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The Development of State Education
in Macclesfield, 1902-1944

Nora Lewis Pole

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Abstract

The Development of State Education in
Macclesfield, 1902-1944

BY

Nora Lewis Pole

Macclesfield is a town in East Cheshire. During the nineteenth century it became a centre of silk manufacture, enjoying an initial period of growth, but from mid-century onwards suffering a slow decline which continued up to the beginning of the second world war.

In 1902 Balfour's Education Act put responsibility for the local administration of education into the hands of county councils and county borough councils. For Macclesfield the L.E.A. was Cheshire County Council but, taking advantage of special provision in the Act, the borough elected to become a Part III authority, with autonomy over its own elementary schools system, and this status was maintained until its abolition by the Education Act of 1944. Thus, for the forty-two years under consideration Macclesfield's educational progress was subject to two masters at the local level.

The aim of the thesis is to trace the development of state education in the borough against the prevailing economic background, and in the light of contemporary theories and movements generally, between 1902 and 1944, the era of Macclesfield as a Part III authority. It is a continuation of an investigation covering the period 1833-1918 which was the subject of an earlier thesis (Sheffield M.A. 1975).

In the gathering of evidence much use has been made of the Cheshire Record Office which holds records of the Macclesfield Education Committee and its sub-committees, the Higher Education Committee records, reports of the Medical Officer of Health, and documents relating to secondary education. School log books have provided another useful source, as has the Macclesfield Courier and Herald, held in Macclesfield Public Library. Files of Macclesfield schools in the National Society archives have also been used; and, locally, school records and private sources have supplied information, supplemented at times by the personal recollections of long-established Macclesfield residents.

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Brief References

The following abbreviations are used in the footnotes:

<u>B.J.E.S.</u>	<u>British Journal of Educational Studies</u>
Cheshire R.O.	Cheshire Record Office
<u>M.C.H.</u>	<u>Macclesfield Courier and Herald</u>
M.E.C.	Macclesfield Education Committee
M.H.S.G.	Macclesfield High School for Girls (later Macclesfield County High School for Girls)
N.S.R.	National Society Records
P.P.	Parliamentary Papers
P.R.O.	Public Record Office

Chapter One

Social and Economic Restraints: the Victorian Heritage

Chapter One

Social and Economic Restraints: The Victorian Legacy

For three weeks the local newspapers were heavily outlined in black, loyal observances were recorded at length, and news unconnected with the event was relegated to inconspicuous corners as, in January 1901, Macclesfield, in common with the rest of the country, mourned the passing of Queen Victoria. Hardly less shattering to the town, and equally all-absorbing, was the death at 82 years of age of William Coare Brocklehurst, head of J. and T. Brocklehurst and Sons, Silk Manufacturers, who predeceased his sovereign by seven months. As for the royal demise, all other activity ceased whilst the town lamented its loss. The Brocklehurst family refused an official public ceremony proposed by the Mayor, in deference to William Coare's known wishes, but the funeral procession on Wednesday, 6 June 1900, marshalled and led by the chief constable of the borough, was scarcely less. The cortège was preceded by the town mace draped in black, and followed by the Mayor, in chain of office, the entire corporation, and deputations from every institution of note, public and private, connected with the town and the surrounding countryside; local county families, neighbouring town and district councils, both party political associations, and every religious denomination in the borough sent representatives, together with business and commercial, voluntary and charitable organizations; over 1,000 people left Macclesfield by special train for the three mile journey to Prestbury, where the funeral service and interment took place, and many more made the



journey on foot to line the village streets.¹ Columns in the local press carried tributes from every walk of life, and in the obituaries could be read the history of Victorian Macclesfield.

In its gathering together of so many elements of the town's life this headline event put on display Macclesfield at the start of the twentieth century, and in its implications it supplied the key to the borough's development in the nineteenth century. Although ancient in origin - it gained its first charter granting free borough status in 1261 - the Macclesfield of 1900 was a product of the early industrial revolution, built on the silk industry, and still almost exclusively dependent upon it. Up to his death, William Coare Brocklehurst was head of the family which, in establishing and maintaining the huge silk manufacturing concern of J. and T. Brocklehurst, had been a dominant influence in the town throughout its formative period.

The family's involvement in the silk trade went back to the mid-eighteenth century, but the firm in its nineteenth and early twentieth century form was founded about 1812 when the two brothers, John and Thomas, were launched on a joint venture by their father. It had prospered from the start, before mid-century becoming the town's largest employer of labour and, backed by adequate capital, it had survived the vicissitudes of a precarious industry in the later decades of the 1800s. John was one of the first two Members of Parliament for the borough when it was enfranchised in 1832, elected in recognition of his leadership of the silk industry throughout a series of crises in the 1820s. From that time on, he and Thomas, and their numerous, energetic, public-spirited progeny led Macclesfield in commercial, civic, and political fields, as well as in the social

1. M.C.H., 9.vi.1900, 16.vi.1900.

and voluntary activities of the community. On John's death in 1868 William Coare took over his father's role as leader of the clan. When he died the mantle, in turn, fell on his son William Brocklehurst (Fitz) Brocklehurst, but by this time social and economic patterns were changing. Although the changes were slow in taking effect and for the large majority of the Macclesfield population there was no appreciable difference in their circumstances until, at earliest, the beginning of the first world war, like Victoria's death on the larger stage, William Coare's passing marked the end of an era and the beginning of a stage of transition.

In 1818 the silk trade had been booming and, despite periodic reverses, it continued to expand up to mid-century. In the second half of the 1800s, however, a long, slow decline set in, and in the later decades comparatively short bursts of prosperity were interspersed with long periods of depression. Contemporary comments in newspapers, letters, school log books etc, from the 1850s on, abound with references to the difficulties of trade and the consequent poverty of the dependent inhabitants. It was part of a national trend. The decline of the industry in the country as a whole is indicated in the census figures, which show a fall in the number of silk workers in England and Wales from 60,595 in 1881 to 29,634 in 1911.² In Macclesfield the number of mills, from 129 in 1857, dropped to 89 in twenty years, reaching a low of 56 by 1914,³ and, rebutting the possibility of amalgamations and larger units, the 1861 total of 13,707 employed in silk dropped to 7,784 by 1911,⁴ in a slightly reduced population (36,101 to 34,804).

2. Population Census, England and Wales, 1881, 1911.

3. J. N. Jackson, 'The Population and Industrial Structure of Macclesfield', (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, Manchester, 1961), p.67.

4. Jackson, p.61.

By the early 1900s silk was accounted of relative unimportance in the national economy,⁵ but it was Macclesfield's life blood, and the ills of the industry, and possible remedies, were obviously topics of paramount importance in the town's considerations. The Cobden Treaty of 1860 was still widely blamed for the start of the decline, and Britain's free trade policy subsequently was seen by most manufacturers as the root cause of the continuing instability.⁶ It was commonly pointed out, too, that foreign rivals had the advantage in competitive pricing because their operatives worked longer hours for lower wages, particularly in Italy wherein lay the chief threat in the early twentieth century.⁷ Local opinion does not appear to have considered the viewpoint of a writer on the national scene that the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 was a critical factor; whereas previously London had been well sited to act as the entrepôt for the European industry, on the new route the Mediterranean ports - Trieste, Genoa, and Marseilles - being nearer the source and thus incurring lower transport costs, were more advantageously situated to receive the raw silk from the east.⁸

In the early twentieth century Italy, with its additional advantage of being able to breed the native silkworm, was forging ahead. Switzerland, France, and Germany were also strong competitors, and Japanese silks were now entering the field.⁹ France, with its great silk centre at Lyons, was the old rival, feared and envied since the 1840s. The German industry, centred at Krefeld, had developed after 1870. (The time of the Franco-Prussian war and the period immediately following, when these two powers were diverted

5. S. Pollard, The Development of the British Economy 1914-1967 (1967), p.7.

6. Report into the Condition of the Silk Industry, 1923, p.11.

7. M.C.H., 13.i.1906.

8. G.R. Porter & F.W. Hirst, The Progress of the Nation (1912), p.350.

9. M.C.H., 13.i.1906.

from concentration on trade, was a golden age for Macclesfield, constantly and nostalgically referred to in less happy years later on). In 1883 the chairman of the Handloom Weavers Association, with the president of the Chamber of Commerce, had visited Zurich, Lyons, and Krefeld to discover, if possible, the secrets of the continental manufacturers' success.¹⁰ The two men were greatly impressed by the high-powered organization and technical expertise they found; the use of the power loom, for example, was more advanced than in Macclesfield. They commented, too, on the superior educational provision and the government sponsored training facilities readily available in each of the countries they visited. British observers in general were increasingly noting the correlation - as they saw it - between Germany's industrial growth and her educational system.

In addition to European competition and the Japanese threat, the American challenge was giving growing cause for concern by 1900. Silk manufacture had been started in Paterson, New Jersey, by a Macclesfield man, in 1846.¹¹ He was joined later by two other pioneers, and in times of depression, particularly in the later 1870s and 1880s, many Macclesfield workers emigrated to try their luck in the new land. At the end of the nineteenth century there was an estimated 3,000-strong force of them. It was a fortunate choice for those who made it. Whilst the decline continued at home, the American trade prospered; by 1923 it was to be using 80% of the world's supply of raw silk. The United States was not a competitor in the same sense as the other nations, in that the bulk of her trade was concerned with supplying the home market, but her self-sufficiency meant that a rich potential customer was lost to the local books.¹²

10. C. Stella Davies, History of Macclesfield (Manchester, 1961), p.203.

11. Davies, p.140.

12. Report on the Silk Industry, p.13.

Predictably in a weak industry, wages in the silk trade were low. In 1893 a survey for a Royal Commission estimated that women throwsters might earn 7s 0d per week in good times and throughout the year averaged no more than 6s 0d per week.¹³ Weavers' earnings were higher, and a woman on a power loom might earn 12s 0d per week in a good spell. For some comparison, one writer quotes the average wage for a London artisan in 1900 as £104 per annum (£2 per week), and for agricultural workers as £42 per annum (16s 0d per week).¹⁴ Handloom weavers working for an undertaker (agent) averaged 10s 0d per week throughout the year, after paying their loom rent, whilst handloom weavers working their own looms at home could, if there was the demand, be on the highest rate. Handloom weaving was carried on in silk manufacture longer than in other textiles. At the time of the Royal Commission on Silk in 1923, witnesses were still talking of these workers as a body, although the chronic unemployment in this section of the industry over a long period indicates little call for the work by that time.¹⁵ There are, nevertheless, still elderly residents of the town to-day who can tell of a working life spent mostly in handloom weaving, supporting the comment made by the Board of Education's inspecting team, in its report on the School of Art in 1936, that 'handloom weaving still survives as a real industry'.¹⁶ In 1906 there was widespread dissatisfaction with the rates of wages as compared with other industries. Acknowledgement of the position was made by both candidates in their election speeches of that year, and resentment and fear of the future comes through in the interjections

13. Jackson, p.71.

14. L.O. Ward, 'H.A.L. Fisher and the Teachers', B.J.E.S., Vol. XXII, No.2, June 1974, p.192.

15. Report on the Silk Industry, p.20.

16. P.R.O., ED114/44, p.10.

of the audiences recorded in the newspaper reports of the campaign.¹⁷

The employment situation in Macclesfield was particularly difficult for men. A preponderance of female labour had traditionally been a feature of the silk industry. In England and Wales in 1881 there were 41,886 female workers to 18,709 male, and in 1911 the women still outnumbered the men by more than 2:1 at 20,556 and 9,087 respectively.¹⁸ In cotton, for comparison, in the late nineteenth century the proportion of female to male workers was 817 to 1,000.¹⁹ The 1901 census figures show Macclesfield's position in line with the national pattern at 4,443 females to 2,155 males employed in silk.²⁰ There was also a sizeable area of work for women as seamstresses and in the various branches of making up, such as tailoring, dressmaking, and shirt-making. With domestic service, these occupations provided for nearly three-quarters of the female work force. (Table I). The men's figure for silk workers, whilst representing the largest single occupational group, accounts for little over one-fifth of all workers. Building and construction was the next most likely sphere of work for Macclesfield males, followed closely by the provision of food, drink, tobacco, and lodgings, and the transportation of people, goods and messages. (Table II). This left, still, more than half the male work force to occupy. There was one cotton mill in the town at this time,²¹ some smallware factories, and several 'extensive' breweries,²² but there had been little or no introduction of, or expansion into, any supplementary industry to compensate for the decline of silk. The

17. M.C.H., 22.xii.1906.

18. Census, 1911.

19. Jackson, p. 65.

20. Census, 1901.

21. Kelly's Directory of Cheshire (1902).

22. Kelly's Directory of Cheshire (1906).

Table IPrincipal Occupations in Macclesfield, 1901. Women.

Females - 10 years and over	15,805
Working	8,295
<u>Occupations</u>	
Silk manufacture	4,448
Tailoresses, dressmakers, seamstresses and shirtmakers	939
Domestic indoor servants	678

Source: Census of England and Wales, 1901.Table IIPrincipal Occupations in Macclesfield, 1901. Men.

Males - 10 years and over	12,118
Working	10,013
<u>Occupations</u>	
Silk manufacture	2,155
Building and construction	999
Food, tobacco, drink and lodging	939
Conveyance of men, goods and messages	839

Source: Census of England and Wales, 1901.

cotton mill, Lower Heys, was to become increasingly important as an employer of labour, and shirt-making also increased in production between 1901 and 1911, but again the demand was mainly for women. There was an established place, too, for juvenile workers. Numbers had declined dramatically in the last decade of the nineteenth century but, although a witness for Macclesfield, in a government survey of 1906, declared that employers would be happy to see it go,²³ the practice of half time working, with early school leaving, continued until it was abolished by legislation. Even at this stage, opportunities for girls outmatched those for boys, and it was accepted that young males would probably have to move out of the area to find work. Colonel W.B.Brocklehurst raised the issue of the imbalance between the sexes in employment opportunities in his election campaign in 1906, declaring that what the town needed was the introduction of engineering or some heavy trade capable of absorbing 500 to 600 men.²⁴ It was obviously considered an urgent problem by the civic leaders since the Corporation had set up a committee to investigate the possibility of enlarging employment prospects by attracting new industry, but no action resulted, then or for many years. Not until after the 1914-18 war did the scope of occupations broaden, for men and for women, and then it was on a limited scale. In 1927 a visiting team of the Board of Education's inspectors recorded commercial work, building, and some engineering, as alternative occupations to the various silk manufacturing processes, but they noted the relatively unaltered industrial structure over a number of years, and commented on 'much emigration to other districts' resulting from inadequate job opportunities.²⁵ It took the demands of the second world war to bring

23. P.P. 1909 Cd.4887 xvii.753, Report of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Partial Exemption from School Attendance, Vol,II, p.216.

24. M.C.H., 13.i.1906.

25. P.R.O., ED114/45,p.1.

alternative industries, and higher wages, on a noticeable scale. As in the earlier conflict, War Office contracts brought full order books and employment to the traditional occupations. In addition, clothing manufacturers and light engineering firms, evacuated or bombed out of their premises, came from London and other towns to set up in the borough, in a number of cases remaining after the war had ended.

The fortunes of the silk industry were reflected in the growth pattern of the town. From about 7,000 inhabitants - and eight streets - in the mid-eighteenth century, Macclesfield grew rapidly in the early 1800s. In 1851 it had a population of 39,048,²⁶ which was its peak until modern times. From this figure there was a long, gradual decrease, corresponding to the decline in the staple industry. In 1901 the population was 34,624, having fallen from 36,009 in 1891.²⁷ The nadir was reached in 1921 with 33,846, but in 1951, at 35,999, the figure was still more than 3,000 fewer than that of a century previously. (In 1971 the population numbered just over 42,000). In 1851 Macclesfield ranked as one of the principal manufacturing towns of the country, being twenty-sixth in order of size.²⁸ In 1951 there were 158 towns of over 50,000 in population, and Macclesfield was far below these. Again corresponding to the constraints of the silk industry, a noticeable feature of the population figures is the consistent outnumbering of males by females. In 1851 there were nearly 2,000 more women; in 1881 the number in excess was 3,004; and in 1901 the difference was 3,852. More than half the

26. Census, 1851.

27. Census, 1891, 1901.

28. Jackson, p.42.

females over ten years of age - 52.9% - were in employment in 1901, compared with a national average of 32.5%.²⁹ If one allows for the three years at the younger end, before which full time working was not legally possible, and for the elderly who had retired from a working life, this proportion assumes greater significance: for the very large majority of Macclesfield women, adult life was spent mainly in the mill or workshop.

The problem of working mothers was causing some anxiety in the years around the turn of the century. The town had a very high infant mortality rate, and it was a commonly held belief among those concerned for public health that a main cause could be found in the common practice of leaving babies and young children with baby-minders, who were often unsuitable, whilst mothers went out to work.³⁰ In the decade up to 1898 the rate had averaged 172 deaths under twelve months per thousand births, against an average for England and Wales of 149 per thousand. In 1899 the figure was worse, at 196, compared with 163 nationally.³¹ This was a good year for trade in Macclesfield, and it was argued that, to get back to the mills as quickly as possible, mothers were weaning their infants too early and leaving them with women 'ignorant of the rudiments of child rearing and hygiene'. The chief cause of death was infant diarrhoea which struck particularly severely in the hot weather and, predictably, was considerably higher in incidence in the insanitary, overcrowded areas of the town. As with other manufacturing towns of the same vintage, Macclesfield had a sorry legacy of unhealthy, closely packed slum areas. Workers lived in warrens of small streets and courts around the factories,

29. Jackson, p.64.

30. Report of the Medical Officer of Health for Macclesfield, 1899 (Chester 1900), n.p.

31. M.O.H. Report, 1899, n.p.

many with inadequate water supplies and few, if any, with adequate sanitary and garbage provision. Other infant-killer hazards were - to take one year's list - whooping cough, premature birth, convulsions, bronchitis, syphilis, suffocation through over-laying, and pneumonia.³² Feared diseases attacking all age groups were tuberculosis, scarlatina - with its attendant dangers of kidney disease and deafness - typhoid fever, diphtheria, and smallpox. The first two of this list far outstripped the others in incidence; in 1898 there were 249 cases of scarlatina and the borough could not free itself of the disease all year. Many were mild cases, and there were only four deaths, but the after effects could be serious. Tuberculosis was more deadly; 98 deaths resulted from this dread disease in the same year, representing one-eighth of all deaths, or 2.22 per thousand of the population.³³ This was an average rate, the mean for the ten year period 1889 to 1898 being 2.15. A similar rate continued well into the 1900s, when for the country the average was steadily improving.

The statistics for the Macclesfield Rural District provide an interesting comparison with those of the town, underlining the very real additional hazards to health and longevity of urban living at the turn of the century. The area, mainly agricultural country, covered 17,329 acres, compared with the borough's 3,215 acres, and had an estimated population in 1898 of 18,170. For borough and rural district respectively, in 1898 the birth rate was 24.6 per thousand and 21.1 per thousand; death rate 20.4 and 17.7; death from zymotic diseases 2.7 and 0.5; deaths under one year, to one thousand births, 196 and 114.³⁴

32. M.O.H. Report, 1905, p.245.

33. M.O.H. Report, 1898, n.p.

34. M.O.H. Report, 1898, n.p.

It was the urgent concern of a young, newly-appointed medical officer of health, Dr. J. Hedley Marsh, to improve Macclesfield's health record as the town went into the twentieth century. It was a mammoth undertaking, but he attacked it with vigour, enthusiasm, and forcefulness. In his first report, and repeatedly thereafter, he emphasized that high infant mortality year after year was evidence against the well-being and health of the community, and he made improvement in this area a priority target.³⁵ One of the hindrances to an improvement programme was ignorance among mothers of the basics of child-rearing, particularly within the most vulnerable section of the community. For this reason, several times he put forward the case for older girls to be given instruction at school in infant care and management,³⁶ but without avail. More immediately, he had hand-bills printed giving advice on baby care, for distribution to all who registered a birth, but here an unforeseen illiteracy problem reduced the value of the plan; it was found that those most in need of guidance were often unable to benefit from the printed word.³⁷ To overcome this, the medical officer of health pressed for the formation of a Ladies Sanitary Association, based on a working Manchester model, to organize volunteers to visit homes and give personal instruction.³⁸ Work on these lines started in 1902, supported by voluntary contributions which in 1904 provided the salary for 'a well qualified' lady health visitor.³⁹ A Mothers' Union was started in 1900 - one imagines from the more confident and affluent sector of the working population - at the inaugural meeting of which Marsh expounded on the

35. M.O.H. Report, 1898, n.p.

36. M.C.H., 7.v.1904; M.O.H. Report, 1905, p.245.

37. M.O.H. Report, 1899, n.p.

38. M.O.H. Report, 1899, n.p.

39. M.O.H. Report, 1905, p.245.

need for proper feeding, cleanliness, fresh air, and sleep.⁴⁰ Another health measure, designed to reduce the scourge of infant diarrhoea, was the opening of sterilized milk depots in 1905.⁴¹ (There were seventy-one cowkeepers and milk sellers in the borough at this time). The infant mortality rate did improve. From an average of 172 deaths per thousand per annum in the decade up to 1898, the figure dropped to 126 by 1906, and by the start of the first world war the average was below 120, although there could be erratic years such as 1911 with 151; most years, however, were above the national average.⁴² (Figure I).

Basic to the whole problem of community health was the unwholesome environment of a large section of the population. In his annual reports in the early 1900s, the association between infectious disease and insanitary living conditions was outlined at length by the M.O.H., and he made it his prime aim in the first decade of his career in Macclesfield to reduce the disease-producing urban squalor among which so many of his fellow townsfolk passed their lives. Heading, what a local newspaper called, a 'Crusade of Cleansing Committee',⁴³ he campaigned continuously to ensure that food and milk suppliers maintained hygienic premises, to have streets watered in hot weather, to get courts and yards drained and paved, and, particularly, to force the reduction - ultimately the abolition - of the privy midden which polluted the ground and fouled the air, sited sometimes within feet of the entrances to homes.⁴⁴ More than any other source,

40. M.C.H., 24.xi.1900.

41. M.O.H. Report, 1905, p.265.

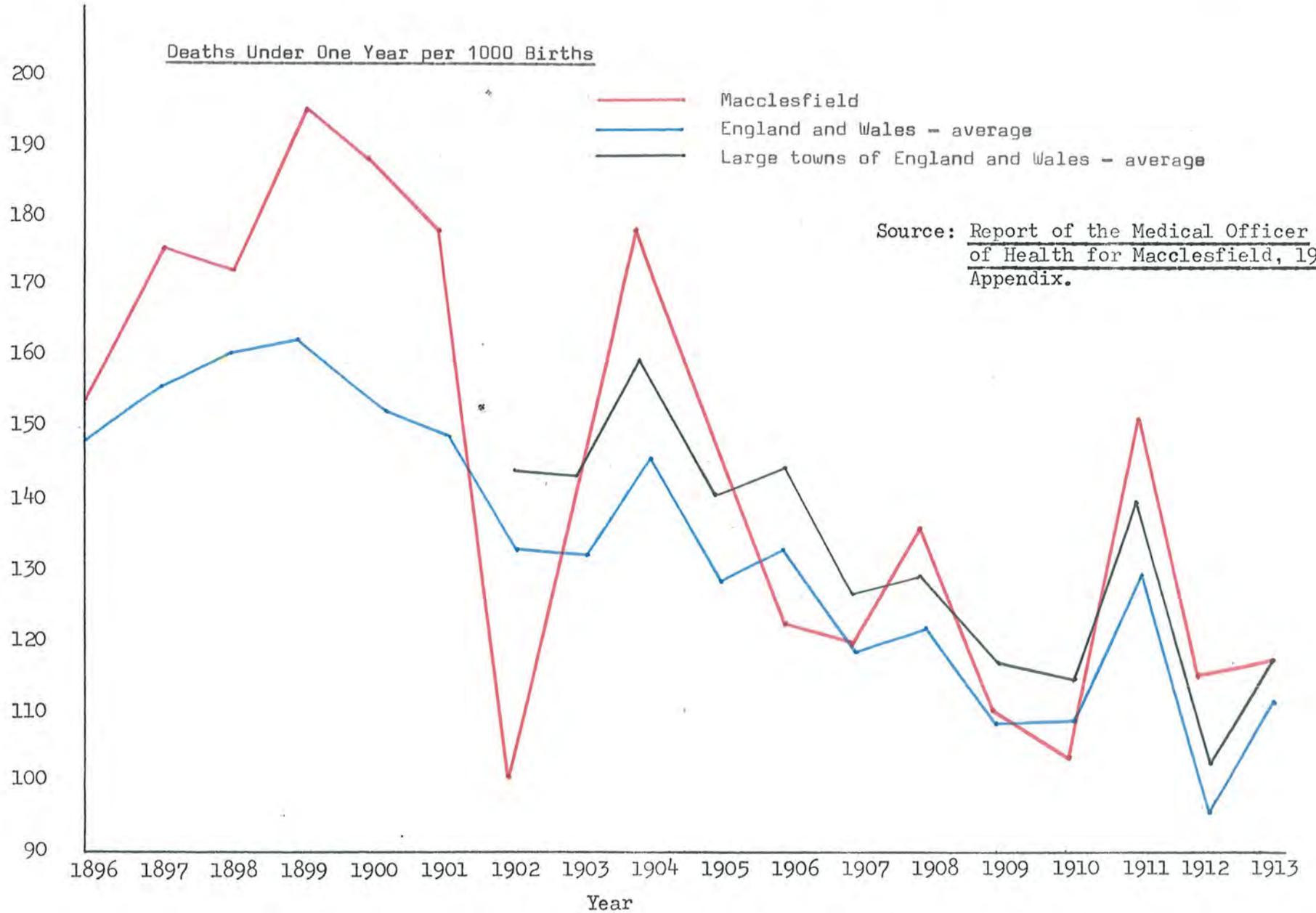
42. M.O.H. Report, 1913, p.33.

43. M.C.H., 29.xii.1906.

44. M.O.H. Report, 1899, n.p.

Figure I

Infant deaths
per 1,000



the medical officer's reports reveal the demoralizing and debilitating living conditions of a sizeable proportion of the community.

There was a sound body of support for the medical officer's health measures - as long as they were not too expensive. (There was alarm among the civic leaders in the early 1900s regarding the paving and drainage scheme for Hurdsfield, forced on the Corporation by, among others, the Rev. William Laycock, vicar of the parish, at a cost of £5,000).⁴⁵ The local Courier, from the first, applauded Marsh's fearless and frank revelations of deficiencies, and warned the town council of the dangers of ignoring his recommendations.⁴⁶ To do them justice, many of the council accepted the strictures of the M.O.H. and, within financial limits, were prepared to follow his lead but, as might be expected, there was also opposition to the cleansing crusade. For example, a councillor in 1899 complained in committee about the zeal of the new medical officer over a certain condemned building in which he had an interest, haranguing the meeting until the other members walked out on him;⁴⁷ and in 1904 property owners took a case to court in an abortive attempt to reverse an order, made on grounds of public hygiene, which involved expensive alterations.⁴⁸

Progress was slow - too slow for Hedley Marsh whose impatience reveals itself in periodic tirades in his reports and in public utterances reported in the press - but, as with the infant death rate, there were noticeable signs of improvement in the public health of the community generally as the new century moved on: the death rate fell from 18.6 per thousand in 1898 to 15.2 per thousand in 1913, and

45. R. Head, Cheshire at the Opening of the Twentieth Century (Brighton, 1904), p.221.

46. M.C.H., 17.xi.1900.

47. M.C.H., 4.xi.1899.

48. M.O.H. Report, 1905, p.263.

the death rate from zymotic diseases dropped from 1.8 to .77, placing Macclesfield below all the Cheshire boroughs - although not below the county rate.⁴⁹ Sanitation was improved when sewage works, the first phase of which was started in the early 1890s, were completed in 1907, and some of the worst of the sub-standard dwellings were removed during this period; but the nineteenth century inheritance projected its influence well into the twentieth century. In an obituary after his death in 1929, it was recalled that Dr. Marsh was responsible for the demolition of 150 to 200 slum houses - 'one of his principal works'.⁵⁰ Most of this number must have been in the 1920s, and can be largely accounted for by the two municipal housing schemes of that decade. In the period before the first world war a number of individual dwellings were demolished, but large scale demolition was impracticable, even if it had been considered desirable, without some provision being made for the displaced occupants, and of this there is no indication. The hardship devolving on families turned out of their homes was used as a valid argument for inaction by the opponents of change.⁵¹ In 1904-5 thirty-one new houses were built in the town.⁵² These might have been replacements for demolished property, but they were put up by private builders. It was not until after the first world war, and following the Corporation Housing Act of 1919, that serious efforts were made to raise minimum accommodation standards and rid the town of the worst survivals of the early nineteenth century building boom. The first of the municipal estates, built specifically for the re-housing of occupants of condemned property, appeared in 1922 at Hurdsfield,⁵³ where the Lower Heys

49. M.O.H. Report, 1913, Tables appended, n.p.

50. M.C.H., 8.vi.1929.

51. M.C.H., 17.xi.1900, for example.

52. M.O.H. Report, 1905, p.263.

53. M.C.H., 14.iii.1923.

cotton factory had superseded Brocklehursts' silk mill as the largest employer of the area. The second followed six years later, a project of 126 houses in another densely populated old mill district, in East Macclesfield, in the parish of St. Paul's.⁵⁴ In 1930 - after Marsh's time - eighty 'non-parlour houses' were put up in Sutton,⁵⁵ and a fourth estate, Moss Lane, was built in the early 1930s on the southern limit of the town, composed of mixed council and private property.⁵⁶

The efforts of Hedley Marsh and his committees brought improvements in the environment, and raised, in some degree, the quality and expectancy of life, especially in the poorest quarters; government legislation and a growing concern for social justice, as the twentieth century progressed, mitigated the worst of the hardships which had been an accepted feature of life at the start of the 1900s. In general, however, changes came slowly to Macclesfield up to the outbreak of the second world war. With small variation in population and little movement in industry, there was no urgent motivation for expansion or modification on any front. Apart from the re-housing schemes there was little building, and the social mix comprising textile workers, shopkeepers and tradesmen, with a small body of professional men and silk manufacturers, was similar in the late 1930s to that of the start of the twentieth century. The cotton factories, and breweries, some shirt and blouse makers, and several cardboard box manufacturers are listed in directories as alternative sources of support in the inter-war years,⁵⁷ but in 'the chief centre of silk

54. Cheshire R.O., CED 7/28/3, p.205.

55. Cheshire R.O., 7/28/3, p.295.

56. Cheshire R.O., 7/28/4, p.83.

57. Macclesfield and District Directory (Manchester, 1924), p. 157; Kelly's Directory of Cheshire (1934), p. 244.

production in Great Britain' - as a Board of Education inspector described the borough in 1936⁵⁸ - the old staple industry was still the main means of livelihood.

Unexpectedly in a town which believed it had considerable advantages to gain from the protection of its industry, throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth there was a strong body of free trade supporters. In 1832 John Brocklehurst had come to the fore as a champion of the silk industry's fight against Huskisson's repeal of duties on French exports, back in the 1820s. He spent his political life in the cause, yet was undeviating in his support of free trade as a national policy. Silk, he argued, was a luxury trade with special difficulties therefore it needed special treatment, but other trades prospered in a free market and, thus, the country as a whole benefited. The reasoning held into the twentieth century and was used in his grandson's election campaign in 1906. Speaking to a Hurdfield audience, W.B. Brocklehurst declared that the cotton industry, 'where wages grew by leaps and bounds', and other trades thrived under free trade, but silk needed a 20% tax on cloth to ensure its survival.⁵⁹ He is quoted, on another occasion, as having told a friend that although he knew it would injure his own trade he must vote for the Liberals against protection because of the benefits to trade in general.⁶⁰ He was also a supporter of the 'cheap food' school - taxation would bring increased food prices - a declared policy which in 1906 was largely responsible for the Liberal success.

This third generation Brocklehurst - from all accounts of him ,

58. P.R.O., ED114/44, p.1.

59. M.C.H., 13.i.1906.

60. Mary Crozier, An Old Silk Family 1745-1945 (Aberdeen, 1947), p.33.

a shy, silent, retiring man personally - had been brought up in the family mould of the silk world and the civic life of Macclesfield. He joined the firm after leaving Macclesfield, becoming head of it on his father's retirement. He first became a councillor in 1879, was twice mayor of the town in the 1880s, sat on the bench for county and borough, and took over his father's aldermanic seat in 1895. After reorganization in the administration of education in 1903, he became chairman of both the Primary Education Committee and the Higher Education Sub-Committee, posts which he held into the inter-war years.

In Macclesfield the 1906 election campaign was fought almost entirely around the problems of the silk trade and possible solutions. The Conservative candidate, Colonel William Bromley-Davenport, member of a local county family, was a staunch Protectionist, proclaiming tariff reform as the only remedy. He had been the parliamentary member for the Macclesfield division for twenty years, but he was unable this time to withstand the tide of public opinion which nationally resulted in a Liberal landslide. With regard to the town's votes he was at a disadvantage in having, for the first time since his initial success, a Brocklehurst opponent. There are indications of a continuing widespread acceptance of the nineteenth century paternalistic relationship between Brocklehursts' and its employees, and apparent personal liking for a boss whom they knew well, in the partisan shouts and demonstrations of the audience quoted in the Macclesfield Courier's coverage,⁶¹ (and the Courier itself favoured the Conservative cause). Too, the firm was still the all-important employer. A supporting speaker at one meeting pointed out that J. and T. Brocklehurst's was paying out £1,000 per week in wages,

61. M.C.H., 13.i.1906.

spent £8,000 per year with local tradesmen and dyers, and had an annual rates bill of between £500 and £600.⁶² The nineteenth century association linking his family with the seat was also a consideration. John had been M.P. for Macclesfield from 1832 to 1868, when William Coare had followed on, to continue until 1886. (Bromley-Davenport's 20 year stint was the only break in the Brocklehurst's hold on the seat from Macclesfield's first parliamentary representation to W. B.'s retirement at the end of the first world war - when J. R. Remer started a Conservative line unbroken to the present day.)

On local government level, party fortunes swung in the reverse direction. Liberals, who had held a majority for a long spell in the later decades of the nineteenth century, by 1900 were the minority party. In 1901 ten aldermen and nineteen councillors were Conservative against the Liberals' two aldermen and sixteen councillors, and there was one Independent Social Reformer.⁶³ In 1905 three Labour candidates were elected, and a year later there were six councillors of this newest party;⁶⁴ at this time the balance on the aldermanic bench was nine to three in favour of the Conservatives. The tide against the Tories in national affairs showed in a reduction of their majority in councillors, where the numbers were even at fourteen each, although one Independent was an ultra-Conservative and could be relied upon to vote with them. Up to 1918 this was the nearest the Conservatives came to losing their hold on local affairs. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s both parliamentary representation and local government was backed by a strong Conservative majority.

