultative Committee from its foundation. They were appointed by the same mechanism as their male colleagues, and were largely on the same social and professional levels. They were not subject to any discrimination, except in representation. Membership of the Committee had given them an opportunity to influence proposals towards changing and reforming educational policy, an opportunity they used to the full. Thirteen of them saw their careers and achievements widely recognised and honoured: between them they amassed fourteen honorary degrees, two OBEs, four CBEs and four DBEs, and Shena Simon was made an honorary freeman of Manchester. The next generation after the 1930s would have to take up the challenge for women to have a more equitable share of representation and thus of responsibility in educational policy-making at this level.

Notes

1 'The Consultative Committee', *The Schoolmaster,* 7 July 1900, pp. 21–2.
2 M.Kogan and T.Packwood, *Advisory Councils and Committees in Education,* London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1991, p. 32.
3 Ibid., p. 9.
4 Ibid.
5 *Journal of Education,* 1901, vol. 23, p. 231; P.Gosden, *The Development of Educational Administration in England and Wales,* Oxford, Blackwell, 1996, p. 116.
6 Executive Committee, Association of Headmistresses (AHM), 13 May 1899.
7 *Journal of Education,* 1899, vol. 21, p. 406.
8 Ibid., p. 545; K.J.Brehony, 'The "School Masters' Parliament": The Origins and Formation of the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education 1868–1916', *History of Education,* 1994, vol. 23, no. 2, p. 182; 7th Annual Report of the Women's Local Government Association, 1900, p. 14.
9 For examples of early dissatisfaction, see *Journal of Education,* August 1900, vol. 22; PRO ED 10/95, letters from bodies re. non-representation, 1900–7.
10 *The Schoolmaster,* 7 July 1900, p. 22.
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10 Parliamentary women

Women ministers of education, 1924–1974

Robin Betts

'Women', Lord Hugh Cecil wrote in 1919, the year in which Lady Astor became a Member of Parliament, 'will not transform the House of Commons.'[1] As Harrison has shown in his analysis of the period between 1919 and 1945, the absorption of women members into a 700-year-old men's house proved to be a slow process. Over a quarter of a century, so-called welfare topics—incorporating education, public health, housing, unemployment and labour relations—accounted for 49 per cent of women's debating contribution and were judged to be appropriate for them to comment upon.[2] On others, including foreign affairs, defence and economic issues (with which welfare was unavoidably linked), their contribution was less welcome. When, surprisingly quickly, ministerial appointments for women began to be considered, this attitude determined the portfolios that were available. Between 1924, when Margaret Bondfield became parliamentary secretary to the ministry of Labour and 1974, when Margaret Thatcher ended nearly four years as a Cabinet minister, most female appointments were made to health and education, areas in which women had already made their mark in the years before they acquired the parliamentary vote.[3] This chapter is concerned first with the experience of three education ministers, the Duchess of Atholl (1924–9), Ellen Wilkinson (1945–7) and Florence Horsbrugh (1951–4); and second, with that of Margaret Thatcher who, five years after she ceased to be Secretary of State for Education and Science, became Prime Minister.

Thatcher's woman precursors at the education ministry, two Scottish and one English, all emerged from families where educational qualifications and public service were respected. Like Thatcher, all three, because they themselves were well-educated, never saw girls' education as a priority. The Duchess, born in Edinburgh on 6 November 1874, was the eldest daughter of Sir James Ramsay, Bt., a barrister, and of Charlotte Fanning Stewart. Her older half-sister, Agneta, had won First Class Honours in Classics at Cambridge, afterwards marrying the Master of Trinity; she herself was educated at Wimbledon High School GPDST and the Royal Academy of Music. In 1898 she married John George, Marquis of Tullibardine, who became MP for West Perthshire from 1910 until 1917, when he succeeded his father as Duke of Atholl.[4] Ellen Wilkinson was born in Ardwick, Manchester, on 8 October

1891, the third of the four children of Richard Wilkinson, a Methodist insurance clerk (formerly a cotton operative) and Ellen Wood. She was educated at Ardwick Higher Elementary School, Stretford Road Secondary School and the University of Manchester. In 1913 she became a full-time organiser for the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) then, in 1915, National Woman Organiser to the Amalgamated Union of Cotton Employees (AUCE), which in 1921 became the National Union of Distributive and Allied Workers (NUDAW).[5] Florence Horsbrugh, born in Edinburgh on 13 October 1889, the youngest of the three daughters of Henry Horsbrugh, a chartered accountant and Mary Christie, was educated at Lansdowne House, Edinburgh and St Hilda's, Folkestone. She was awarded the MBE for work in London canteens and national kitchens during the First World War.[6]

The Duchess's political career owed a good deal, in its early years, to friends in high places. In August 1921, as a guest of the Atholls, Lloyd George told her that he wanted to see more women in the House of Commons. She had already been informed by a prominent Conservative MP that a good many of his fellow members were not yet reconciled to the presence of women in the House of Commons. She decided that it was her duty to do what she could to smooth matters over, even though the King expressed doubts whether, despite having no children, she could combine her social duties with life at Westminster. Sir George Younger, the Chief Conservative Whip, welcomed her approach to him, offering to find her a city constituency on the grounds that a rural one would prove too fatiguing. In fact she was elected (the first woman MP for Scotland) for Kinross and West Perthshire in the General Election of December 1923. Wilkinson, who had been elected to Manchester City Council at the beginning of November 1923, was returned as Labour Member of Parliament for East Middlesbrough a year later in the General Election called on the resignation of the first Labour Government. Horsbrugh emerged more suddenly. She was elected to the House of Commons in 1931 as one of the Conservative members for Dundee, having been selected on her reputation as a speaker at the 1929 election.[7]