62. M.C.H., 13.i.1906.

63. M.C.H., 9.xi.1901.

64. M.C.H., 3.xi.1906.

During the war of 1914-18 the silk industry had a period of prosperity resulting from import restrictions on foreign goods and from war offices orders.⁶⁵ In line with the national boom the upward trend continued for a short spell following the armistice, but by the spring of 1921 Macclesfield, in company with manufacturing areas throughout the country, was feeling the effects of the general economic recession. By the autumn of 1923 conditions were so bad that the hardship of the silk industry, raised in the House of Commons by Macclesfield's M.P., J.R. Remer, was made the subject of a government enquiry.⁶⁶ A representative of the Macclesfield Silk Trade Employers Association, called as a witness, indicates the drastic reversal of fortunes experienced within a few months; compared with March 1920, half the looms in the town and 63.61% of the operatives were without work in January 1922. Another employer told how his work force had dropped from 590 during the war to his present 340, with many of those on half time.⁶⁷ A union representative claimed that 2,242 of the town's 4,000 silk workers were unemployed and more than 400 on organized short time.⁶⁸ In addition, chronic underemployment, 'the greatest curse', meant that hundreds of workers were taking home in wages less than they would get from unemployment benefit, yet were unable to register. In a similar plight were the handloom weavers, most of whom had been unemployed so long that they did not qualify for benefit. Power loom workers were slightly better off. In normal times, working on piece work, operatives if skilled - it took from five to seven years to achieve the requisite skill - might earn

65. Silk Report, p.13.

66. Silk Report, p. 5, p.28.

67. Silk Report, p.43.

68. Silk Report, p.48.

between £2 15s and £3 per week. This compared favourably with the average wage in other sectors of the industry of £1 7s for women and £2 5s for men; but even here the average weekly earnings, over two years, in eleven firms, was well below half the normal rate, at £1 7s 1d.⁶⁹

It added to the unemployment problem that the cotton trade, too, was slack, and Lower Heys could offer no relief.⁷⁰ In 1922 the Corporation was moved to provide some aid by way of public works, and in February extended relief schemes were mounted which included road construction and repairs, and improvements to the waterworks, sewage plant, and the public baths.⁷¹ The distress which hung over the town is underlined in the records of the Primary Education Committee. A suggestion from the Head Teachers Association that 14 year olds should be kept at school until they found work was agreed upon and adopted as policy;⁷² and concern was expressed at another meeting regarding the need to occupy the 14 to 18 year group,⁷³ although this was outside the Committee's province for action. In March 1923 it was decided that the Technical School should be re-decorated to alleviate unemployment,⁷⁴ and in December - indicating the extent of the poverty - £100 was made available from official sources for a clog fund for needy children.⁷⁵

The trade slump of the early 'twenties saw the dashing of the bright hopes of the immediate post-war period, and it pointed the way

69. Silk Industry Report, pp.49-50.

70. M.C.H., 6.i.1923.

71. M.C.H., 5.i.1924.

72. M.C.H., 18.viii.1923.

73. M.C.H., 3.ii.1923.

74. M.C.H., 17.iii.1923.

75. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.67.

ahead. Until the next war there would always be at least one million unemployed in the country, mainly in the old industries - textiles, coal, shipbuilding, iron and steel.⁷⁶ Macclesfield came within that sphere. Silk duties were imposed in 1925, and trade stabilized in 1926 (and a week's holiday with pay was introduced into the silk industry),⁷⁷ but the break was brief in the economic gloom. Before the end of the decade Macclesfield was sharing the effects of the great economic recession which blighted most of the 1930s. Not all companies foundered. A successful one was that of A. W. Hewetson, Embroiderers. This firm, established at the end of the nineteenth century, pioneered machine embroidery and, growing from small beginnings, in the 1930s employed a labour force of approaching 500. It designed and manufactured hand and machine embroidered goods in silk, cotton, and rayon, developing technical expertise which was fully employed during the second world war in producing badges for the uniforms of the armed services, and other government work.⁷⁸ In 1929 J. and T. Brocklehurst and Sons Ltd., amalgamated with the long established Langley firm of William Whiston and Son Ltd., silk printers and dyers to become Brocklehurst-Whiston Amalgamated, and remained an important source of employment well into the post-war years. (As Brocklehurst Fabrics it is still in business on the original site in Hurdsfield). A number of small concerns, however, in various branches of the silk trade - weavers, warpers, and winders - had to struggle in the unfriendly economic climate, and there were many closures. H.M.I. E. Burney noted industrial depression in the town when he made an

76. R.W.Breach and R.M.Hartwell, British Economy and Society 1870-1970 (Oxford, 1972), p.133.

77. W.R.Brown, The Silken Glow of Macclesfield (Manchester, n.d.), p.60.

78. Oral evidence: Mr. A. Biddulph, Leek.

inspection of the Central School in 1931;⁷⁹ again in 1936, 'widespread depression', was recorded in the Art School report, 'as in other industries';⁸⁰ and in 1939 the depressed state of trade was the inhibiting background to a proposed programme of educational improvements.⁸¹

Up to a point, Macclesfield's history between 1900 and 1940 followed a common pattern with other manufacturing towns originating in the early nineteenth century industrial revolution. Before the end of Victoria's reign Britain's dominance, established earlier, was being increasingly challenged. With Germany and the U.S.A. leading, other trading powers were catching up and in some spheres overtaking her. The resultant slowing down in economic growth, and the consequent closures, bankruptcies, unemployment, were particularly apparent in the old, established industries. With the world recession and ever fiercer competition, the position worsened after the first world war. Whilst at the same time the general standard of living was raised by higher public health requirements, increased medical knowledge, and the development of embryo social services, the inter-war period was a time of austerity and insecurity, and remembered as such by those who lived through it. Even during the worst of the recession years, the industries of the new technology - radios, motor vehicles, electrical appliances, etc - brought prosperity to certain areas of the country, but Macclesfield belonged to the old world.

Where Macclesfield's history differs from that of the majority of manufacturing towns of similar origins is in the earlier start of

79. P.R.O., ED21/24866, 27.xi.1931.

80. P.R.O., ED114/44, p.1.

81. M.C.H., 2.iii.1939.

the decline of its staple industry. The Report of 1923 speaks of silk as a trade which had been 'hanging on by the skin of its teeth for fifty, sixty, seventy years'.⁸² Industrial insecurity from mid-Victorian times onwards largely shaped the Macclesfield of the first forty years of the twentieth century. Civic leaders, all affected, to some degree, by the vagaries of the silk industry, were bred to regard public economy as of primary importance. For a large proportion of the town's inhabitants the immediate concern was the struggle to obtain the basic necessities for existence. It was in the climate of these stark attitudes that state education developed from 1902 up to the second world war, between the Education Acts of Balfour and Butler.

82. Jackson, p.42.

Chapter Two

The Battle of the Buildings: Voluntaryism's Last Stand

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'The educational rock in Macclesfield's path', ran the leading article in the Macclesfield Courier and Herald in December 1906, 'is not irregular attendance, not inefficient teaching, not parsimonious administration, but ANTIQUATED SCHOOL BUILDINGS'.¹ The writer referred to the voluntary schools which comprised the town's entire elementary provision, and the criticism was the more telling coming as it did from the editor, Robert Brown, staunch Anglican, school manager, and life-long voluntaryist. For the past three years the 'antiquated school buildings' had been the subject of dissension between the several bodies of managers and the Board of Education. The Board, pursuing a determined policy in the matter of school accommodation, found them substandard and unacceptable; the managers and a large body of supporters, devoted to the voluntaryist cause, were prepared to defend them at all costs. The resultant struggle, on this front, for state versus sectarian control dominated the educational scene in Macclesfield for more than a decade after the passing of the Education Act of 1902.

The problem of defective buildings was not new. There were sixteen elementary schools in 1903: twelve Anglican, two Wesleyan, one British, one Roman Catholic. (Table III). Apart from Beech Lane National School, opened in 1875 to 'fill a gap', all had been built in the first half of the nineteenth century. Throughout their

1. M.C.H., 29.xii.1906.

Table IIIMacclesfield Elementary Schools in 1902

School	Denomination	Date of Building
Broken Cross	Church of England	1848
Beech Lane	National	1876
Christ Church	National	1840
Crompton Road	National	1848
Hurdsfield:		
Daybrook Street	National	1845
Church Street	National	1841
Old Church, Duke Street	National	1813
St George's, Sutton	National	1835
St George's, Branch	National	1845
St John's, Newtown	National	Before 1862
St Paul's	National	1851
St Peter's	National	1845
St Alban's	Roman Catholic	1810 (as Chapel)
Bridge Street	Wesleyan	1840
Mill Street	Wesleyan	1820 (as Sunday School)
Lord Street	British	1819 (enlarged 1889)

Sources: National Society Records, Macclesfield National Schools;

P.R.O. ED21/2136 - ED21/2148, Macclesfield Elementary Schools.

history, for the most part, they had been chronically short of money. In the mid-1890s, in an earlier tightening-up period on school building regulations, there could well have been a mass closure of schools in the town, when the requirements of the Education Department for repairs and alterations to bring the premises up to minimum standards caused a financial crisis for the Anglicans. The danger was averted by a mammoth effort on the part of the local Church of England community, aided considerably by the National Society and the Diocesan Education Committee. The Voluntary Schools Act of 1897, by relieving schools of paying rates and by lifting the 17s 6d grant limit, eased the position and boosted morale in the last years of the century, but the danger of 'urgent demands' from Whitehall was ever present.

Against this background of perpetual financial insecurity, Macclesfield voluntaryists, with denominationalists throughout the country, greeted with relief the passing of the new Education Act on 20 December 1902 - 'the long promised and long delayed Education Bill', as a Church member of the School Board hailed it on its introduction in March. They saw the saving of their system in its provision for rate support for voluntary schools, and relief from the 'intolerable strain' under which managers had lived for decades.² What was not appreciated, for the most part, was the corresponding liability entailed to increased expenditure, in a time of rising standards and growing costs, under the control of a new, highly efficient government department. Balfour and Morant foresaw this angle when they were preparing the Bill. Writing in 1902 the latter expressed agreement with his chief's view, 'that voluntary managers will find it a much more expensive business than they at present realise to bring and keep

buildings up to the increasingly heightened standards'.³ They could have had Macclesfield in mind. Locally, Robert Brown alone appears to have been alert to the possible threat. In a debate on whether or not Macclesfield should choose to become a Part III authority and administer its own elementary education, he suggested that the town might find itself better off financially under the county authority in the event of the Board of Education making heavy demands regarding school buildings.⁴ His was a lone voice. Macclesfield became a Part III authority which, as a non-county borough of more than 10,000 inhabitants, was - in the primary zone only - an alternative choice to county control. Almost immediately the heavy demands of the Board of Education began.

The opening salvo was a devastating, condemnatory report which was received by the Board in November 1903 from the newly appointed inspector for the district, Mr H Ward. Having inspected the schools, he found almost all 'seriously defective in the premises'; 'very unsatisfactory conditions mostly prevail', he went on.⁵ At this stage, Ward saw Macclesfield as a 'quiet, rather poor, perhaps decaying town', and advised against the Board presenting wholesale demands for large and costly schemes. He proposed to recommend to the L.E.A. a programme of gradual improvement dealing with the most urgent needs first. It is indicative of the unacceptably low standard of the premises as a whole that, although at this point H.M.I. was prepared to make all possible allowances, he expected, nevertheless, to effect the closure of seven schools within the following three years, namely: the British school and the two Wesleyan buildings, in addition to St Peter's, St George's Branch, Duke Street, and Crompton Road National schools.

3. J. Murphy, Church, State and Schools in Britain, 1800-1970 (1971) p.104.

4. M.C.H., 17.i.1903.

5. P.R.O., ED16/20, 16.ix.1903.

A second report followed four months later, during which time Ward had met with the Primary Education Committee and completed the routine annual inspections. He had also drastically revised his assessment of the situation. Strictures on the buildings were reiterated but the policy of gentle persuasion was abandoned for a distinctly tougher line.⁶ There was no longer any reason to withhold pressure, he told the Board, and he asked for his earlier request for leniency to be rescinded. Possibly he had decided that the Committee and/or managers were pleading poverty unnecessarily and shirking their responsibilities. 'The Committee is terribly afraid of having a provided school on its hands and dreads building', he recorded, and only a few months later he was reporting of a recalcitrant Christ Church, 'these managers have money'.⁷ Possibly he had been antagonized by his reception in certain quarters. The Education Committee, rate-conscious and heavily weighted with Conservative/voluntaryist sympathizers, could not have responded readily to a proposal to close nearly half its schools. At Hurdsfield he had, no doubt, already met the Rev. William Laycock of whom he observed in one memo, 'he delights in being caustic at the expense of the Board of Education and its officers'.⁸ He had certainly crossed swords with the vicar of Christ Church who refused, 'from pure obstinacy', to build a new entrance to the infants' department in place of the existing one which was reached by way of a narrow, cobbled passage frequently befouled with garbage from private ashpits running alongside.⁹

6. P.R.O., ED16/20, 23.iii.1904.

7. P.R.O., ED21/2136, 29.viii.1904.

8. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 25.vi.1905.

9. P.R.O., ED21/2136, 8.iii.1904.

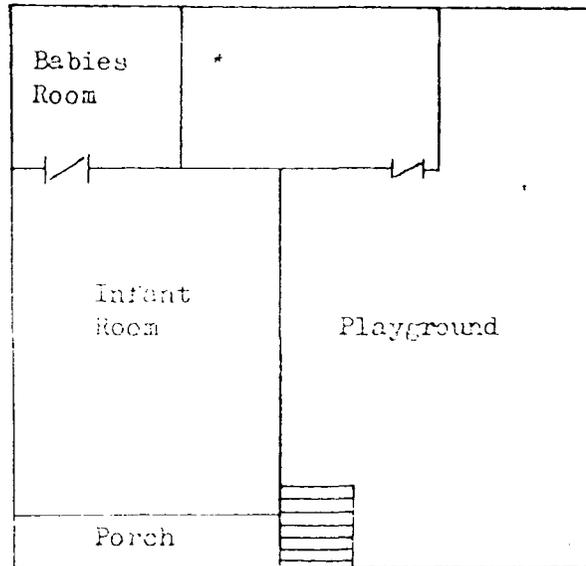
Ward's detailed reports of their structural defects provide an illuminating picture of the schools at the start of the twentieth century. Marjorie Cruikshank refers to the image of shabbiness which became associated with church schools, as compared with the new council schools being erected, in the public mind in the post-1902 period - 'dark and forbidding relics of the past'.¹⁰ One can judge the aptness of the description in Macclesfield's case through Ward's eyes. Although the borough had had a school board for thirty-one years there was never a board school, and the era of school board building, as described by Dr. R. Lowe,¹¹ for example, had passed the town by. The voluntary schools were typical of their period of origin - church school architecture of the pre-1850s period. They were usually two-storeyed structures with infants on the ground floor and older children upstairs. Most departments had one large room, undivided or curtained off, where two or three classes were taught at the same time; at Crompton Road there were four classes in one room which could not be partitioned as it was the parish church.¹² There might be one classroom in addition, sometimes two. The plan of St. George's, which was recognized for 330 mixed older pupils and 221 infants, shows a typical Macclesfield National school lay-out. (Figure II). Lighting, ventilation, and heating were generally inadequate, H.M.I. found; windows were glazed with small, diamond-shaped leaded panes; heating was by stove or open fire. (Miss Peachey was still having heating problems at Daybrook Street Infants in 1914, when winter temperatures in the classroom were down to 47°F at times).¹³

10. Marjorie Cruikshank, Church and State in English Education 1870 to the Present Day (1963), p.103.

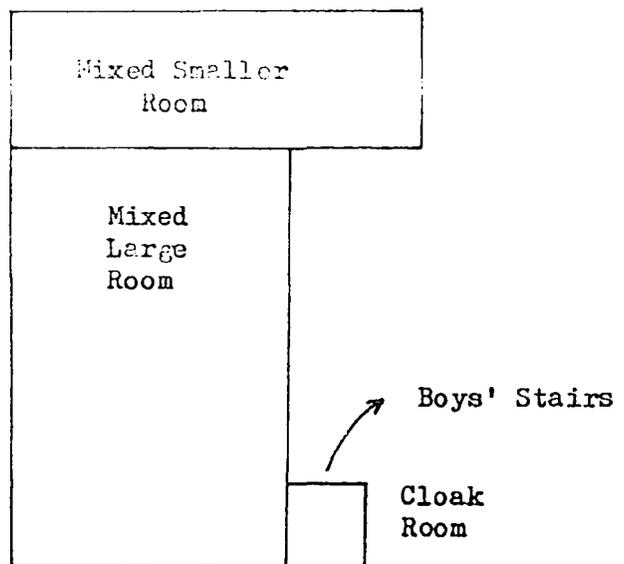
11. M. Seaborne and R. Lowe, The English School: Its Architecture and Organisation, Vol. II, 1870-1970 (1977), pp.24-38.

12. Cheshire R.O., CED7/45/2.

13. Hurdsfield Daybrook Street Infants' Log Book, 20.ii.1914.

Figure IIPlan of St. George's National School, 1905Ground Floor

- * Unrecognised; unconnected to other rooms; used as a relief room except for a weekly parental meeting.

First Floor

Other criticisms included lack of cupboard space, and rooms lumbered with unnecessary furniture belonging to the church or Sunday school; some classes, particularly infants, were being taught in rooms which were also thoroughfares to other parts of the building and were, therefore, subject to constant interruptions; cloakroom accommodation was sadly lacking, as was playground space which, where it did exist, was often ill-paved, small, and badly drained; lavatory provision was condemned outright, provoking a demand from H.M.I. for a report from the Sanitary Inspector.¹⁴ This last deficiency was part of a serious civic problem, a relic of the past about which the medical officer of health had been campaigning for several years with the utmost urgency.

Ward's onslaught on the Macclesfield schools - speedy confirmation of Robert Brown's fears regarding the possible escalation of education expenses - was in line with the Board of Education's policy aimed at enforcing, through its building regulations, a uniformly heightened standard of accommodation in the elementary school service.¹⁵ In addition to structural defects, he complained that rooms were often overcrowded. Discussing this problem at his first meeting with the Primary Education Committee, he rejected as unreliable the currently accepted calculations upon which the supply of school places was based; 'the great superfluity which exists on paper - 7,000 places roughly, 6,000 on registers, 5,000 in average attendance - exists only on paper'.¹⁶ The Courier corroborated his findings in 1906 when it told readers that 'many voluntary schools have accommodation' estimated to be at least 25% too high.¹⁷ The writer called the 7,440 places accredited to the schools in total 'a fictitious and menaced'

14. Cheshire R.O., CED 7/28/1, 15.iii.1904.

15. Seaborne and Lowe, p.74.

16. P.R.O., ED16/21, 28.iii.1904.

17. M.C.H., 29.x.1906.

figure, and warned those responsible that they were living in a fool's paradise to believe they were 2,200 to the good when there was really a 700 deficit.

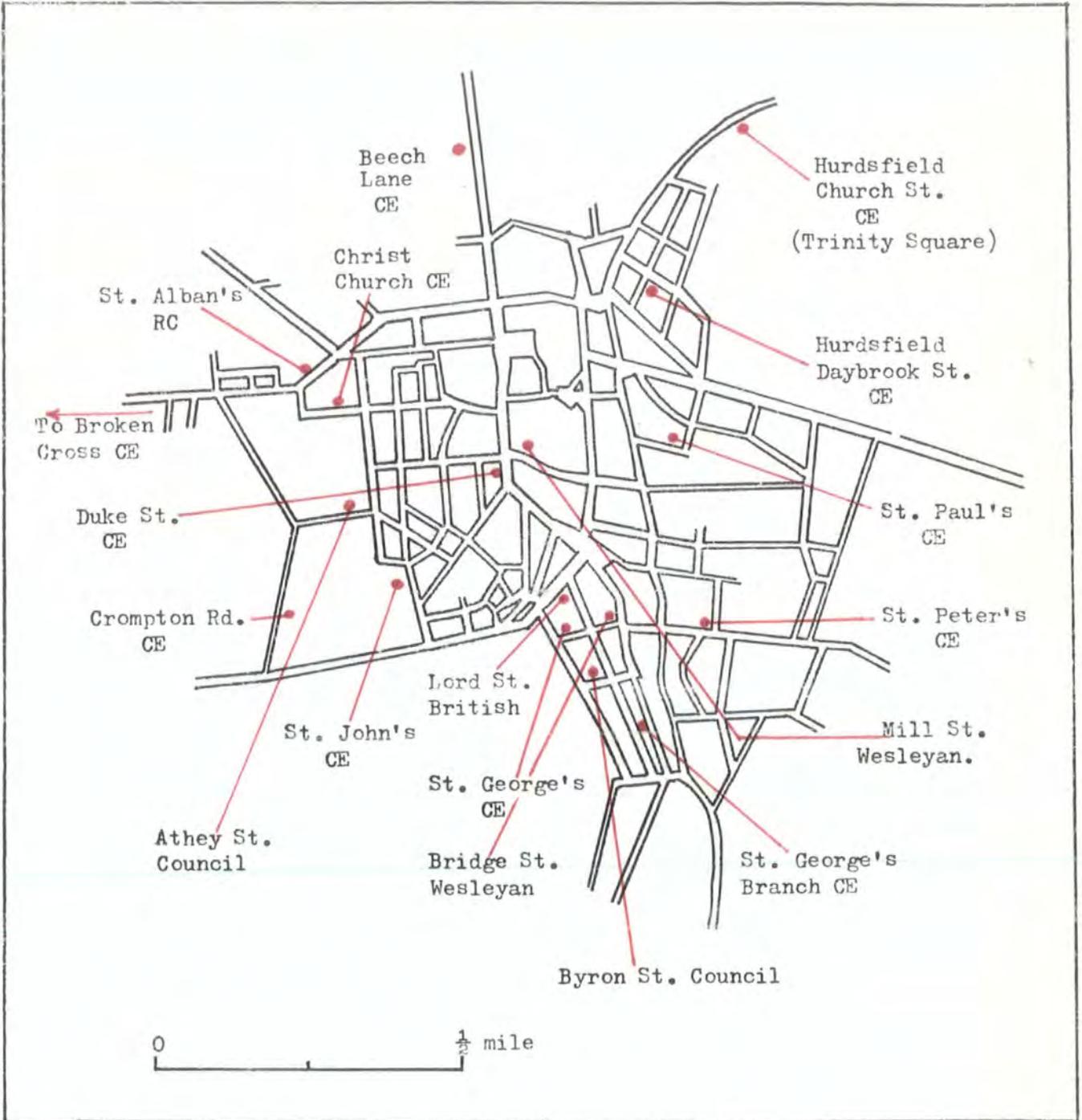
Of the seven schools condemned in 1904, four - St. Peter's, St. George's Branch, Lord Street British, and Bridge Street Wesleyan - were in the south of the town, and St. John's (Newtown), with St. Andrew's (Crompton Road), were to the west. (Map 1). In his programme of improvements discussed with the L.E.A., Ward foresaw the closure of these within three years and the building of two new provided schools to replace them.¹⁸ In the event, only Bridge Street, which had an average attendance of about 300 between 1900 and 1904, withdrew without a struggle, closing on 30 September 1905 after sixty-five years continuous service.¹⁹ In October 1904 there were signs of another possible closure when the managers of Lord Street reported to the L.E.A. that they had no funds for structural improvements. The school had only narrowly escaped extinction nine years previously when, again because of money problems, it had been offered to the School Board. The offer was declined, and immediate financial pressure was relieved through the aid of the voluntaryist lobby in general, principally to ensure the protection of the system from intrusion by the dreaded board school. Now, the L.E.A. seemed willing to take on a provided school, offering to buy the building with the intention of improving it to Board of Education standards and opening it as one of the two council schools demanded by H.M.I.²⁰ The trustees, however, were not willing to surrender all claims; they refused to sell, but offered to rent the building on a yearly lease reserving certain

18. P.R.O., ED16/20, 28.iii.1904.

19. P.R.O., ED16/136, 1.v.1903.

20. P.R.O., ED21/2139, 25.x.1904.

Map 1.



MACCLESFIELD ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS 1902-1918

rights of usage for Sunday and evening activities. The Board of Education regarded these terms as unacceptable and declined to give its approval. Moreover, it insisted that before the L.E.A. entered into any transaction the structural defects should be made good. Thus, the negotiations were brought full circle back to the inability of Lord Street to pay for the necessary work, and in September 1905 the L.E.A. decided to abandon the scheme.²¹

After the flurry of action over Lord Street, nothing further was attempted in the way of reorganization within Ward's three years of grace, and in 1907 the Board showed signs of losing patience. The L.E.A. was reproved for its inactivity regarding H.M.I.'s recommendations, minimum improvements only having been made.²² 'Nothing of importance has been done', it was complained, and a summary of defects was compiled on the schools in which only Beech Lane escaped censure. Perhaps jolted by this reprimand, notices were issued by the L.E.A. for two new council schools of 800 places each, in May 1908,²³ but twelve months later a Ward minute, referring to Macclesfield's 'vague and insufficient' plans, called them 'an insult to the Board'.²⁴ A letter to the L.E.A., expressing the Board's 'grave concern', dwelt at some length on 'the extremely unsatisfactory nature of public elementary school accommodation in Macclesfield'.²⁵ Did the L.E.A. appreciate, the Board enquired, 'the gravity of the situation caused by its failure to deal with the matter promptly and comprehensively'? Six out of the fourteen schools were on the condemned list, in addition to

21. P.R.O., ED21/2139, 5.ix.1905.

22. P.R.O., ED16/20, 20.ix.1907.

23. P.R.O., ED16/21, 3.v.1908.

24. P.R.O., ED16/21, 6.v.1909.

25. P.R.O., ED16/21, 3.viii.1909.

two on the black list. (The two Hurdsfield schools now counted as one for official purposes). Substantial reduction of grants was threatened, and there was to be no further extension of recognition for the condemned schools, which at this stage were: Christ Church, Crompton Road, Lord Street (still hanging on after 5 years on the brink), Mill Street Wesleyan Infants, St. George's Branch, and St. John's. At the end of the year the L.E.A. was still holding back and the Board declared it was losing patience.²⁶ Persuasion and strictures had proved useless; it was time for action. Only large deductions from the grants, it seemed, would be effective, and in February 1910 this policy was adopted.

Macclesfield was not the only intransigent L.E.A. in this sphere. Lowe records the growing number of local authorities dallying in the matter of inadequate school provision in 1909 and the Board of Education's renewed pressure, resulting initially, as in Macclesfield's case, in minimum reaction, but forcing the recalcitrants through threat of grant withdrawal - again, as with Macclesfield - to come to terms.²⁷

The Primary Education Committee feared it would lose £2,500.²⁸ In effect, 20% of the allowance for the condemned schools was withheld, a total of £415,²⁹ but this was sufficient. Now, there was a rapid reaction. Plans for the first new school were sent in forthwith and, after an amendment by the Board which insisted on boys', girls' and infant departments instead of the senior mixed, junior mixed, infants, preferred by the L.E.A., approval for the building of Byron Street Council School was granted on 13 May 1910.³⁰ Construction started in

26. P.R.O., ED16/21, 16.xii.1909.

27. Seaborne and Lowe, pp. 73-4.

28. P.R.O., ED16/21, 11.ii.1910.

29. P.R.O., ED16/21, 16.ii.1910.

30. P.R.O., ED21/2135, 13.v.1910.

October of the same year, and the school opened on 6 January 1912.³¹

'I do not see how the town can escape a new school', wrote Ward in 1903,³² but it was eight years before the first phase of his urgent recommendation was put into effect.

Byron Street was designed and constructed by local firms and, as advocated in the Board of Education building regulations, it was built on the central hall plan, although with a variation in that classrooms were sited on three sides only. It was two storeys high, and planned to accommodate 1,060 children: 380 each in the senior and junior departments, with 300 infants.³³ In addition to two halls there were twenty classrooms: seven to take 60 pupils each (the maximum allowed by the Board's regulations for elementary schools), twelve for classes of 50, and one room for 40 pupils.³⁴ Indicating two important curricular expectations of the period, a large asphalt playground, with covered shelter, was provided for P.T., with a school garden for the infants.

The second council school followed fairly promptly although, again, not without some delays and the suspension of grants on two schools, 'to impress the L.E.A. with the need for haste'.³⁵ Plans for Athey Street were approved on 9 March 1911,³⁶ and the school opened twelve months after Byron Street in January 1913.³⁷ Designed to house 300 seniors and 350 juniors in mixed departments, it was built on the same plan as Byron Street but without the infant provision.

31. M.C.H., 13.i.1912.

32. P.R.O., ED19/19, 16.x.1903.

33. P.R.O., ED21/2135, 13.v.1910.

34. M.C.H., 6.vii.1912.

35. P.R.O., ED21/2133, 7.iii.1911.

36. P.R.O., ED21/2133, 9.iii.1911.

37. M.C.H., 11.i.1913.



In addition to hall, cloakrooms, etc., each department had seven classrooms, which allowed for a rather more favourable pupil/room ratio. Building costs amounted to £13 per school place, which equated exactly with the national average.³⁸

Although it owed something to local feeling in the face of outside interference - as it was seen - and to the parsimony of the civic leaders with their vested interest in keeping down the rates, the struggle to keep out the council schools was, in essentials, a continuation of the generations-old sectarian warfare, which had prompted the founding of the voluntary schools in the first half of the nineteenth century and had been the motivation for their nurture and preservation, in the face of tremendous difficulties, ever since. To contemporaries the pattern of events in the first decade of the twentieth century must have appeared very much a repeat of that of the 1890s, with shortage of funds, a demanding government department, and the threat of a breach in the exclusively voluntaryist school system. The 'dilatatory attitude' of the L.E.A., as the Board of Education saw it, was a reflection of the hopes and plans of the schools' managers to avoid closures or reduction in numbers, and so to resist the imposition of the non-sectarian intruder. The managers had always been used to a large measure of autonomy, and believed it was their due. Throughout thirty-one years up to 1903, voluntaryists had maintained a majority on the School Board, and in any conflict of authority between that body and any individual school management invariably victory went to the latter. They believed in themselves; they had succeeded before, and they would succeed again. The aspect that was new, and hard to appreciate, at least in the early days of

³⁸. Seaborne and Lowe, p.71.

the struggle, was the greater degree of government involvement and the tighter structure of the administration as it developed in these years. Managers, and supporters, were used to dealing with urgent demands for structural improvements from the Education Department - the forerunner of the Board of Education - but they were not prepared for the relentless determination of the new regime in following up the demands. The retiring government inspector in 1903, Mr. Gleadowe, had had Macclesfield as part of his district for over thirty years, from the early school board days, and, whilst he was not always satisfied with the situation, he had been as lenient as possible within his brief. When Ward took over he noted of his predecessor that he 'did not make a practice of pressing for structural improvements although he was aware of the need and expressed his views verbally'.³⁹ The more rigorous approach must have been a shock, too, to the L.E.A.. During this period the Macclesfield Primary Education Committee, in spirit, was a continuation of the School Board. It was larger in number, but several of the same people served on both bodies and, certainly, the same views were represented and expressed, showing strong sectarian loyalties and local pride. In 1910, for example, the composition of the Committee was eighteen Anglicans and one Roman Catholic to eight Nonconformists one of whom, at least, was a voluntaryist.⁴⁰ According to Lowe some L.E.A.s used the building regulations to try to force voluntary managers into action, and he cites an incident between Durham county and a Church of England school which became heated on this issue.⁴¹ One can imagine this with the more remote administration of the Part II authorities, but in

39 P.R.O., ED16/20, 16.ix.1903.

40. P.R.O., ED16/21, 3.iii.1910.

41. Seaborne and Lowe, p.73.

Macclesfield the L.E.A. was in close contact with its managers, and - more important - was in close sympathy. Not until the years approaching the first world war did the L.E.A. show signs of having a policy of its own. 'The local authority is consistently kindly and lenient to the denomination schools', wrote the Rev. A.C. Evans, vicar and manager of St. George's, to the National Society in 1910.⁴² Ward and his colleagues realised the position full well. 'I know the Church party boss the Town Council and the L.E.A.', was how H.M.I. Howard viewed the position, writing a Board minute in 1909.⁴³

The year 1910 saw the break through for the Board of Education in its struggle to establish the council schools. It also saw a resurgence of sectarian activity, after the black year preceding it. In 1909 six schools lay under threat of extinction, and most of the others could see only ruin ahead. Yet by 1912, as the second council school made ready to open its doors, all but three of the old schools had been saved, if only, in some cases, in a truncated form. Several contributory reasons suggest themselves to account for the renewed efforts. At the end of 1909 the Rev. C.E. Coade arrived to take up duties as the new vicar of Macclesfield (the title held by the incumbent of the Old Church, St. Michael's). Finding that two of the three schools in his charge were in immediate danger of closure he straightway launched an energetic rescue campaign.⁴⁴ In some quarters the increased pressure from the Board of Education inspired correspondingly more resolute opposition. The Rev. A.C. Evans, of St. George's, was a case in point, to judge from his correspondence with the National Society. Amongst other activities, he organized weekly house-to-house

42. N.S.R., St. George's, 26.iv.1910.

43. P.R.O., ED16/21, 19.x.1909.

44. N.S.R., Crompton Road, 24.i.1910, 20.i.1911.

tours of his parish to collect donations of between 1d and 3d per family; and from April 1910, when he first confided his dread of the consequences to the church schools of the imminent opening of Byron Street,⁴⁵ to July 1911, where he is reporting the start of reconstruction work on St. George's, 'to put it beyond attack in the next generation',⁴⁶ numerous remarks testify to his fears of the Board's intentions and his determination to maintain his school as a voluntaryist citadel. The most influential reason, however, was outside intervention. From 1909, increasingly, the Diocesan Association, with Archdeacon Henry Maitland-Wood as the leading spirit, put its funds and services at the disposal of Macclesfield voluntaryists. It was a tremendous boost to local morale. This was the root cause of the L.E.A.'s 'irresolute behaviour' which so exasperated the Board. H.M.I. Howard acknowledged it when he wrote, 'I know the new school won't be built until it is clear the C of E can't extend the Town Council will certainly try to give the Diocesan Association time to evolve plans'.⁴⁷

The opening of the council schools meant closure for Lord Street, which had been under threat for seven years, and for St. George's Branch and St. John's, two of the old National schools. Others which had been in danger saved themselves by making essential improvements. Two such were Duke Street - the oldest school in the town, soon coming up to its centenary - and Crompton Road which, with Beech Lane, made up the Vicar of Macclesfield's charge. Coade had mounted his rescue operation on a grand scale, with a single-minded determination which

45. N.S.R., St. George's, 26.iv.1910.

46. N.S.R., St. George's, 4.vii.1911.

47. P.R.O., ED16/21, 9.x.1908.

admitted no doubts regarding the importance of his mission. He involved the National Society, the Diocesan Association, neighbouring gentry, and his three predecessors, as well as the local community. He submitted plans to the Board of Education in which building costs were estimated at £1,860 (later increased),⁴⁸ and with immense faith, on a stipend of £300 per annum, he underwrote, with friends, the total amount needed - £2,500 - pending the outcome of a mammoth money-raising effort. This venture stretched over nearly two years, starting in February 1912, with special services attended by three former Vicars of Macclesfield now in different parts of the country,⁴⁹ and culminating in a four-day bazaar, opened jointly by the Duchess of Westminster and Lady Hugh Grosvenor in November 1913.⁵⁰ £2,500 had been expended by that time, and a target of £2,000 was aimed at. The event raised £2,009, and there was great rejoicing; added to the £200 granted to each school from both the National Society and the Diocesan Association, this meant that the schools were saved.

The amounts raised through voluntary contributions in this period are impressive. St. George's managers had to concede the loss of their small Branch school, but for their main building they succeeded in amassing £2,200, which allowed them to reconstruct the accommodation within the shell of the old school and acquire extra playground space.⁵¹ St. Peter's, one of the poorest parishes in the town, collected nearly £500 in one year.⁵² Christ Church, twelve months before the Old Church effort, raised £1,450 from its four-day bazaar.⁵³

48. N.S.R., Crompton Road, 24.i.1910, 20.i.1911, 4.vii.1912.

49. M.C.H., 10.ii.1912.

50. M.C.H., 22.xi.1913.

51. N.S.R., St. George's, 19.vii.1911.

52. N.S.R., St. Peter's, 23.xi.1910.

53. M.C.H., 16.xi.1912.

The schools did not survive unscathed. Duke Street (Old Church) was reduced to juniors only; Crompton Road was limited to standard II and below, as was St. Peter's, and Mill Street was debarred from taking the youngest infants. By the beginning of 1912 school accommodation figures had been drastically re-adjusted. (Table IV).

It is interesting to note Christ Church's figures in Table IV. This was one of the schools most fiercely resentful of what it saw as encroachment and interference on the part of the Board of Education. It was rather more comfortably placed financially than most of the schools. Its head, Dr. Beach, was held in great esteem in the town - 'the foremost educationist in the town', was an accepted comment in a Committee meeting - and it was proud of its high standing generally. (One elderly resident remembers it still as 'the nob's' school'.) The managers had a long history of non-cooperation with secular authority. Under the Rev. J. Wagstaffe they had waged intermittent warfare with the School Board for more than a decade in the 1880s and 1890s. Ward came up against them in his early days in Macclesfield in the conflict concerning the infants' entrance. He claimed then, 'the managers tried to throw dust in my eyes', when they refused to carry out his recommendation for a new door because the vicar did not want the 'serenity' of the neighbourhood disturbed by the re-routing of noisy children.⁵⁴ This trivial incident was dragged out over two years, an appeal going to the National Society eventually, for advice as to whether or not the managers could be compelled to move a door.⁵⁵

It was largely because of Christ Church plans that the L.E.A. dallied so long in putting forward concrete proposals for the council

54.P.R.O., ED21/2136, 8.iii.1904, 29.viii.1904.

55.N.S.R., Christ Church, 8.iii.1907.

Table IV

Macclesfield Elementary School Accommodation
1st January 1912, with Average Attendance for 1911

School	Accommodation	Average Attendance
Byron Street Council	1,050	-
Athey Street Council	700	-
Broken Cross C.E.	113 (Mainly Jun. & Inf)	65
Christ Church C.E.	400	461
Crompton Road	200 (J.M. to St II)	125
Hurdsfield C.E.		
Church Street)		
Daybrook Street)	787	356
Mill Street Wesleyan	300 (No Inf.)	147
Old Church, Duke Street C.E.	270 JM.	178
Old Church, Beech Lane C.E.	113 JM.	67
St. Alban's R.C.	315	229
St. George's C.E.	459	327
St. Peter's C.E.	260 (to St II)	401
St. Paul's C.E.	670	237

Sources: Cheshire R.O., CED 7/36/4, p.88;

P.R.O., ED21/2136-2148.

schools between 1908 and 1910.⁵⁶ Ward regarded it, 'in some respects the worst school in Macclesfield';⁵⁷ its managers were 'defiant' and showed 'an insolent attitude', he claimed. When it was on the condemned list in 1908 he had high hopes of being able to close it, and a date was fixed on: 31 October 1909.⁵⁸ From what happened subsequently it seems likely that the delay was contrived, at least partly, in an attempt to avoid the reduction in numbers which the alterations would entail. Ward's hopes were not to be realized. Faced with an ultimatum the managers gave way. Plans were prepared by October 1910 which, after certain amendments had been made, were approved by the Board at the end of the year.⁵⁹ This was the year when, in applying renewed pressure on defaulting authorities regarding accommodation, the Board of Education determined to enforce the regulations governing the ratio of space to pupil in grant-earning schools.⁶⁰ The Macclesfield managers were informed that from the beginning of January 1910 recognition of accommodation would be based on a requirement of nine square feet per infant and ten square feet per older child, instead of the former eight square feet per pupil.⁶¹ The change reduced Christ Church from a school for 846 (always full) to one for 618. Building alterations reduced its capacity further, to 400.⁶² One result of this was the early resignation of Dr. Beach, who was offered the headship of the new school but declined because of 'the

56.P.R.O., ED16/21, 9.x.1909, 14.x.1910.

57.P.R.O., ED21/2136, 9.v.1908.

58.P.R.O., ED21/2136, 6.viii.1908.

59.P.R.O., ED21/2136, 23.xii.1910.

60.Seaborne and Lowe, p.74.

61.P.R.O., ED21/2147, 7.v.1909.

62.P.R.O., ED21/2136, 23.xii.1910.

present tangle';⁶³ another, as Table IV perhaps foreshadows, was that for years afterwards Christ Church was constantly having to answer charges of overcrowding.⁶⁴

The Church party had had to accept council schools, but it had salvaged considerably more by 1912 than had seemed possible at many stages in the preceding years. It might be supposed that the educational scene, administratively, was set for a tolerably peaceful spell. There was, however, one problem yet to be resolved, in the schools attached to Trinity Church, Hurdsfield. As the rest of the town settled down to work the new system, Hurdsfield embarked on a defensive crusade, under the wing of the Diocesan Association, which was to carry on to the end of the first world war.

Hurdsfield, like Christ Church, was intensely jealous of its independence although, unlike Christ Church, it was one of the poorest schools in the town. It had two school buildings, Church Street and Daybrook Street, for girls and infants, and boys and infants, respectively, and about half a mile apart. Both buildings had come under fire from the Board of Education from 1904 onwards. At the time of Ward's initial report the vicar and chairman of managers was the Rev. William Laycock, whose caustic utterances H.M.I. had early experienced. Although Laycock retired in 1906, after nearly thirty years in the appointment, the hostility he showed towards the Board was maintained. A complaint made in 1905 about unfair criticisms⁶⁵ was repeated at the end of 1906 when Samuel Aspinwall, the managers' correspondent, reported that he and his colleagues considered the method of inspection had 'the appearance of a system of espionage'.⁶⁶

63. M.C.H., 2.xii.1912.

64. M.C.H., 1.ii.1913; P.R.O., ED21/2136, 30.x.1913, 29.iii.1915, 5.x.1916.

65. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 25.vi.1905.

66. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 14.x.1906.

As with other schools there had followed several years of hedging, broken promises, and vague plans. In 1909 Daybrook Street was black-listed, and in 1910 reduction of grant was threatened. At this stage a suggestion was made, and agreed on locally, that Daybrook Street be sold to the L.E.A. for £1,500 and the money used on Trinity Square (Church Street) to bring it up to standard.⁶⁷ The Board of Education approved the scheme cautiously, reckoning that with £2,000 spent on it by the L.E.A. Daybrook Street would provide adequate accommodation for 276 boys whilst a renovated Trinity Square would take 376 girls and infants.⁶⁸ The only condition imposed by the central body was that Trinity Square should give a guarantee to keep open as a local authority school. With one council school in the process of construction and another on the drawing boards, in addition to the Hurdsfield arrangement, H.M.I. could at last feel satisfied with progress in Macclesfield, but at this point a legal snag was discovered in the trust deeds of the two schools, the solving of which put a block on negotiations in May 1911.⁶⁹ In the ensuing months the co-operative attitude of the Hurdsfield managers changed significantly.

This was the period when the Macclesfield voluntaryist cause was being taken up outside the borough by the Diocesan Association, and it seems likely that Hurdsfield received some stiffening from this source. Now, in mid-1911, the trustees began to make conditions. At first they demanded to be allowed rights of usage in case of various eventualities which might affect Sunday and evening activities in either or both of the schools;⁷⁰ then they declared their intention of using one-third of the Daybrook Street purchase money to

67. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 3.x.1910.

68. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 9.i.1911.

69. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 11.v.1911.

70. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 18.v.1911.

replace the Sunday School which would be lost to that area if the L.E.A. took over.⁷¹ The Board refused to pass the plans, and in March 1912 a minute suggested that the difficulty would be resolved if the scheme were abandoned and a third council school built instead.⁷² Two months later, in which time the National Society had joined in the controversy on the side of the trustees,⁷³ the central authority was heartened to find the L.E.A. moving in that direction and looking at sites.⁷⁴ L.E.A. action brought swift reaction from the trustees. Almost immediately a deputation arranged to attend a meeting with the Education Committee, and a compromise was worked out which, with certain amendments, the Board approved.⁷⁵ Another legal snag appeared here, however, which involved the Treasury and held up proceedings for eight months. Eventually, in May 1913 the Board put forward a draft scheme for the transfer of Daybrook Street⁷⁶ but, unexpectedly, in the following month the L.E.A. rejected the proposal and decided to build its own school.⁷⁷ According to the local newspaper, the authority claimed that Hurdsfield had dallied long enough and that it feared further loss of grants.⁷⁸ The Board of Education officials, privately, believed the Committee had found the Daybrook Street plan to be proving more expensive, at £16 per head, than a new building, and wished that Macclesfield had worked out its calculations earlier instead of persevering with 'the troublesome scheme'.⁷⁹

71. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 21.viii.1911.

72. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 4.iii.1912.

73. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 4.v.1912.

74. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 10.v.1912.

75. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 7.x.1912.

76. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 14.v.1913.

77. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 10.vi.1913.

78. M.C.H., 5.vii.1913.

79. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 14.vii.1913.

This uncharacteristically decisive action on the part of the L.E.A. set in motion a domino reaction which perturbed both the Education Committee and the Hurdsfield managers. Since 1906 a bone of contention between the Board of Education's officers and Daybrook Street had been the staircase leading to the boys' department which H.M.I. considered extremely dangerous - and which had been the scene of a serious accident.⁸⁰ On the announcement of the local authority's decision to abandon the Hurdsfield plan, the Guardian Insurance Company refused to continue cover for the Daybrook Street pupils because of the staircase.⁸¹ The managers, faced with personal liability, decided to close. For Hurdsfield this meant the end of the two schools, since without Daybrook Street to bargain with there would be no money forthcoming for the rescue of Church Street. For the L.E.A. the closure would mean the embarrassment of a deficit of 350 school places in its requisite numbers. The situation was saved temporarily by the L.E.A. taking over Daybrook Street and running it as a non-provided school after having repaired the staircase - at a cost of £10 10s!⁸² H.M.I. was not entirely happy with the settlement but he advised the Board against stirring up trouble. 'Daybrook Street is a wretched building,' he wrote, 'but it is probably as good as any available for a school'.⁸³ One can almost feel the exhaustion!

The Hurdsfield saga was by no means finished. The L.E.A. was advised that its proposed site was unsuitable, being too near the gasworks to be healthy, and in January 1914 it tried to get the Board's approval for a scheme to buy and alter Daybrook Street to

80. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 14.xii.1906; M.C.H., 17.vi.1905.

81. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 3.vii.1913.

82. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 14.vii.1913, 24.viii.1913.

83. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 14.vii.1913.

accommodate 400 children, but the Board rejected the proposal on the grounds that the building was too small to provide a long term solution.⁸⁴ The search for a fresh site was being continued when a new urgency was injected into the situation by the enforced closure of Church Street; in the winter gales the roof was found to be on the point of collapse, and there was no money for repairs.⁸⁵ Ward hoped that both schools would close, and in September there was a move in that direction. The L.E.A. sent a letter threatening to withdraw its financial support of them as maintained elementary schools unless repairs were started on both buildings, or reasonable signs of intent were given, within three months.⁸⁶ The Hurdsfield case had by now achieved national fame; a question was raised in the House of Commons concerning the school which had defied the President of the Board of Education for nine years.⁸⁷

By this time there was division within the Hurdsfield church community itself. A new vicar expressed the view forcefully that his parishioners had suffered long enough, and suggested that the time had come to put an end to the drifting by handing Daybrook Street over to the L.E.A.⁸⁸ His opinion carried no weight with the entrenched trustees and managers, but a forward move was made. In January 1915 a special meeting was arranged between the L.E.A. and the managers where the latter offered, as their war effort and in view of the need for economy, to repair both schools.⁸⁹ The L.E.A. accepted, and the Board approved as long as there was no further delay. In fact, although Daybrook Street continued to function,

84. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 1.vii.1914.

85. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 26.i.1914.

86. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 9.xi.1914.

87. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 7.vii.1914.

88. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 21.x.1914.

89. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 5.i.1915.

there was to be another two and a half years of domestic dissension, money raising, and building, before Church Street - or Trinity Square, as it was officially renamed - re-opened on 24 July 1918.⁹⁰

The re-opening was regarded as a great victory for the voluntary-ist cause, not only in Macclesfield but in the county. H. Cook of the Diocesan Association had written to the National Society in 1915 saying that if Hurdsfield were lost it would be 'disastrous to our cause',⁹¹ and a Board of Education minute noted that the renewed vigour of the Church party in January of that year, when the managers made their offer to repair the schools, was due to influence outside the borough.⁹² Undoubtedly, Archdeacon Maitland-Wood was the hero of the crusade. The support of the Diocesan Association had been crucial to the continuance of the fight for survival. The Board minute recorded that this body had a considerable amount of money and was prepared to spend it on Macclesfield.

The long drawn out Hurdsfield struggle was the final campaign in Macclesfield's battle of the buildings. In the two decades following, when a number of the remaining old schools were once more black-listed on account of building inadequacies or overcrowding, and when re-organization was being discussed, the instant reference for managers was the Diocesan Education Committee, but the reaction was a very pale reflection of the passion of the pre-first world war years. When the Board of Education accepted the settlement of the 'tangled' Hurdsfield case, with the proviso that it hoped to have a new council school after the war,⁹³ it had been in constant conflict with the

90. M.C.H., 27.vii.1918

91. N.S.R., Hurdsfield, 18.ix.1915.

92. P.R.O., ED16/21, 27.i.1915.

93. P.R.O., ED21/2138, 15.viii.1918.

managers of the town's schools for nearly fifteen years.

Macclesfield's stubborn resistance to the introduction of council schools was due, in some degree, to an innate conservatism which could see no reason for change. It owed something, too, to nostalgia. Many leading citizens of Edwardian Macclesfield had been educated, at least partly, in one of the voluntary schools; between 1902 and 1910 four mayors were ex-National schoolboys, and proclaimed their pride in the fact. Civic pride also played a part. R. Lowe points out that the Board of Education looked on its policy regarding the enforcement of the building regulations as one facet in the trial of strength between central and local authorities.⁹⁴ Certainly, from its own angle, Macclesfield held something of the same view. Opposition to change was also influenced by a preoccupation with the task of keeping down the rates. The provision of public education has always been subject to financial pressures, say Seaborne and Lowe;⁹⁵ and in Macclesfield this was consistently so. Apart from a disinclination on the part of ratepayers to be other than thrifty in providing for those who did not provide for themselves, the town's economic circumstances did not encourage lavish public expenditure. Most of the leading figures were involved in, or to some extent depended on, the struggling silk trade, and their fears for its future coloured every civic consideration. The Primary Education Committee admitted as much to the Board of Education when it wrote, in excuse for its tardiness of action in 1909, 'we have to regard the interest of the schools (meaning the managers) and the rate-payers', - to which a Board official appended a pencilled note,

94. Seaborne and Lowe, p.73.

95. Seaborne and Lowe, p.xvi.

'what about the interests of the children?'⁹⁶ (As Alan Rogers noted, the interests of the children were not a consideration in this controversy, except as adjuncts to the political and religious issues.)⁹⁷

All these considerations added political strength to the opposition movement to provided schools. The prime driving force, however, was the unassailable conviction of its supporters in the rightness of the voluntaryist cause. S.G.Platten, discussing the view that the 1902 Education Act reduced the Church's influence in education whilst saving the voluntary system, points out that a moderate lobby among the leadership, including the Archbishop of Canterbury, accepted as inevitable the surrender of secular education to the State,⁹⁸ but A. Rogers, for one, shows the wide gap between such moderates and the extremists in the years leading up to the Act,⁹⁹ and Marjorie Cruikshank's discussion of the three abortive attempts to abolish the dual system between 1906 and 1908 reveals the continued strength of voluntaryist feeling - and the strength of its political influence.¹⁰⁰ Macclesfield was of the extremist wing; peaceful co-existence had no place in the philosophy of the borough's denominationalists. To the defenders of the voluntary schools the 1902 Act was to be their salvation, and the harassment, as they saw it, by the Board of Education, was an outrage.

The L.E.A., heavily weighted with voluntaryist supporters and sympathetic to the notion of local autonomy as against central

96. P.R.O., ED16/21, 27.xi.1909.

97. A.Rogers, Churches and Children - 'A Study in the Controversy over the 1902 Education Act', B.J.E.S., VIII, November 1959, p.29.

98. S.G.Platten, 'Conflict in the Control of Elementary Education 1870-1902', B.J.E.S., XII, May 1964, p.296.

99. A.Rogers, pp.33-34.

100. Cruikshank, pp.94-111.

domination, was in the position of an uneasy buffer in the struggle. With a static population it had no spur to action from market forces, and it was, as yet, uncertain of its authority. Macclesfield, in this period, is an interesting example of the time lag between the passing of legislation and its implementation. One aim of the 1902 Act was the reduction in the number of lines of communication between the Board of Education and local administration, but the borough's struggle, entailing copious correspondence and numerous meetings, locally and at Whitehall, was still between the Board and the several bodies of school managers, who embarked on a calculated war of attrition, confident of the outcome. The relentless pressure of the newly reorganized central department, with its control of the purse strings, eventually wore down resistance, but the council schools were accepted only very grudgingly. At the opening of Byron Street, Alderman P. Eaton spoke resentfully of the Board of Education having 'compelled' the town to build the school.¹⁰¹ The School Board, he recalled with approval, had kept board schools out of Macclesfield; there was no need for them and the majority of the inhabitants was against them. At Christ Church's bazaar, Alderman Bradley, lamenting the 'severe ordeal' of many of the Church schools, told his audience that the Board had put 'every obstruction in their way'.¹⁰² There was an aggrieved tone too, in the comments of William Harrison, chairman of the Schools Maintenance Committee, on the opening of Athey Street: he hoped the Board of Education would 'at last see that Macclesfield was doing its best to carry out the Board's wishes'; it had been pressing since 1905 for better school accommodation, and he

101. M.C.H., 3.i.1912.

102. M.C.H., 16.xi.1912.

hoped they would now be satisfied.¹⁰³ And more than ten years later, when Byron Street was in need of structural repairs, Robert Brown referred to the 'disastrous economies' effected in the erection of the building, which were the result of the resentful spirit permeating the Corporation at that time.¹⁰⁴

Considering that Macclesfield had a strong Nonconformist community and a large Liberal following in the early years of the twentieth century, it is perhaps surprising that opposition to the voluntaryists' efforts to retain the monopoly in elementary schooling was relatively unimpassioned. Compared with the resentment shown in some areas over the rate aid made available to denominational schools by the 1902 Education Act, reaction was unorganized, limited to individual criticisms. Harold Whiston, in a Liberal meeting in 1906, commented on the strife up and down the country, 'the logical outcome of Balfour's Act', and made a plea for a national system of education outside the religious denominations: 'religious strife has no more to do with education than the moon with green cheese'; but he was more concerned to persuade his audience of the need for improved school accommodation generally, to replace the 'insanitary and unhygienic' buildings which he castigated as 'a disgrace to civilization'.¹⁰⁵ The excuse of 'no money' did not carry weight, he argued, when it could be 'wasted all over the globe'. There were other voices raised in favour of the council schools, particularly as the period wore on. William Frost, a Liberal councillor on the Education Committee, spoke for the minority view when he declared, at the Byron Street opening

103. M.C.H., 11.i.1913.

104. M.C.H., 7.ii.1924.

105. M.C.H., 15.xii.1906.

ceremony, that he was glad the Board of Education had compelled action, otherwise there would have been no move forward.¹⁰⁶ At the end of 1914 Frost tabled the motion in an Education Committee meeting - carried by nine votes to eight - proposing a new school for Hurdsfield,¹⁰⁷ a proposal being canvassed, in the face of bitter hostility from his leading churchmen, by the vicar of the parish. The Trades and Labour Council gave its support to this line of action, and at the beginning of 1915 was reported to be preparing a case for a Board of Education enquiry into the issue.¹⁰⁸ Following Hurdsfield's 'war effort' offer, however, nothing further was heard of this move. It is interesting to speculate on the influence of W. B. Brocklehurst. As M.P. and a leading civic and industrial figure, he was, on the face of it, the natural leader of Liberal/Nonconformist opinion in the town, but his attitude was unusually detached throughout the years of dispute. As chairman of the Education Committee he meticulously presided, represented his committee, and led deputations, in meetings with Board officials locally and in London, yet he gave no indication of holding decided opinions in any direction. On occasion he refrained from voting in controversial debates, but that he was not a mere figure-head would seem to be indicated in the remark of a Board official to Selby-Bigge concerning a critical meeting of the L.E.A. in 1910 which, he reported, was presided over by 'Fitz Brocklehurst . . . wily man that he is . . .'¹⁰⁹ Brocklehurst's views only became apparent at the Byron Street opening, in his plea for peace regarding the religious controversy which, he pointed out, had been 'repeated in

106. M.C.H., 13.i.1912.

107. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/2, 23.xii.1914.

108. P.R.O., ED16/21, 27.i.1915.

109. P.R.O., ED16/21, 3.iii.1910.

the House of Commons and up and down England'. He proclaimed the view of the Liberals, which James Murphy comments on,¹¹⁰ that parents did not care about the religious dispute, it was only the fanatics at each end. In his opinion, care of the rates was the overriding concern of the people.¹¹¹ His attitude must have had considerable influence on the situation with a sizeable section of the non-sectarian lobby and perhaps accounts, in some degree, for the lack of systematic opposition to the highly organized voluntaryists.

In 1912 there was still some way to go before Brocklehurst's wish for peace was to be realized. Central authority had been established and the voluntary system breached, but the Hurdsfield problem still lay ahead, and as the victory ceremony showed, on the re-opening of Trinity Square, the sectarians there felt themselves a force to be reckoned with up to 1918. In 1895 the report of the Archbishop of Canterbury's Committee on Education declared that 'of all the dangers which beset the Church and beset religion in this country none is more serious than that which must follow the general surrender of the voluntary schools'.¹¹² Throughout the decade following the passing of the 1902 Education Act, and in a section of the town for longer, this belief was the strongest motivating force in Macclesfield's educational policy.

110. Murphy, p.96.

111. M.C.H., 13.i.1912.

112. Rogers, p.32.

Chapter Three

The Little Wage-Earners

Chapter Three

The Little Wage-Earners

The collection of outworn school buildings over which the administration fought such a bitter battle was one facet of the Victorian legacy which shaped educational development in Macclesfield in the early years of the twentieth century. Another formative influence was the low expectation extant, among providers and consumers, in regard to elementary schooling. In Robert Roberts' book, A Ragged Schooling, the author, born in 1905, recalls an incident from his schooldays in downtown Salford during the first world war, when he and a classmate were assigned the task of initiating a discussion in standard VII on the merits and demerits of a compulsory school leaving age of 15 years.¹ His own enthusiastic thesis presenting the benefits of extended education was received in utter silence and, so far as the rest of the class was concerned, was demolished without effort by his opponent whose contribution was delivered in one sentence: "I think we ought to gerrout and get some money for us parents". On another occasion he listened to his grandmother congratulating his father on getting an older girl into the mills and off his hands at the age of 12 years; a school life lengthened to 14 years was only for the slow-witted.² In Macclesfield, at the same period, these sentiments would have received unhesitating acceptance by a large proportion of the

1. R. Roberts, A Ragged Schooling (Manchester, 1976), p.172.

2. Roberts, p.177.

population. As with textile towns in general - and as in certain other industries - Macclesfield inherited a generations-old tradition of dependence on the child wage-earner, and employers, parents, and children accepted the role, for the most part, without question. The majority of the young workers went into weavers' garrets or the silk mills, where they worked at cleaning out the impurities in the raw silk and winding bobbins, or as piecers (mending broken threads) or doffers (exchanging full bobbins for empty ones), but boys also took jobs as errand lads, lather boys, delivering milk and other commodities, selling newspapers, whilst girls were employed as domestic helps and nurse girls.³

Throughout most of the school board period when government regulations were progressively limiting juvenile employment, the start of a working life for most Macclesfield school leavers was governed by the minimum legal requirements, and each new restriction was accepted by employers and work force with the greatest reluctance. In the last few years of the nineteenth century, however, there were signs of a slowly developing change of attitude. In the ten years from 1893 to 1902 the number of half-timers officially registered in the borough had decreased from 1,140 to 312.⁴ The fall is dramatic, but it is important to remember that in this decade government legislation raised the minimum school leaving age twice - to 11 years in 1893 (becoming operative on 1 January 1894) and to 12 years in 1899 - thus reducing by two thirds the age range eligible for part-time permits. Lowndes records the marked drop in half-timers nationally, by 20,000

3. P.P. 1909, Committee on Partial Exemption, Vol. II, p.238.

4. Cheshire R.O., CED74/4, 1902.

per year, resulting from these compulsory measures.⁵ The decrease owed something, too, to the declining demand for part-time workers in the wake of technical developments; the handlooms plied in the weavers garrets, for example, in the twenty years from 1886 to 1906, fell from 1,200 to 500, whilst power looms, themselves decreasing slightly, dealt with a correspondingly larger share of the work. A government enquiry in 1909 supported this line of reasoning when, after recording a drop in the half-time figures nationally between 1890 and 1899, it noted that a cotton boom recently had resulted in a rise in numbers.⁶ Nevertheless, whilst acknowledging that compulsion and expediency were important agents for change, it must be allowed that increasing concern for child welfare had a place as a contributory cause. Richard Snow provides an example of the changing view-point on the issue within the silk industry. In 1893 - when he occupied the conflicting offices of vice-chairman of the School Board and secretary to the Macclesfield Silk Trade Protection Association - he proposed that the School Board should support the request from the town's silk manufacturers to the Home Secretary to delay raising the school leaving age for one year, at the same time declaring his view that anyone, irrespective of scholastic attainment, should be allowed to work at 11 years of age.⁷ In 1899, however, speaking to the Chamber of Commerce he told his audience that he noted a change in public opinion on the subject, and his was one of the voices which called on Sir John Gorst, vice-president of the Education Department, to implement his 1890 Berlin pledge and raise the school leaving age to 12 years immediately.⁸ With

5. G.A.N. Lowndes, A Silent Social Revolution, 2nd ed.(1969), p.23.

6. P.P.1909 Cd.4791 xvii.731, Report on the Inter-Departmental Committee on Partial Exemption from School Attendance, Vol I, p.12.

7. M.C.H., 21.vi.1893.

8. M.C.H., 3.vi.1899.

his involvement in industry - he was a silk manager in the Brocklehurst concern - Snow's change of heart was doubtless influenced to some extent by the changing requirements of the mills with regard to the juvenile work force. M. R. Bamfield reports the belief of some contemporary observers in 1899, who held that a change in public opinion regarding a longer school life had been encouraged because fears of adverse results in industry had proved groundless following the raising of the school leaving age to 11 years, six years previously.⁹ On the other hand, Snow was a public-spirited man actively engaged in church, voluntary, and civic work, and it is equally likely that he was reflecting the changing climate of opinion with reference to the role of the child in society - and, locally, contributing to it. Growing concern for the well-being of the country's junior citizens was a feature of these years. Although there were dissident branches within it, mainly in the Lancashire and Yorkshire textile industries, the trade union movement was campaigning vigorously against half-time working in the 1890s; the National Union of Teachers, voicing the sentiments expressed in numerous Macclesfield log book entries, was bitter in its criticism of the system; and the Labour party considered it 'an outrage', as I.L.P. member, William Bond, informed the Macclesfield public in his election campaign as a School Board candidate in 1898.¹⁰

An increasingly protective attitude towards the young showed itself in the early years of the new century in the legislation introducing a medical service and meals into schools. It is seen in the speech on education made by Harold Whiston, heir to the prosperous

9. M.R. Bamfield, 'The School Leaving Age - A Historical Study, with particular reference to legislation relating to school leaving up to 1944', (unpublished M. Ed. thesis, Durham, 1967), p.106.

10. M.C.H., 22.x.1898.

silk printing works at Langley, to the Macclesfield Liberal Club in 1906.¹¹ He declared the time was coming when compulsory education for all should not finish before 16 years of age. Children were sent to the mills before they were physically fit to cope with the work, he argued, and the system was driving people into asylums and penitentiaries. No child should have to work in the mills; "the system of making little ones bear the burden of wage-earning must cease", he proclaimed. Whiston's was an extreme view in the context of the times. It did not represent the majority opinion among the Macclesfield manufacturers, nor did it have the support of the Liberal M.P., Colonel Brocklehurst, although he would have liked to have seen the leaving age raised to 13 years without exemption, thus cutting out the half-time workers.¹² This was the view of the employers as a body, expressed through Brocklehurst in 1909. As M.P. for the borough and chairman of the Primary Education Committee, he was called to give evidence before the Inter-Departmental Committee on Partial Exemption from School Attendance. Reporting on a joint meeting of the Chamber of Commerce and the Silk Trade Protection Society of Macclesfield, where he had canvassed opinions on the issue of part-time working, he told the Committee he had noticed that views had changed in recent years, and informed members that his fellow employers had assured him of their 'indifference' to half-timers.

Brocklehurst felt that the main obstacle to the abolition of the half-time system was custom, backed by a strong desire for its continuance on the part of parents and children. Children liked to go into the mills because of the independence they gained.¹³ (Regrets

11. M.C.H., 5.xii.1906.

12. P.P. 1909, Committee on Partial Exemption, Vol. II, p.216.

13. P.P. 1909, Committee on Partial Exemption, Vol. I, p.11.

came later, he claimed). He had received anonymous letters from parents urging him to use his influence to ensure the retention of half-timers.¹⁴ H.M.I. H. Ward, another witness before the same Committee, confirmed the strength of parental pressure and traditional practice in maintaining the system, not only in Macclesfield but in the whole of his district which covered nine Part III areas of Cheshire, including Stockport.¹⁵ Parental opposition was the inhibiting factor, he believed, behind the local authorities failure to take action in their separate areas, and he claimed they would receive gratefully a parliamentary dictum enforcing a 13 year school leaving age for all - as it involved no added expense - since they favoured the move but did not feel strong enough to face the resultant local reaction. A resolution passed by the Macclesfield Education Committee supports this view. A session in April 1909 officially deprecated the half-time system, at the same time advocating compulsory attendance at evening continuation classes up to 16 years of age.¹⁶ Ward felt that custom rather than poverty was responsible for the continuing practice of part-time working, and claimed it was a commonly expressed view that the half-timer came from a well-to-do home. Much of H.M.I.'s evidence is based on Stockport - by far the most populous town in his district - where, in addition to other established manufacturers, there were a large number of cotton mills, and several other of his authorities were cotton towns. Possibly, in the more prosperous industry his argument held. Cotton was booming at this time. Silk, on the other hand, apart from a good year in 1912,

14. P.P. 1909, Committee on Partial Exemption, Vol. II, p.216.

15. P.P. 1909, Committee on Partial Exemption, Vol. II, p.253.

16. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 23.iv.1909.

was depressed up to the start of the war in 1914; 'an alarming amount of distress' was reported in February 1904 in the local newspaper,¹⁷ and in 1910 a Relief Committee was trying to alleviate the worst hardship.¹⁸ In evidence from the point of view of the wage-earner, as against that of the onlooker, Brocklehurst's anonymous correspondents pleaded that the half-timers' contribution to the family budget was a necessity.¹⁹ The medical officer's reports and reports of H.M.I. on individual schools also support the view that there is room for doubt regarding Ward's dismissal of the motive of need when applied to Macclesfield, at least amongst a section of the population. In the event, despite the declared opinions of employers and authorities, there was no immediate action, and the half-time system continued unimpaired for a further thirteen years.

In the sixteen schools which provided elementary education for Macclesfield scholars in 1902 there were 6,293 pupils on the registers, and the average attendance was 5,348 (84.98%).²⁰ A bye-law, taking advantage of the government measure of 1900, had raised the school leaving age to 14 years in 1901, but provisos allowed full time exemption from the age of 13 and half-time from 12 years, for 'a child gainfully employed' and satisfying minimum educational requirements.²¹ The requirements for a half-time permit were a pass at standard IV level of the Code, or 300 attendances per year for five years, at no more than two schools, after 5 years of age; for full

17. M.C.H., 6.ii.1904.

18. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, p.341.

19. P.P. 1909, Committee on Partial Exemption, Vol. I, p.216.

20. Cheshire R.O., CED74/4, 1902.

21. P.R.O., ED18/19, 1901.

SCHEDULE III.

Local Education Authority.....OE MACCLESFIELD.....

LABOUR CERTIFICATE, No. 1 (a) (for total exemption after 13 years of age).

AGE AND EMPLOYMENT.

PREVIOUS ATTENDANCE.

I certify that Frank Jones
residing at 17 Nelson Street,
was on the 26th day of June 1917, not
less than **thirteen** years of age, having been born on
the 20th day of June 1904, as appears
by the Registrar's Certificate [or the Statutory Declara-
tion] now produced to me, and has been shown to the
satisfaction of the local education authority for this
district to be beneficially employed.

I certify that Frank Jones
residing at 17 Nelson Street,
has made 350 attendances in not more than two schools
during each year for five preceding years, whether
consecutive or not, as shown by the ⁽²⁾ certificate furnished
by the Principal Teacher of the ⁽³⁾ St Georges
School.

⁽²⁾ For this Certificate see Schedule VI.
⁽³⁾ Here name School or Schools in which the attendances have been made.

(Signed) Wm. Greaves
⁽¹⁾ Clerk to the Local Education Authority. ⁽¹⁾ or other officer.

(Signed) Wm. Greaves
⁽¹⁾ Secretary to the Local Education Authority.

⁽¹⁾ or other officer.

Dated the 26th day of June 1917.

N.B.—In districts where the bye-laws extend to the age of fourteen, this Certificate can only be granted if the bye-laws permit full-time exemption on an attendance qualification.

Plate II

Labour Certificate, 1917

time exemption a standard VI certificate, or 350 attendances per year for five years, was necessary. In practice, by 1910 qualification on both counts - attainment and attendance - was required. Most of those who qualified left at the first opportunity; and the failure rate in the biannual labour examinations shows that many more would have joined the ranks of the early leavers if they had been able to fulfil the necessary conditions. In March 1902, for example, 36 attempted standard IV and 85 standard VI; 15 and 49, respectively, were disappointed.²² In October 10 out of 22 would-be half-timers, with 35 out of 66 full time hopefuls, failed to gain their certificates.²³

The figures recorded by the Primary Education Committee indicate the continued strength of the exemptions system up to its abolition, in accordance with the 1918 Education Act, in the early 1920s. (Table V). After the marked decline of the 1890s the half time rate steadied. Although an overall downward trend is noticeable in the ensuing period, the 1902 figure of 312 part-time exemptions was only marginally higher than the average for the decade leading up to the first world war (292 per annum). It must be taken into consideration, too, that numbers on roll were falling at rather more than 100 per year, and continued to decline, although slightly less rapidly, into the post-war period. (Table VI). This pattern of decline gives greater significance to both half and full time exemption figures up to the cessation of the practice in 1922. In the first year of the war, as Bamfield noted generally,²⁴ there was a rise in the number of half-time workers, and the figure remained comparatively steady throughout the war years. There was a noticeable fall, in half and full time

22. M.C.H., 19.iv.1902.

23. M.C.H., 15.xi.1902.

24. Bamfield, p.126.

Table VFull and Half-Time Exemptions Certified by
Macclesfield Education Committee, 1902-1924

Year (31 March)	Full Time	Half-Time
1902		312
1905	494	294
1906	471	285
1907	468	336
1908	474	285
1909	502	311
1910	504	294
1911	509	306
1912	507	292
1913	456	258
1914	451	259
1915	441	295
1916	502	283
1917	445	279
1918	443	276
1919	408	229
1920	416	303
1921	413	110
1922	374	103
1923	260	52
1924	334	

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/2-5.

Table VIAnnual Attendance Figures in the
Macclesfield Elementary Schools, 1902-1922

Year (31 March)	On Roll	Average Attendance
1902	6,293	5,348
1904	5,896	5,005
1906	5,657	4,946
1908	5,426	4,705
1910	5,225	4,613
1912	4,964	4,407
1914	4,981	4,323
1916	4,717	4,209
1918	4,654	4,323
1920	4,624	3,892
1922	4,452	3,935

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/2-7.

exemptions, in the year ending 31 March 1919, but the jump to 303 half-timers in the following twelve months, the year of returning menfolk and continuing brisk trade, does not suggest any decisive change of attitude. One interpretation of the figures in this period of full employment suggests that by this time at least opportunity rather than need governed the size of the half-time force; and, supporting an earlier argument, custom would appear to have buttressed the practice. It is indicative of a common attitude to early working that the editor of a local newspaper, commenting on a new regulation of the Board of Education, in February 1919, which required pupils, in accordance with section 9 of the 1918 Education Act, to stay on at school until the end of the term in which they reached the necessary age instead of allowing them to leave on their birthdays, could commiserate with parents concerning the enforced extra few weeks at school for their offspring: 'parents will feel the pinch at the loss of their children's earnings . . . some (children) will be two months past 12 or 13 years of age', he wrote; and the reaction of the Education Committee to the same requirement was to increase the number of leaving dates by dividing the school year into four terms instead of three.²⁵ Only in the penultimate year before compulsory abolition, 1920-21, was there an appreciable diminution in the half-time figures, indicating an apparent growing general acceptance of the changing regulations. Possibly employers and employees were influenced by expectation of the implementation of the new restriction from 1 January 1921, the decision to postpone being made only three weeks before the law was due to take effect.²⁶ Even so, in the final

25. M.C.H., 1.ii.1919.

26. B. Simon, The Politics of Educational Reform 1920-1940 (1974), p.32.

quarter before the ending of the practice, 1 April to 30 June 1922, 52 applications were received by the Education Committee, and approved, for part-time exemption from school.

Although they made up a significant group, Macclesfield's half-timers did not form as large a proportion of the school population as was the case in many textile towns. In 1906-1907 the borough's total represented 58.7 per thousand in average attendance, slightly lower than Stockport where the figure was 61.3 per thousand.²⁷ This may have been the result of local variations in the exemption regulations. Certainly by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, and possibly before, Macclesfield's early leavers had to make the choice between taking two years at half-time or one year with full exemption; they could not follow a year of part time working at 12 years of age by full time exemption at 13 years. Also, Stockport had no full time exemption before standard VII.²⁸ Possibly both factors had an influence on the comparative half-time rates of the two authorities. Neither authority approached the figures of two other Cheshire towns: Dukinfield and Stalybridge, where coalmining, iron foundries, and cotton mills absorbed 93.8 and 99.8 per thousand respectively, nor those of the Lancashire textile towns where, in some places, the rates reached as high as 124 half-time pupils per thousand.

In the years before the first world war there was steady and vocal opposition to the part-time schooling system from a growing sector of the community. The full time leaving age of 13 years, on the other hand, was accepted - outside the schools - with much less

27. P.P. 1909, Committee on Partial Exemption, Vol. II, p.220.

28. P.P. 1909, Committee on Partial Exemption, Vol. II, p.253.

debate. It was on this sector of the juvenile wage-earners that the Fisher Act, bringing in the abolition of all exemptions to the 14 year minimum, made the greatest impact. The average year group, which at the start of the century was in the region of 700, and in 1907, according to the L.E.A. estimates in connection with proposed medical inspections, was 638,²⁹ by 1918 was down to approximately 500.³⁰ As Table V shows, full time labour exemption certificates were regularly over 400 in number into the immediate post-war years, which, proportionately, was as high as it had ever been. Thus, up to the legal enforcement of the raised school leaving age, more than three-quarters of Macclesfield pupils left the elementary schools at 13 years. (An ex-pupil of the war years recalls that they considered a classmate 'a bit slow' if he, or she, had to stay on to 14 years, exemption being dependent on the ability to pass the 'labour exam'.)³¹ The eventual appointed day for the change of attendance regulations to take effect was 1 July 1922. In announcing the imminent implementation of this section of the 1918 Act, the local Courier commented on the 'very considerable effect' it would have in the town.³² Up to the previous year, ran the report, no less than 80% of elementary school children left for work at 13 years, and 60% was given as the current figure, the 13 year olds who had just beaten the deadline. The maintenance of the high number of labour certificates sought and granted up to the latest possible date allowed illustrates the reluctance with which the lengthening of school life was accepted at the expense of a year's

29. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/3, p.88.

30. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, pp.152-153.

31. Oral evidence: Mrs. E. Adshead, Macclesfield.

32. M.C.H., 1.vii.1922.

wages. Whilst 39 down on the previous total, 374 in the final full year shows a fair degree of attachment to the old system.