Of the three women, only Wilkinson—and she only intermittently—can be categorised a welfare feminist in Hughes's terminology. 'I feel sometimes that I am the Member for widows, rather than the Member for Middlesbrough', she observed in a debate on widows' pensions in 1928. But she was far from single-minded on the issue.' I have women's interests to look after', she declared, 'but I do not want to be regarded purely as a woman's MP…. [M]en voters predominate in Middlesbrough East, thousands are unemployed and I mean to stand up to the gruelling work for all their sakes.'[8] The Duchess was a liberal feminist, content that equity between the sexes was being established; in Lady Astor's view this meant that she never saw straight about women.[9] Horsbrugh, the last to be elected, took her position as a woman MP very seriously, choosing to exemplify Megan Lloyd

George's advice to feminists in 1932 that one of the most effective ways of breaking down the prejudice against women was for them to prove that their interests were not narrow and sectional, but extended to the nation as a whole.[10] The first woman to move the Address to the King's Speech, on the one occasion that it was delivered by Edward VIII, she told the House of Commons that her invitation was a compliment not only to the women members of the House but to the vast numbers of women electors throughout the country.[11]

The Duchess was the best qualified of the three to hold a government education post. Following the First World War she was elected to the Perthshire Education Authority and was appointed vice-president of the Association of Education Authorities in Scotland. Wilkinson, although she had undergone teacher-training, took little further interest in the profession till her appointment as minister. In the Labour government of 1929–31 she was appointed parliamentary private secretary to Susan Lawrence, parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Health. In 1940 her first appointment was as parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Pensions; then, on 8 October, as large-scale German bombing was taking place, she became parliamentary secretary at the Ministry of Home Security, working with Herbert Morrison, a post she held till the end of the war. Horsbrugh, appointed parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Health by Chamberlain, was retained in her post by Churchill until the break-up of the war coalition in May 1945. In the caretaker government of May–July 1945 she was parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Food.[12]

'That a woman should go to the Board of Education is in the fairness of things', the *Schoolmaster and Woman Teacher's Chronicle* commented when the Duchess was appointed parliamentary secretary to the Board of Education in 1924: 'Half the children in the schools are girls and two-thirds of the teachers are women'.[13] Unfortunately, the president of the Board of Education, Lord Eustace Percy, proved difficult to work with. He approved neither the idea of a female parliamentary secretary (treating her sometimes with ill-concealed contempt) nor the appointment of his new permanent secretary, Aubrey Vere Symonds.[14] He soon ran into difficulties. The Conservatives had, for the first time, incorporated educational issues in their general election manifesto, promising, among other things, a progressive reduction in the size of classes, the improvement or replacement of insanitary schools, and the development of education above the elementary school stage.[15] Percy was initially criticised by reactionaries for suggesting that Local Education Authorities (LEAs) should formulate a forward educational programme for the next five years; he then caused uproar among progressives by reacting too speedily to the Cabinet's call for retrenchment on the return to the Gold Standard, advocating (in his Draft Circular of 1925) raising the school entry age to seven and re-imposing elementary school fees. In the Commons his acerbity of manner and utterance won few friends.[16]

The Duchess proved to be more skilful and her reputation rose. Hard-working and conscientious, she won the support of her civil servants and, as the *Schoolmaster and Woman Teacher's Chronicle* recalled in 1929, 'quickly gained the ear and respect of all parts of the House of Commons by her gifts of exposition, her zeal and her comprehensive knowledge of the work of her department'.[17] Not the least of her achievements was to provide a moderating influence, which finally enabled Percy to establish a working relationship with LEAs and, shearing his economies of some of their more drastic effects, re-establish the possibility of ordered and substantial progress.

Secure in her aristocratic status, the Duchess expressed her opinions unhesitatingly. The terms of Percy's Draft Circular she described as 'a violation of one of our principal pledges given by the Prime Minister at the last election', warning him that its publication would have a disastrous effect on public opinion.[18] This proved correct. When Circular 1371 was released at the end of November 1925 and local authorities realised that their percentage grants would be converted into block grants, thus putting the government in full control of education expenditure, widespread opposition manifested itself.[19] In the Commons Percy reacted sharply to questions by C. P.Trevelyan (the former Labour president of the Board) and W.G.Cove, the Labour MP for Wellingborough, who had been president of the National Union of Teachers from 1922 to 1923. The Duchess, deputising for Percy the day before, had adopted a more emollient approach. The block grant, she said, provided a guaranteed minimum, not a fixed maximum, during the period covered. She anticipated an increase in subsequent years.[20] During a debate on 17 December on a motion by Trevelyan deploring 'the policy defined in the Circular as calculated to discourage progressive local education authorities and to check an advance in education which appeared to have received the approval of all parties', she created a highly favourable impression for her well-judged responses to a range of critics including H.A. L.Fisher, Ramsay MacDonald and Ellen Wilkinson. She concluded:

> Our education policy remains as it was stated a year ago: the improvement of opportunities for the older children…the replacement of bad buildings and the reduction in size of the large classes. I earnestly hope that we shall be able to proceed further with this policy.[21]

As the Prime Minister, concerned that she should get home as quickly as possible after a day which had involved a good deal of strain, hurried her through the Lobby, she was cheered by Government supporters.[22]