The L.E.A. figure for 1924 is puzzling. Although the number is high for one quarter if compared with preceding years, the 1923 figures for full and half-time exemptions, compiled at the end of March, can probably be accounted for by those young workers who managed to get their employment certificates between 31 March 1922 and 1 July 1922. The full time figure of 334 for the year ending 31 March 1924 cannot be explained in this way. It is the more difficult to understand when taken in conjunction with the number on roll in the schools for the 13+ age group, which on 31 March 1923 was 419,³³ and a year later was 485.³⁴ The most likely explanation is that these were pupils who were allowed to leave school a few days or a few weeks early, with the approval of the Rota Committee. Whilst no half-time certificates were granted after 30 June 1922,³⁵ L.E.A. records show that a number of pupils, over a period of two to three years, continued to gain full time exemption, if on a limited scale. The issue was raised in September 1923 when a member of the Education Committee, observing that an increased number of children were being excused attendance at school, queried whether they all had jobs. In reply it was stated that, although under present regulations 14 year olds could not leave until the quarter day after their birthday, some needy children were being given special consideration.³⁶ The practice was

33. Cheshire R.O., CED 7/36/8, p.53.

34. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.97.

35. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.98.

36. M.C.H., 1.ix.1923.

brought to light officially in a letter from the Board of Education in July 1925 reproving the Macclesfield authority for allowing children to leave school before the end of the appropriate term and, 'more serious', permitting pupils to leave before their fourteenth birthday.³⁷ The L.E.A. report book records that '73 plus 31 casual' full time exemptions were granted for the quarter ending 31 March 1924.³⁸ Possibly the 334 for the year can be accounted for in this way, although the number seems large for a breach of regulations. The L.E.A. pleaded slackness to the Board's charge, but disavowed any intention of deliberately flouting the law, and promised stricter observance in the future. The incident is another indication of the strength of the resistance to change on this issue, both inside the Education Committee and out. The Rota School Attendance Committee had continued to allow children, 'with reasonable excuse' and on representation from parents, to leave school before the end of the term in which the fourteenth birthday was reached, and the practice was defended by the chairman, Samuel Aspinwall, for 'exceptional cases' where the wages were needed in the home and 'suitable employment was found'.³⁹ Under threat of loss of grant in the event of further default, and with an inspectorial enquiry in the offing, the L.E.A. ensured that there should be no more early leavers: the illegality of their actions was spelt out to members of the offending committee, and the secretary was forbidden to accept any further requests for consideration. The subject was closed, but only with a degree of grudging acceptance by some committee members, and implications of

37. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.122.

38. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.96.

39. M.C.H., 1.iii.1924.

parental disappointment. As late as December 1926 the topic of the '14 term' was still being discussed,⁴⁰ and in 1928 when the Committee received a request from Farnworth for support in urging the Board of Education to change the law, Macclesfield agreed that as long as applicants for exemption had obtained beneficial employment to the satisfaction of the L.E.A., it was in favour of pupils being able to leave school immediately upon reaching fourteen years of age, instead of waiting until the end of term.⁴¹

With a substantial proportion of the 12 to 14 year group at work at least for part of the week, the short school life of the early leavers and the disruptive effects of the half-time system were problems constantly referred to by H.M.I. in reports, and by teachers in log books or at meetings. On the first issue the headmistress at Duke Street, for example, recorded in April 1902 that only 15 girls remained in standards VI and VII out of the 36 who had started the year, the pupils having been dribbling away in twos and threes since the previous October;⁴² in August 1903 she was congratulating herself on having improved on the position of a year ago, with 19 still at school out of the 28 who started standard VI at the beginning of the year;⁴³ and in June 1907 26 out of the 64 who originally made up standards V, VI, and VII had departed.⁴⁴ The Mill Street headmaster, Thomas Hewitt, reported that there was a great demand for labour in April and 13 children from the two top classes left together for full time work.⁴⁵ One result of the custom of early leaving was that upper classes,

40. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.167.

41. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.203.

42. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 11.iv.1902.

43. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 17.viii.1903.

44. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 6.vi.1907.

45. Cheshire R.O., SL79/2/2. 8.iv.1907.

because of small numbers, were frequently taught together. The headmistress of Duke Street, new to the school, took standards V, VI and VII as a group, on her own, for a week in 1901.⁴⁶ Whilst all schools with senior departments were affected to some degree by the problems of attenuated attendance in their upper classes, the extent varied. In 1904 Duke Street was left with 6 boys and 12 girls in standard VII, compared with 40 boys and 35 girls in standard IV, St. Paul's had 28 in its top group, with 94 in standard IV; and St. Alban's was down to 14, against 37 in the earlier age group; and in all the schools standard VI also was notably reduced.⁴⁷ Of the sixteen departments concerned, in nine standard VII was more than 50% down on standard IV. Of the rest, only Mill Street kept up its numbers, its standard VII and ex-VII of 60 and standard VI of 59 comparing favourably with the 66 in standard IV.

The early leaving age was lamented periodically for its effect on the school life of the child, but the issue of part-time working produced many more problems for the schools, and consequently provided the topic for discussion at many of the meetings of the town's teaching force. "This glaring anomaly of the twentieth century", was William Elliott's view of it in his speech as retiring president of the Macclesfield Teachers' Association in February 1919, when he rejoiced in its abolition through Fisher's 'children's charter'.⁴⁸ At the annual general meeting of the M.T.A. in 1913 the presidential address had enlarged on 'the evils of the half-time system', and called for a 14 year leaving age;⁴⁹ and in 1918 a speaker recalled the

46. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 13.ix.1901.

47. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/1, p,76.

48. M.C.H., 1.ii.1919.

49. M.C.H., 1.ii.1913.

many times the call had gone out for the suppression of part-time working for schoolchildren, blaming for its retention the strength of opposition from employers and some parents.⁵⁰ Herbert Ward, H.M.I., had elaborated on this theme in 1909 in his evidence before the Committee on Partial Exemption. Someone had to suffer, he argued; either the full time pupil became discouraged through the slow pace, or the half-timer, unless very bright, fell behind.⁵¹ In his experience, he claimed, he had found that some half-timers passed standards VI and VII, but they rarely attended practical classes. This was a problem which concerned Macclesfield headteachers, and, initially, it would seem, the fault lay more with central government than with the local authority. Up to 1909 one of the difficulties regarding the half-time scholars was that their attendance at the cookery and handicraft centres was not recognized by the Board of Education for grant purposes.⁵² Since the stipulated minimum age for pupils of these classes was 12 years - the age for half-time exemption - many children passed through school having taken no part in the practical instruction, which increasingly was being regarded as an important aspect of the curriculum, or if they did attend, as happened in some schools to make up numbers, they could not be counted as grant earners. There was great satisfaction when the 'long desired' change in regulations was received allowing half-timers and 11 year olds to be included for grant assessment. Nevertheless, in 1913 the Committee voted, albeit after heated argument, that full time pupils should be given preference over half-timers for places in the handicraft classes.⁵³ Ward did not

50. M.C.H., 2.ii.1918.

51. P.P. 1909, Committee on Partial Exemption, Vol. II, p.231.

52. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/3, p.146.

53. M.C.H., 30.viii.1913.

see half-timers as a threat to order in the schools he visited, as they were usually 'too sleepy to be troublesome'. Not everyone would have agreed with this view. Dr. Hurt records the discipline problems which arose with part-time workers in some schools in the fruit-picking areas of Kent,⁵⁴ and Ward admitted that outside his area he knew of cases where young workers brought 'the language and manners of the mill' into school, and parents were 'afraid of their little wage-earners'. He felt that half-timers were irritants to the organization of a school, but he refuted 'sweeping assertions' regarding their 'wholesale deterioration'. Nevertheless, he condemned the system soundly, demolishing in the process the argument advanced by some protagonists of the practice that there was practical benefit to be gained from learning and working at the same time. The half-timers' work was drudgery, he concluded, and the system was educationally unsound. Although officially, a pass at standard IV was required in Macclesfield for a half-time work permit, there appear to have been allowances made on occasion and the attainment qualification waived. At Athey Street Council School in 1916 a visiting inspector found the 67 half-timers there extending into every class from standard III to standard VII;⁵⁵ and whilst this might have been a wartime measure, at Byron Street in March 1914 there were half-timers down to standard II.⁵⁶

Wages for the part-time child workers were usually between 2s 6d and 3s 6d per week. A Macclesfield silk printer, now retired, remembers his half-time days at Harold Whiston's silk printing works in the adjoining village of Langley, in 1915. As a twelve year old

54. J. Hurt, Elementary Schooling and the Working Classes 1860-1918 (1979), p.203.

55. P.R.O., ED21/2133, February 1916.

56. P.R.O., ED21/2135, 3.iii.1914.

tierer he earned 2s 9d per week when working afternoons, and 3s 3d per week for mornings, which included Saturdays.⁵⁷ His job was to follow a hand printer with whatever dye was being used, keeping the sieve adequately supplied and the colour even. His hours were from 6.30 a.m. to 12 noon one week (33 hours) and 1.30 p.m. to 6 p.m. the next (22 hours), and in all weathers, summer and winter, he walked about three miles each way, in the morning and evening, fitting in his shift at the local village school, where all the Whiston half-timers attended by arrangement. Another local resident recalls her mother talking about her half-time days in 1908-1909. Here, indisputably, necessity was the reason for the twelve year old's early entry into the working world. When her father became unemployed her wage, small though it was, was vital to the upkeep of a large family of younger brothers and sisters.⁵⁸ She was paid 2s 6d per week, of which she received 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ d from her mother for her own use. She had felt glad and proud to have been able to contribute to the household income but she regretted having to miss school. She remembered the impatience of the teachers, who brushed aside the half-timers and refused to stop to explain missed work, and she recalled the superiority which the full time pupils felt (and no doubt expressed).

Whereas the short school life was largely accepted, for varying reasons, as a necessity, the low educational standard of the rising work force worried many commercial and civic leaders of the borough, at a time when an efficient popular educational system was being regarded increasingly as an important factor behind the success of foreign competitors in the industrial field. When Colonel Brocklehurst

57. Oral evidence: Mr. Bradley, Macclesfield.

58. Oral evidence: Mrs. E. Cleaver, Pott Shrigley.

told the Partial Exemption Committee that, as chairman of the Primary Education Committee, he would like to see attendance at technical evening classes made compulsory for elementary school leavers up to 16 or 17 years of age,⁵⁹ he was voicing a popularly held view that this was the answer to the problem. In the same year, on the national front, it was the subject of a report by the Consultative Committee, and in 1911 it was one of the proposals in Runciman's Bill, which also attempted to abolish half-time schooling.⁶⁰ Locally, the Education Committee passed a resolution in 1909 declaring its support for the policy,⁶¹ and the superintendent of the Technical and Evening Schools made several references to the need for a regulation to this effect in his monthly reports in 1912.⁶² The Higher Education Committee - where again Brocklehurst was chairman - had offered such courses on a voluntary basis since 1903, following the practice of the School Board, whose Evening Continuation School catered largely for the same sector of the population.⁶³ The Technical and Evening School, under the superintendency of the headmaster (up to 1912) of Christ Church, George Beach, ran the continuation classes as an integral part of the further education programme, leading on, it was hoped, to more advanced commercial, technical, and art studies.⁶⁴ The classes pursued the basic subjects of reading, writing, arithmetic, geography, history, citizenship, and singing.⁶⁵ They were, in effect, a continuation of elementary school work and, indicative of the lowly

59. P.P. 1909, Committee on Partial Exemption, Vol.II, p.216.

60. L. Andrews, The Education Act, 1918 (1976), pp.6,8.

61. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 23.iv.1909.

62. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, P.124, and other references.

63. Cheshire R.O., CED7/79/1, pp.5,22-23.

64. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.43.

65. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.23.

standard of a number of scholars, there was a preliminary class to the continuation studies. Ward remarked in 1909, with special reference to the half-timers, on the large numbers 'filling in their knowledge' in pre-continuation classes over the area.⁶⁶ Ex-elementary school pupils were admitted free of charge to the evening classes if they enrolled within twelve months of leaving the primary school.⁶⁷ In 1906 138 boys and 89 girls had signed up by October,⁶⁸ and in 1907 the numbers rose to 167 boys and 115 girls,⁶⁹ which was half, approximately of that year's full exemptions, if all the enrolments came from this group, and from Macclesfield. In 1908 the increased numbers continued: 238 boys and 136 girls;⁷⁰ but the drop-out rate was high. Ward noticed that half-timers, particularly, tended to become discouraged. The policy of supplying basic education after working hours was enthusiastically supported by most employers; several paid all necessary expenses, and some made evening school attendance a condition of employment.⁷¹ The resistance to further toil of young people who were each already working ten hours daily in the factories and workshops does not appear to have been appreciated by many of their masters. Colonel Brocklehurst was questioned on this point by a member of the Partial Exemption Committee in 1909, and - revealing an ambivalent attitude to the issue, in view of his expressed wish to see attendance at continuation school made compulsory - he declared that Brocklehursts' did not enforce enrolment at evening classes because of workers' objections.⁷² Dr. Beach, too, saw no bar to the

66. P.P. 1909, Committee on Partial Exemption, Vol.II, p.252.

67. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.22 and subsequent yearly entries.

68. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.2.

69. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.30.

70. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.43.

71. P.P. 1909, Committee on Partial Exemption, Vol. II, p.216;
Cheshire R.O., CED 7/82/1, p.37.

72. P.P. 1909, Committee on Partial Exemption, Vol. II, p.216.

natural progress from school to evening study after work, and commented sternly and frequently in his monthly reports on the falling off rate. In 1906, when he took over the post, he noticed a 'weakness' among the boys whose numbers had been decreasing yearly;⁷³ in 1907 it was the girls' attendance which was unsatisfactory, and he lamented the fact that Macclesfield, like the rest of England, lacked perseverance;⁷⁴ the trend among the girls persisted, and in 1908 wastage was 'simply enormous'.⁷⁵ In 1911 the superintendent reported that girls were neglecting school to attend places of amusement or recreative classes;⁷⁶ and in 1912 he concluded that boys and girls would not attend evening school unless forced, preferring to walk the streets and visit places of amusement.⁷⁷

The problem of working children was not limited to those who left school early with official sanction. A large number of scholars in school, some barely out of the infants' departments, worked long hours before and after school sessions. The School Board had debated this question in 1899, when Sir John Gorst was raising it in the House of Commons as a national issue.⁷⁸ The Board gathered details of 100 elementary school pupils - 89 boys, 11 girls - engaged on a regular basis, and found boys as young as eight years old working for 24 hours per week. Twenty-four of the sample were working for less than 1d per hour, and a milk boy was at the job for 43 hours for one shilling a week. The rates, if anything, are rather lower, but the findings are similar to those reported by John Hurt of a

73. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.7.

74. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.37.

75. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.43.

76. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.103.

77. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.128.

78. M.C.H., 13.v.1899.

survey of London schools in 1897.⁷⁹ The girls were employed as nurse girls or did cleaning, apart from one who went out every evening except Sunday to sell firewood and for thirty hours work made 12s Od to 14s Od. The School Board members accepted the findings with equanimity, concluding that Macclesfield was not as bad as elsewhere, and in any case they felt they had no powers in the matter, so no further action was taken. Twenty years later a 1918 survey on child employment revealed a similar pattern in out-of-school occupations. At this time it was estimated that the number in regular work in the borough was 247, and they were putting in hours which, in some cases, far exceeded those allowed for children with half and full time school exemption. For example, a lather boy of eight years of age worked $24\frac{1}{2}$ hours for 1s 3d per week; a nine year old errand boy received 2s Od for 27 hours work; and two milk boys of ten and eleven years worked, respectively, $50\frac{3}{4}$ hours and $53\frac{3}{4}$ hours for 2s 3d and 2s 6d per week. In the early 1900s late arrival at school, to 9.45 a.m. or 10 a.m., was allowed, with official sanction, for 24 boys working on milk or newspaper deliveries.⁸⁰

It is difficult to evaluate the influence of varying motivating factors on the continuance of the acceptance in the community of the child wage-earner. The hold of established custom was strong but, despite assertions to the contrary from onlookers, such as H.M.I. and employers, the immediate need of those involved, in a town depending on a precarious industry, must have been a powerful force. Taking into consideration that it was only a sample, the School Board

79. Hurt, p.207.

80. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/3, p.7.

survey of the under-twelves suggests support for this view, as does the 1918 survey. Colonel Brocklehurst told the Partial Exemption Committee that he believed parents would accept a raised school leaving age - in the context of part-time working - inferring that they would be willing if economic circumstances allowed,⁸¹ and at times of good trade - 1912, 1918-1919, for example - some decrease can be seen in the exemption figures, as the totals show in Table V for the years ending 31 March 1913 and 1919. The number of half-timers for 1920, however, also a good year, controverts this argument. Perhaps it is unreasonable to expect to see a marked change of pattern in the few good years, when experience would recommend that the sensible course was to make the most of opportunities offered. The tide of public opinion generally swelled markedly in twenty years. The changing conception, during this period, of the nature of childhood had some bearing here, allied to fears for the country's future, commercially and with regard to physical fitness standards, but so had immediate expediency. Employers were now finding less value than formerly in maintaining the part-time element in the junior work force. In the schools, which were as near the problem as any sector of the community, and in educational administration, it is noticeable that it was the half-time system, with its disruptive effects on the organization, which received most attention, rather than the early full time leaving age, although this too was deplored. Whiston's remarks on the advisability of a school leaving age of sixteen years show that the length of school life was a topic under public consideration - if on a limited scale - in 1906. The swelling tide did not,

81. P.P. 1909, Committee on Partial Exemption, Vol. II, p.216.

however, have a noticeable effect on the practicalities of the custom. The continued requests of parents after 1922 for exceptions to be made to the 'no exemptions' ruling, and the 'bending' of the rules by the School attendance Committee over 'the 14 term', indicate the attachment to the established practice. The 14 year leaving age was established compulsorily, but the attitude which regarded as desirable the earliest possible entry into work remained strongly entrenched up to the second world war. (And traces of it might be said to have been passed on up to very recent times). There is little reason to believe - certainly, in the climate of the years following 1922 - that there would have been a speedy change of pattern with regard to the child wage-earner without the force of legislation. That such a change was made was one effective result of Fisher's Education Act of 1918.

Chapter Four

The Issue of the Curriculum

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Source material on the question of the school buildings in Macclesfield is voluminous, recording in detail the long drawn out resistance of the Primary Education Committee and - a body still more entrenched - the managers of the voluntary elementary schools to the demands of the Board of Education for extensions and improvements to accommodation in the early years of the twentieth century. Records are also available providing information regarding the local administrative structure showing size of schools, attendance, staffing etc., and on the socio-economic balance of the schools intake. It is more difficult to ascertain what went on in the schools and how they appeared to those who used them: pupils, teachers, and parents.

Considering the Board's severe criticisms of the buildings, the heat engendered by the question, and the monumental expenditure of time and energy disbursed on the administrative wrangle by all with any responsibility for the provision of the schools, it would be easy to assume that Macclesfield's elementary education was in an extremely neglected state. It would be unfair, however, to equate the low standard of the premises with the work carried on in them. Despite financial insecurity and uncertainty of tenure there is no evidence of low morale in the teaching force and within the system, the standard of teaching was obviously efficient. Away from the glare of publicity, throughout the long altercation between central and local authorities, the schools - with individual exceptions - were consistently accredited 'satisfactory', 'good', and 'very good' ratings

from H.M.I. At Hurdsfield Girls School in October 1903 instruction was judged 'intelligent and systematic';¹ a term later, Crompton Road - soon to be condemned - showed 'zeal and success' in the infants' department;² Mill Street was considered to be 'ably managed' and complimented on the 'very successful' teaching;³ and Beech Lane's scheme was accepted as 'well planned and intelligent';⁴ Christ Church, whose managers were among the most recalcitrant in regard to the Board's demands for improvement to the fabric of the school, was particularly well reported on for its organization and results;⁵ and in 1906 Duke Street Boys was commended for its carefully planned instruction and 'cheerful teaching on intelligent lines'.⁶

Log books show that school work in the early 1900s still centred on the '3Rs'. Arithmetic - 'drilling in decimals' is a typical entry - writing, spelling, dictation, composition, figure consistently, and examination of the whole school by the headteacher, class by class, was a regular feature. With scripture, history, geography, poetry, and sewing for the girls or drawing for the boys, these subjects formed the framework of the schools' work. Payment by results had been abandoned in the early 1890s, but its influence persisted in the comprehensive system of examining and in the shape and emphasis of the curriculum. In February 1905 the Macclesfield Education Committee compiled a table showing the subjects included in the elementary school

1. Cheshire R.O., CED7/46/3, 31.x.1903.

2. Cheshire R.O., CED7/45/2, 15.i.1904.

3. Cheshire R.O., CED7/48/1, 31.x.1903.

4. Cheshire R.O., CED7/50/1, 31.x.1903.

5. Cheshire R.O., CED7/44/4, 31.x.1903.

6. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, 21.v.1906.

curriculum, and the time allotted to each in the various schools.⁷

The schedule confirms the predominance of the '3Rs'. After religious instruction, reading, writing - which included composition - and arithmetic headed the list, and the four subjects together occupied approximately half the school week - in some senior schools considerably more than half; in addition, in most cases, grammar took up from one to one and a half hours of the post-infants' time (Tables VII and VIII). As the Tables indicate, there was a fair degree of latitude allowed in the time allocation to subjects. This shows most clearly in a comparison between the schools of the time apportioned to 'varied occupations' and 'other subjects' which, combined, varied in the senior departments from 7 hours 20 minutes at Broken Cross to 85 minutes at Christ Church Girls'. Since recreation time at morning and afternoon breaks was included under this heading Christ Church Girls' apparently did little else apart from the listed subjects. All other senior departments with the exception of Lord Street (2 hours 40 minutes) reserved at least three hours here, and ten schools gave five hours or more. Random references at various times suggest that these headings covered swimming, housecraft - theory, if not practical - history (since it is not on the list but appears in log entries), hymn practice, and elementary science. In 1907 St. Paul's indented for, and was allowed, French dictionaries indicating that the study of French occupied some of its scholars.⁸ In the infant departments the time allowance was proportionately greater, throughout the schools, ranging from ten hours at Lord Street to just over five hours at Daybrook Street, object lessons and training in practical and manipulative skills being among the occupations engaged in.

7. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/1, 28.ii.1905.

8. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/2, p.146.

Table VIISubjects of Instruction and Time Allocation in
the Macclesfield Elementary Schools in 1905Schools for Older ChildrenSchool week 27 hours 30 minutes

Subject	Maximum per week in hours and minutes	Minimum per week in hours and minutes
Religious Instruction	5h. 35m.	2h. 15m.
Reading and Recitation	4h. 55m.	2h. 30m.
Writing, Composition etc	5h. 50m.	2h. 30m.
Arithmetic (incl. Mental)	5h. 15m.	3h. 20m.
Singing	1h. 30m.	55m.
Grammar	1h. 50m.	12m.
Geography, Mapping	2h.	1h.
Drawing	3h. 20m.	30m.
Needlework (girls)	3h. 15m.	1h. 30m.
Drill	1h. 30m.	30m.
Varied occupations	2h.	1h.
Other Subjects (incl. recreation)	6h. 45m.	1h. 25m.

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/1, 28.ii.1905.

Table VIIISubjects of Instruction and Time Allocation in
the Macclesfield Elementary Schools in 1905Infant SchoolsSchool week 23 hours 45 minutes

Subject	Maximum per week in hours and minutes	Minimum per week in hours and minutes
Religious Instruction	3h. 45m.	2h. 5m.
Reading and Recitation	5h. 8m.	2h. 30m.
Writing, Composition etc	3h. 20m.	2h.
Arithmetic (incl. Mental)	3h. 18m.	1h. 30m.
Singing	1h. 40m.	40m.
Drawing	2h. 30m.	20m.
Needlework (girls)	2h.	50m.
Drill	1h. 55m.	40m.
Varied occupations	4h. 30m.	1h. 15m.
Other Subjects (incl. recreation)	7h. 55m.	3h. 10m.

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/1, 28.ii.1905.

The infant school regime is outlined in more detail in Daybrook Street's scheme of work for 1901-1902. (Table IX). In addition to the basic subjects, singing - tonic sol-fah and songs - drill, with and without dumb-bells, marching, and kindergarten games 'occasionally', are listed.⁹ There was, also, drawing for the boys, on slates and in books, with hemming and, in class I, knitting for the girls. Classes I and 2 had instruction in paper-folding, whilst the younger children were given practice in stick-playing, and class 3 (the under-fives) had lessons involving letter pieces. Oral lessons were also included, on such topics as: a frosty day, the silkworm (chosen, no doubt, with the staple industry in mind), washing the tea things, for the older infants, and the common domestic animals for 'the babies'. Class 3, the babies' class, was a feature of all the schools. In a town where a large percentage of the women worked as a matter of course, there was a constant supply of infant scholars. In 1905 there were 503 four year olds and 336 under four years of age, a total of 839.¹⁰ St. Paul's alone had 129 under-fives. The overall number was reduced to 477 in the following year and, the figure decreasing only in line with the total school population, this proportion was maintained into the post-war period.¹¹ In the early years of the new administration the schools were advised against admitting the under-fours, but there were still 35 on the registers in 1910.¹² In 1909 new regulations required the attendance of the under-fives to be treated separately with regard to the grant.¹³ At this time the group numbered 442. Ten years later the total was 354, but in 1920 it dropped to 261 which,

9. Daybrook Street Log Book, 8.xi.1901.

10. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/1, p.116.

11. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/2-8, 1905-1927; CED7/28/4-5, 1928-1944.

Attendance statistics in this paragraph are taken from the attendance records of the Macclesfield Education Committee.

12. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/4, p.87.

13. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/4, p.39.

Table IX

Hurdsfield Daybrook Street Infant School;
Scheme of Work for 1901-1902

Reading	Writing	Number
<p><u>Class 1</u></p> <p>To read with expression from two or three readers. Word building from same.</p>	<p>Capital and small letters. Names, transcriptions. Copy books at end of year.</p>	<p>Composition of numbers 10-20. Addition of numbers 2-9 to 100. Sums in addition and subtraction on slates.</p>
<p><u>Class II</u></p> <p>To read with expression from two readers. Spelling from same.</p>	<p>Capital and small letters from copy. Names and easy words.</p>	<p>Composition of numbers up to 10. Addition of numbers 1-5 as far as 50. Easy sums on slates (no carrying).</p>
<p><u>Class III (Babies)</u></p> <p>Learn alphabet, both large and small letters. Read words of three letters from Sheet. Spelling from same.</p>	<p>All letters written within one space. Easy combinations may be taught at end of year.</p>	<p>Composition of numbers 2-6. Learn names and values of figures to 9. Ball-frame number chart and kindergarten occupations to be utilized.</p>
<p>Kindergarten occupations to be used as far as possible in conjunction with elementary subjects, Natural History and Object lessons.</p>		

Source: Daybrook Street Log Book, 8.xi.1901.

allowing for sporadic leaps in individual years, marked the start of a slow decline to 203 in 1930, and 190 in 1932. This was the nadir, an equally slow climb taking the total to 221 in 1939-40, and continuing into the war years.

On the surface the curriculum in the early 1900s does not read very differently from that of the 1880s and 1890s, but other evidence indicates that changes were taking place, widening the scope of school life and denoting a growing concern for the nature of the child. Miss Peachey, who was almost in the last decade of a career which began in 1868, following suggestions from H.M.I. Ward, put in a requisition in 1904 for small tables and chairs with backs, for the Daybrook Street infants, together with toys and pictures, a bed, and a rocking horse or swing, and she had the large classroom altered to make it more suitable as a kindergarten room.¹⁴ In 1905 she added recitations and drill to the scheme of work, and easy rhymes and action songs for the 'babies',¹⁵ and new dual desks were ordered eighteen months later, to allow for greater freedom of movement.¹⁶ As Malcolm Seaborne observed, the introduction of dual desks in place of the old long desks was a new development in classroom furniture in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.¹⁷ In 1910 St. Albans, too, refurnished both mixed and infant departments. Long desks were shortened, and fifty dual desks were substituted in the infant department for sixteen of the old type, whilst thirty 'babies' desks and eight kindergarten tables were provided for the youngest group.¹⁸

14. Daybrook Street Log Book, 4.viii.1905.

15. Daybrook Street Log Book, 2.viii.1905.

16. Daybrook Street Log Book, 8.iii.1907.

17. M. Seaborne, Primary School Design (1971), p.27.

18. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/4, p.96.

The sphere of infant education was the first area to show the influence of the 'progressive' movement in education, based on the ideas of Froebel, Dewey, and Montessori. For the older age range, too, as the new century advanced, the scope of school activities was extended, if cautiously. In Macclesfield the development can be seen in the promotion of various aspects of physical education, the introduction of practical instruction on an organized basis, and in the opening up of the schools, in some degree, to the outside world. Drill and swimming, cookery and manual classes, activities outside the classroom walls, became part of the regular pattern.

Swimming had been a regular activity in the later years of the School Board for children who could afford the entrance fee of one penny, as was allowed under the Day School Code.¹⁹ William Bond, an Independent Labour Party representative (the only one on any of the boards), tried in 1902 to get free entry for school parties, leading a deputation to the Town Council to plead the cause.²⁰ He failed in his mission then, but two years later the Council reversed its decision, and the swimming baths were made available free of charge to scholars from the public elementary schools, provided they were accompanied by a member of staff.²¹ The headmaster of Duke Street Boys' took advantage of the new arrangement by taking 100 boys on his own.²² Swimming was included on the timetable for the girls too, but the response was less enthusiastic. In August 1907 at Duke Street

19. M.C.H., 15.iii.1902.

20. M.C.H., 22.ii.1902, 22.iii.1902.

21. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, 14.ix.1904.

22. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, 14.ix.1904.

Girls' the swimming group numbered thirteen.²³ Swimming continued as a regular activity for six months of each year. In 1907 Sergeant Robert Whittaker was paid £27 6s 0d for instructing the boys and £20 for the girls' lessons,²⁴ duties which he continued until his retirement in 1926.²⁵ In addition to the swimming commitment, Whittaker was employed by the Education Committee, at a salary of £40 per annum, as a peripatetic physical training instructor (in which capacity he also served the Grammar School and the Modern School). An ex-pupil of St. Peter's, who went on to the new Byron Street Council School when it opened, remembers Sergeant Whittaker well, as a strict master but one always ready with a joke. Drill at the two schools he attended was taken in the yard with two or three classes out together, and it was one of the lessons the boys looked forward to, he recalls.²⁶ Girls' drill at Duke Street at the beginning of the century consisted of castanet exercises,²⁷ but in 1907 Sergeant Whittaker gave a demonstration lesson here, with standards III and IV, to three members of the staff.²⁸ The headmistress approved the new move. The teachers gained valuable information and advice, she wrote in the log book, perhaps indicating a new style in physical exercises for the girls. Certainly by 1917, as one old Mill Street pupil remembers, drill in the yard was the accepted form of girls' physical training lessons.²⁹

23. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 19.viii.1907.

24. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/2, p.128.

25. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.146.

26. Oral evidence, Mn Bradley, Macclesfield.

27. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 11.i.1902, 18.iii.1902.

28. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 18.iv.1907.

29. Oral evidence, Mrs. E. Adshead, Macclesfield.

The upsurge of interest in formal physical activity for elementary school pupils accorded with the climate of opinion nationally. In the early 1900s there was serious concern regarding the health of the nation and, with increasing government involvement in the sphere of education, the schools provided a convenient avenue for remedial action. In Macclesfield the strength of feeling aroused over the issue of the country's physical fitness can be judged from the activity, initiated by T. C. Horsfall of Swanscoe Hall, Rainow, in January 1900, and reported on regularly in the local press, which resulted in the formation of the Patriotic Association of Macclesfield and District in June.³⁰ Horsfall, perturbed at reports regarding the insufficient numbers of men fit to receive military training, called for a united local self help effort to raise the general standard. Since he felt that any improvement must depend largely on the rising generation he declared his belief in the 'absolute necessity' for every elementary school to be provided, 'at whatever the cost', with a large playground, gymnastic apparatus, and a well trained instructor able to teach the children 'the most healthgiving games, drill, and use of gymnastic apparatus'. He pleaded also for facilities for physical training and rifle practice to be brought within reach of every able-bodied citizen, and he promised £1,000 towards expenses. He was joined in his movement by another prominent local figure, Henry Birchenough, and the resultant Association was launched, in the presence of the mayor and a host of influential citizens and neighbours, for the encouragement of athletics and physical training for the young. Horsfall's dream for the elementary schools did not

30. M.C.H., frequent references throughout 1901.

materialize. Rather, advances crept in cautiously. In the controversy over the school buildings, playground space was one of the points at issue between the schools' managers and the Board of Education's inspectors. The Elementary Code for 1904 directed attention to the need for education in health, and it specifically mentioned the necessity of training children 'in the appropriate physical exercises' and promoting organized games.³¹ In the same year the Board's Syllabus for Physical Training was issued to all schools.³² The problem in implementing the directive would seem to have been the lack of expertise in this area among the teachers. H. C. Dent comments on the low standard of training and equipment for physical training in the training colleges at this period.³³ Doubtless, such considerations formed the background to Sergeant Whittaker's appointment in Macclesfield. As R. D. Bramwell explains, the first recourse of the Board of Education for its 1902 handbook on physical education was to army advisers.³⁴ In 1904, in response to protests from the teaching and medical professions, which both favoured the Swedish system of gymnastics, the militaristic approach was revised, but the dearth of trained teachers created a void at the schools level which army instructors could fill, where available.

Concern for health was also the motivating force behind the increased interest in the teaching of various aspects of home management to senior elementary school girls. In 1904 the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration - appointed to investigate the

31. 'Elementary Code 1904, Introduction', J.S. Maclure, Educational Documents 1816 to the present day (1965), p.154.

32. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, p.79.

33. H.C. Dent, The Training of Teachers in England and Wales 1800-1975 (1977), p.77.

34. R.D. Bramwell, Elementary School Work 1900-1925(Durham, 1961), p.95.

high rejection figures among would-be recruits for the army in the Boer War - advised, among other recommendations, that cookery, domestic economy, and hygiene should be made compulsory subjects for girls in elementary schools. Morant regarded this issue as of paramount importance and made it a priority area for the recently formed women's branch of the inspectorate in his new administration.³⁵ In this field there had been government recognition in the 1890s. In 1893 the Education Department issued its first Regulations for the Training of Teachers of Domestic Subjects, signifying its approval of the efforts of the Schools of Cookery to provide valid courses and qualifications for elementary school teachers.³⁶ Unfortunately, since despite official sanction the courses carried minimum grant, the movement made limited progress.

There was growing support in Macclesfield in the late 1890s for the inclusion of cookery in the school curriculum. Crompton Road managers applied to the Board of Education for official approval to start classes in 1899, pointing out how very necessary they were in a town where, because of the early employment of girls in the factories (and they might have added, the regular employment of most mothers), there was no home training.³⁷ Although the staff was available, the proposed room was judged too small and declared inadequate by H.M.I. W. Gleadowe. Approval was consequently withheld. Suffering from the usual lack of funds, the managers declared themselves unable to build and the scheme had to be abandoned, but

35. Dent, p.35.

36. Dent, pp.39-40.

37. P.R.O., ED21/2137, 27.x.1899.

the more flourishing schools - Christ Church and Mill Street certainly, other schools possibly - were including the subject on the timetable, providing their own resources. (When Christ Church closed down its own facilities on the opening of the town's centre its cookery utensils were valued at £3 2s 8d.)³⁸ Gleadowe, who knew the town well having had it under his supervision for thirty years, felt, nevertheless, that more could be done, and blamed the School Board for what he considered a deficiency in the town's education service. Reporting to the Board of Education in 1899 he emphasized the responsibility of the local Board for the provision of a cookery centre so that all the schools would have the necessary facilities.³⁹ 'Perhaps in time I may get them to do so', he concluded, rather dejectedly.

Gleadowe did not see the day as he retired upon reorganization, but in 1904, under the new administration, moves were made towards the establishment of a central school of cookery in the town. Pressure on education authorities to provide facilities in this field increased as the nation absorbed the findings of the Inter-Departmental Committee's report, and other surveys. The encouragement of tuition in home management skills became part of government policy.

P. H. J. H. Gosden notes the growth in the West Riding schools between 1905 and 1914 of instruction in housecraft and practical subjects.⁴⁰ In Macclesfield the suggestion by the medical officer of health in 1905 that the Education Committee might do more to ensure the teaching to the older girls in the schools of the feeding and management of

38. Cheshire R.O., CED7/65/18, 2.xii.1905.

39. P.R.O., ED21/2137, 28.xi.1899.

40. P. H. J. H. Gosden and P. R. Sharp, The Development of an Education Service (1978), p.57.

babies reflects a general body of opinion.⁴¹ The question of the cookery centre was raised in a Committee meeting in August 1904;⁴² a sub-committee was appointed in October to explore the possibilities; and in January 1906 the centre was opened in a room of the Large Sunday School in Roe Street.⁴³

Gleadowe's hope that all elementary schools might have access to cookery facilities was realized and the number of children partaking was almost doubled, but still a sizeable section of the relevant age group was not included. In November 1905, of 610 girls of 11 years and over, 180 were being taught cookery in their own schools;⁴⁴ the new centre took ten groups per week for sessions of two hours duration (later extended by 30 minutes), each group limited to 18 pupils, and it would seem that groups alternated weekly or by course. In 1910-11, according to the grant allowed by the Board of Education, 342 girls were registered during the year of which 285 attended regularly the officially recognized provision for one course of 40 hours (20 weeks), and 11 completed two courses.⁴⁵ Cookery was an extra, to be paid for, and not all schools took up their full quota. For one course in 1907 St. George's Branch sent 8 girls, St. Paul's 9, and St. Peter's 10, whereas Christ Church (15) and Mill Street (9) sent second year pupils in addition to full first year classes.⁴⁶ (School pence was still paid in at least eight schools and Mill Street, with £111 0s 11d for the year, and Christ Church, £103 8s 1d, headed the list).⁴⁷ In some cases under-age pupils,

41. M.O.H., Report, 1905, p.245.

42. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, p.80.

43. Cheshire R.O., CED7/65/18; CED7/65/24.

44. Cheshire R.O., CED7/65/11.

45. Board of Education Statistics of Public Education in England and Wales, Part I, 1910-11 (H.M.S.O. 1912), p.62.

46. Cheshire R.O., CED7/65/24.

47. P.P.1912-13(42)LXV. 479, Accounts and Papers, Elementary Education, p.23.

requiring special permission from the Board, were sent to make up numbers in the classes, yet in 1913, as H.M.I., Miss Bastow, observed, no provision was made for half timers, on the grounds of lack of accommodation.⁴⁸ H.M.I., approving the teaching but criticizing the 'very inconvenient' room at Roe Street, recommended an extension of facilities, and in 1914 the centre was moved to the Technical School where two rooms were made available, allowing an extra 16 places per session.⁴⁹ The age group was now covered, but in 1917, when the fee was 4d per session, cookery was still an optional.⁵⁰ If the basic aim of encouraging domestic subjects in schools in the early 1900s was to improve the health of the nation through a better understanding in tomorrow's mothers of the importance of nutrition, in Macclesfield the expense, in addition to the bias against half-timers, ensured that many of those who might have benefited most from instruction in culinary skills did not get a chance to take advantage of it.

The successful applicant for the post of Cookery teacher, which carried a salary of £85 per annum,⁵¹ was Miss Harriet Fowler, and her curriculum vitae provides an interesting insight into contemporary training in this area. After qualifying at the Chester School of Cookery she had been retained on the staff and, in addition to training students for teaching, she had organized and conducted cookery and laundry classes for elementary school children at the Chester centre, which was run in conjunction with the Cookery School, and in

48. Cheshire R.O., CED7/65/33.

49. Cheshire R.O., CED7/65/34.

50. Oral evidence: Mrs. E. Adshead, Macclesfield.

51. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/2, p.128.



various Welsh and county centres; she had been responsible for examining schools and students on their knowledge of the principal illnesses, and she had certificates in hygiene and elementary chemistry.⁵² Since Macclesfield was more acceptable, for family reasons, she was willing to forego the offer of a post in Birmingham, teaching cookery and laundry, at £95 per annum. In 1907 half an hour was added to each session at the centre. Even so, the syllabus drawn up by Harriet Fowler, based on one hour for demonstration time and the rest for practical work, presents a demanding schedule for 12 and 13 year old girls. (Table X). The Board of Education was of this opinion when presented with the proposed course. On its advice 'grilling', which was combined with 'cold meat cookery', was deleted,⁵³ but one can imagine some hectic sessions for pupil and teacher, (although an experienced teacher reading the schedule thought it was not very different in timing and content to what she was teaching up to a decade ago).

The boys' centre, for handicrafts, was sited at the Technical School from the beginning of the century. Up to 1903 it was administered by the Town Council's Technical Instruction Committee, to which body were paid the manual instruction grants earned by the schools.⁵⁴ The instructor, James Hooley, held as qualifications the N. A. A. S. Diploma for the Lloyd system of manual instruction, together with several certificates authorized by the Board of Education and the City and Guilds of London in drawing and trade crafts.⁵⁵ His 1903 salary of £70 per annum, as a member of the Technical and Science School staff, had been raised to £80 by 1907 when he was employed, for

52. Cheshire R.O., CED7/65/12.

53. Cheshire R.O., CED7/65/22.

54. Cheshire R.O., CED7/65/3.

55. Cheshire R.O., CED7/65/2.

Table X

Macclesfield Cookery Centre
Syllabus of work for year ending July 31st 1906

First Course. Time 2 hours.

<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Principle</u>	<u>Blackboard Summary</u>	<u>Dishes cooked or new work</u>	<u>Extra Dishes</u>
1.	Introduction, why food is cooked. Management of Range. Scullery Work. Milk Pudding	Scullery Work. Milk Pudding.	Cleaning of utensils and lighting of Stove. Rice and Sago Pudding (without egg).	
2.	Soup. Pastry.	Vegetable. Nutrient properties eg. Lentils, Potatoes. Stock-soup making Pastry -(Shortcrust)	Lentil or Potato Soup, Bone Stock. Syrup or Jam Turnovers. Tart or Cornish Pasties.	
3.	Fish. Boiled Puddings	Fish. Classes of Fish. Nutrient properties. Boiled Puddings.	Baked or Fried Fish. Roly Poly or Treacle Pudding.	White Sauce
4.	Bread Making	Notes on Bread Making	White Bread (Yeast). The making of Baking Powder. Baking Powder Bread - Scones.	
5.	Stewing.	Stewing - advantages	Stewed Liver and Bacon or stewed Mutton or Beef	Raspberry or Rock Buns.

Table X (continued)

<u>Lesson</u>	<u>Principle</u>	<u>Blackboard Summary</u>	<u>Dishes cooked or new work</u>	<u>Extra Dishes</u>
6.	Boiling	Boiling - Joints suitable for boiling - boiled meat.	Boiled mutton. Barley Broth Parsley Sauce.	Scrap Bread Pudding.
7.	Baking and roast-vegetables.	Roasting. Roast or Baked meat. Vegetables.	Baked Sheep's Heart or Rolled Steak and Gravy. Boiled greens.	Yorkshire Pudding Baked Potatoes.
8.	Cold Meat Cookery	Cold Meat Cookery	Cottage Pie or minced meat, beef or mutton.	Boiled potatoes
9.	Frying	Dry and Wet Frying. Advantages and disadvantages of each method.	Fish cakes. Liver and Bacon - Gravy.	Pancakes.
10.	Invalid Cookery	Invalid Cookery. Steaming.	Beef Tea - (raw and cooked) Steamed Fish. Steamed custard or Arrowroot pudding.	Gruel.

Source: Cheshire R.O. CED7/65/22.

his daytime work, by the Macclesfield Education Committee.⁵⁶ The Scheme of work at the handicraft centre was planned on the basis of one and a half hours per session at bench work and half an hour of drawing, with theory fitted in where possible.⁵⁷ The early syllabus was restricted to woodwork but in 1914 metalwork was included, although since not many boys attended for more than one year, the standard must necessarily have been elementary for the most part. In 1909 H.M.I. Ward complained that the teaching was 'lifeless and mechanical', needing to allow greater freedom for individual effort and 'failure if necessary'.⁵⁸ In 1914, however, he commended the 'decidedly good' work and the efforts of the teacher to 'develop intelligent thought and self-reliance'.⁵⁹ It is perhaps indicative of developments in this area that the 1907 scheme of work merely set down a list of manipulative skills to be taught and 'useful objects' to be made, whereas in 1914, with the same instructor, work was based on making 'models illustrating mechanical and scientific principles', with emphasis being placed on the making of objects for school and 'domestic use', such as netball stands, notice boards, and working with the boys' own materials.⁶⁰ The boys' course consisted of 30 weekly sessions, and attendance at a minimum of 20 sessions was required for grant qualification. As with the girls, all schools sent groups but, again, not all boys attended, and the drop-out rate was the despair of headteachers. In 1907, following a reduction in the annual grant earned, the Committee queried figures which showed 299 registered

56. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/2, p.128.

57. Cheshire R.O., CED7/65/30.

58. Cheshire R.O., CED7/65/31.

59. Cheshire R.O., CED7/65/36.

60. Cheshire R.O., CED7/65/39.

but only 138 qualified for the allowance grant, a fall of 24 on the previous year.⁶¹ The headteachers blamed the half-time system mainly. Since the minimum age to count for the grant was 12 years, boys often became half-timers before they had completed the necessary attendances and, up to this time, part-time scholars did not qualify for grant purposes. An attempt had been made to improve the position by getting parents to promise to allow their sons to fulfil the 20 weeks requirement, but promises were often broken. There was some relief when the Board regulations were changed in July 1908 to allow the half-timers to be included in the grant assessment for handicrafts and cookery, and to lower the qualifying age to 11 years,⁶² but in 1910-11, of 241 boys registered, only 132 completed the full course, with a further 27 attending for between twenty and thirty sessions.⁶³ It was a disadvantage, too, to a favourable attendance rate that the handicraft centre was open when the day schools were closed for casual holidays. The Committee's dictum was that pupils should attend since otherwise the instructor would have a wasted day, but there is no evidence that it was taken seriously.

Attendance at the cookery centre was optional since a fee was charged, but also on the girls' timetable, and compulsory, was domestic economy taken as a theory lesson. At Duke Street Girls' this was taught by the headmistress with standards V, VI and VII.⁶⁴ Needlework was another subject which was taken seriously with the explicit aim of imparting housewifely competence. Supplies of calico, flannel,

61. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/3, p.67.

62. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/3, p.146.

63. Statistics of Public Education, 1910-11, p.62.

64. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 1.ix.1902.

and tape arrived regularly at Duke Street, and girls learned to cut out paper patterns, sew a flannel patch or a print patch, and eventually produce the garments which were sold off periodically.⁶⁵ Sometimes an extra interest might be given to these lessons. One Mill Street ex-pupil, looking back to schooldays at the start of the first world war, remembers how a friend's aid was enlisted in sewing lessons in the making of their teacher's trousseau.

Duke Street, in both boys' and girls' departments, illustrates the swing, cautious but noticeable, towards a more child centred approach in the schools in the first decade of the twentieth century. The school had difficulties; the intake was poor, and for many years the school worked under the shadow of imminent closure; but both master and mistress were keen and energetic. The headmistress was particularly interested in music and took each class in turn for their tonic sol-fa lessons. She also trained the upper classes in two-part singing,⁶⁶ and periodically she released the staff by taking the whole school so that she could teach the girls new hymns. In 1907 both head teachers started to send classes out to a park or playground for organized games, the girls once a month - standards V to VII had every third Friday from 3.15 to 4.15⁶⁷ - and the boys about every three weeks.⁶⁸ During the following year, in each school, a branch of the St. George's Book Club was started with the aim of encouraging home reading.⁶⁹ Members bought books, paying by instalments. There was a badge for

65. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 20.iv.1907.

66. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 16.vi.1902.

67. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 19.iv.1907, and frequent references thereafter.

68. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, 6.ix.1907, and several references 1907 and 1908.

69. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 24.ii.1908; SL74/3, 11.vii.1909.

membership and a monthly magazine containing competitions designed to stimulate interest in school work. In the girls' department 41 scholars and four teachers enrolled in the opening session. At the end of the school year the boys wrote essays on an incident from any full length novel they had read during the year, and prizes were presented by a well-known local figure at a special ceremony.⁷⁰ The vicar gave twopence for every shilling paid in by the children, and 133 books were bought in the year, at a cost of £4 9s 3d. This scheme would seem to have been part of a widespread movement. Malcolm Seaborne records the formation in Leicester schools in 1905 of Home Reading Circles organized to promote interest in reading out of school.⁷¹

With the same aim in view, of encouraging wider reading, the Borough Teachers' Association had earlier initiated a move to bring the public library within the orbit of the schools by the addition of a juvenile section. The plan was presented to the Primary Education Committee by Alfred Salt, the Association's secretary and headmaster of St. George's, in September 1904.⁷² It was referred to the Library Committee of the Town Council who agreed to the terms, namely, that the Primary Education Committee should pay the initial cost of 800 books plus all additional books later, and the Library Committee would deal with the cataloguing and distribution, in conjunction with the Teachers' Association, providing £10 to £15 per annum for renewals and other expenses.⁷³ The Education Committee, unsure of its ground, sought approval from the Board of Education,

70. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, 11.vi.1909.

71. M. Seaborne, Recent Education from Local Sources (1967), p.43.

72. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 23.ix.1904.

73. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 16.xii.1904.

but the Board advised in February 1905 that the legality of the expense was for the District Auditor to pronounce on.⁷⁴ There is no record of a decision from this quarter, but in 1914 St. George's School, still under Alfred Salt, was commended in a report by H.M.I. on the good use made of the public library,⁷⁵ and in a later entry still, in 1921, when the post-war Committee was re-starting a similar scheme, there is reference to Dr. Beach, headmaster of Christ Church and a stalwart of the Teachers' Association, 'starring' the children's books in the public library in 1907.⁷⁶ The spirit of the teachers' proposal was in line with contemporary progressive educational thought. Bramwell refers to the encouragement by the Board of Education, through H.M.I., of school and class libraries between 1905 and 1918, and reports Northumberland's contribution in 1907 of £66 18s 10d for the purchase of library books for 57 schools.⁷⁷

Perhaps the most striking area of change in the first decade of the twentieth century and becoming a marked feature in Macclesfield by 1907, was the opening up of the schools to the world outside and the extension of school activities beyond the classroom walls. There is mention of a class from Duke Street Boys' being taken to the Hollins - an open area going out towards the hills, just outside the town's boundary - for an object lesson in 1902,⁷⁸ and in 1905 a visiting lecturer gave a talk to the girls on 'English Serpents and Foreign Insects', with live and dead specimens⁷⁹ which must have

74. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 17.iii.1905.

75. P.R.O., ED21/2145, 26.viii.1914.

76. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, 21.xii.1921.

77. Bramwell, pp.9-10.

78. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, 26.iii.1902.

79. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 23.viii.1905.

aroused a lively reaction. Another visitor came in to talk about the Holy Land and in 1909, through the organization of Dr. Beach, the senior children of all the schools visited a missionary exhibition in the Drill Hall.⁸⁰ From 1907 onwards numerous log entries indicated a calculated policy to involve the children in field work and environmental experience. A geography lesson in the open air, on cloud formations; a walk in the hills for geographical observation; a country walk for observation; a lesson in Beech Lane fields for the purpose of drawing the railway bridge; are a few examples. There were walks to find leaves to draw, and for the purpose of learning how to construct maps and to follow them. In an article discussing the forces responsible for curricular change, R. D. Bramwell refers to the influence of Heimatkunde and Schulreise in popularizing the use of neighbourhood studies and school journeys in geography teaching.⁸¹ It is doubtful whether any Macclesfield teachers knew of these works, but the philosophy expounded in them was certainly percolating into the schools. In an inspection report in 1913 Mill Street was particularly commended for its use of school journeys.⁸² An entry in the log book of 1906 shows that these were a well established feature and provides a detailed example of one of the headmaster's expeditions.⁸³ The participants were standards V, VI, and VII, a large group in Mill Street which, unlike most of the schools, kept a large senior contingent. Starting at 2 o'clock one

80. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 26.ix.1909.

81. R.D. Bramwell, 'Curriculum Determinants: an Historical Perspective', History of Education Society Bulletin, Autumn 1973, p.47.

82. P.R.O., ED21/2140, 3.xi.1913.

83. Cheshire R.O., SL79/2/2, 18.iv.1906.

April afternoon, by 5.50 pm the boys had to complete the following schedule:

- (a) Draw a map of the distance given.
- (b) Do contour work on given heights of hills.
- (c) Note the formation of various valleys.
- (d) Note the geological formations.
- (e) Use a measuring chain for distances indicated.
- (f) Plot the locations of towns and villages.

The headmaster here was Thomas Hewitt, an active townsman, one of the two elementary school headmasters on the Education Committee, and a highly respected voice on education locally. Mill Street Wesleyan Higher Grade School (as it was still called) rivalled Christ Church in reputation in these years, and both owed much to the energies of their respective headmasters. In the early 1900s, in the spirit of the times, Hewitt - who had come to Macclesfield in 1885 - was working out experimental ideas designed to relax the rigidity of school routine. He believed in shorter but more frequent holidays and a wiser arrangement of the curriculum embodying more craft and practical activities.⁸⁴ For infants he advocated free play every hour and no afternoon school or, if this were impracticable, manual activities only. He published his theories in a pamphlet called Handicraft and Nerve Strain. H.M.I. Ward in 1909 claimed that Hewitt was making 'extravagant claims as a pioneer educationist'; he admitted that Mill Street was 'quite a good school' but that was all.⁸⁵ His grudging acknowledgement probably reflected, to some extent, his frustration over Macclesfield's protracted delay in replacing its

84. P.R.O., ED21/2140, 29.ix.1910.

85. P.R.O., ED21/2140, 16.iv.1909.

inadequate school buildings of which Mill Street was one, on the point of being condemned. In another reference - admittedly a eulogy in the local paper when Hewitt completed his fiftieth year as a teacher - Ward is quoted as having reported on Hewitt's methods at Mill Street fully and complimentarily.⁸⁶ For a teacher who began his career in the early days of the Revised Code - he was a fourteen year old pupil teacher in 1869 - Hewitt's views, firmly grounded in experience, have the ring of a practitioner sensitive to the changing attitudes of his times, in line with the findings of more notable educational innovators.

The strong sectarianism which motivated Macclesfield's determined defence of its voluntary schools and caused the delay in its modernization plans was responsible in 1912 for the one attempt by the L.E.A. to guide the curriculum, in the area of religious education. The building of the first council school, Byron Street, was a bitter blow to the large body of Anglican opinion in the L.E.A. and it opened against a background of bitter resentment. In January 1912 the School Management Committee decided to adopt the Religious Instruction Syllabus, issued by the Cheshire County Council, for its new charge.⁸⁷ The syllabus, modelled on that of the L.C.C., was drawn up to provide instruction for standard I to standard VII in three courses. Pupils would learn the Lord's Prayer and the Ten Commandments, be instructed in the Old and New Testaments according to their age groups, and learn by heart designated passages.⁸⁸ This would have been acceptable to all sections of the community, except the Roman Catholics who were

86. M.C.H., 26.iv.1919.

87. P.R.O., ED19/19, 4.i.1912.

88. P.R.O., ED19/19, 27.i.1912.

not involved, but Robert Brown, for twenty years a militant Anglican on the education scene, persuaded the Committee to add to the Macclesfield edition the teaching of the Apostles' Creed. There was immediate uproar.⁸⁹ The Free Church Council, denied the right to put its case before the L.E.A. and the Town Council, held a meeting - attended and, surprisingly, supported by several well-known churchmen - and issued a circular, publicized via the Nonconformist pulpits of the town, advising parents to keep children away from school until the religious instruction period was over. Large numbers of the community responded, and attitudes hardened. The Church element argued that to remove the Apostles' Creed was to deprive of a right parents who wanted their children to learn it. The Nonconformists' objections hung particularly on the phrase, 'the Holy Catholic Church'. A lot of bitterness was unleashed on both sides in the L.E.A., the Town Council, and in public meetings. Eventually a compromise was reached whereby the Apostles' Creed was taught only first thing on Monday mornings, in a separate room, and parents were informed that undenominational Bible teaching would be provided as an alternative, given by the Nonconformist headmaster.⁹⁰

It is indicative of the climate of educational opinion in Macclesfield at this period, in administrative quarters, that the question of the teaching of the Apostles' Creed was the only topic on the curriculum to be discussed at any length by the Education Committee or any of its sub-committees. Marjorie Cruikshank quotes a comment of Sidney Webb in 1904 that 'in comparison with the strength of feeling on the form of religious teaching in schools other

89. M.C.H., frequent references between 22.xii.1911 and 2.iii.1912.

90. M.C.H., 2.iii.1912.

considerations were as dust before the whirlwind.'⁹¹ The development of elementary education in Macclesfield up to the end of the first world war provides ample evidence of support for this view. In contrast to the time spent on, and the publicity given to, the religious aspect of education, secular curricular development advanced by stealth, recorded for the most part in traditional and stilted phrases in log books and inspectors' reports.

It is interesting to speculate on the motivating influences behind the changing attitudes which became apparent in the town's schools in the years leading up to the first world war. 'New blood' in the teaching force might be considered but, although Duke Street Girls' and both boys' and girls' departments at Hurdsfield had newly appointed heads in the early 1900s, some of the leading headteachers - Christ Church and Mill Street among them - had been at their posts for fifteen years and more when Balfour's Act took effect. The economic circumstances of the town had not improved; and in Macclesfield the reorganization in the administration of education after 1902 could not be said to have made any appreciable immediate difference at local level. As a Part III authority the borough had charge of its own elementary provision; many of the same people were involved in the direction and supervision of the education service as had served on the school boards, and certainly a similar approach - guided by parsimony and sectarianism - governed its policy. On the other hand, the altered financial position of the schools might be allowed to have influenced teachers' views of the curriculum. Macclesfield had a purely voluntary system up to 1912 and consequently the schools had only recently been brought within the orbit of rate aid for

91. Marjorie Cruikshank, 'A Defence of the 1902 Act', History of Education Society Bulletin, Spring 1977, p.2.

running expenses. Whilst the L.E.A. was not a munificent authority, capitation, teachers' salaries, and the quality of the teaching force improved to some extent under the new regime compared with the austere pre-1902 era. Forces for change can be observed generally in the increased concern shown for the less fortunate in society and particularly in the more sensitive attitude towards children's needs. It was an attitude shown by William Bond, of the School Board, who - in line with the policy of the Independent Labour Party of which he was a member - tried to raise support for free swimming in 1902, declaring it was the duty of the Board not only to secure school attendance but to make life brighter for the pupils whenever possible;⁹² and by the industrialist, Harold Whiston, when in 1906 he condemned the practice of child labour, and advocated a 16 year school leaving age.⁹³ Nearer the scene of action, H.M. Inspectorate played a part. Miss Peachey ordered her kindergarten furniture after talks with the Board's new inspector in 1903. In the 1904 report on Duke Street Boys' it was advised that history should be made more pictorial, geography more observational, and the teaching in the upper classes less mechanical;⁹⁴ and that this was acted upon would seem to be implied in 1906 when H.M.I. professed himself pleased with the oral work, and commended the staffs teaching for intelligence rather than mechanical accuracy.⁹⁵ In 1914 Byron Street Junior Girls', which was successfully developing its indoor gardening as part of the nature study course, was recommended to start a playground garden outdoors;⁹⁶ and at St. George's more

92. M.C.H., 15.iii.1902.

93. M.C.H., 15.xii.1906.

94. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, 8.xii.1904.

95. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, 21.v.1906.

96. P.R.O., ED21/2135, 3.iii.1914.

open-air teaching was suggested to relieve a situation where four teachers used three rooms.⁹⁷ The growing professionalism and confidence of the teaching force was another factor calculated to encourage innovation. The teachers' associations of borough and district were becoming increasingly vocal, and their views on the educational issues of the day - invariably delivered by the heads of schools - were being made known to the general public, through newspapers, and to the L.E.A. The self image of the profession was encouraged by the 1904 Code, and by the Handbook of Suggestions issued in 1905 which exhorted teachers to think for themselves and work out methods suited to the needs of their particular schools.⁹⁸

As would be expected, not all schools moved at the same rate. In 1913, and repeated in 1914, a complaint was made to the L.E.A. by H.M.I. concerning Broken Cross where, it was maintained, urgent revision of the timetable was needed, starting with 'the elimination of unsuitable work' such as 'Latin roots'.⁹⁹ At St. Paul's, too, the scheme of work was pronounced out-of-date, with no handwork, little domestic education, and too much formal grammar - although here the headmaster challenged the findings, eventually forcing his critic into a position of stalemate.¹⁰⁰ It is difficult to ascertain the content and methodology behind the stereotyped phrases used in the log books to record the basic lessons, but St. Paul's head provides two glimpses of action: chanted tables aiming to make every child 100% sure, and repetition every morning - according to the writer, in line with the latest Board instructions - of the dates of the reigns of the

97. P.R.O., ED21/2145, 26.viii.1914.

98. Maclure, p.160.

99. P.R.O., ED21/2134, 13.i.1913, 14.ix.1914.

100. P.R.O., ED21/2147, 4.xii.1913, 4.vi.1915, 21.ix.1915.

sovereigns of England, forwards and backwards - 'a good awakener'. In the pre-1914 era there were few full time scholars in the Macclesfield schools above the age of 12 years, and after 13 years pupils were likely to disappear completely into the working world. With the resultant small numbers in the upper classes it was a common practice for the top two or three standards to be taught together, thus involving repetition and a 'marking time' for the brighter pupils. Gosden and Sharp noted a similar situation in the West Riding.¹⁰¹ Here, as early as 1905, the L.E.A. gave thought to the problem and some guidance to schools. In Macclesfield, such guidance as there was in this area came from the central rather than the local authority. St. Paul's, for example, was advised to extend its pupils by more frequent promotions and enlarge the top class.

Gosden's observation that there was little radical change in classroom work up to 1914 for the older children in the West Riding schools¹⁰² applies equally to Macclesfield. On the other hand, it is noticeable that in an era of poverty, with poor buildings, oversized classes, scanty facilities, and in an atmosphere of hostility between central and local authorities which must have had a demoralizing effect on the schools' staffs, in individual schools limited curriculum change was taking place. Developments in Macclesfield, can be seen to support R. J. W. Selleck's observation that by 1914 'the narrow curriculum and rigid methodology of the early payment by results period was widely discredited'.¹⁰³

101. Gosden and Sharp, p.56.

102. Gosden and Sharp, p.57.

103. R.J.W. Selleck, English Primary Education and the Progressives, 1914-1939 (1972), p.24.

Up to 1914, and for a further eight years, schools were catering for a primary age range. After the war, more particularly after 1922 when Fisher's Education Act became operational on the issue, the abolition of exemptions added two years and, if one allows for the change in regulations which required attendance up to the end of 'the 14 term', in some cases, more than two years to school life. Responsibility for the additional group, emphasized in the Education Act, was a spur to providing more advanced work. In the eyes of the local administration the obligation was largely discharged when the two central schools - one each for boys and girls - were opened in 1924. The curriculum here included extra subjects such as languages, commerce, and technical instruction; and in the early 1930s the schools were catering for approximately 20% of each year group from 11 years upwards.¹⁰⁴ For the remaining four-fifths, and for the younger children, there was no demarcation point in developments in the inter-war years. Throughout the period poor buildings hampered progress. In 1935 H.M.I. Burney reported on the 'far from satisfactory accommodation' in the borough, which provided 'not a single science or craft room'¹⁰⁵ - apart from the Central School. There are indications, nevertheless, that the pre-war trend towards a more child-centred approach continued and accelerated. One legacy of the 1914-18 war was the radical change in society's views regarding the social structure. Education occupied a prominent place in these views and much was expected from it. Although the early post-war hopes were not realized in the years that followed, the schools could not fail to be affected by the prevailing social theories.

104. P.R.O., ED21/24866, 27.xi.1931.

105. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.467.

At first glance, judging by the nomenclature, the timetable in the Macclesfield schools appears to have altered little from the start of the twentieth century. The curriculum at Athey Street Junior School in 1919-20 was based on number, writing, composition, recitation, singing; history and geography; drawing or needlework, according to sex; some handwork, and a twenty minute lesson of physical exercises taken by the peripatetic instructor.¹⁰⁶ Small clues suggest differences in emphasis and attitude. One innovation at Athey Street was the open afternoon when the timetable was suspended so that parents might come into school to see the work being done. Starting in June 1920 Open Day, thereafter, became an annual December event.¹⁰⁷ Another variation from the normal timetable in December 1921 was a concert presented by the children for their fellows. From 1925 this, too, became an annual custom, with all children taking some part, reciting, drilling, singing, or acting.¹⁰⁸

Another legacy of the war years, as Bramwell noted, was an increased enthusiasm for games, and he remarks on the tone of the 1919 Syllabus for Physical Training which, giving teachers freer choice than formerly, urged the promotion of games and dancing in schools, and emphasized the importance of enjoyment.¹⁰⁹ The attention paid to all aspects of physical activity was a marked feature in Macclesfield. Despite the small playgrounds, which H.M.I. Burney complained about in 1935, and lack of playing fields, a schools' sports day was organized annually by the Schools' Sports Association from 1924 onwards,¹¹⁰ a day's holiday being granted, as Athey Street's

106. Athey Street Log Book, 3.ii.1919, 13.v.1920.

107. Athey Street Log Book, 16.vi.1920, and annually in December.

108. Athey Street Log Book, 22.xii.1925, and annually thereafter.

109. Bramwell, Elementary School Work, p.99.

110. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.208.

log book shows, for the purpose of running off the heats, as well as for the event itself.¹¹¹ Swimming was another activity taken seriously. By 1920 the earlier arrangement allowing free swimming to elementary schools had lapsed and the charge - after several years at 1½d - was 2d per scholar per session.¹¹² In the following year, however, after enquiries to Manchester and Salford regarding the practice there, the Committee restored free entry, at a cost to the L.E.A. of £100 for a session of nineteen weeks.¹¹³ The effectiveness of the move is seen in the massive increase in the average weekly figures of scholars partaking: from 284 boys and 216 girls in 1920, the 1922 numbers were 523 and 341 respectively. In 1924 proficiency awards were made at elementary, proficient, and advanced levels, and the first Royal Life Saving certificates were gained by sixteen girls and seven boys.¹¹⁴ In 1928 - a measure of the importance of the activity in the life of the town - cups and shields were presented to successful schools at the annual gala by Dr. Marsh, medical officer of health.¹¹⁵ In 1932, when tuition was provided for all pupils from standard IV upwards, weekly attendance averaged 652 boys and 561 girls, and an estimated 70% learned to swim before leaving school.¹¹⁶ Statistics regarding swimming were kept throughout the inter-war years as meticulously as those on free places and scholarships. Up to 1926, when he retired, Sergeant Whittaker was still the peripatetic P.T. instructor, but the Athey Street log book shows that additional games

111. Athey Street Log Book, 27.v.1930, and other references.

112. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, p.133.

113. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.28.

114. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.123.

115. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.227.

116. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.67.

sessions and some physical exercise lessons were taken by class teachers. The drive towards a higher standard of expertise in the subject is seen in the first appearance of a county organizer in the town in the spring of 1922. She gave a demonstration drill lesson to the members of the Teachers' Drill class, using Athey Street's standard I;¹¹⁷ and two months later she spent a morning of games in the playground with the infant classes and standard I.¹¹⁸ Perhaps arising out of this activity, in July 1923, during the summer holiday, there was a mass demonstration of physical exercises by the scholars in one of the parks of the town.¹¹⁹ Continuing interest in physical education is seen in the information received by the Education Committee in 1930 that 50% of the cost could be made available from national sources, through the National Playing Fields Association, for the acquisition of playing field for elementary schools;¹²⁰ and, locally, in 1934 the county authority's inspectors of physical training (man and woman) again used Athey Street for a series of four evening demonstration lectures to Macclesfield teachers, following a series of sessions with the children in school time.¹²¹ By 1933 country and morris dancing were included as activities at Athey Street, and in 1938 rhythmic dancing was appearing.¹²²

It is more difficult to ascertain what went on under the various subject titles within the classroom. In 1922 writing and composition were officially classified as English at Athey Street.¹²³ H.M.I. in

117. Athey Street Log Book, 11.iv.1922.

118. Athey Street Log Book, 2.vi.1922.

119. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.68.

120. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.277.

121. Athey Street Log Book, 21.ii.1934, and subsequent entries.

122. Athey Street Log Book, 14.xii.1933, 21.i.1938.

123. Athey Street Log Book, 2.vi.1922.

reports consistently stressed the need for high standards in reading, recitation, and speech, as well as written English, and oral skills were encouraged in this school in the acting of plays based on stories from nature, history, and English.¹²⁴ In the 1922 report the school was commended for its good supply of reading books, but there is no indication as to content. As David Shayer has shown, in the early 1920s there was a movement aimed at encouraging a more liberal interpretation of English as a school subject, expressed in the Board of Education's Report on the Teaching of English in England, published in 1921.¹²⁵ In Macclesfield four lectures on the teaching of English were planned for the autumn term 1922, at which it was hoped at least one teacher from each school would be present.¹²⁶ Unfortunately, there is nothing to denote the subject material of the course. Some indication of the school fare for standard V and upwards is provided in the entrance examination schedule for the Central School, for which all children were prepared at the appropriate age unless there were special reasons for not entering. Here, the arithmetic paper, regarded by H.M.I. as rather too demanding, required knowledge of linear and square measure, vulgar fractions and decimals, and the English test asked for the ability to write 'a clear and correct description' of an object such as a sewing machine or a wheelbarrow.¹²⁷ Imaginative topics were eschewed because of the difficulties of standardization. One wonders what the effect was on the teaching. There is, perhaps, a suggestion of excessive concentration on the

124. Athey Street Log Book, 14.xii.1933.

125. D. Shayer, The Teaching of English in Schools 1900-1970 (1972), pp.66-70.

126. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.41.

127. P.R.O., ED21/24866, 27.xi.1931.

examination subjects in the scholarship age groups in the inspector's warning that eagerness for examination success should not preclude music, dancing, nature study, oral English and practical work. At Duke Street, which took boys up to 10 years and girls to 11 years, judging by a Board of Education report, practice in handwriting, spelling, punctuation, and written expression - all assessed as markedly above average - formed an important part of the curriculum in 1936; and history, geography, and nature study were also included in the timetable, well prepared but, in H.M.I.'s view, relying too frequently on the teacher talking and the class listening.¹²⁸ Mill Street, which lost a large number of its most able students to the secondary and central schools, was commended by H.M. Inspectors in 1937 for its 'less orthodox syllabus' in arithmetic, and for its efforts to introduce pupils to 'suitable literature'; history here, using 'excellent' time charts, included local studies - following in the tradition of T. H. Hewitt - and topics relating to modern world movements, in addition to aspects of the national story.¹²⁹ The school was judged in general to be providing instruction 'indicating a modern educational outlook', the one regret being that, as in most schools of the borough, there were no facilities for the teaching of practical science. The picture of classroom life is illuminated in shafts by personal reminiscences. An ex-infant pupil of Beech Lane remembers arithmetic cards and tins with counters, and everyone 'penned in'.¹³⁰ She also remembers Byron Street Junior School, the first council school, for its bright, bustling atmosphere, where the

128. Cheshire R.O., SL74/4, 7.vi.1936.

129. Cheshire R.O., SL79/2/3, 16.viii.1937.

130. Oral evidence: Mrs. E. Cleaver, Pott Shrigley.

pupils spent much of their time on arithmetic, reading, and writing, and a tremendous amount of knitting and sewing, the results of which were sent to exhibitions, gaining much-prized honour for the school.

In 1921, possibly arising out of the Libraries Act of 1919, there was a revival of interest in school links with the public library. By this time some schools had small reading libraries of their own and a few - Mill Street was one - maintained their Reading Circles from pre-war days.¹³¹ The Librarian, urging a joint venture, reported that more children were using the public library, particularly boys, whose favourite author was R. M. Ballantyne, but there was no contact between schools and library, and no separate juvenile section; because of wartime restrictions stock was depleted and many new books were needed. Dr. Beach, co-opted on to the Library Committee, reported on a scheme organized by the Lancashire and Cheshire Institute which would supply to schools fifty books per quarter at a charge of one guinea per year for 50 or £1 11s 6d per 100. It is not recorded whether this scheme was used, but by 1926 a library allowance was being made to all senior departments of 6d per head of average yearly attendance,¹³² a rate which was maintained up to 1943.¹³³

One yearly event which figured in the timetable of all the schools was Empire Day. At Athey Street the pupils assembled in the central hall or the playground, according to the weather, to listen to a talk on the meaning of the day, after which everyone sang the national anthem and saluted the flag.¹³⁴ From 1928 a half holiday was given

131. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, p.156.

132. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.108.

133. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.487.

134. Athey Street Log Book, 21.v.1920, and subsequent references.

in the afternoon, and in 1933 there was a full day's holiday when 441 pupils and 31 teachers visited London, at a cost of 7s 6d per head, including train fare, coach, guides, and a meal.¹³⁵ The visit was repeated in 1934, but in 1935 there was a reversion to the earlier custom of a school ceremony followed by the half holiday, a practice which was kept up into the early years of the second world war.

By the early 1930s technological advance was making an impact on schools. As early as 1914 the Macclesfield Electric Cinema Ltd. had attempted to gain the schools' patronage for a film entitled, 'Sixty Years a Queen'.¹³⁶ In that instance the Education Committee was wary of the proposal and withheld its approval. Again, in 1925 no action was taken when the manager of the Majestic offered facilities for scholars to see 'Everest'.¹³⁷ By 1930, however, early closure of the schools to allow pupils to attend cinema shows, usually for a travel film, was an accepted feature of the programme at Athey Street Junior School,¹³⁸ and in 1933 the Committee arranged for all elementary school pupils of 11 years and upwards to see a film on Australia.¹³⁹ In 1937 Athey Street pupils listened to the Armistice Day service on the radio;¹⁴⁰ and the hazards of motor traffic now necessitated Safety First films, and talks from the police.¹⁴¹ Opportunities for wider travel were also being provided, the Empire Day visits to London being one venture. In 1932 the

135. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.130.

136. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/2, p.127.

137. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.130.

138. Athey Street Log Book, 15.x.1930, and other references.

139. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.125.