Circular 1371 was withdrawn on 15 March 1926, but the principle of block grants reappeared in the more general Economy (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, the second reading of which took place over the following two days.[23] The Duchess eventually took decisive action. Since Percy could not be dissuaded from supporting the government, she took up the matter with the Prime Minister in January 1927, confident that he would pay attention to her views. 'As a result', she recorded with satisfaction, 'it was

decided, to my intense relief, that education grants should be excluded from the scheme'.[24]

Over the Report of the Consultative Committee on Secondary Education (the Hadow Report of 1926) the Duchess and Percy presented a united front. Churchill (Chancellor of the Exchequer) was not disposed to fund Hadow's recommendation that the school-leaving age should be raised to fifteen. Lady Astor, voting against the government on the issue in February 1927, declared that there was nobody more able than the Noble Lady who worked with the President of the Board of Education. She only wished that the Duchess had the last say on education. The Duchess, however, could not be prevailed upon to abandon her ministerial colleagues. The Report, she argued, appeared to call for continuity of administrative action by the Board rather than for any particular new departure.[25] In the supply debate in July she pointed out that that reorganisation of elementary schools was already being carried out and, she added, 'We have been endeavouring to provide a variety of forms of instruction at the post-primary stage'. But neither she nor Percy could do other than acquiesce when Cove observed that raising the school leaving age was the acid test of progressive policy as far as the Board of Education was concerned.[26]

The Duchess had never initiated policy. Her strength lay in her determination to stand firm on party policy and her main achievement was to have occupied a parliamentary secretaryship for five years, placing beyond question the capacity of a woman for such a role. She was much in demand outside the House. Since international peace was deemed an appropriate interest for women MPs, she became a delegate to the League of Nations annual meeting in Geneva in September 1925, when she was appointed to its Committees on the Instruction of Youth in the Aims of the League and on Morals.[27] In June 1927 she chaired the Imperial Education Conference in London.[28] Following the resignation of the Baldwin government in 1929, however, she did not hold office again. Two years later, as the national government was being formed, Lady Astor warned Baldwin and MacDonald privately against promoting her because of her anti-feminist views.[29]

From now on the Duchess was drawn into international politics. In 1931 she published *Women and Politics,* intended to assist women in playing a more active part in public life; a reference to increasing conscription of labour in the USSR was developed into *Conscription of a People* (published the same year) in which she urged the government to withdraw credits from the USSR and cancel the sale of armaments and arms-making machinery, views she moderated only once the Nazi regime was established in Germany. The outbreak of the Spanish Civil War in March 1936 provided unprecedented opportunities for her. Her search for facts gradually made her a rebel, alarming to her party.[30] Her Penguin special entitled *Searchlight on Spain* (1938) has been described as the most successful of all the propaganda books on the war.[31] However, her support for the Republican side, which won her the title 'the Red Duchess', and her opposition to non-intervention caused

Neville Chamberlain, the Prime Minister, to deprive her of the Party Whip. Finally she resigned her parliamentary seat over the Munich Agreement of September 1938, vainly seeking re-election as an Independent in her own constituency in support of Churchill's anti-appeasement policy.[32] She became, from 1944, chair of the British League for European Freedom. Her unwavering hostility to Stalin's post-war regime proved as unwelcome in government circles as her observations about the USSR, Nazi Germany and Fascist Spain in the 1930s. She died on 21 October 1960.[33]

Ellen Wilkinson was active both before and after the General Election of 1945 in advocating the replacement of Clement Attlee as leader of the Parliamentary Labour Party by Morrison; Attlee, however, ignoring her campaign, appointed her Minister of Education with a seat in the Cabinet.[34] Though he was conscientiously maintaining the Labour Party insistence on advancing women, from the policy-making angle the post offered very little. New ideas were certainly not expected. In its election manifesto the Labour Party had promised to do no more than put the recent Education Act into practical effect, mentioning in particular raising the school-leaving age to sixteen at the earliest possible moment and providing free primary, secondary, further and adult education for all.[35] This was the task with which Wilkinson was entrusted.

The new minister was fortunate with her civil servants. Having rejected Sir Robert Wood (deputy permanent secretary during the war), she developed a highly productive relationship with the newly-appointed permanent secretary, Sir John Maud and with Antony Part, her principal private secretary. 'She trusted her civil servants', Maud recalled: 'she accepted rather than resisted advice'. With David Hardman, her parliamentary secretary, who was to remain in office until 1951 there was, however, no rapport, but he was frequently absent as the United Kingdom's delegate to the United Nations Economic Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO).[36]

Within weeks of the Labour victory Wilkinson's apparently straightforward task was made immeasurably more difficult by the United States' cancellation of Lease-Lend, on which the near-bankrupt British government was relying to finance its recovery programme. She reacted energetically. 'In Parliament', the *Schoolmaster and Woman Teacher's Chronicle* recalled in February 1947, 'she was always a lively and pertinacious defender of her department. One had the impression sometimes that she felt she was fighting against the prejudices that even yet are aroused in some breasts against women occupying high positions in the State'.[37] On appointment she had publicly announced that raising the school-leaving age was her priority.[38] At a Cabinet committee on 16 August 1945 she insisted that the new government should not hesitate on the issue. There was no possibility of raising the age to fifteen earlier than 1st April 1947, she argued, but it could be done by that date, although it would necessitate some overcrowding of classes in some areas and the use of school accommodation (huts, prefabricated buildings etc.) of a kind which could be regarded as satisfactory only as a temporary measure.