140. Athey Street Log Book, 11.xi.1937.

141. Athey Street Log Book, 8.v.1936, 10.ii.1937.

Sports Association inaugurated a school camp, held annually up to the start of the war, when teacher members took 45 boys, who had never previously been away from home, to North Wales for a week;¹⁴² and from Christ Church, for several years, parties of approximately 40 pupils and four staff visited Belgium.¹⁴³

In any period, in the main, curriculum change in schools has been a gradual process, a tardy, cautious reaction to the social and economic pressures of the times. It is perhaps in the nature of the teaching profession - and of society in general - that a strong conservative reaction will be roused to defend the known against the challenge of rapid revolutionary movements. Modifications to customary practices might be made within the established structure, but drastic revision incurs a responsibility not easily accepted. Allied to this, it is necessary to take into consideration the wide range in the degree of acceptance of new methods and content at any one time. H. C. Dent sees the years between the two world wars as a period of new ideas and experimentation in activity methods allowing a freer approach to the teaching of children, a 'great leap forward' in the methods employed and in regard for the needs and interests of the child, but he has to admit that the child centred approach was a minority movement for many years.¹⁴⁴ Shayer, too, in his research into the development of English as a school subject, illustrates the conflict between the progressives and the traditionalists which was still being waged in this sphere in the 1930s.¹⁴⁵ On the whole, a

142. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.2.

143. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, pp.11, 129.

144. H.C.Dent, 'To Cover the Country with Good Schools: A Century's Effort', B.J.E.S., Vol. XIX, No.2, June 1971, p.131.

145. Shayer, pp.89-97.

cautious reaction to innovation, varying from school to school, can be seen to have guided progress in Macclesfield between the two world wars. Although buildings do not necessarily dictate curriculum, the standard of provision in the schools, in general, was an inhibiting factor in the pursuance of new methods, as H.M.I.s' comments indicate. At no time was there a revolutionary move but, continuing the pre-war trend, perceptible change can be noted, in varying degrees, in the elementary school pattern. The headmaster of Mill Street, on his retirement in 1933, remarked on the many changes which had taken place recently.¹⁴⁶ He was referring to the organization of the school where, because of the large number of scholars who regularly transferred to the secondary schools and, particularly, to the Central School, the senior forms had altered in character, requiring different grouping arrangements, but there is an implicit awareness in his comments of the need for a new approach; and the 1937 report shows that in this school there was an open attitude to educational developments, and grass roots experimentation going on. On the other hand - although, again, it does not necessarily indicate the approach to teaching - Duke Street's request in 1934 for tables and chairs for the youngest infants, to replace the dual desks in use,¹⁴⁷ coming as it did thirty years after Miss Peachey's re-furnishing on these lines at Daybrook Street, illustrates the time lag in educational innovation in different schools. At Beech Lane at the start of the 1930s the babies' class was still using long desks and slates.¹⁴⁸

Changes taking place in the Macclesfield elementary schools in

146. Cheshire R.O., SL79/2/3, 28.ii.1933.

147. Cheshire R.O., SL74/4, 30.viii.1934.

148. Oral evidence: Mrs. E. Cleaver, Pott Shrigley.

the inter-war years are most noticeable in the areas of extra-curricular activities and in physical education. School boundaries were widened, and movement was acknowledged to be an essential aspect of child development, not only from the standpoint of physical fitness but for its aesthetic, social, and recreative value. The library, cinema, and radio, school journeys, dancing, drama, and various sporting activities became a regular part of school life. It is more difficult to assess the extent of change in the basic subjects. Evidence of method and lesson content is not easy to find, but the paucity of comment in log books and records, in itself, might suggest that innovations were gradual enough to be accepted without note. For approximately 20% of elementary school pupils in the upper end of the range transference from the top juniors to the Central School opened up a new world of learning not available before 1924. For the rest of the school population, into the years of the second world war, it would seem that the traditional subject titles covered a variety of teaching methods and subject content, ranging in style from the post-Revised Code model of the early twentieth century to the modern methods - within the limits of the schools' resources - being devised within the classroom or percolating through to it by way of educational literature, H.M. Inspectors' courses and visits, and other professional sources.

Chapter Five

The Elementary School Teachers

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In December 1906, with education to the forefront in public debate as Birrell's Bill came to its unsuccessful conclusion, the Macclesfield Courier and Herald raised the subject with its readers from another angle under the headline, 'Where does Macclesfield stand in the Educational Sense?'¹ The particular issue under scrutiny was the provision of teachers in the elementary schools, and the enquiry was aroused by the publication of a government Blue Book from which a statistical table relating to Cheshire was to be found elsewhere in the paper. Including the county authority there were eleven administrative bodies concerned with primary education in Cheshire, and their respective staffing positions were tabulated according to the degree of training their employees had received. Macclesfield's establishment revealed weaknesses. The borough, with an average of less than two certificated teachers per school department, namely 59:30, was next to the lowest in provision of the most highly trained staff; in the employment of uncertificated assistants, sixty teachers, representing 44%, it was the highest; and in percentage of pupil teachers to certificated teachers, 43:59, representing 73%, it was second in the table. (Table XI). In brief, Macclesfield was employing a minimum of trained teachers, who were expensive, and a large number of the least costly, those who were in training or had not gained the certificate.

1. M.C.H., 8.xii.1906.

Table XI

Statistics of Teaching Staff in the
Cheshire Primary Schools, December 1906

Education Authority	I Certificated Teachers		II Uncertificated Teachers		III Supplemental and Provis- ional Teachers		Total of I, II & III	Pupil Teachers and Probationers	% of P.T.s to Certificated Teachers
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%			
Cheshire C.C.	742	46	611	38	254	16	1,607	295	40
Congleton	21	42	10	20	19	38	50	14	67
Crewe	89	52	72	42	9	6	170	49	55
Dukinfield	45	62	19	26	9	12	73	34	76
Hyde	61	52	48	41	9	7	118	13	21
MACCLESFIELD	59	43	60	44	18	13	137	43	73
Stalybridge	44	45	28	29	26	26	98	24	55
Wallasey	109	54	75	37	17	9	201	52	48
Birkenhead	299	62	148	31	32	7	479	89	30
Chester	77	49	59	39	20	12	156	45	59
Stockport	177	49	145	40	36	11	358	62	35

Sources: M.C.H., 6.xii.1906. (Extract from B.E. Blue Book).

Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/24, CED7/36/8.

The L.E.A.'s own statistics, compiled earlier in the year, vary somewhat from the government figures, presenting a more favourable picture, particularly at the top end of the scale, but the official compilation was not challenged. In July 1906 the Education Committee recorded seven more certificated and six less uncertificated teachers in its employ, with a considerably higher number of supplementals and a similar tally of pupil teachers. (Table XII). Possibly there had been a turnover of staff at the start of the new school year to account for the shift in balance. Whichever set of figures is used, the calculations reveal that only approximately one-third of the teaching force had the professional qualification of a Board of Education teaching certificate. Even so, this was an improvement on the 1903 position, when reorganization of the administration took place following Balfour's Act. The forty-six certificated teachers in that year represented little more than a quarter of the total force of 191 (including pupil teachers but not probationers). It would seem that immediate advantage was taken of rate aid to increase the proportion of qualified staff. As Table XII shows, a noticeable change was made in the following year when an additional twenty certificated and seven uncertificated teachers were engaged, whilst supplementals were reduced almost by half. The numbers of pupil teachers accord in central and local records and remain fairly constant, the variation here being in the sudden fall in the number of probationers in the schools, from thirty in 1903 to four preparing to enter the profession three years later. The reason for the decline lay in the alternative recruiting arrangements currently being put into practice.

In the first decade of the twentieth century radical changes were made in the teacher training system. As the new administration

Table XII

Statistics of Teaching Staff in Macclesfield Elementary Schools, July 1906

Year	Certificated				Uncertificated		Supplementals and Provisionals	Pupil Teachers	
	Men		Women		Men	Women		Boys	Girls
	College Trained	Untrained	College Trained	Untrained				(including probationers)	
1903	15	-	15	16	8	39	-	8 + 8 probs	36 + 22 probs
1904	17	2	19	28	8	46	-	17	37
1906	18	2	19	27	9	45	2	15 + 4 probationers	24
1910	20	4	12	30	10	48	-		
1914	22	19	2	31	7	36	-		
1922	24		56		4	24	9		

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/2-4, CED7/36/8.

moved into action it was the aim of Robert Morant to improve the cultural quality of the elementary schools' teaching force, which he saw as under-educated and poorly trained, by replacing the existing practice of internal recruitment and instruction with a system based on secondary education. At the start of the 1900s teacher training was carried out through the long-established system whereby a prospective teacher was apprenticed, at fourteen years of age, to teach classes under the supervision of a headteacher and to continue his own education via the same source or through a pupil teacher centre. In Macclesfield at this time the older practice of personal tutoring by the head was only just giving way to the more modern corporate method, introduced generally in the mid-1880s. The late take-up was not in this instance entirely the fault of the town. An enthusiastic attempt had been made in 1892 to form a pupil teacher centre operating in conjunction with the School Board's Evening Continuation School. The effort was unsuccessful because, having only voluntary schools under its aegis, the Board was unable to gain the Education Department's approval for a levy on the rates to cover expenses.² When the plan was raised again in 1899, initiated by the School Board and strongly supported by teachers and managers, similar financial obstacles applied. This time, however, the difficulties were circumvented with the aid of private donations, offers of free accommodation, and the secretarial help - unpaid - of the School Board clerk, William Grieves.³ The venture, run and staffed by the Macclesfield District Teachers Association, was an example of corporate self-help, unusual in the town's educational history in the

2. M.C.H., April to July 1892, several references.

3. M.C.H., 3.ii.1900.

unity of purpose shown by all participants in the scheme. To cover a syllabus comprising English, French, arithmetic, geography, science, needlework or drawing, and teaching method, the course organizers initially envisaged the students attending one evening per week, in addition to Saturdays from 9.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m., from June to September, over a period of four years. In practice, by July 1903 the evening session had been abandoned and pupil teachers were being released from their schools on two afternoons per week to attend the centre.⁴ The Macclesfield and District Pupil Teacher Training Centre opened officially on 3 February 1900 with more than eighty students from the borough and adjoining areas. Before the first entrants had completed their course the administrative changes which followed Balfour's Act had transferred this area of education into the charge of Cheshire County Council, and Morant's plan was launched.

The first move towards the establishment of the new training regime was made through the Board of Education Regulations of 1903, whereby the minimum age of recruitment was raised to 16 years of age - thus effectively abolishing the probationers - and a two year training period was required at a centre attached to an accredited educational establishment. The death knell had been sounded for the local centre. Negotiations between Cheshire's newly appointed Director of Education and the interested parties locally started in December 1903, when it was decided that the administration of the Pupil Teacher Centre would be taken over by a local Higher Education sub-committee of the Cheshire County Council in July 1904 and a rate levied by the county authority on the district.⁵ Consideration was

4. Cheshire R.O., SL7/36/2, p.70.

5. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/1, p.5.

given to the continuation of a separate centre but it was resolved, after costing, that there was no need for it in a 'small place like Macclesfield', and the secondary schools were deemed adequate. The L.E.A. informed teachers at the existing centres that their services would no longer be required from the end of July 1904.⁶ In the event the change over did not take place until the end of the year, and the first student-teacher classes started in January 1905.⁷ The borough's two secondary schools became the pupil teacher training centres within the county scheme, with the trainees spending two and a half days per week at their centre and the rest of the time in the elementary schools.

At this period each school department had between one and four pupil teachers attached to it.⁸ The dependence on the teacher apprentices is indicated in reports and log books. In an otherwise congratulatory report on Duke Street Boys' School in 1906, H.M.I. noted that although the school was well staffed numerically it had many teachers under training.⁹ The complement here in 1904 was headmaster, two certificated teachers and one supplemental, and four pupil teachers, to cover the seven standards which averaged an attendance of approximately 180.¹⁰ In the girls' department of the same school, for an average of 169 in 1905, the staff comprised headmistress, two certificated and two uncertificated teachers, with two pupil teachers.¹¹ This was the start of the period when pupil teachers were attending the secondary schools' pupil teacher classes for half of the week and spending only half their time in the elementary schools.

6. Cheshire R.O., CED 7/36/1, p.52.

7. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/30, p.6.

8. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/1, p.93.

9. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, 21.v.1906.

10. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, 8.xii.1904.

11. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 23.viii.1905.

Duke Street Girls' log book illustrates the effect of this practice on the staffing position, in an entry which records that one certificated teacher was taking standards III and IV together, a total of eighty children, on alternate days when the junior girl was pursuing her own studies at the High School.¹² It also indicates the work load of the young trainees, aged 16 to 18 years. This aspect is underlined in a critical observation made by H.M.I. Herbert Ward in annual reports on the two Hurdsfield infant schools in 1906, where he noted that the pupil teachers were treated as full members of staff rather than apprentices in the school to be trained.¹³ And a Beech Lane teacher, Annie Lees, filling in her curriculum vitae in 1909, obviously regarded her years of training as valid work experience when she listed under teaching positions held previously: a year as monitor, starting when she was two months short of her fifteenth birthday, and a year as pupil teacher candidate, as well as her three years apprenticeship which she began at the age of 16½ years in 1901.¹⁴ In a sphere where thirteen year olds were leaving regularly for full time work in the mills and workshops perhaps it was natural to regard the sixteen year old trainee teacher as a regular member of staff.

The commentator in the Courier dwelt at length on the issue of the pupil teachers, but considerations regarding their effective training were not his concern. His interest followed a different line. Having compared Macclesfield's showing with that of its neighbours in the county, he went on to suggest that the borough's weakness lay not in a deficit of trained teachers but in a superfluity of pupil teachers.

12. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 23.viii.1905.

13. Daybrook Street Log Book, 21.vi.1907.

14. P.R.O., ED21/2141, 21.ix.1909.

He based his reasoning on a statement purported to have come from a member of the L.E.A.'s staffing sub-committee - himself a headteacher in the town - that Macclesfield schools were employing and training double the number of pupil teachers needed in order to keep in line with other authorities, and to cover 'wastage'. This term was used to denote the drop out rate in the teaching force. (The Director of Education advised the Education Committee that when it was determining the number of entrants for the pupil teacher centres it must make allowance for 'death, marriage, and other well-known wastage').¹⁵ It would seem that the wastage factor in some schools was extended to allow double cover of pupil teacher posts. In St. George's, for example, a complaint was made when two junior pupil teachers were attending the centre on the same day, and Christ Church protested similarly concerning its three senior apprentices.¹⁶ The forty-three trainees cost the town £700 per annum, pointed out the Courier; surely there was an opportunity for economizing in this suggestion that there were more of them than were strictly necessary. A reduction by half, it was argued, would save a penny rate. Such a course, ran the closing comment, 'would deprive youth of eligible opportunities but careers should not be supplied at public expense'. It was a revealing remark reflecting the attitude of a significant section of the town's influential citizens, who accepted the expense of education on the rates with grudging reluctance.

The half and half system by which the trainee teacher alternated between the centre and the elementary school to which he was attached had unsatisfactory consequences for the schools, as was seen in the

15. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/1, p. 51.

16. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/2, p.94.

Duke Street experience. It also had adverse effects on the academic progress of the student, and in 1907 Board regulations were revised to offer an alternative scheme. Under the new system prospective teachers, with at least two years (later three years) attendance at a secondary school, might apply for a bursary at 16 years of age to take them through a one-year course leading, it was hoped, to training college. Cheshire Education Committee, with its own training college at Crewe to be opened in 1908, adopted the new scheme forthwith. In July 1907 centres were informed that no new pupil teachers would be appointed and were instructed to phase out the existing scheme. Any student in mid-course was to spend two terms of his second year at his centre and the final term at his elementary school.¹⁷ Thereafter, the bursary scheme would operate throughout the county. As stated in the Board of Education's general report on the instruction of pupil teachers, published in 1907, future elementary school teachers would come from the ranks of the secondary school.¹⁸

The change in the pattern of teacher training, involving eventually the abandonment of the pupil teacher stage, was not achieved without setbacks. The Board of Education Report for 1909-10 commented on the serious fall in the number of entrants for teaching, over the country: the decline it had noted in the previous year had now become a grave problem, and it feared difficulties in maintaining quality and quantity.¹⁹ In four years the national figure, currently 6,137, had almost halved. The shrinkage was not perhaps surprising. The new system demanded a new approach to a teaching career, entailing early commitment since a scholarship became an essential for most of

17. Cheshire R.O., CED76/1/1, 22.vii.1907, p.39.

18. P.P. 1907 Cd. 3582 LXIV. 203, Report on the Instruction of Pupil Teachers, 1903-1907, p.39.

19. P.P. 1911 Cd. 5616 XVI. 1, Report of the Board of Education for 1909-10, p.30.

those who would have entered the profession by the former route, and a longer period of complete dependence on parental support. The national trend was reflected locally. In Cheshire between 1905 and 1907 the number of pupil teachers admitted yearly averaged 185.5, and at the end of the period the county's ten centres were accommodating a total of 531 trainees.²⁰ In 1911 the number of bursars completing their period of recognition was 42 (9 boys, 33 girls) over the county.²¹ In 1908, the year of the change over, in Macclesfield there were nineteen pupil teachers finishing their second year, but only four bursars in the girls' centre and, since the boys' school was not recognized for the bursary scheme until 1909, there were no replacements for the thirteen second year trainees leaving there.²² In 1911 there was only one girl bursar and there were no boy bursars in the borough;²³ the boys' school had not had any bursars for two years and the L.E.A. agreed with the Board of Education's decision to delete it from the list of centres.²⁴ Although there was some improvement subsequently in the girls' numbers, the reduced entry would seem to have persisted. There is a noticeable gap between the forty-three girls of first and second year status who attended the High School centre in 1905²⁵ and the seven bursars of 1917,²⁶ or the ten of 1919,²⁷ and on a national level, the Association of Education Committees, in 1919,

20. P.P. 1907, Report on Pupil Teachers, pp.39-40.

21. Statistics of the Board of Education in England and Wales, 1910-11 (H.M.S.O. 1912), p.114.

22. P.P. 1908(349) lxxxiii. 421, List of Pupil Teacher Centres recognized by the Board of Education between 1 August 1907 and 31 July 1908, p.7.

23. P.P. 1908, List of Pupil Teacher Centres, p.90.

24. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 7.ii.1911.

25. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/30, p.6.

26. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/89, 5.x.1917.

27. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/112.

comparing the respective recruitment positions of 1908 and 1917, recorded a fall from 6,892 to 5,239 (24%) among the girls, and - understandably after three years of war, with still no sign of peace - a reduction in the boys' figures from 2,722 to 919 (67%).²⁸

Although William Grieves, secretary to the Education Committee, maintained that pupil teachers were not counted as units in calculating minimum staffing requirements in 1906, in some schools, at least, removal of the pupil teachers meant a reduction in staff. Duke Street Boys' record reveals the integral part of the trainees in the staff structure, where gaps were left which were only partially filled by additional trained teachers. Against the 1904 tally of four full time adults and four pupil teachers for an average attendance of 177 boys, the 1911 complement was headmaster, two certificated teachers, one uncertificated assistant, and one supplemental, i.e. five adults - and supplementals were often young people in training or failed trainees - for a roll running at the slightly reduced average of 158.²⁹ Practice regarding the duties of the pupil teachers varied, to some extent, from school to school. In 1905 at Hurdsfield Boys' two trainees alternated in taking standard III, and in the infant department class IV was covered in the same way, as was class III at Duke Street Infants' where between thirty-eight and fifty children might be present.³⁰ In infant departments generally, pupil teachers usually had responsibility for a class. At Christ Church, as at St. Peter's, the girl trainee alternated with the headteacher, and at St. Paul's she took kindergarten lessons. In the senior department here, the pupil teachers

28. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, p.8.

29. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, 23.iii.1911.

30. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/1, p.93.

helped by taking backward pupils and, also on alternate days, assisted the headmaster to cover standards III, IV, and V, whilst at St. Peter's they assisted the head with standard IV. At Christ Church, on the other hand, the headmaster of the boys claimed that the training of the pupil teachers took up as much time as another class, and the girls were not responsible for any class but sent round from one standard to another to learn to teach, taking an occasional class for practice.

Overall in the borough, in the first quarter of the century, apart from the loss of the pupil teachers there was a steady fall in the number of teachers employed because of falling rolls. In 1914, for an enrolment of just under 5,000, the teaching force numbered 125, and by 1922, with a further drop of 530 pupils, it was 115. At the same time, if pupil teachers are counted at all, there was a deterioration in the ratio of staff to pupils. If the trainees are assessed at half a unit each, as was apparently the case in most of the schools, the teacher:pupil ratio in 1906 was 1:33.3, using the L.E.A.'s figures, or 1:35.6, using the Board of Education's assessment; in 1914 it equalled 1:39.8, and in 1922 it was still less favourable than either of the 1906 numbers. (Table XIII). Only if the pupil teachers are discounted completely in the 1906 reckoning, and using the Board figures, which produces a ratio of 1:41.3, can a case be made out for improvement, on a numerical basis, in the following sixteen years; and this is unrealistic since, in infant schools at least, the apprentice teachers carried a recognizable measure of responsibility for classes on their own. For comparison, Simon quotes the national figures for 1913 and 1921 as, respectively, 1:32.9 and 1:32.4.³¹

31. Simon, p.38.

Table XIII

Statistics Relating to Teachers and Pupils
in the Macclesfield Elementary Schools, 1906-1914

Year	No. on Roll	No. of Teachers	Teacher:Pupil Ratio
1906	5,657	(148 + 43 P.Ts (or (137 + 43 P.Ts	1:38.2 or 1:33.3 1:41.3 or 1:35.6
1914	4,981	125	1:39.8
1922	4,440	115	1:38.6
1926	4,492	121	1:37.1
1930	4,489	132	1:34
1932	4,625	138	1:33.7
1935	4,611	138	1:33.4
1939	4,077	137	1:29.75
1944	3,955	133	1:29.73

(L.E.A. figures)
(Board of Education
Figures)

Sources: Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/1-8;
M.C.H., 8.xii.1906.

(It is important to be cautious in making statistical deductions since the L.E.A. figures are not always consistent. Numbers on roll and average attendance figures vary, usually slightly, in different sources).

Although quantitatively, after an initial improvement, there was a reduction in teaching power, albeit marginal, in the first two decades of the twentieth century, the decline in the school population in Macclesfield largely nullified the effects of the loss of the pupil teachers and the shortages occasioned by the shortfall in the bursar trainees. Qualitatively in the same period, there was a rise in the calibre of staff, if judged by professional qualifications. From 43% in 1906, certificated teachers made up 54% of the whole in 1910, 59.2% in 1914, and 67.8% in 1922. In 1909 a move was made by the Board of Education designed to raise staffing standards. In August the L.E.A. was informed of an imminent change in regulations regarding staffing values, to be implemented before July 1911.³² In the new Code certificated assistants were recognized for an average attendance of sixty children each, as previously, but all other grades were reduced. Acknowledgement of the administrative work required of them was shown in the reduction of a headteacher's value from fifty to thirty-five; uncertificated teachers were also recognized for thirty-five, from forty-five; and both student teachers and supplementaries were reduced to twenty, from forty-five and thirty each. The revised regulations also imposed a maximum of sixty pupils per register, replacing the previous limit of 15% above average attendance, a change which revealed over-large classes in three infant departments and St. Paul's

32. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/4, p.12.

seniors. The efficacy of the measures is implied in the remark recorded by the Education Committee's secretary that the thirteen supplementaries - five in mixed departments and eight with infant classes - cost £512 and were 'now only recognized to teach 200'.

A certificated teacher did not necessarily mean one who was college trained. The Board of Education recognized three grades of teacher: certificated and college trained, certificated without college training, and uncertificated. There were also the supplemental and provisional assistants who were unqualified and recognized only for limited employment. Under the old system a pupil teacher gained college entrance via the King's Scholarship which was taken at the end of the years of apprenticeship. Success at this stage entitled a young teacher to seek employment as an uncertificated assistant, in which capacity he/she might study to pass the Board of Education's Acting Teacher's Certificate without going to college. College training was not an automatic choice in Macclesfield. In 1904 all twenty entrants, four boys and sixteen girls, were successful in the King's Scholarship examination, but only one boy and three girls went on to college.³³ In 1906, the final year of the old examination, seven boys and twelve girls passed through to college (including three offspring of elementary headteachers in the town).³⁴ In the revised scheme, the Board of Education's Preliminary Certificate replaced the King's Scholarship as the qualifying examination for entry into the profession. In its first year, although six boys and twelve girls were successful in gaining the certificate, only two boys and five girls became college entrants (including the daughter

33. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/1, p.29.

34. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/2, p.34.

of another local headmaster, one of two students gaining places at Manchester University),³⁵ whilst in 1908 out of fourteen who passed the Preliminary Examination three boys and three girls took up college places.³⁶ As Table XII shows, most of the men in the Macclesfield schools were certificated, and a large proportion of them were college trained. Women, on the other hand, were greatly in the majority in all other grades. Female dominance numerically was a feature of the elementary teaching force nationally, at this time. In 1908-9 only one-third of certificated teachers were men, and there were two and half times as many new entrants from the girls as from boys.³⁷ There was a trend towards an adjustment of the balance between the sexes in the overall numbers in Macclesfield between 1910 and 1914. From less than a quarter of the total, the proportion of male teachers rose to 38.4%. Possibly the reorganization of the elementary schools, with the opening of the council schools at Byron Street and Athey Street, had something to do with the marked rise on the male side during these years. The intervention of the war, however, arrested any development in this direction, and in 1922 the figures show women accounting for more than three-quarters of the town's elementary school teachers. Again, this reflects the national situation. At the conference of the Association of Education in 1920 a plea was made for more male teachers.³⁸

Although women predominated numerically, men occupied the senior posts and took the lead in professional activities in Macclesfield.

35. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/3, p.35.

36. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/3, p.144.

37. P.P. 1911, Board of Education Report, 1909-10, p.56.

38. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, p.63.

If pupil teachers are included, in 1906 the borough had a total of 180 teachers of whom approximately one-third only were certificated, and a smaller proportion still, college trained. It is perhaps not surprising that in a profession of limited qualifications the head teachers of the schools, particularly of the large senior departments, figured as prestigious characters in the local educational world, and in the community at large. They played an influential part in the opening in 1900 of the Pupil Teacher Centre which they organized, and for which they provided the staff from among their number, during the five and a half years of its existence; the presidency of the Macclesfield Teachers' Association, a branch of the N.U.T., was invariably filled by an elementary school headmaster; and the heads of schools provided the point of reference for any public enquiry relating to child life in general. When the newspapers reported that a move had the support of, or there had been consultation with, 'the teachers', it was the headteachers to whom the reference alluded.

Three headmasters in particular stand out for their contributions to the life of the town in the early years of the twentieth century: Dr. George Beach of Christ Church, Mr. William Elliott of St. Paul's, and Mr. Thomas Hewitt of Mill Street Wesleyan. The three men were all strong voluntaryists and, in 1903, headteachers of approximately twenty years standing in Macclesfield. George Beach - referred to by a local government official on one occasion as 'undoubtedly the highest educational authority in this district',³⁹ was appointed to Christ Church in 1882, having held headships previously in Birmingham and Staffordshire.⁴⁰ Starting as a pupil teacher in West Bromwich in

39. P.R.O., ED21/2141, 2.ix.1909.

40. M.C.H., 15.ii.1913.

1866, he had been awarded a Queen's Scholarship, 1st Class, and he gained a Class 1 government Certificate after two years at Carmarthen Training College, whence he progressed to Trinity College, Dublin, to take a degree of B.A.. Subsequently he added the degrees of M.A., LL.B, LL.D., - he was called to the Bar but did not practise - as well as 'scores of drawing, drill, music, and science certificates' to his list of qualifications. In addition to his day school headship, which he held up to 1913, from 1906 to the early 1930s he was principal of the Technical and Evening Schools. Christ Church flourished under his headship, and for nearly thirty years there were few educational debates or ventures in the town in which he was not involved, whilst for almost another twenty years, up to 1931, he held a special position as an unofficial honorary adviser in the borough's educational world. With the vicar of Christ Church Beach had been involved in a protracted quarrel with the School Board regarding supposed infringements of voluntaryists' rights, and Christ Church was among the bitterest opponents of the scheme to introduce council schools into the borough's education system. When this plan was accomplished in 1913 and Christ Church consequently reduced in numbers, Beach, with his wife who was headmistress of the infant department for many years, retired five years early, in protest at the turn of events.⁴¹ The second of the trio of heads, T. H. Hewitt of Mill Street, again starting as a pupil teacher, in his case at fourteen years of age in the Wesleyan School, Barnsley, also gained a Queen's Scholarship, 1st Class, which took him to Westminster College for his two years training.⁴² He came to Macclesfield in 1885, via headships in Whaley Bridge and neighbouring

41. M.C.H., 7.xiii.1912.

42. M.C.H., 26.iv.1919.

Bollington, by which time he had added a full Teachers' Drawing Certificate and several South Kensington science certificates. He did not add further formal qualifications to his credentials, but bent his energies to carrying out and monitoring his experimental ideas regarding the curriculum. He wrote, and had published, a pamphlet called Nerve Strain and Handicraft, in which he advocated shorter but more frequent holidays and a less rigid timetable embodying more handicraft. One H.M.I. wrote that the headmaster made 'extravagant claims' for his methods, but Hewitt received requests from as far afield as Leeds, Leicester, and London - among other places - to lecture on his ideas. In Macclesfield he was regarded as a pioneer educationist. Hewitt was a local councillor, and from 1903 to his death in 1922 he was a member of the Macclesfield Primary Education Committee, one of the two teachers in that body. His councillor colleague was William Elliott. Elliott was the most senior in service of the three heads, having been appointed to his post at St. Paul's in 1881. Throughout the period his was the largest school in the town until the council schools opened. Elliott was elected to the council in 1900. A rival candidate challenged his right to contest the election on the grounds that his duties as councillor would be incompatible with those of a headteacher, but the nomination was upheld by the Board of Education with the approval of the governors.⁴³ It was the start of a lifelong involvement in this field which was to last until 1945.

As first lieutenants to clerical managers the headteachers were bred in an environment of jealous defensiveness against anything which could be interpreted as a threat to voluntaryist independence.

43. P.R.O., ED21/2147, 27.x .1900.

From 1902, as the 'battle of the buildings' raged, the enemy was the Board of Education. There would seem to be overtones of the traditional attitude in Elliott's defiant reaction to a report on his school by H.M.I. in 1913.⁴⁴ The inspector, J. A. Shawyer, whilst approving the hard work of the staff, criticized the general standard of attainment. He blamed the faulty organization, which was 'in need of reviewing', and an 'out-of-date' scheme of work, where handwork did not appear; and he noted that there was little domestic science. Elliott, in a classic example of the practitioner's reaction to criticism from those on the sidelines, wrote a review of 1913 in the log book, according to the inspector, 'whitewashing himself'. The headmaster, pointing out the attempts made to implement Board of Education instructions, claimed that the curriculum was adapted to the class of children attending the school; he commented on the improvement in general character and appearance of the pupils over the past years, and drew attention to the number of St. Paul's boys who had gained scholarships to the Grammar School, later to go on to college and university. Shawyer was incensed. In a complaint to his senior, H.M.I. Ward, he called the entry an 'impertinent' attempt to score off the inspectorate behind its back. Ward appears to have had an altercation previously with Elliott. According to the headteacher's account - refuted by H.M.I. - the inspector had written an adverse report some years back, 'in a temper', but had later apologized and withdrawn the criticism. The officials at the Board of Education were obviously embarrassed and spent eighteen months trying to smooth

44. P.R.O., ED21/2147, 4.xii.1913.

down the irate Shawyer. He looked upon the entry as a serious contravention of the Code, which prohibited expressions of personal opinion, and wanted it expunged.⁴⁵ Forced to follow up the dispute, the Board found that log book entries could not be removed, and the episode was closed with advice to the two inspectors involved to ignore the entry, as being 'more likely to rile the headteacher' than if the case was pursued. The incident is an interesting comment on the status of the elementary school headteachers, and on the confidence of at least one of them, locally.

With the opening of the council schools in 1912 and 1913 it might be supposed that the leadership of the voluntary schools' headteachers would be challenged in the town from this quarter, but the proclamation of war following so closely on the heels of their establishment arrested normal development, and brought unprecedented pressures. By 1916, in addition to loss of male staff and the general disruption brought about by wartime demands, the schools were suffering from the borough's attempts to economize, efforts which involved the L.E.A. in a further skirmish with the Board of Education. Economy measures included the use of slates where possible, the suspension of examinations, and the requirement that headteachers be responsible for a class whatever the size of the school.⁴⁶ This last point caused particular disquiet to H.M. Inspectorate. Joseph Gaskell, headmaster of Athey Street Council School, was noted to be showing signs of strain due to overwork and worry,⁴⁷ as was Hewitt at Mill Street, and the schools were

45. P.R.O., ED21/2147, 26.vi.1915, 4.ix.1915.

46. P.R.O., ED19/19, 24.iii.1916.

47. P.R.O., ED19/19, 5.vi.1916.

felt to be suffering from lack of guidance because of the pressure on the headteachers.⁴⁸ H.M.I. Ward and his team considered the Education Committee's measures to be 'hasty and ill-considered', and accused the L.E.A. of using the war as an excuse for needless economies. They also criticized overcrowding in the classrooms and the use of unqualified staff. In the junior department of Christ Church in 1915, 235 children were on the registers for the recognized accommodation of 190, and average attendance for the previous six months had been 197.⁴⁹ A black spot was one room recognized for 60 children to which 104 pupils were allotted and where one morning 107 were present. Despite a fine, designed to stir the L.E.A. into action, the position was virtually unchanged eighteen months later.⁵⁰ Other schools, too, were overcrowded and understaffed. As male teachers left for war service the authority's policy was seen to be based on filling in with unqualified assistants. Macclesfield was compared unfavourably with neighbouring Stockport where, in similar circumstances, such stringent measures had not been found necessary.⁵¹ Gaskell had full time responsibility for 55 boys, and his standard III, of 59 boys aged 8 to 13 years, were in the charge of an unqualified assistant. Byron Street had 90 girls of standard VI and VII taken alternately by the headteacher and an unqualified assistant; and at St. Paul's two unqualified assistants took 84 standard IV boys and girls between them, whilst in the infant department there, one teacher had charge of a class of 66.⁵² It was

48. P.R.O., ED19/19, 24.iii.1916.

49. P.R.O., ED21/2136, 29.iii.1915.

50. P.R.O., ED21/2136, 5.x.1916.

51. P.R.O., ED19/19, 5.vi.1916.

52. P.R.O., ED19/19, 24.iii.1916.

the appointment of three more unqualified teachers in March 1916 which brought sharp reproof and occasioned the Board of Education's survey of the Macclesfield staffing position. Following negotiations with the Board's officials, the L.E.A. was advised to consider the possibility of employing married women who had been in teaching previously, and after a meeting in August between two inspectors and the School Management Committee advertisements went out. It is an indication of the quality of the substitute teachers that the three unqualified assistants engaged earlier - who would have been put in full charge of classes - were of the age and stage which made them suitable for retention as monitors.⁵³ (There is a useful warning implicit in the Board of Education papers on this topic against accepting comments at face value. The memo of March 1916 mentions Macclesfield's good record between 1902 and 1913, whereas a minute written three months later reads, 'the past record of staffing in Macclesfield is not good.'⁵⁴)

In the early twentieth century the National Union of Teachers, the elementary teachers' organ, was becoming increasingly influential in the national debate on education. Its political power is shown in the part it played in the downfall of Morant. The Macclesfield Teachers' Association, founded in 1870, the same year as the parent body, reflected the development locally, fostering a growing corporate awareness in the teaching body, and playing an increasingly articulate and formative role in the town's educational scene. It acted as an avenue of communication between the teaching force and the Education Committee and it provided a platform whereby the opinions of the

53. P.R.O., ED19/19, 2.viii.1916.

54. P.R.O., ED19/19, 14.vi.1916.

teachers could be made public. Up to 1905 it was responsible for the running of the Pupil Teacher Centre, and William Grieves paid tribute to the work of the elementary school headteachers in this connection at a Committee meeting in 1906.⁵⁵ In 1913 the Association numbered 70.⁵⁶ The presidential address at the annual general meeting that year, pleading for a universal 14 year leaving age, deplored, yet again, the practice of half-time schooling. It reflected a long-standing view of the profession. The 1918 president, John Earles, supported Fisher's move to abolish exemptions in the certain knowledge that teachers were 'dead against' the practice;⁵⁷ and William Elliott, in the following year, proclaiming his colleagues delight at the passing of the Education Act, had the fervent support of his audience when he rejoiced in the removal of half and full time exemptions to the 14 year leaving age, as well as other 'drags on progress'.⁵⁸ Both Earles and Elliott also gave prominence to the prospect of improved salaries through the new Act. The first necessity for progress, in Elliott's view, was a larger, better qualified teaching force, and he was optimistic that it would be achieved, attracted by the higher rates of pay which must result from Fisher's promise of government cover for three-fifths of the salary bill.

In the profession as a whole bitterness concerning salaries had festered since well before the war. After a period of stability in prices, the cost of living was rising from 1910 onwards, and by 1913 a national salaries movement had been launched which resulted in improved scales in almost half the L.E.A.s of the country.⁵⁹ The war

55. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/2, pp.70-72.