LEAs would not press on with administrative preparations unless the government was firmly resolved to adhere to the agreed date.[39] Morrison, her former chief, raised doubts, as he was to do persistently, about shortages of accommodation and teachers. Aneurin Bevan (Minister of Health) supported her conditionally, pointing out that educational building programmes would have to compete with the requirement of the National Health Scheme. Joseph Westwood (secretary of state for Scotland) warned that raising the school leaving age would involve overcrowding of existing schools and overlarge classes. Progress was agreed, but in December 1946 Sir Stafford Cripps (Minister for Economic Affairs) issued a recommendation that the measure should be delayed. Wilkinson, by now seriously ill, rallied strongly. Under other governments, education had too often been the first casualty of an economic blizzard, she told the Cabinet. A Labour government should be the last to seek protection, and very meagre protection at that, from a fallible forecast of economic trouble by the enlistment of child labour. Once this issue was conceded, the 1944 Education Act might well share the fate of the Fisher Act of 1918. Finally she reminded the Prime Minister, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Foreign Secretary of the long record of promises made by pre-war Labour politicians. She prevailed: the Cabinet agreed that the educational and political advantages of introducing the new leaving age outweighed any possible gain from deferment.[40] Wilkinson next struggled purposefully to secure the building grants that the initiative entailed. At the end of the year she announced that the year's capital expenditure of £7 million would be increased to £24 million for 1947.[41]

On secondary education, now to be available for all pupils between the ages of eleven and fifteen, Wilkinson was less certain. As her biographer admits, she had not thought through the implications of basic educational change, let alone how it should be achieved; nor, in fact, had the Labour Party itself.[42] Under Butler the new Ministry of Education had prepared (as its Pamphlet No. 1) *The Nation's Schools*. Wilkinson published it in 1945, providing an introduction which pointed out that a new educational edifice was not being planned on a cleared site: it already existed. Under 'Secondary Education' the pamphlet referred to three broad types, intended to meet the differing needs of different pupils.[43] But within the Labour movement opinion in favour of multilateral or comprehensive schools was hardening. The minister's practical though short-term view of secondary education, placing emphasis on the elimination of elementary schooling for pupils of secondary school age, seemed to avoid the emerging issue.[44] At the Labour Party Conference of 1946 she defended the tripartite system, but promised that the Ministry's views on secondary education would be re-cast in a new pamphlet. In the House of Commons W.G.Cove (former critic of the Duchess of Atholl) launched an acrimonious attack on her, asserting that she was a danger to the whole Labour movement so far as education policy was concerned.[45] But *The New Secondary Education,* published in 1947 after her death, was still cautious, if not evasive. 'The prejudices of three hundred

years cannot be eradicated by one Act of Parliament', she had written in the foreword, 'nor their effects wiped away by one administration, especially while labour and materials are short and mountains of arrears of building repairs and re-equipment are waiting to be done'. And, she added, 'Until education in the State secondary schools is as good as the best that money can buy outside the State system, so long will inequalities remain'.[46] The minister envisaged that the County Colleges, included in the 1944 Act, would consolidate, extend or if necessary rectify whatever a pupil's education had yielded during the compulsory period of schooling.[47] The abandonment of the Colleges concentrated attention on the secondary system; in the mid-1950s the Labour Party took up the cause of the comprehensive schools. For her failure to advance the comprehensive cause, Labour historians have judged Wilkinson harshly.[48]

Raising the school-leaving age and introducing secondary education for all exacerbated the teacher shortage brought about by the war. In July 1943 an Office Committee had been set up by the Board of Education to examine teacher supply. It recommended that about fifty emergency training colleges should be set up and a pilot course began at Goldsmiths' College in September 1944.[49] With the war over, the one-year course, followed by two years' probation and part-time study, proved immensely attractive to ex-service men and women. Wilkinson gave this practical innovation her firm support. It was, however, beset with administrative difficulties, especially relating to accommodation and grants. She herself was continually criticised in the House of Commons and elsewhere. On 15 May 1946, in response to Sir Gifford Fox, she explained that emergency training colleges were being opened as fast as buildings could be found and converted. The scheme, she said, was intended to provide trained teachers to meet the needs of the schools over a period of several years. It had never been contemplated that all the additional teachers needed could be trained at one and the same time. Hence a considerable period of waiting was inevitable.[50]

Wilkinson died suddenly on 6 February 1947. In eighteen months, her biographer claims, she had secured resources for the Emergency Training Scheme, limited the Direct Grant System, widened opportunities for university entrance and expanded the provision of milk and meals for school children.[51] But her opportunities for personal initiatives outside agreed policy were few. As the *Schoolmaster and Woman Teacher's Chronicle* concluded, she will be remembered as the Minister of Education who insisted that the pledge to raise the school leaving age on 1st April 1947 should be kept: 'A weaker personality might have succumbed to the pressure to postpone the reform until such time as manpower problems would be solved and when books, equipment and other materials would be more plentiful'.[52]

Florence Horsbrugh, the Conservative Party's first woman minister in charge of a department, was appointed in unpropitious circumstances. Winston Churchill, aiming on his return to power at the head of a Conservative government in October 1951 to build a strong anti-socialist

government, first offered the Education portfolio to Clement Davies, the Liberal leader, who refused it. The post was then given to Horsbrugh. The Prime Minister, who took little interest in education, excluded her from the Cabinet although, he affirmed, she would be consulted whenever the topic was discussed.[53] Unmistakably, from the first days of the new government, both education and the principle of women's access to Cabinet posts had been downgraded.

The new minister was not left to administer her downgraded ministry in peace. In the early days of the Cold War, Churchill's priorities were foreign affairs and defence; the Cabinet, discovering that the economic situation was more serious than they had expected, embarked immediately on drastic retrenchment. Horsbrugh found herself under pressure from two powerful ministers, R.A.Butler and Harold Macmillan, soon to be rivals for the premiership. Butler, having salvaged his appeasement-damaged reputation by means of his achievements as education minister, was now Chancellor of the Exchequer, aware that tight control of government expenditure on the welfare state would further raise his stock with Prime Minister and party alike. His experience in education made Horsbrugh's ministry (especially in her absence from the Cabinet) his special concern; he at once declared a moratorium of three months on school building and asked to be kept informed of any significant developments. Macmillan, as Minister of Housing, sought persistently to secure the resources that would enable him to reach the government's target of 300,000 new houses a year. The Opposition concluded that his success in doing so was at the education minister's expense.[54]

Horsbrugh's parliamentary secretary was the constitutional historian Kenneth Pickthorn, later unkindly described by the *Daily Herald* as her pedantic lieutenant.[55] They inherited a team of well-established higher civil servants, which still included Sir John Maud (permanent secretary) and (Sir) Antony Part (principal private secretary). But the Ministry of Education, demoted and soon under attack, was beginning to look unpromising. Soon rumours abounded that morale was low. Feeling that he was in a backwater, Maud secured his departure in August 1952.[56]

Horsbrugh responded dutifully, but as it now appears too readily, to the Government's economy programme. On 7 December 1951 she published Circular 242, intended to save £13 million by cutting back on LEA expenditure.[57] The *Times Education Supplement (TES)* speculated apprehensively:

> Already there are reports of nursery schools to be closed and orders for primary equipment shelved. Larger and larger classes threaten…. All this must prompt the question whether it might not be better to raise the age of entry to the primary school.[58]

Rigorous, more general economies introduced by the Chancellor on 29 January, however, left education alone. The ten years of schooling established under the 1944 Act, Butler promised in a broadcast, were to remain

untouched.[59] In return Horsbrugh was obliged, in her Circular 245, published at the beginning of February 1952, to cut new building to a minimum.[60] With the threat of the so-called bulge, the *TES* foresaw serious overcrowding, and repeated the view that children might begin their schooling at six.[61] Both Butler and Horsbrugh were urged by the Prime Minister to resort to a selective retraction of the newly established school leaving age.[62] 'The kindest epitaph that 1952 could win from the world of education would be that it has been a year of making do', the *TES* concluded at the end of December. But the Minister had not given way. Ten years' schooling remained, and as the House of Commons rose for Christmas she was able to assure it that school places would be forthcoming to meet the swollen roll.[63]

As 1953 opened, the *TES* noted that Horsbrugh had been obliged to answer some nasty Parliamentary questions about school building. She argued that whereas work done (not planned) in 1951 had amounted to £34,500,000, it had increased to £37,000,000 in 1952 and would reach £40,300,000 in 1953.[64] This issue had by now become the means by which the Opposition sought to establish that the Churchill government was abandoning the Welfare State. At the beginning of July the publication of a report by a sub-committee of the Estimates Committee was made the basis of a full day's debate on school building. Responding to Chuter Ede's observation (drawn from *The Times*) that the recent rate of school building was quite inadequate, Horsbrugh was at first interrupted by a number of Labour critics including the future education secretary, Edward Short.[65] Once into her stride, however, she delivered a measured and powerful justification of Government policy, arguing that it had made and was continuing to make the best use of available resources in the interests of children.[66] 'Many congratulations on your parliamentary performance yesterday', Churchill wrote to the Minister.[67] She was appointed to the Cabinet on 3 September.

The government, however, was still bent on retrenchment. Butler took the opportunity of the minister's elevation to send her an urgent letter. 'I need not conceal from you that I am most disturbed about the paucity of the economies which we have been able to make in the last two years', he wrote. 'We have no time to lose, *and we must think in terms of major changes in policy* as well as constant "pruning"'. He requested an immediate review of all possible economies as well as an earlier delivery than usual of the ministry's estimates.[68] But Horsbrugh was no longer inclined to respond. She rejected the idea, arguing that the ministry was already only 'just getting by' in terms of class size, salaries and books, and that ratepayers' resources were already being strained by the increasing number of children. The Chancellor's view that fees could be reintroduced she dismissed out of hand. The only policy change that would produce a major economy would be one which reduced the number of children in schools. That would mean a change in the law of school attendance which was politically and educationally impracticable. The only economy which she conceded might be feasible was an increase in the rate of teachers' superannuation contributions.[69]

Unfortunately for her long-term reputation Butler seized on this proposal.[70] The Teachers' Superannuation Bill (designed to increase the contributions of teachers from 5 to 6 per cent) was introduced in January 1954.[71] It at once became plain that pay increases due in April would be partly clawed back in July. Teachers were unanimously opposed to the government proposal, the general secretary of the NUT told the Annual Conference in April: they had used and would use every democratic means to secure its withdrawal.[72]

From her first days as Minister Horsbrugh had been obliged to work in consultation with more powerful colleagues. She was entitled to assume that she had earned the right to preside more independently over her department in easier times.[73] But in the autumn of 1954, when the Chancellor began to draw more favourable conclusions about the state of the economy, the Prime Minister (fifteen years her senior) was suddenly persuaded that the government needed new blood. Horsbrugh and Pickthorn were relieved of their posts. It would be foolish to pretend that Miss Horsbrugh has been a popular Minister', the *Schoolmaster and Woman Teacher's Chronicle* commented on her departure:

> [Her]term of office…is equated in the minds of teachers with a period of restrictions and cutting down on educational expenditure…. [Nevertheless] Miss Horsbrugh deservedly gained respect as a doughty and sincere fighter. She won a number of battles behind the scenes. She had spirit and courage and she gave as good as she got in the constant criticism to which she has been subjected over the past three years.[74]

Considering the difficulties that she had encountered Horsbrugh had done well. She was awarded a DBE as she returned to the back benches; when she retired from the House of Commons in 1959 she was appointed a life peer.[75] From 1955 to 1962 she was a delegate to the Council of Europe and the Western European Union. She died on 6 December 1969.[76]

Under the Duchess of Atholl, Ellen Wilkinson and Florence Horsbrugh, education was unmistakably a ministry of limited importance, its opportunities for policy-making repeatedly narrowed or shut down in immediate response to economic crisis. As the Board of Education, served by the Duchess, it had been entrusted by the Act of 1899 with the superintendence of matters relating to education in England and Wales.[77] The Act of 1944 established it as a ministry, giving its ministers, Wilkinson and Horsbrugh among them, control and direction of national policy.[78] In practice, however, its powers were largely dispersed to the LEAs. Amongst ambitious politicians at Westminster it was regarded mainly with indifference. Kept clear of the Headmasters' Conference schools and the ancient universities, the traditional nurseries of the old ruling class, its functions were unprestigious ones, down among the ameliorative duties of the welfare state.

The creation of the Department of Education and Science (DES) in 1964 has been seen as evidence of the government's determination to establish a new department on a level with the Foreign Office, the Home Office, the Treasury, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Defence Department.[79] In the six years between its reorganisation and the appointment of Margaret Thatcher, however, the new department failed to consolidate its new powers. Four secretaries of state with an average tenure of seventeen months could not make much impact.[80]

Meanwhile, the status of women within Harold Wilson's Cabinet had been formidably enhanced by Barbara Castle, successively minister of Overseas Development and Transport, then, in 1968, appointed First Secretary of State, her office linked to the Ministry of Employment and Productivity. Accepting the business of politics on men's terms she provided, when on the attack, one of the most awesome sights that the House of Commons had to offer.[81] On the Opposition benches, Margaret Thatcher was establishing herself. Born on 13 October 1925, the younger daughter of Alfred Roberts, a grocer, and Beatrice Stephenson, a dressmaker, Thatcher had been educated at Grantham and Kesteven Grammar School before reading Chemistry at Somerville College, Oxford and making her way into politics through the Oxford University Conservative Association. Turned down four times as a Conservative candidate in the mid-1950s because she had young children, she had been elected MP for Finchley in 1959. Two years later she was appointed parliamentary secretary to the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance, a post she held until the Douglas-Home government resigned in 1964.[82] As Castle's reputation grew, leading Conservatives became apprehensive that if their own party's ablest woman, Thatcher were promoted further, they would never be able to get rid of her.[83] With Edward Heath as leader she became opposition spokesman on Housing and Land (1965), then deputy to the Shadow Chancellor (1966). The following year she was appointed to the Shadow Cabinet to deal with Fuel and Power. She observed in her memoirs:

> I did not make a particularly important contribution…nor was I asked to do so. For Ted and perhaps others I was principally there as the statutory woman whose main task was to explain what 'women'…were likely to think and want on troublesome issues.[84]

In November 1968 she was transferred to Transport. In October 1969 Sir Edward Boyle resigned the shadow education portfolio, and Heath replaced him with Thatcher, whom he regarded, according to his biographer, as a competent all-rounder whose sex recommended her for one of the departments suitable for a woman.[85] 'I was delighted with my new role', she recalled: 'I suspect that women, or at least mothers, have an instinctive interest in the education of children'.[86] Her colleagues in the Shadow Cabinet seem to have been equally pleased; she was duly appointed Secretary of State for Education and Science when the Conservatives returned to power in June

1970. As an Oxford graduate with two children at independent schools, Thatcher would be unlikely to develop her department into a power base and emerge as the Castle of the Conservative Party.

In the three and a half years of the Heath government this assumption proved to be correct. In her memoirs, published in 1995, Thatcher drew attention to the fact that, despite the determination and energy that she brought to what she soon perceived was not a mainline political job, her efforts were often in vain.[87] The ethos of her department struck her as interventionist and self-righteously socialist.[88] Sir William Pile, the new permanent secretary, had already spent nineteen years in the department (1947–66) as well as three years at the Home Office and Prison Service. The three deputy permanent secretaries were also well established.[89] 'It was soon clear to me on the whole that I was not among friends', Thatcher recalled.[90] On their part, her civil servants, one of her biographers commented, 'were not used to dealing with a woman minister and found her self-confident and sometimes abrasive approach disconcerting and confusing'.[91]

For an incoming Conservative minister in 1970 the main area of concern was secondary education. During the election campaign Thatcher had, as she put it, hammered away at raising the school-leaving age, the need to encourage Direct Grant schools, and the right of LEAs to decide whether or not to introduce comprehensive schools.[92] Over all three she strove to carry out her party's election promises. After due consideration, the school leaving age was raised to sixteen in 1972 by Order in Council. Financial support for Direct Grant schools (withheld by the previous administration) was restored in 1971.[93] Over the comprehensive issue she acted particularly promptly. Circular 10/70, issued on 30 June 1970, ten days after her appointment and in good time for the Queen's Speech, withdrew Labour Circulars 10/65 and 10/66.[94] The results were not what she expected. The Party manifesto had offered no real alternative to comprehensivisation, merely making a passing reference to 'imaginative new schemes abolishing the eleven plus…introduced by Conservative councils'.[95] She herself had doubts, on ideological grounds, about the restoration of selection that some Conservatives were expecting.[96] So in the event the move towards comprehensivisation was not stemmed. On the contrary, between 1970 and 1974 some 3,600 proposals for secondary reorganisation were referred to the Secretary of State under Section 13 of the 1944 Act. She rejected only 325 or 9 per cent.[97]

Despite her determination and boldness, Thatcher soon found herself the victim of the financial stringency that had plagued her predecessors. She was not a member of the key Economic Policy Committee of the Cabinet. She had campaigned for a shift in emphasis towards primary education and she duly produced plans to improve 460 old primary-school buildings; within months, however, they were under threat from the Chancellor of the Exchequer's moves to cut expenditure. To protect her programme she agreed to sacrifice school milk for children over seven. This involved her in a good deal of hostile publicity: as John Campbell, Heath's biographer, put it, there

was something deeply emotive about a woman stopping the supply of milk. Labelled 'milk snatcher', she found that she had incurred the maximum of political odium for the minimum of political benefit.[98]

Thatcher did not give up. Having taken steps to extend secondary education and improve primary school buildings, she set herself the task of establishing a proactive rather than reactive role for her department over the remaining areas for which she was responsible. Her White Paper, *Education: a Framework for Expansion,* emerging from the DES Programme, Analysis and Review Reports, was published in December 1972. 'Mrs Thatcher's White Paper is clearly one of the select group of seminal educational documents since the end of the Second World War', the *TES* commented: 'For the first time the DES has presented a framework…within which policy can develop, instead of the pattern of bits and pieces from which in the past an outline of Government education policy has been built up'.[99] The Secretary of State summarised her plans in the House of Commons on 19 February 1973. Nursery education was to become available for most children aged three or four within ten years. School building expenditure of £500 million over three years was promised. Teacher training was to be reformed along the lines of the James Report, published the previous year, placing emphasis on induction and in-service courses. On Higher Education she expressed the Government's determination to make courses available to all eighteen-year-olds qualified for it. She envisaged 700,000 places (22 per cent of the age cohort) in 1981 compared with 15 per cent in 1971 and 7 per cent in 1961, the accommodation to be equally split between universities and polytechnics.[100]

In retrospect, Thatcher viewed the White Paper not as her greatest achievement but as the high point of the attempts by government to overcome educational problems through increased expenditure. Before the year was up the boom on which her hopes had rested ended under pressure from the oil crisis and the miners' strike.[101] Most of her plans collapsed with it, those for nursery schools surviving until the fall of the Heath government in February 1974. 'Mrs Thatcher was a good departmental chief, good at business and the orderly conduct of affairs' the *TES* concluded in February 1975. 'The White Paper of December 1972 represented a great administrative achievement.... [S]he was good at defending departmental interests in Treasury discussions but when the balloon went up in December 1973 this made precious little difference.'[102] She herself judged her achievements coolly in terms of the replacement and repair of primary schools, the raising of the school leaving age, the reduction of class sizes and the increased number of qualified teachers and higher education students. She also viewed with some pride her unexpected but successful defence of the Open University.[103] But her period at the DES had not advanced her career. Like Horsbrugh, her performance in a lesser ministry had been too plainly dependent on more powerful members of the Cabinet. Unlike Castle, she had posed no threat to the men in charge of her party.

Women, Stacey and Price pointed out in 1981, had come far in a short space of time yet few of them were in positions of power.[104] In politics, over sixty years after women had first been elected to the House of Commons, such positions were still customarily restricted to those areas deemed appropriate for women before and shortly after the Second World War. Thatcher, in opposition once more in 1974, took stock of her situation. Ambitious for promotion, she concluded from male precedent that Shadow experience of the Treasury, the Home Office or the Foreign Office, the main offices of state, was a pre-requisite for the leadership of her party.[105] Far from being promoted to one of these posts, however, she found herself once more appointed as deputy to the Shadow Chancellor, a post she had occupied eight years before. Then a sudden opportunity arose. After his second 1974 defeat Heath could have offered himself for re-election as leader, but he failed to do so. The executive of the Party's 1922 Committee demanded an election to confirm or remove him.[106] Thatcher seized her chance; she was duly elected in his place.

The appointment of a female Prime Minister might have signalled an advance by women into the leading Cabinet posts from which they had been excluded. Under Thatcher no such advance took place. From 1979, when she took office, until 1992, when her successor made his first female appointments to the Cabinet, only one other woman briefly attained Cabinet status.[107] In 1992 the appointments to health and education began again. In the mid-century these appointments seemed to lend authority to women; now it was plain that they were constraining them. The 1997 election brought no relief. Under New Labour, while Tony Blair was pleased to include more women at the lower levels of government, the main offices of state were still reserved for men.

Notes

1 Quoted in B.Harrison, 'Women in a Men's House: The Women MPs 1919–1945', *Historical Journal,* 1986, vol. 29, p. 623.
2 Ibid., pp. 637, 636.
3 D.Butler and A.Sloman, *British Political Facts 1900–1979,* London, Macmillan, 1980, pp. 16–50.
4 *Dictionary of National Biography 1951–1960,* Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1971, p. 926; *Schoolmaster and Women Teacher's Chronicle* (SWTC), 14 November 1924, p. 720.
5 B.D.Vernon, *Ellen Wilkinson,* London, Croom Helm, 1982, Chapter 1.
6 *The Times,* 8 December 1969, p. 10; *The Scotsman,* 8 December 1969, p. 7.
7 Duchess of Atholl, *Working Partnership,* London, Arthur Barker, 1958, pp. 126, 127; P.Brookes, *Women at Westminster,* London, Peter Davies, 1967, p. 42; *The Times,* 8 December 1969, p. 8.
8 M.Hughes, '"The Shrieking Sisterhood": Women as Educational Policy-makers', *Gender and Education,* 1992, vol. 4, p. 256; B.Harrison, 'Women in a Men's House', p. 630; B.D.Vernon, *Ellen Wilkinson,* pp. 79–80.
9 B.Harrison, 'Women in a Men's House', p. 634.
10 Quoted in ibid., p. 652.

11 *Hansard,* 317, 3 November 1936, 14–17; R.R.James (ed.), *Chips: The Diaries of Chips Channon,* London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1967, p. 75; N.Nicolson (ed.), *Harold Nicolson: Diaries and Letters 1930–9,* London, Collins, 1966, p. 277. Horsbrugh seems to have been a much more popular figure than Hughes ('The Shrieking Sisterhood') suggests.
12 SWTC, 14 November 1924, p. 720; Duchess of Atholl, *Working Partnership,* p. 119; B.D.Vernon, *Ellen Wilkinson,* pp. 94, 102–3; SWTC, 8 November 1951, p. 533.
13 SWTC, 14 November 1924, p. 720.
14 S.J.Hetherington, *Katherine Atholl 1874–1960: Against the Tide,* Aberdeen, University Press, 1989, p. 109; B.Simon, *The Politics of Educational Reform 1920–1940,* London, Lawrence and Wishart, 1974, pp. 88–9.
15 F.W.S.Craig, *British General Election Manifestos 1900–1974,* London, Macmillan, 1975, p. 59.
16 SWTC, 30 January 1925, p. 159; 13 June 1929, p. 1191.
17 Ibid.
18 B.Simon, *The Politics of Educational Reform 1920–1940,* p. 92.
19 Ibid., p. 94.
20 *Hansard,* 188, 3 December 1925, 2493–4; 2 December 1925, 2218.
21 Ibid., 189; 17 December 1925, 1807.
22 Duchess of Atholl, *Working Partnership,* p. 151.
23 *Hansard,* 193, 16 March 1926, 273–395; 17 March 1926, 457–522.
24 B.Simon, *The Politics of Educational Reform 1920–1940,* p. 112; Duchess of Atholl, *Working Partnership,* p. 158; S.J.Hetherington, *Katherine Atholl 1874–1960,* p. 116.
25 *Hansard,* 202, 16 February 1927, 1055; 14 February 1927, 562.
26 Ibid., 209, 26 July 1927, 1096–1100, 1107, 1157–8.
27 Duchess of Atholl, *Working Partnership,* p. 148. According to C.Miller in 'Geneva—the Key to Equality: Inter-war Feminists and the League of Nations', *Women's History Review,* 1994, vol. 3, p. 220, feminists turned to the League of Nations as the world depression and the rise of reactionary ideologies in Europe increasingly undermined women's economic and political rights.
28 S.J.Hetherington, *Katherine Atholl 1874–1960,* p. 117.
29 B.Harrison, 'Women in a Men's House', p. 634.
30 Ibid., p. 648.
31 H.Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War,* London, Penguin, 1977, p. 609.
32 Duchess of Atholl, *Working Partnership,* p. 228.
33 *Dictionary of National Biography,* 1971, p. 927.
34 On her support of Morrison, see B.D.Vernon, *Ellen Wilkinson,* pp. 177–9, 196–8; K.Harris, *Attlee,* London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1985, pp. 164, 251.
35 F.W.S.Craig, *British General Election Manifestos 1900–1974,* p. 129.
36 B.D.Vernon, *Ellen Wilkinson,* pp. 204–5; I.B.Lawrence, *Power and Politics at the Department of Education and Science,* London, Cassell, 1992, pp. 9–12; D.W. Dean, 'Planning for the Post-war Generation: Ellen Wilkinson and George Tomlinson at the Ministry of Education 1945–51', *History of Education,* 1986, vol. 15, pp. 97, 98, 99, 100.
37 SWTC, 13 February 1947, p. 157.
38 B.D.Vernon, *Ellen Wilkinson,* p. 206.
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41 Ibid., p. 209.
42 Ibid., pp. 204, 203.

43 *The Nation's Schools,* London, Ministry of Education, 1945, pp. 4, 13.
44 D.W.Dean, 'Planning for the Post-war Generation', p. 109.
45 O.Banks, *Parity and Prestige in English Secondary Education,* London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1955, pp. 141–2; *Hansard,* 424, 1 July 1946, 1834.
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47 D.W.Dean, 'Planning for the Post-war Generation', pp. 108–9.
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49 P H.J.H.Gosden, *Education in the Second World War,* Methuen, 1976, pp. 124, 126.
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51 B.D.Vernon, *Ellen Wilkinson,* p. 225.
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53 The Conservative Party Manifesto, under 'Education and Health', had merely promised to provide better services: see F.W.S.Craig, *British General Election Manifestos 1900–1974,* p. 172; D.W.Dean, 'Consensus or conflict? The Churchill Government and Educational Policy 1951–55', *History of Education,* 1992, vol. 21, p. 18.
54 Ibid., pp. 17, 21–22; B.Simon, 'The Tory Government and Education: Background to Breakout', *History of Education,* 1985, vol. 14, pp. 284–5.
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59 Ibid., 1 February 1952, p. 91.
60 Ibid., 8 February 1952, p. 113.
61 Ibid., 28 March 1952, p. 273.
62 PRO: PREM 11/84, 21 December 1951, 19 June 1952.
63 *TES,* 20 December 1952, p. 1037.
64 Ibid., 30 January 1953, p. 77.
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Index