56. M.C.H., 1.ii.1913.

57. M.C.H., 2.ii.1918.

58. M.C.H., 1.ii.1919.

59. Gosden, p.27.

checked further immediate progress but the movement gained an influential supporter in H.A.L. Fisher, who became President of the Board of Education in 1916. Concerned at the shortage of teachers and believing that educational advance was impossible with a disgruntled teaching force Fisher committed himself to making the profession financially attractive, particularly to men.⁶⁰ Harrison and Mellor from Macclesfield reported that the whole of one day was given to discussing teachers' salaries at the conference of the Association of Education Committees in 1919.⁶¹ One speaker, lamenting the 'conspicuous lack of cordiality' between teachers and L.E.A.s emphasized the resentment of the profession, pointing out that the teachers believed they had been poorly paid in the past. The reduction in the number of prospective teachers was underlined, at a time when more were needed than ever before to implement the new Act, and a resolution was moved that a national salary scale be established. To that end, Fisher set up the Burnham Committee in the same year.

Salaries in the Macclesfield service varied widely. Some of the favoured heads were well remunerated. In 1895 it was noted by a Board of Education official that T. H. Hewitt received a salary of £314 per annum at Mill Street, more than the total earnings of the ten other members of staff (including pupil teachers),⁶² and H.M.I. Gleadowe remarked on one occasion in the 1890s that Macclesfield schools would be better served if the salaries paid to some headteachers were scaled down so that the money saved could be used to attract a higher calibre of assistants. The salary of Hewitt did not quite compare with that of the headmaster of the Grammar School who

60. Ward, p.195.

61. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, p.8.

62. P.R.O., ED21/2140, 16.viii.1895.

received £200 per year, in addition to a bonus of from £3 to £6 per registered boy⁶³ - with about 50 pupils on the books - but it surpassed the Modern School head's £120 per year, plus from £1 to £3 per capita.⁶⁴ At the other end of the range, at Hurdsfield, for example, in the same period, the four headteachers were required to take salary cuts because of the schools' financial straits. The girls' headmistress had her salary reduced from £60 to £50 per annum and her colleagues in the infant departments from £45 to £40 each,⁶⁵ albeit with a supplement, in all cases, of two-fifths of the merit award, which in 1899 boosted the total remuneration to slightly more than double the basic.⁶⁶ Rate aid to the voluntary schools after 1902 helped to raise these low salaries, and there was some closing of the gap between maximum and minimum rates for headteachers, but marked differentials in remuneration were maintained. By 1904 Macclesfield had established a scale, with headteachers paid according to size and status of department, and sex of employee. As the 1905 schedule shows, the scale for male heads ranged from £110 to £260 per annum, and for their female colleagues from £90 to £170. (Table XIV). The scales were not strictly adhered to in practice. The incumbents of Christ Church boys' and girls' departments and of both the St. George's schools were paid above the maximum for the size of department they held, and Hewitt and Elliott were off the scale altogether. These two, paid on the commission system, as David Wardle calls it,⁶⁷ received respectively £356 and £312 per annum. The rates for assistant staff reflect the superior status of the college trained teacher

63. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59, p.23.

64. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59, p.31.

65. Hurdsfield Church Sunday and Day School log book, 19.iii.1894.

66. Hurdsfield National Schools' Cash Book, 1898-99.

67. D. Wardle, English Popular Education 1780-1975 (1970), p.106.

Table XIV

M.E.C. Salary Scale for Elementary School Teachers, 1905

Grade of Teacher	Minimum	Maximum	
<u>Headteacher</u>			
Men	£110 p.a.	£260	
Women	£90	£170	
<u>Certificated Assistant</u>			
Men College trained	£90	£120	
Untrained	£80	£110	
Women College trained	£80	£110	
Untrained	£70	£90	
<u>Uncertificate Assistant</u>			
Men	£55	£65	
Women	£45	£55	
<u>Supplementals and Provisionals</u>			
Men	£35	£45	Must satisfy L.E.A. pursu- ing King's Scholarship or other qualifying examination.
Women	£30	£40	
<u>Pupil Teachers</u>			
Boys	£14 (1st yr)	£20 (3rd yr)	
Girls	£12	£18	
<u>Supply</u>			
Certificated Men	£1.15 p.wk.		
Women	£1.10 p.wk.		
Uncertificated Men	£1.15 p.wk.		
Women	£1.00 p.wk.		

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/1, p.133.

as against the holder of the acting teacher's certificate, and of both over the uncertificated and the supplementaries. The last-named group comprised staff engaged, on H.M.I. approval, for specific vacancies. They were without academic qualification and had no security of tenure. Usually, but not always, they were women, and in Macclesfield regulations required them to be studying for the King's Scholarship or some other qualification. The Macclesfield rates for assistants were in advance of the Devon scales for 1908, quoted by Professor Gosden, and compared favourably with those of Leeds at the starting figure, but they fell short, here, in the possible maximums in several grades, and considerably so for certificated men.⁶⁸ The two senior teachers, Hewitt and Elliott, at this stage, were among the most highly paid in the country. Less than 1% of all elementary head-teachers (487 men) were earning more than £300 per year in 1905-06.⁶⁹ Beach of Christ Church and Salt of St. George's were also well remunerated at £250 and £245 per annum respectively.⁷⁰ But these were the minority. The bulk of the heads in the town received considerably lower rates. When George Peachey retired from Duke Street in 1898 his post was advertised at £150 per annum;⁷¹ his successor, Joseph Gaskell, moved on to take charge of Athey Street Boys', the second council school, in 1913, for £170 yearly.⁷² John Earles, a peripatetic head, made redundant when the opening of the council schools caused the closure of some of the poorer voluntary school departments, earned £150 in 1912.⁷³ The girls' headteacher at Athey Street received £115 annually in 1912, as did the headmistress of Duke Street.

68. Gosden, p.25.

69. P.P. 1908 Cd. 3886 lxxxv.1, Board of Education Report and Statistics of Education, 1905-06, p.30.

70. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/2, pp.13-14.

71. M.C.H., 11.vi.1898.

72. M.C.H., 27.vii.1912.

73. M.C.H., 3.viii.1912.

As Gosden records, a rise in the cost of living between 1910 and 1913 resulted in a national campaign for improved salaries.⁷⁴ Almost half the L.E.A.s gave an increase but Macclesfield was not among them. The 1905 rates applied up to the end of the first world war, the only alteration being a small drop in the starting salaries for certificated teachers. A discussion by the Education Committee in March 1918 on the conditions attached to the Fisher grant revealed the deficiencies of Macclesfield's salary scale, at the lower end, at least. Eligibility for the grant required minimum salaries which involved rises of between 18% and 44 $\frac{1}{2}$ %. (Table XV). Following the passing of the Fisher Education Act, and acting on the example of the Cheshire County Council Education Committee, Macclesfield revised its scale to take effect from 1 April 1918. (Table XVI). It is interesting to note that headmasters gained least, which suggests that their rates previously had been more favourable than those of the women heads and assistant teachers. Again, however, there were certain posts carrying salaries well over the scale maximum. Hewitt, Elliott, and Salt (St. George's) received £360, and two other men were above £300, whilst the two top headmistresses drew yearly salaries of £250.⁷⁵ The 1918 scale marked the beginning of a period in which teachers' salaries was a frequent topic on the Education Committee agendas - the 'vexed question', as one member saw it.⁷⁶ The Consultative Committee under Lord Burnham, composed of representatives of local education authorities and teachers organizations, was constituted in 1919 to look into the question nationally. This year saw the start of a period of high inflation, and in November, again in accordance with

74. Gosden, p.27.

75. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/6, p.200; CED7/36/7, p.20.

76. M.C.H., 1.ii.1919.

Table XVMinimum Salary Levels, 1918

Grade of Teacher	Macclesfield minimum rate	Minimum required for government grant
Certificated		
Men	£75 p.a.	£100 p.a.
Women	£65	£90
Uncertificated		
Men	£55	£65
Women	£45	£65

Source: M.C.H., 30.iii.1918.

Table XVI

Salary Scale for Elementary School Teachers
Macclesfield Education Committee, 1 April 1918

Grade of teacher	Average attendance of school	Salary	
		Minimum	Maximum
<u>Headmaster</u>			
Senior Schools	Up to 220	£160	£220
	221 to 320	£180	£250
	321 and over	£200	£280
<u>Headmistress</u>			
Junior Mixed & Girls Schools	Up to 150	£120	£160
	151 to 250	£135	£180
	251 and over	£150	£210
<u>Headmistress</u>			
Infant Schools	Up to 150	£110	£150
	151 to 250	£120	£160
<u>Certificated Assistant</u>			
Men		£100	£190 in 22 years
Women		£90	£150 in 15 years
<u>Uncertificated Assistant</u>			
Men		£65	£120 in 20 years
Women		£65	£100 in 20 years
<u>Supplemental</u>			
		£30	£65 (L.E.A. not allowed to employ any more)

Source: M.C.H., 30.iii.1918.

Cheshire's decision, Macclesfield granted economic bonuses of £40 per woman and £50 per man to each teacher.⁷⁷ Hewitt retired in 1919, having extended his working life only as a wartime measure,⁷⁸ and his replacement was installed at £385 per annum. Elliott was now receiving £410, raised in January 1920 to £420,⁷⁹ but his earlier favourable placing in the national context had been eroded. Burnham rates, which were intended to be taken as minimum recommendations,⁸⁰ fixed the male headteacher scale at £357 10s Od to £637 10s Od.⁸¹ Macclesfield's most highly paid teacher, almost at the end of his career, was nearer the minimum than the maximum amount considered fair reward when the national scale was established.

Not all L.E.A.s accepted the Burnham recommendations, but Macclesfield adopted them immediately, from 1 January 1920.⁸² In the following year salaries rose again. Before he retired in March 1922 Elliott received £460 per year. In April 1922 payment to Macclesfield headteachers ranged from £125 to £461 per annum, and in 1923 the maximum reached £493 15s 3d.⁸³ By this time, however, the restrictions imposed to deal with the depressed economic state of the country put a brake on increases. Teachers' salaries nationally were subjected to a 5% cut in 1925, a move to be repeated in the years 1932 to 1935, when 10% was deducted from teachers' earnings, reduced to 5% in July 1934.

The expectations raised by Fisher's Education Act in regard to salaries were realized in Macclesfield to a limited degree. As in

77. M.C.H., 29.xi.1919.

78. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, p.30.

79. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, p.56.

80. Simon, p.29.

81. Gosden, p.46.

82. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, p.146.

83. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, pp.6,100.

many other authorities, with the establishment of the Burnham Committee below average rates were raised, particularly for those on the lower rungs of the professional ladder, but the economic difficulties of the country, and the measures taken to deal with them, restricted advances drastically on this front. Nonetheless, the two decades between the wars did see headway made in professional standing. This can be detected in the changing attitude of the Education Committee. As individuals, and through their organizations, teachers became increasingly valued in a consultative capacity. A breakthrough was made by the Macclesfield Borough Teachers' Association in May 1919. Although Hewitt and Elliott, staunch and active N.U.T. branch members, had been on the Education Committee from 1903 in their own right as elected councillors, the Association had wished for direct teacher representation since well before the war. A request in 1907 was rejected, but the new application was more successful. An opponent gave it as his opinion that there was 'enough union interference with the government without having servants to quarrel with every day', but a resolution in favour was carried by seven votes to five.⁸⁴ The decision was ratified by the Town Council a week later,⁸⁵ and in 1921 the constitution of the Education Committee was altered by the insertion of the words, 'one person to be appointed on the recommendation of the Macclesfield Teachers' Association'.⁸⁶ By this time the head-teachers were meeting separately, which indicates a growing awareness of their professional standing and also in itself is a measure of the increased strength in the assistant teaching body which was not shown

84. M.C.H., 31.v.1919.

85. M.C.H., 7.vi.1919.

86. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, p.158.

before the war. In 1922 the Byron Street headteachers, Juliet Priestley and Walter Weyer, were co-opted on to the School and Building sub-committee, in an advisory capacity, on the recommendation of the Macclesfield Head Teachers' Association.⁸⁷ It is not explicitly stated but the move probably had a connection with the plan to convert part of the Byron Street building into the new Central School. The formation of the Head Teachers' Association as a separate body was an early post-war venture. In 1925, in its turn, it too requested direct representation on the Education Committee.⁸⁸ In this case, the request was shelved for six months and was not brought up again, but the prestige of the body rose steadily. It was on the representation of the Head Teachers' Association and with sympathy, that the Education Committee resolved in 1933 to urge the government that the 10% cuts in teachers' salaries should be restored.⁸⁹

Macclesfield's teaching force, which had decreased throughout the two decades from 1900, in line with the substantial decline in the school population, reached its nadir numerically in the early 1920s. The decline continued up to 1922 when 115 teachers taught 4,440 children in 103 classes,⁹⁰ and into 1923 when there was one less certificated teacher, the figures in that year being 77 certificated teachers (67.5% of the whole), 28 uncertificated teachers, and 9 supplementaries, with 4,448 on the roll.⁹¹ There were also three swimming instructors and - as from 1906 - an instructor each for cookery and manual crafts. By 1926, however, with the registered

87. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.29.

88. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.131.

89. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.215.

90. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.34.

91. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.100.

number of children approximately the same, there was a rise in the number of teaching staff to 121. (Table XIII). Pupil totals remained relatively constant throughout the twenties, rising slightly in the 1930s before a steady decline took them to a new low in 1944. (There were two rogue years, 1940-1942, when war displacement distorted the totals). During the same period, as Table XIII shows, staffing ratios improved steadily. It is interesting to note that even in the worst recession years, the early 1930s, with the school roll on the increase (albeit temporarily), the teacher:pupil ratio was maintained, and even improved slightly; although, again, it is necessary to be cautious in making deductions. Staffing figures, as with attendance statistics, do not always accord in different sources. A glaring example appears the records for 1932-33, when the Board of Education put Macclesfield's staff total at 128 and complained that it was below its establishment of 132,⁹² whilst the L.E.A. showed 138 teachers employed, in addition to a number of supplementaries.⁹³ The use of supplementaries would seem to be one cause of confusion. Supplementals were no longer recognized by the Board of Education after 1918, but supplementaries are included in L.E.A. totals up to 1944. Since they were engaged for temporary and part time appointments, overall totals varied according to the period of the year in which the statistics were compiled. Nonetheless, allowing for the unreliability in certain instances, there was a definite upward trend in staffing between the two wars.

Two factors would seem to have contributed to the improved staffing position. In 1924 the Board of Education, under the first Labour administration, launched a campaign to enforce the rule of one class

92. P.R.O., ED21/24878, 14.x.1932.

93. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/9, July 1938, n.p.

to one room and to reduce class sizes, initially to a maximum of 60, ultimately to below 50 pupils.⁹⁴ Whilst the urgency varied with which this policy was followed up in subsequent years, the principle was accepted and must have necessitated reinforcements. At the same time as the start of the move, the central schools - one for each sex - were opened in Macclesfield. Although the schools fell within the sphere of elementary education, classes here were limited to a maximum of 40 pupils. The Education Committee took very seriously the staffing of the new schools. The additional staff provided raised the total of the teaching force and, in introducing a new mathematical formula for calculating staffing requirements, it may have influenced the L.E.A.s attitude to other elementary schools. Indirectly, the coming of the central schools can be seen as another factor which contributed to the rise in the status of the elementary school teachers in the period between the wars. The staff was well qualified; the first graduates in the elementary system - after Dr. Beach - were recruited to the central schools; and the schools were highly regarded by the Committee and in the town over the twenty-year period of their existence. As part of the elementary provision they raised the image of the whole system.

The role and image of the teacher changed more violently with the outbreak of war in September 1939. Although Macclesfield was not involved in an evacuation of its own children, from 1 September the schools' staff were deployed as billeting officers for the reception of 1,247 evacuees from Manchester and Stretford.⁹⁵ Accommodation, feeding arrangements, gas-masks, air raid precautions, now took

94. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.71.

95. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, p.182.

precedence over normal school tasks. Schools, closed for two to three weeks at the beginning of September, until satisfactory provision of air raid shelters could be made, re-opened on a shift system, which demanded the occupation of pupils on an informal basis, in the open air and in hired halls, for off-shift school sessions.⁹⁶ The hectic pace of the early months relaxed somewhat as a wartime routine was established, and the evacuees gradually returned home; in May 1940 H.M.I. advised a merger of the visitors with the Macclesfield schools because numbers were so low;⁹⁷ but additional duties became an accepted part of the teacher's programme, and periodic emergencies demanded a flexibility of approach. School gardens, dining room supervision, the organization of war effort weeks, War Savings, the collection of tinfoil, bones, and other reclaimable items, were some of the extra tasks undertaken. In October 1940, when evacuees from London and West Ham arrived in the town,⁹⁸ Athey Street was closed as the school was used as a dispersal centre and the teachers employed in the task of billeting.⁹⁹ A few weeks later the return of evacuees from Manchester and Stretford brought to the same school two teachers and an influx of junior and infant pupils which raised the weekly average attendance from 199.7 to 238.2.¹⁰⁰ In March one evacuee teacher returned to Stretford when numbers dropped because of the dribbling back of her charges, and the Athey Street head was left with an unwieldy standard III of 58 pupils.¹⁰¹ In May a further fourteen Manchester evacuees arrived, without a teacher.¹⁰²

96. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, pp.163,182; Athey Street Council School, Junior Mixed Log Book, 18.ix.1939.

97. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, p.212.

98. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, p.25.

99. Athey Street Log Book, 19.x.1940.

100. Athey Street Log Book, 6.xii.1940, 10.i.1941.

101. Athey Street Log Book, 5.iii.1941.

102. Athey Street Log Book, 14.v.1941.

In 1944, when the passing of the Education Act marked the beginning of the end of Macclesfield's autonomy in the sphere of elementary education, the teaching force of 133 was four short of the number of adult teachers in 1903 for a school population reduced by approximately 30%. In qualifications and status, too, and in experience, the professional body had changed markedly during the era of the Part III authority.

Chapter Six

Campaigning for Health

Chapter Six

Campaigning for Health

At the start of the twentieth century there was grave national disquiet concerning the country's low standard of fitness and, consequent on this awareness, the living standards which produced it. Although Booth¹ in 1889 and Rowntree² in 1901, for London and York respectively, had identified the problem in reports, and pressure groups had proclaimed their anxieties, in varying degrees, in other parts of the country, it took the Boer War to focus public attention on the gravity of the situation. In 1902 the report of the inspector-general for recruiting on the Rejection of Recruits for the Boer War showed that more than one-third of would-be army enlistments were found to be unfit for military service. In 1904 the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, set up to investigate the matter, published in its findings the causes of the high proportion of rejections: poor eyesight, rotten teeth, heart disease, puny growth.³ The world's richest national power was faced with the unpalatable truth that it was producing a C3 nation healthwise. Action was needed and the school was selected as the bridgehead; school medical inspections, school meals, domestic economy classes, physical training, and hygiene lessons, were to be the means whereby a healthier Britain would be

1. C. Booth, Labour and Life of the People (1891).

2. B.S. Rowntree, Poverty: a study of town life (1901).

3. S. Leff and Vera Leff, The School Health Service (1959), p.25.

achieved. Backed by governmental and public concern, in 1906 and 1907 two parliamentary measures were passed embodying the bulk of the Committee's recommendations: the Education (Provision of Meals) Act and the Education (Administrative Provisions) Act. The first allowed, if no other funds were available - and this was an all-important proviso - the raising of a halfpenny rate to provide meals for children in need, on schooldays. The second made the L.E.A. responsible for the medical inspection of all elementary school children at the start and finish of school life, and allowed for an intermediate examination at the local authority's discretion; there was also a permissive clause regarding the provision of treatment. The Medical Department of the Board of Education was established under Dr. (later Sir) George Newman. Thus, the school welfare services, which were already in operation in varying degrees in certain authorities, gained official sanction.

As Dr. Hurt has shown at length, the need was urgent and of long standing.⁴ In cities, towns, and countryside, a sizeable proportion of the child population was growing up in abysmally squalid and demoralizing conditions, stunted and deformed, mentally and physically, for lack of food. From the days immediately following the 1870 Education Act, when a previously hidden stratum of society was forced to send its offspring into the elementary schools, the problem was apparent to teachers, doctors, officials, and others who came into direct contact with the children. Pinchbeck and Hewitt record the concern for children's health shown by members of the medical profession; five surveys of London schools were undertaken between 1899 and 1906, and all commented on the weakly, undersized child population.⁵ In 1903

4. Hurt, p.p.101-152.

5. Ivy Pinchbeck and Margaret Hewitt, Children in English Society, Vol.II (1973), p.633.

a Royal Commission found that more than one-third of Edinburgh's pupils did not get sufficient food for sustenance.⁶ Despite the desperate need, however, there was strong opposition to the idea of aid on a large scale, or of any permanence, on the grounds that such would lead the parents of recipients to become neglectful of their duties to provide for their families; for the really destitute there was the Board of Guardians. Voluntary agencies and individuals, with varying degrees of frugality, struggled to cope with the problem, but by the early 1900s it was becoming apparent that the voluntary system alone was not adequate. The nation's work force - and fighting force - was dangerously below an acceptable level of physical fitness and must be strengthened. Nonetheless, it was with caution that the schools' welfare legislation was framed. Local authorities were permitted to use public funds for the provision of meals for necessitous pupils, but they were under an obligation to recoup the cost from parents or voluntary agencies wherever possible; and, whilst medical inspections were compulsory on the authority, the provision of treatment was only adoptive.

Macclesfield's awareness of the public debate in this field is shown in the resolution of the Primary Education Committee in February 1904 to make enquiries into the number of children suffering from want of food or 'cases of sickness caused by injudicious feeding'.⁷ (It was a criticism made by middle class providers that poor parents fed their children injudiciously when, in reality, children were sick with hunger.⁸) The problem was not new to the town; the not infrequent

6. Leff and Leff, p.24.

7. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 19.ii.1904.

8. Hurt, p.113.

trade depressions made the soup kitchen a familiar part of the local scene, and in the School Board days school dinners for the needy on a voluntary and temporary basis figured in school log books.⁹ The Courier's review of the year reported 'an alarming amount of distress in Macclesfield' for February 1904;¹⁰ the national debate had validity in the context of local conditions at this time. Another resolution of the Education Committee, following a speech made by Mrs. Walter Greg to the Christian Social Union on child deprivation in the town, advocated periodic inspections in day schools by the medical officer of health, and Richard Snow, who, for several years, had taken a particular interest in child welfare, urged the use of the authority's powers against child neglect.¹¹ There was not, however, any further action until after the passing of the Education Acts, and nothing was done immediately then. Pinchbeck and Hewitt record that the local authorities did not take up with alacrity their new powers with regard to the provision of meals; the L.C.C. held back for two years hoping to be able to continue to rely on voluntary subscriptions.¹² In Macclesfield, too, it was 1908 before official moves were made. There was some revival in silk at the start of 1905 which might have removed the spur of immediate need on a large scale and, moreover, these were the years of the borough's engagement in conflict with the Board of Education over the school buildings, which probably absorbed the main energies of the local administrators. The appointed day for the implementation of the 1907 Act was 1 January 1908 and, possibly with

9. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, 5.xi.1886, 19.xi.1886, 25.ii.1887.

10. M.C.H., 2.i.1905.

11. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 27.v.1905.

12. Pinchbeck and Hewitt, p.35.

the spur of legislation pricking it on, in this year the L.E.A. made school welfare provision a priority topic for consideration. By this time, Dr. John Hedley Marsh was engaging his considerable energies in the debate.

Hedley Marsh had already made his mark in the town as the medical officer of health. Born in Sale, Cheshire, in 1869, he trained at Owens College, Manchester, and the Manchester Royal Infirmary, gaining the diplomas of M.R.C.S. and L.R.C.P. in 1894.¹³ He moved to Macclesfield to take up the post of senior house surgeon at the Infirmary, and spent two years there before going into private practice in the town. He was establishing himself reputably in this sphere when the post of borough medical officer of health fell vacant in June 1899.¹⁴ After a rival applicant had been eliminated in an earlier round he was unanimously elected by the Health Committee to fill the vacancy and recommended to the Town Council, the appointment being ratified at a meeting of the full body on 5 July 1899.¹⁵ The post was part-time and carried a salary of £100 per annum, with £20 per year, in addition, for extra duties in connection with the Infectious Diseases (Isolation) Hospital.¹⁶

Marsh chaired his first meeting of the Health Committee on the day following his appointment, and his first quarterly report was published in the local newspaper early in November 1899.¹⁷ The editor was greatly encouraged; he saw hope, he claimed, for more fight from

13. British Medical Journal, 22,vi,1929.

14. M.C.H., 13.iv.1899.

15. M.C.H., 8.vii.1899.

16. M.C.H., 7.vi.1899.

17. M.C.H., 11.xi.1899.

the new M.O.H. than there had been from his predecessors, regarding the duties of the Town Council towards the health of the town. He had judged his man well. An attack on the 'totally inadequate' Isolation Hospital, and a grave warning concerning Macclesfield's high infant mortality rate, presaged a lifelong crusade in the cause of community health. Marsh's immediate task, as he saw it, was to remove or reduce with all haste the most pestilential of the environmental hazards among which a large number of the townsfolk lived: the insanitary housing, unhygienic food purveyors, the ubiquitous privy midden. Public hygiene, he proclaimed, was largely the answer to the problem of the unacceptably high infant death figures and the dread epidemics which regularly took their toll, particularly in the pre-school and infant school age. A copy of St. Peter's parish magazine for December 1896 illuminates this marked feature of the times. Five names are listed under the section reserved for burials; one of the deceased was aged 5 years, one lived 14 days, one was 4 years old, and there were two 6 year olds.¹⁸ On another page, underlining the anxieties attendant on rearing children, the Home Doctor section of Housewives' Corner lists the incubation periods for the common infectious diseases: scarlet fever, small-pox, whooping cough, diphtheria, typhoid fever. Marsh's urgency aroused some opposition among vested interests and rate-conscious town leaders, and the slow rate of progress was a constant source of exasperation to the medical officer of health, but advances were made, and in 1906 the Courier was able to commend the 'crusade of cleansing' which was under way in disease-producing areas in the overcrowded parts of the town.¹⁹ In the current debate

18. St. Peter's, Macclesfield, Parish Magazine, November 1896.

19. M.C.H., 29.xii.1906.

regarding the promotion of the health of the nation Marsh was one of those who, on various local fronts, were already at work.

The duties of the school medical officer were an extension of the work of the medical officer of health and, although he was not officially appointed to the new post until 1910, Marsh grasped eagerly the increased powers granted by the Education Acts. He was already acquainted with the schools. From 1899 to 1903 his duties had included those of medical officer to the School Board.²⁰ Responsibilities in this capacity revolved round the ordering of school closures during epidemics and the issuing of the requisite certificates to claimants for half and full time exemption from school attendance. After the dissolution of the School Board he continued a general supervision, and in 1904 he was requested by the Education Committee to advise on a code of practice to be adopted by the public schools for dealing with infectious diseases.²¹ Marsh recommended that Macclesfield should follow the Manchester custom of closing any school in a measles epidemic where the number of cases reached 10% of the roll, and that head teachers should be required to notify the medical officer of health.²² Reports of these cases are entered regularly in the school log books up to the first world war, and not infrequently, 'Dr. Marsh called to-day', appears in the entries.

The common incidence of disease, and death, is a marked feature in the log book entries in the early years of the twentieth century. Scarlet fever, measles, whooping cough, and diphtheria were the most

20. M.C.H., 8.vi.1929.

21. Medical Officer of Health's Report, 1905, p.253.

22. M.O.H. Report, 1905, p.p.249, 253.

common of the zymotic infections, with typhoid and smallpox rarer but not unusual, and there were numerous closures at the medical officer's insistence. In Duke Street Boys' measles and scarlet fever harassed the school from 23 November 1901 to 23 January 1902, and further outbreaks of fever and diphtheria struck in March.²³ For most of December up to Christmas in 1904 all the schools except one were closed for scarlet fever.²⁴ At Duke Street Girls' a scarlet fever epidemic closed the school for a month in the summer of 1906, and from 15 December to 14 January in 1907; the Diocesan report noted that the school year had been reduced by three months through enforced closures.²⁵ In 1908 a virulent attack of measles from 2 to 20 October brought the medical officer into the infants' department at Duke Street to give a demonstration lecture on how to disinfect the buildings.²⁶ A dreaded disease was tuberculosis, and Duke Street Boys' log tells a sad, little tale concerning one of its pupil teachers who contracted it in 1900. At the beginning of December the boy was away for a week, ill in bed, but the following week, although 'very ill to all appearances', on the Monday he sat for his Queen's Scholarship. At the beginning of March he was away again, and he was still absent when his successful examination result came through. He was ordered to the seaside for a month by his doctor, and in May it was recorded that he was 'in a consumption' and not likely to work again. On 5 September the school closed for the afternoon so that the staff could attend the funeral of their late colleague-in-training.²⁷

23. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, 1901-2, several references.

24. M.O.H. Report, 1905, p.253.

25. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 10.iv.1907.

26. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, 11.xi.1908.

27. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, 1900, 1901, several entries.

In the same year an assistant teacher had a day's absence following the death of his little daughter, and another was away for the sudden death of a sister.²⁸ In 1905 a pupil teacher was granted leave of absence for the funeral of his brother,²⁹ and in 1908 the headmaster took his first day off in ten years on the death of his small son.³⁰

A particularly vulnerable sector in the schools was the babies' group. Many children started school a year, two years, or even three years, before statutory age. In January 1910 there were 422 of them on roll and, indicating their susceptibility to infections, their attendance averaged 60.37% as compared with the 88.4% of the older children, January 1911 being only a marginally better month at 64.5%.³¹ In one report Marsh claimed that the infants' departments of the public elementary schools acted as incubators for the infectious diseases. 'As long as children under five are permitted to herd together in public elementary schools so long will education be paid for in the heavy toll of infant lives', he proclaimed.³² This public announcement involved the medical officer in a drawn-out dispute, through the columns of a local newspaper, with one of the schools' head teachers who maintained that children were less at risk at school than playing in the streets unsupervised.³³ Dr. Lowe has pointed out that in the early years of the twentieth century the medical profession was particularly concerned with school hygiene, holding conferences in London in 1905 and 1907, and seeking to

28. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, September 1901.

29. Cheshire R.O., SL74/3, 7.iii.1905.

30. Cheshire R.C., SL74/3, 27.x.1908.

31. P.R.O., ED21/2133, 3.ii.1911.

32. M.O.H. Report, 1905, p.249.

33. M.C.H., several references throughout July/August 1905.

influence the Board of Education on the subject.³⁴ Marsh's attitude in Macclesfield shows him to be in sympathy with this movement.

In May 1908 Marsh was authorized by the Education Committee to visit London for a series of demonstrations and lectures on the twin themes: school medical inspections and the feeding of school children.³⁵ Two Committee members had already been appointed to attend and report back on the conference of the National Union of Teachers which was debating the same topics.³⁶ Towards the end of 1907 the L.E.A. had contacted other authorities in Yorkshire, Staffordshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire, to ascertain what action was being taken elsewhere with regard to the new legislation.³⁷ It was found that whereas Manchester had two full time school medical officers and one part time assistant already at work, the Crewe authority had 'no intention of rushing it', and most other replies indicated that no action was being taken as yet. It was decided, in accordance with the changed requirements of the Code for 1908-1909, that medical inspections should be organized in the Macclesfield schools in the new school year. To start with they were carried out by Marsh alone, and it was a time-consuming task; it was early December before he reached Duke Street, and a log entry indicates that several visits by the M.O.H. would be necessary before every child had been examined.³⁸ In 1909-10 three more doctors were assisting part-time, in the work.³⁹

The results of these and subsequent inspections, as recorded in

34. Seaborne and Lowe, p.65.

35. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 22.v.1908.

36. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 3.iv.1908.

37. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/3, p.90.

38. Cheshire R.O., SL74/2, 1.xii.1908.

39. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/4, p.80.

the annual reports of the medical officer of health, paint a dismal picture of child life for the poor at this time. Defective vision, skin diseases, ringworm, sores, discharging ears, enlarged adenoids and tonsils, extensive tooth decay, ran the list year after year.⁴⁰

It was a source of frustration to Marsh that although medical inspections were undertaken regularly, as was demanded by law, the provision of a treatment clinic, which was permitted on the rates but was not compulsory, was not forthcoming. His impatience rings out in his reports. An example is the one in 1912 which, as the medical officer stated in his preamble, was similar to that of the past four years. 695 boys and 724 girls had been examined of whom 670 were in the entrants' group.⁴¹ One unsatisfactory aspect of the children's physical well-being was bad teeth; only 139 boys and 124 girls had no defect. 'It is truly deplorable', he declared 'to contemplate the vast amount of dental loss, pain, and suffering which our children undergo', and he pleaded the urgent need for a dental clinic, estimating that six hours per week of a dentist's time, at £50 per annum, would suffice for the work. Nose and throat problems was another area of concern. A total of 188 children were reported on for enlarged tonsils, adenoids, and glands. Of the 74 followed up, eleven had had operations, eleven had taken medical advice, and in 52 cases nothing was done. Here, he felt that the local authority should make some arrangement with the Infirmary where parents were too poor to make their own arrangements, 'otherwise', he complained, 'I do not see how the child is going to gain any benefit from the

40. M.C.H., 19.x.1912; Cheshire R.O., CED7/70/22, p.3.

41. M.C.H., 19.x.1912.

medical inspection, nor the rate-payer any value for the work done'. On discharging ears of which, in addition to 30 children with defective hearing, there were 14 cases, he wrote, 'I have repeatedly pointed out that such children drift on to incurable deafness'. 'I have repeatedly pointed out . . .' was a favourite phrase, often used in these years. Heart disease as a result of rheumatic fever was another danger area, and a warning was issued to parents and teachers to be on the alert for signs of the onset of the illness so that remedial steps could be taken before damage was done. Dirty heads, particularly among the girls, with their 'beautiful, flowing locks', was a continual problem. Only 20 boys had dirty heads in 1912, with 18 reported as having 'very dirty bodies', but 239 girls had nits, in addition to 14 with 'very dirty heads'. Parents were given leaflets explaining treatment if present at the medical inspection, and were sent them if not; and the school nurse followed up the cases. The medical officer noted that some parents were very indignant at being told that their children had dirty heads, having come to consider 'the presence of nits as being quite in accordance with the natural order of things'. He had not, however, had to invoke, with any case, his powers under the 1908 Children's Act with regard to compulsory cleansing.

Macclesfield's figures do not approach those of the larger towns, but the country's health problems are seen there in microcosm. Hedley Marsh, unlike some of his colleagues elsewhere,⁴² regarded the detection and effective treatment of them as questions of urgency. There was an arrangement for the provision of spectacles where necessary. In 1910 the Committee was dismayed to learn that a boy,

42. Hurt, p.136.

'hampered by defective vision', had failed to collect his glasses from the Town Hall,⁴³ and in the 1912 report, Marsh pointed out that no child attending the public elementary schools need suffer from defective vision if the case was brought to notice. In 1913 the Board of Education approved L.E.A. expenditure for 'inexpensive' spectacles for children, up to a maximum of £2 10s Od;⁴⁴ although parents were expected to contribute where possible, and in 1911 one father was summoned for the repayment of 2s 6d.⁴⁵ Apart from this, however, despite the medical officer's persistent pressure, no systematic treatment was available until 1915, when the Pierce Street Clinic was opened. Macclesfield was not alone in its dilatoriness. According to Hurt, in March 1914, although all L.E.A.s had school medical officers, 127 had made no move towards opening clinics, and 77 had no facilities of any sort for remedial treatment.⁴⁶

The same building that was used for the clinic housed the School Feeding Centre. The supplying of school meals for necessitous children had been a joint aim of the medical officer, with the provision of facilities for medical treatment, since the passing of the new legislation. There was equal need. As Marsh reported in 1912, he was satisfied that Macclesfield children were up to the national average in height but concerned that they fell well below it in weight, and he emphasized the responsibility the Education Committee now had for 'the physical as well as the mental' well-being of the children under its care.⁴⁷ Suitable food must be provided

43. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/4, p.74.

44. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/2, p.59.

45. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/5, p.7.

46. Hurt, p.143.

47. M.C.H., 19.x.1912.

for the ill-fed children if their parents could not be compelled to feed them. A start had already been made by this time. In October 1908 the Town Council had required the Education Committee to form a Canteen Committee, under the 1906 regulations, to confer with the Relief Association on the possibility of providing school meals,⁴⁸ but more than twelve months passed in negotiations before there were any results. Eventually, in February 1910, impelled by the additional distress caused when the Lower Heys cotton mill closed throwing a large number out of work, the Committee made its decision. As required by law it ascertained from the Relief Association that there was no alternative fund for feeding the school children, then applied to the Board of Education for approval to spend £35 for this purpose.⁴⁹

Marsh's part in getting the meals service launched is revealed in the authority's letter to the Board of Education. It was the 'urgent representations' of the medical officer which had persuaded the School Management Committee to take this step; he had found many children in need and was of the opinion that 'it was cruelty to cram education into the heads of children whose stomachs were empty'.⁵⁰ This, no doubt, was in reply to the Board's warning that the Committee must be sure the recipients of the meals 'could not benefit from education because of lack of food'. The supplicatory tone of the application for approval supports Hurt's contention that the Provision of Meals Act reserved the right of caution in the use of public money.⁵¹ The Board was assured that the school attendance officer had enquired into all cases recommended to the medical officer

48. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 23.x.1908.

49. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 19.ii.1910.

50. P.R.O., ED16/21, 25.ii.1910.

51. Hurt, p.124.

by teachers, that parents would be required to pay unless the Committee was sure they could not do so, that the position was urgent, there was no other agency, and that Dr. Marsh was 'personally' supervising the arrangements.

At this stage, the Education Committee looked on the proposals as a temporary measure to be abandoned when the S.M.O. considered the emergency over. In any case, since the estimated cost of the meals was approximately £1 per day, the approved amount for expenditure would fund barely two months supply. As it was, although Marsh had been pressing since November 1909, much of the winter had passed when the first meals were served in February 1910.⁵² Originally 117 children, in six schools, were identified as being in need,⁵³ but by February 1911 249 children in four schools alone were judged to be eligible beneficiaries of school meals, and most schools had smaller numbers of pupils on the list in like circumstances. (Table XVII). St. Alban's figure of 96 represents more than 40% of its average attendance of 229, and the Duke Street total approaches 25% of its 1911 average in school of 178,⁵⁴ but the total number of 328 from the entire school population is considerably below the 10% estimated by the Board of Education to be under-nourished in the country generally.⁵⁵ It is difficult to assess the extent to which the operation was successful in identifying all those in need. More than one writer records that local authorities generally were reluctant to incur more than minimal costs for this area of their work,⁵⁶ and there is no evidence - nor does its general practice suggest it was likely - that Macclesfield

52. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/4, p.75.

53. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/4, p.120.

54. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, p.88.

55. Hurt, p.147.

56. Hurt, p.147; Hewitt and Pinchbeck, p.635.

Table XVII

Number of Scholars judged to be in need of meals
in the Macclesfield Elementary Schools, 1910

School	Number of children
St. Alban's R.C.	88
Duke St. C.E.	78
Christ Church C.E.	42
Trinity Square C.E.	22
Daybrook St. C.E.	20
St. George's High St. C.E.	18
Crompton Road C.E.	15
St. Peter's C.E.	12
St. Paul's C.E.	12
St. George's London Rd.	11
Mill St. Wes.	6
Lord St. Brit.	4
Total	328

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/4, p.120.

Table XVIII

School Meals provided under the Education (Provision
of Meals) Act 1906 by the Macclesfield Primary
Education Committee, 1910-1915

Year	Number of meals	Total cost per annum
1910		£34 1s 10d
1911	8,283	£89 11s 9d
1912	3,000	£50 0s 0d
1913	8,530	£149 3s 1d
1914	9,000	£162 17s 4d
1915	44,403	£806 19s 8d

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/6, p.4.

was more lavish than the average. An invitation from the Workington authority to support a petition to Parliament to allow school meals on days when the schools were closed was decisively rejected in 1912.⁵⁷ On the other hand, the persistence of the school medical officer kept the problem constantly before the Education Committee and, as residents who recall the times testify, Marsh had widespread personal contacts in the town. His attitude to the issue is indicated in his proposal that a precedent be set by including a kitchen and dining room in the plans of the new school - the second of the council schools - then going up at Athey Street,⁵⁸ but his suggestion was not acted upon. As the annual statistics reveal, at this stage - the beginning of 1911 - and for several years the meals service did not operate continuously. In the year ending 31 March 1912 3,000 meals were served. (Table XVIII). This works out at roughly 15 per day over a school year. Records show that the average number in the period from 19 February to 3 May, when 4,508 meals were supplied at a total cost of £81 13s 4d, was 92 per day.⁵⁹ Therefore, from 19 February to 31 March 2,660 meals would be needed, which is a very large proportion of the 3,000. There was a burst of prosperity in silk at this time, and the fact is reflected in the annual total compared with the years before and after. In the following year, which is more representative, with the daily average recorded as approaching 140, 5,412 meals of the 1912-13 total of 8,530 were served between 23 January and 20 March⁶⁰ - forty school days. It was evidently a scheme for winter which was when the problem was seen at its keenest; in an early debate Marsh had voiced the need

57. M.C.H., 22.vi.1912.

58. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, p.391.

59. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/5, p.44.

60. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/5, p.132.

for the children to have something warm inside them early in the day.⁶¹ In these early years the meals were served at first in tradesmen's shops near the schools, then in disused school and Sunday school buildings.⁶² They were supplied by a local firm at a cost to the authority of $2\frac{1}{2}$ d per head in 1911, and thereafter, following a complaint from the purveyors that there was little profit in the contract,⁶³ at 4d or 5d per head up to 1915. Some children paid - up to 2d per meal - but free meals were supplied to the poorest on production of a 'certificate of need' from the authority.⁶⁴ In February 1913 head teachers were asked to inform parents that they might contribute one penny per meal in part payment. Since only 6s 1d was recovered from this source over the period, most children obviously had their certificates of need. The standard of the meals is not revealed. In the early days of planning, before the Children's Care Committee took over menus, Marsh supervised the contents, insisting on fat and protein, despite the expense, on the grounds that the children, in his opinion, often had starch to excess.⁶⁵ A certain frugality is indicated in the report in May 1912 that during the year, on a few occasions, there had not been sufficient for each child. By the end of 1912 it was accepted, however, that a more far-reaching arrangement was needed. A School Canteen Committee, appointed in December, held four meetings, and sent a deputation to visit the Bradford School Canteen Depot. The Education Committee was looking seriously at the possibility of a permanent meals centre.⁶⁶

61. P.R.O., ED16/21, 25.ii.1910.

62. Cheshire R.O., 7/70/22, p.3.

63. M.C.H., 10.ii.1912.

64. Cheshire R.O., 7/36/5, p.132.

65. P.R.O., ED16/21, 25.ii.1910.

66. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/5, p.132.

The tender for the building of the Macclesfield School Clinic and Feeding Centre was accepted in November 1914. The months following, before the building was opened in June 1915,⁶⁷ must have been fraught with difficulties. Reflecting the national picture, where there was a rise from 150,000 to 500,000 in the first year of the war,⁶⁸ in Macclesfield there was almost a five-fold increase over the previous year in the number of children taking school meals in the year ending 31 March 1915. (Table XVIII). This included the critical first few weeks of the war, when unemployment rose in the uncertain circumstances and soldiers' allowances had not yet started to come through.⁶⁹ A new Provisions of Meals Act was passed in 1914 to encourage L.E.A.s to make greater efforts. The halfpenny rate limit was removed and government grants increased. The initial growth rate, however, was not maintained. In the five months from 1 April to 31 August 1916, 4,878 meals were served at the Pierce Street Centre, averaging between 38 and 41 daily.⁷⁰ Again following the national trend, full employment reduced the borough's need, and at the end of the war the cost of school meals had been reduced almost by half on the 1915 figure, to £406.⁷¹ This was still, approximately, the yearly expenditure on school meals at the start of the 1930s, the 1931 total being £402 12s 5d,⁷² although in 1926 costs had risen to £875.⁷³ At this time the charge to non-necessitous children was 3d per day for a meal consisting of, for example, potato hash and

67. Cheshire R.O., CED7/70/22, p.1.

68. Leff and Leff, p.60.

69. Hurt, p.151.

70. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/4, p.130.

71. M.C.H., 26.iv.1919.

72. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/9, p.58.

73. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/9, p.10.

cabbage followed by rice pudding or jam pudding.⁷⁴ As the title indicates Pierce Street Feeding Centre provided, basically, for necessitous children. (When recommending a change in nomenclature to obviate discrimination in December 1940, the Board of Education categorized feeding centres as mainly providers of free meals, with school canteens supplying paid meals, and communal kitchens accommodating evacuees).⁷⁵ In April/May 1924 266 pupils paid, whilst 1,216 - representing 82% of the whole - received free meals;⁷⁶ in the first quarter of 1925, when a total of 3,429 meals were served, 2,891 - 84.3% - were free, and several more were paid for by the Guardians;⁷⁷ and when Tom Mellor visited the centre in 1926, of the 59 pupils present only two had paid.⁷⁸

In addition to the dining room and kitchen, the premises at Pierce Street provided accommodation for medical examinations and dental inspections, with a nurses' room for follow-up treatment, a dental recovery room, an office and a waiting room.⁷⁹ The staff of the schools' medical service comprised Marsh and four other doctors, an ophthalmic surgeon, a dentist - all part time - and two full time nurses.⁸⁰ The feeding centre was staffed by a professional baker, Mr. P. Garside, and his wife. Converted from the old Modern School building, the centre's alterations and equipment cost £3,270. One amenity not included was the shower unit which Marsh had persuaded the Education Committee to recommend at the planning stage of the

74. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.166.

75. Cheshire R.O., CED7/42/9, 31.xii.1940.

76. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.116.

77. Cheshire R.O., CED7/32, p.1.

78. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.166.

79. Cheshire R.O., CED7/70/22, p.5.

80. Cheshire R.O., CED7/70/22, p.10.

clinic. Estimated to cost £250, the building of the unit was postponed, and it never materialized. The installation of shower baths was another health measure the medical officer of health had been trying to promote in schools for several years. He had taken Education Committee members with him to view an example in Manchester, dwelling on the pleasure the use of them would give, as well as on the hygiene aspect.⁸¹ He had included showers in his suggestions for the new council schools,⁸² and he brought up the subject in reports: '. . . 10 or 12 showers and a swimming tank . . . to our new schools . . . money well invested in promoting the health, happiness, and well-being, . . . of the children of our town.'⁸³ 'I cannot understand the opposition to this movement', he complained. He gained some support from the Committee but, in the end, he had to accept failure on this score.

It was, doubtless, suggestions on these lines which were responsible for Marsh's exclusion from the decision-making of the Primary Education Committee and the voluntary schools' managers when they were engaged in their defence of the elementary school buildings. In 1908 Marsh wrote to Dr. Newman at the Board of Education complaining that the Committee had failed to show him the plans they had passed for the renovations to St. Alban's R.C. School, and suggesting that as school medical officer he was in a position, using his knowledge of local conditions, to advise the Board and the L.E.A.⁸⁴ 'There are many old schools in this town being altered to try to please the Board of Education and the inspectors', he explained, and he felt he

81. M.C.H., 19.x.1912.

82. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 17.ii.1911.

83. M.C.H., 19.x.1912.

84. P.R.O., ED16/21, 28.vi.1908.

had plans which would satisfy them. Marsh saw in the situation a golden chance to modernize or replace the old schools. There was no doubt where his sympathies lay: 'I can quite understand the L.E.A. not wishing for further expense . . . but the interests of the health of the scholars . . .'

He was obviously hoping for official backing from the Chief Medical Officer so that he could take a leading part in the planning. It would be a help to the Board and the inspectors, he ventured, if plans were submitted to the school medical officer first. One can imagine that the voluntary schools, fighting for their existence in the face of costly demands from the Board, and the local authority, terrified of expense, would look very warily on the 'extravagant' claims of the M.O.H.

The opening of the clinic and meals centre was another important step towards Marsh's ideal of a healthy community, but much still remained to be done. In 1919 a health report highlighted the deficiencies he saw in the local authority's provision.⁸⁵ The report was the yearly one for 1917, more than twelve months late. Some Committee members were inclined to cavil, particularly as the Board of Education was threatening punitive action if it was not forthcoming. Marsh was unrepentant; he had 'no time for compiling statistics whilst saving lives.' It is an indication of the wartime pressures on civilian doctors; and the influenza epidemic was rife. Although the war provided full employment and relatively high wages for those left at home, ran the report, there was a deterioration in living standards in some areas: increased child labour, poverty for those living on army allowances, mothers working consistently long hours. The

85. M.C.H., 29.iii.1919.

medical officer found domestic cleanliness very low in some cases, and 226 children had had to be excluded from school with skin complaints associated with dirt. The question of school baths was brought up again or, as a start, the shower unit at the clinic. It was 'an urgent educational requirement', declared Marsh, in fighting form; 'I have called the authority's attention to it for many years. I trust I may live to see the need met and my importunities satisfied.' Warming to his argument he pointed out that facilities for cleansing children would result in pupils being returned to school more quickly, thus earning higher grant allowance; 'education would not be retarded, parents would be satisfied, and your school medical officer would be delighted'. He also made plain his opinion of the old voluntary schools saved at such tremendous cost in time and effort before the war. Duke Street and Daybrook Street he condemned outright as unsatisfactory with regard to sanitation, whilst Beech Lane and Crompton Road he considered 'would be no great loss', and he looked to one new school, at least. He also called for the establishment of a clog fund, and the extension of provision for dental treatment to at least twice the present work load. 'I trust, in short', came the clarion call, 'that the cultivation of a sound, clean, healthy body shall form as important a part of elementary education as reading, writing and arithmetic, and demand more time than plasticine modelling and tonic-sol-fah'.

Marsh was probably buoyed up with new hope for the future by the recent Education Act, which called for increased care for the child's physical well-being in its directives to education authorities. His report in 1919 has something of the spirit of expectation about it that was evident in the retiring speech of the local N.U.T. president

who hailed the Act as 'the children's charter'.⁸⁶ Among other facilities he put forward as 'pressing educational needs', he listed an open-air school for the delicate child, classes in the schools for the mentally sub-normal, and arrangements for the physically handicapped. This was the area to which he bent his efforts, as school medical officer, in the last ten years of his life.

Responsibility for mentally and physically handicapped children devolved on local education authorities under the government legislation of 1893 - Elementary Education (Defective and Epileptic Children) Act. In the early twentieth century Macclesfield had in its care a small number of these children and, having no provision of its own, it arranged, and in some cases paid, for them to be taught in special schools or institutions in other authorities, often Manchester. In 1905 the medical officer of health compiled a report on them for the consideration of the Education Committee.⁸⁷ In 1906 two blind and three deaf and dumb boys were being maintained by the L.E.A. at a cost of £125 per year;⁸⁸ in 1910 the same number - possibly the same children - were accommodated for £137 5s Od.⁸⁹ Ineducable children became notifiable by law in 1913, but they, and most disabled children, lived at home, dependent entirely upon the care and tutoring of their families. Referring to this group in 1912, Dr. Marsh recommended the formation of a Children's Care Committee, through which interested and capable members of the public might take up individual cases and keep in close personal touch where parents could

86. M.C.H., 1.ii.1919.

87. M.C.H., 26.viii.1905.

88. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/2, p.30.

89. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/4, p.106.

not, or would not, cope with the problems entailed.⁹⁰ There is no evidence to show that the move was adopted although members of the Ladies Health Association - formed in 1902 and still in action in the mid-1920s - may have included cover of this aspect in the voluntary social work they carried out, supplementing the work of two full time health workers, under the direction of the M.O.H.

The 1918 Education Act focussed attention more closely on the handicapped child. Provision of special schools was considered the responsibility of the county authority, and in August 1919 a member of the Macclesfield Education Committee, commenting adversely on the position in Cheshire where the only institution for the educationally sub-normal child was at Birkenhead in the extreme west of the county, voiced the view that a school was needed at both sides,⁹¹ Macclesfield being near the eastern border. At this time the borough's quota of children eligible for support was still only five, costing the authority £176 15s Od, minus parents' contributions.⁹² In 1922 Macclesfield supported the indignant protest of the Association of Education Committees to the Board of Education at the cut in grants for special education as part of the wholesale economies⁹³ and, as a practical measure, in March 1923 there was discussion regarding the possibility of organizing a class for mentally sub-normal children.⁹⁴ This was probably motivated by Marsh. In November 1923, when there was renewed debate in the county regarding Cheshire provision for this sector, the school medical officer complained that he had been

90. M.C.H., 14.xi.1912.

91. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, p.25.

92. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/6, p.201.

93. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.6.

94. M.C.H., 31.3.1923; Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.43.

keeping the topic before the public since 1918 - inferring that nothing positive was done - and in January he outlined a plan for implementation within the borough to occupy a dozen or so mentally defective children.⁹⁵ The class was to be organized under the Public Health Society and accommodated at Hurdsfield House, which had been started after the war as a maternity and infant welfare centre, providing medical care, advice, and subsidized milk and foods.⁹⁶ The aim was to engage the minds of the children in simple occupations, such as counting beads and floor games involving numbers. With voluntary guides to and from the centre the cost was estimated at no more than £20 to £30. Marsh had a powerful ally in Robert Brown, who represented the Macclesfield Board of Guardians on the county council Mental Deficiency Committee where he had brought up the question only two months previously. This committee had recommended the building of a new county home two and a half years previously but the plans had been rejected for financial reasons. Brown thought it was 'a scandal' that nothing was done, and vowed to persist in pressing for action. The Education Committee approved Marsh's proposals, and Nurse Foden was given leave, with expenses paid, to attend a Board of Education course in Liverpool, for three weeks, for the instruction of teachers of mentally defective children.

There is no record as to whether, or for how long, the Hurdsfield House scheme was carried out. In 1925, when a Board of Education query regarding the authority's plans for special education revived the Committee's consideration of the issue, a number of Macclesfield children were being sent to Sandlebridge Special School in the county,

95. M.C.H., 19.i.1924.

96. M.O.H. Report, 1928, p.21.

at a cost to the authority, in 1926, of £180 per year.⁹⁷ A sub-committee was formed to assess the feasibility of supplying local accommodation, and in the early summer a deputation inspected one building, but wet weather curtailed what should have been a round tour of several possibilities!⁹⁸ At the same time a house adjoining the Pierce Street Centre became vacant and was considered for adaptation, but it was rejected as unsuitable. Marsh proposed a new building, purpose-built. In addition to a unit for the educable mentally retarded children he wanted an open-air school for the anaemic, rheumatic, and pre-tubercular pupils.⁹⁹ In the pre-first world war years the anxieties which produced school medical services and meals also motivated a more radical development for the rescue of children enfeebled by their environment. This was the open-air school movement which originated in Germany in the later nineteenth century. The London County Council (1907), Bradford and Halifax (1908), and Sheffield (1909) pioneered the movement in Britain, taking delicate and backward children from deprived areas, on a daily basis, out of the urban squalor they lived in, and organizing their schooling round a structured regime of fresh air, a nourishing diet, and rest, under medical supervision.¹⁰⁰ The 1918 Education Act, and the mood it engendered in the immediate post-war years, gave added impetus to the development, although the economic circumstances of the early 1920s curtailed expansion here - in Sheffield, for example¹⁰¹ - as elsewhere in education. The open-air school idea was strongly

97. Cheshire R.O., CED7/32, pp.2,16.

98. Cheshire R.O., CED7/32, p.12.

99. Cheshire R.O., CED7/32, p.12.

100. D.A. Turner, 'The Open Air School Movement', History of Education, Vol. I (Newton Abbott, 1972), pp.59-68.

101. Turner, p.70.



Plate III

Dr. John Hedley Marsh c. 1928.

supported by the Chief Medical Officer, Dr. George Newman, from the start, and he continued his advocacy with L.E.A.s into the 1930s.¹⁰² Macclesfield was, doubtless, one of those influenced, but in 1926 the matter was deferred for six months to give time for a programme of site inspections to be carried out, and the scheme was never brought to fruition. Marsh was working on further plans when the illness struck him in 1928 which led to his death in 1929. Reference to the 'excellent suggestions' contained in his last report was made in the meeting of the School Clinic and Feeding Centre sub-committee following his death, when tribute was paid to his 'very valuable work' for the school medical service.¹⁰³ After Marsh's death the impetus behind the special school issue slackened. Whilst it must be remembered that the early 1930s was an era of financial difficulty, and a call for national economy in educational spending, in addition to local frugality, effected a clamp down on new projects, it is apparent that the Committee lacked the drive in this area formerly supplied by its vigorous, forceful school medical officer. The next mention of the subject is a reference in April 1930 to a circular from the N.U.T. setting out recommendations to be borne in mind in the planning of new schools regarding the facilities needed for teaching mentally defective children.¹⁰⁴ This was followed by a discussion on an invitation from Henshaw's Blind School, in Manchester, to attend a conference on the 'urgent need' for a school for the mentally retarded blind, on which the Committee resolved to await the report but not to participate in the debate.¹⁰⁵

102. Turner, p.59.

103. Cheshire R.O., CED7/32, p.68.

104. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.277.

105. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.280.

The question of the open air school was raised again in 1933,¹⁰⁶ but there was no resultant action, and thereafter the topic was not mentioned. The need for special education, on the other hand, gradually gained acceptance. In April 1932 the L.E.A. agreed to pay expenses of twelve guineas and to allow a supply teacher to the school, so that one of the Athey Street staff might attend an eight week course in London, run by the Central Association for Mental Welfare, for teachers of retarded children.¹⁰⁷ There is evidence of deepening interest at this stage from central authority. At the end of 1932 the Committee was discussing a suggestion made by two female H.M.I.s that all the retarded children in the under-11 years age group should be taught in one group in the school they normally attended.¹⁰⁸ In the October following the L.E.A. launched an initiative for separate accommodation in a special unit, holding a special meeting to consider 'the Committee's duty to provide education for retarded and mentally defective children'.¹⁰⁹ A report from the school medical officer showed that the number of such children between seven and fourteen years of age in the borough's schools was sixty, comprising thirty-two feeble minded or retarded children, and twenty-eight defined as very backward. It was decided that four teachers would be needed, and a sub-committee was instructed to look at the Athey Street playground as a possible site for building. The area inspector, Mr. E. Burney, was present at the next meeting, a fortnight later, when the medical officer - modifying his figures somewhat - reported that there were not less than forty

106. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.124.

107. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.3.

108. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.66.

109. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.196.

educable retarded children in the borough - twenty-five boys and fifteen girls - and the borough surveyor was asked to prepare plans for a one-storey building containing two classrooms, a rest room and reception area, cloakrooms, lavatories, a teachers' room, and any other necessity, on the playground at Athey Street.¹¹⁰ Mr. Burney put forward an alternative proposal that a peripatetic teacher should be employed to go round to advise the schools, thus obviating the need for segregation. Possibly it was at his behest that Dr. Muriel Bywater, a medical officer from the Board of Education visiting the Macclesfield schools on a routine check, entered the debate at the end of December. Recommending the L.E.A. to contact the Board's medical branch to avoid waste of time and trouble, she reiterated that the Board's policy was against segregation, in favour, rather, of educating the children in average or special classes within the normal school.¹¹¹ The official line was adopted, and in 1938 the first special allowance for 'this special and arduous work' was made when the master at Athey Street who had attended the London course, was granted an additional £12 per annum on his salary.¹¹² Teachers in other schools were evidently engaged in similar work since, in approving the one case, the School Management Committee resolved to find out from other authorities whether teachers were entitled to the increment without having taken the course. Perhaps the Committee was not completely convinced of the effectiveness of the policy of non-segregation. In May 1939 the Secretary was asked to ascertain whether anything was being done in the Cheshire County Council area

110. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.225-6.

111. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.228.

112. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, p.71.

regarding special schools for educable mentally retarded children,¹¹³ and the problem was pursued throughout the early years of the war. In December 1940 the Cheshire County Council, reminding the Macclesfield authority that it was responsible for its own educable retarded children, up to 16 years of age, announced that it was taking over the special school at Sandlebridge from April 1941, and offered places for the borough's children subject to payment by the Education Committee.¹¹⁴ Another home at Great Warford was also taken over by the county at the same time,¹¹⁵ but difficulty in placing children remained. In December 1941 the Committee's secretary wrote to eleven certificated schools for retarded children but could find no vacancy, and in 1943 two children were accommodated in Birmingham.¹¹⁶

The open-air movement had a marked effect on the ordinary school with regard to design and on curriculum.¹¹⁷ One development of the inter-war years which was taken up in Macclesfield in the 1930s was the school camp. It was first mentioned in April 1932 when the School Sports Association sought permission from the Education Committee to take 45 senior boys to North Wales.¹¹⁸ None of the boys had ever been away before and the holiday was to be mainly recreative, although historical and geographical expeditions were to be included. The total cost was £60 of which the boys would pay £45. This type of activity was permitted under the 1918 Education Act, and the Committee unanimously agreed to grant £20 towards expenses.

113. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, p. 132.

114. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, p. 268.

115. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, p. 296.

116. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, pp. 277, 393, 457.

117. Turner, pp. 70, 78.

118. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p. 2.

The following year, when the venue was Peel, in the Isle of Man, the number of participants was increased to 60 boys.¹¹⁹ Thereafter, the holiday became an annual event up to 1940. The girls were not included in the schools' scheme but they did benefit equally when various charitable bodies organized holidays in 1932 and 1933, in the depths of the depression. In July 1932 thirty of the poorest children between 8 and 14 years of age went to a Sunshine Home at Rossall for a week, through the Chronicle Cinderella Fund,¹²⁰ a practice which continued until the accommodation was taken over for a wartime hospital in November 1939.¹²¹ In May 1933 ten boys and ten girls were taken to a camp at Squires Gate, run by the Mill Street Mission,¹²² and in August an anonymous donor presented 60 tickets to the authority, each ticket to cover expenses for one week at another Sunshine Home.¹²³

In the early 1930s school milk was introduced. According to the Athey Street log book it first appeared on 23 July 1931, a third of a pint to each child on payment of one penny - with a straw to ensure slow consumption of the drink. In 1934 the price was reduced to a halfpenny, and the scheme was extended to include free milk for children who would benefit, in the opinion of the school medical officer, but who could not afford the daily charge.¹²⁴ The move was commended by the Trades Council which, however, urged a more liberal application of the plan, to enable children to have the free allowance on non-school days as well as in school, but this was not

119. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.122.

120. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.45.

121. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, p.181.

122. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.136.

123. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.174.

124. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, CED7/28/4, pp.275, 350; CED79/2/3, 24.x.1934.

followed up.¹²⁵ At the same time, as Table XIX shows, there was a marked increase in the yearly expenditure on school meals. This period covered the worst years of the depression when the need for free meals could be expected to rise, but the increase might also be attributed in part at least, to the milk in schools scheme.

With the outbreak of the second world war the extension of provision for milk and meals was encouraged by the Board of Education,¹²⁶ and nationally there was a great expansion in the services, as the promotion of children's health became a wartime priority. In the Cheshire elementary schools in February 1943, 77.2% of pupils were taking school milk, with 30.3% receiving dinners.¹²⁷ One writer records a three-fold national increase over the war years in the number of children taking school dinners.¹²⁸ Again referring to Table XIX, it can be seen that by 1942 there was a further appreciable rise in the amount spent on school meals by the Macclesfield authority. There was not, however, the immediate upsurge in attendance at the start of the second world war which was seen in 1914, apart from the evacuees. As a reception area, the L.E.A. opened its Communal Kitchen in September 1939, in Longacre Street, for the accommodation of these newcomers to the town. In September 1939 there were 1,247 of them, and they received their mid-day meal on six days of the week,¹²⁹ but by March 1940 the numbers remaining were small enough to be absorbed into the normal schools¹³⁰ and, although there were

125. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.350.

126. Cheshire R.O., CED7/42/9, 31.xii.1940.

127. P.P. 1942-3 Cmd. 6443 xi. 57, Statistics for a day in February 1943, of Elementary and Secondary school pupils receiving school meals and milk, p.3.

128. Lawson and Silver, p.416.

129. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, pp.164, 169.

130. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, pp.182, 212.

Table XIX

Expenditure on School Meals by Macclesfield
Education Committee, 1932-1942

Year	Expenditure
1932	£498 6s 3d
1936	£804 18s 4d
1938	£865 18s 11d
1940	£950 4s 9d
1942	£1,301 2s 1d

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/30/4,
pp. 21, 173, 253, 299, 363.

several evacuation schemes subsequently, involving children from London and Manchester, there was nothing on the scale of the initial influx. For the local school population the rise appears to have been more gradual, but noticeable. Numbers are not available, but the increased costs, and the inclusion on the salary roll, from 1939-40 onwards, of six dining room helpers, indicate an extension of the service. In 1944 the growth in numbers constrained one Committee member to raise the question of another dining centre to cope with the demand,¹³¹ and on Tom Mellor's retirement in 1945, from his post as secretary to the Education Committee, special mention was made of the work he had done concerning the wartime feeding arrangements for the schools.¹³²

In the field of child welfare Macclesfield showed itself to be aware of the problems of the first four decades of the twentieth century, and of the remedial measures being advocated. Its record in this sphere shows clearly the extent to which effective implementation of the law depends on local personalities. Hedley Marsh's forcefulness was an all-important factor in the progress of the welfare service up to 1928, and it is noticeable that after his death the current topic of interest, the move towards a local open-air and special school, lost impetus and lapsed. In November 1940 the secretary to the Education Committee reported - with special reference to a case brought to his notice by the Juvenile Court - on the impossibility of finding vacancies for the educable mentally handicapped child,¹³³ and representations were made to the Cheshire authority urging action with regard to the extension of the county's resources.¹³⁴

131. M.C.H., 20.x.1944.

132. M.C.H., 1.vi.1945.

133. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, p.256.

134. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, pp.262, 268.

Another deficiency in the borough's service was nursery provision. Despite a steady flow of under-fives into the schools, the youngest children were accommodated in the babies' class throughout the period. In 1932 the headteachers of Athey Street and Byron Street infant departments visited a nursery in Salford,¹³⁵ and in 1937, on the advice of H.M.I., arrangements were made for all infant heads to see nursery schools in Accrington and other authorities,¹³⁶ but it was not until wartime needs impelled the move that a nursery class for 2 to 4 year olds was started at Athey Street in the summer of 1943, in which year eight nursery assistants appeared on the salary sheet.¹³⁷ Nonetheless, whilst it was cautious in action, and the facilities it provided were adequate rather than generous, the Macclesfield Education Committee, goaded, for much of the period, by its first school medical officer, could be said to have moved with the times in the pursuance of the nation's campaign towards a healthy child population.

135. Athey Street log book, 7.xi.1932.

136. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.67.

137. Athey Street log book, 19.vii.1943.

Chapter Seven

The Secondary Schools 1902-1918

Chapter SevenThe Secondary Schools 1902-1918

The most passionate and vociferous reaction in the debate surrounding the 1902 Education Act was focussed on the question of the voluntary schools. Equally far-reaching in its effect on the development of state education, although attracting much quieter publicity, was the issue of secondary education and the direction in which the Act pointed it.

More than thirty years after the Taunton Commission's report, which represented the first governmental move towards establishing a national system at this level, secondary education at the start of the twentieth century was still regulated by a variety of mutually independent administrative bodies: the Charity Commission, the Department of Science and Art, and - under the Technical Instruction Act of 1889 - the new county and county borough councils. The unwieldiness of its administration had been an issue of concern noted in the Bryce Commission in 1895. A recommendation made then that one authority should be appointed to co-ordinate all areas of education resulted in the formation of the Board of Education in 1899. This body had few powers over the immediate situation, but when the more radical changes were effected in 1902 it was to hand to take over, in conjunction with the local councils, the running of a coherent service, including secondary and higher education as well as elementary schooling.

At the turn of the century secondary education was almost exclusively supplied through endowment or through private enterprise.

Reflecting the accepted Victorian class system, with the public schools reserved for the ruling caste and the grammar and proprietorial establishments catering for the middle orders, secondary education was the preserve of the upper strata of society, almost completely divorced from the elementary system which made provision for the children of the working classes. Scholarships from elementary to grammar school provided, in theory, a means by which a clever poor child might jump the rails to travel along the secondary track to higher education, but in practice the chances of success via this route were slender. More accessible to the aspiring elementary school pupil was the higher education being provided increasingly in the 1890s, under the Education Department's regulations governing specific subjects, at higher grade schools and classes of the London School Board and school boards of the larger towns, but the Cockerton judgement put an end to this line of development in 1901. Post-primary education would be extended, but from above in ordered fashion. Balfour's Act, as implemented by Robert Morant throughout the ensuing decade, set the seal on the policy the Cockerton case represented, and ensured that twentieth century secondary education should be developed on the exclusive rather than the popular model. Morant, who became Permanent Secretary to the Board of Education in 1903, made secondary education a major priority area for central and local administration, but his objective was the development of an elitist system, distinct from the elementary system and having superior status to it. He saw the secondary schools operating with a fair degree of autonomy and reflecting something of the ethos and culture of the public schools, and there was no room in his plans for radical variations from the general pattern. As with a sizeable body of opinion at the start of the twentieth century, he saw

a threat to the literary and classical tradition of learning, which he believed was essential to the country's intellectual well-being, in the growing scientific and technical bias apparent in the higher elementary, technical, and evening schools. His determination to redress the balance here, and to define the distinctive nature of secondary schooling, was proclaimed in the Secondary School Regulations of 1904 where, in addition to specific curricular requirements, the wider scope and more advanced nature of secondary education was spelt out.

In Macclesfield at the start of the twentieth century secondary education had barely emerged as an issue of public concern. Silk manufacturers - a guiding force in the town's leadership - bewailed periodically the dearth of workmen sufficiently educated for training in scientific skills pertaining to the industry. They quoted the German advantage in this area as one reason for the ever-increasing threat to trade from that quarter but, whilst individual employers might provide training in Manchester, or even in London (in expectation of lifelong service to the firm from the beneficiary) recognition of the deficiency did little to generate action in the local provision for higher education, at least in the full time area. (The Technical School and the Evening Continuation School provided instruction in leisure hours with the aim of raising the educational standard of the workers). Nor was there demand from the work force itself. In a precarious economic climate workers were primarily concerned with the immediate problems of eking out a living. Juvenile workers were still an accepted feature of the economy. Educational expectation for them, and by them, was satisfied by the minimum legal schooling requirements supplied at the elementary schools. For the vast majority the chances

of putting a foot on 'the ladder of opportunity' were so remote as to be non-existent. There were approximately 1,500 scholars in the elementary schools' 11 to 14 year age group in 1902¹, yet in the combined rolls of the three secondary schools - age range 7 to 19 years - there were barely 400 pupils, and a proportion of these were out-of-town children.²

Collectively, the three schools reflected locally the national pattern of secondary provision, if at the rear rather than in the van of its development. The King Edward VI Grammar School (the Free Grammar School) was a sixteenth century foundation recently reorganized under the Endowed Schools Act. The Modern School - its offshoot - was formed in 1838 as an attempt to broaden educational provision within the terms of the endowment. The High School for Girls, which operated as a private company, was largely the inspiration of W.C. Brocklehurst, head of the large silk enterprise, who presided over the governing body and provided financial backing for the school from its inception to his death in 1900.³ His belief in the importance of girls' education echoed a growing call for a more rigorous approach to girls' schooling which, starting in the 1850s when Frances Buss and Dorothea Beale were pioneering the new model, had become progressively louder throughout the 1860s and 1870s. At the turn of the century the Macclesfield girls' school had been in existence for twenty years. There were no higher elementary schools in the borough. Mill Street and Christ Church were regarded as higher grade schools

1. Cheshire R.O., CED7/8, 1902.

2. P.R.O., ED109/411, p.5; ED109/416, p.2; ED109/406, p.1.

3. M.C.H., 9.vi.1900; M.H.S.G. Annual Reports, 1892, 1897, 1898.

up to the first world war and retained a larger proportion of their older scholars than other schools; in 1911 out of a total of 150 in the 13 to 14 year group, over fourteen schools, Christ Church had 33 and Mill Street 28, whilst six of the town's twelve elementary school pupils between 14 and 15 years were at Christ Church.⁴

On its foundation the Modern School was designed to provide a sound commercial training for the sons of tradesmen and shopkeepers, preparation 'for all mechanical employments', whilst the parent body continued on traditional lines for a more exclusive intake, ostensibly open to boys from 'every class of society', selected on the basis of intelligence and industry,⁵ but inevitably drawing on a limited social clientele. In 1900, although in practice some of the social distinctions between the two schools had been blurred, this was still its accredited role, and the relative status gap was maintained. Thus, under the Charity Commissioners' scheme of 1879, amended 1895, the Grammar School accepted boys between 8 and 19 years of age for an annual fee which might fall between £8 and £20 (in 1904 it was £10 10s⁶), whereas the Modern School was restricted to an age range of from 7 to 16 years and a charge of £4 to £8 per year⁷ (1904: £4 4s⁸). In addition to the 3Rs, the curriculum offered mathematics, grammar, composition and literature, history, geography, and natural science, as well as Latin, Greek, and at least one modern language in the Grammar School, with commercial subjects and 'perhaps' French, German,

4. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/4, p.88.

5. D. Wilmot, A Short History of the Grammar School in Macclesfield (Macclesfield, 1910), p.59.

6. P.R.O., ED109/411, p.9.

7. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/1, pp.21-25.

8. P.R.O., ED109/416, p.2.

or Spanish in the Modern School.⁹ Special attention was promised in both schools to preparation for the examinations of the Department of Science and Art, and there was instruction in drawing, drill, and vocal music. A new practical science building had been added to the Grammar School in the early 1880s and chemistry was taught as a paid extra after school hours.¹⁰ Allowance was made in the scheme for both schools to have boarding houses, a ceiling of £60, including tuition, being specified as the annual charge.¹¹ In practice a boarding scheme seems to have operated whereby boys lodged during the week in small numbers in accredited accommodation;¹² the official boarding element was never significant. Rent free accommodation was provided for both headmasters, as it was for the second master at the Grammar School who aroused the indignation of the governors by sub-letting his house for use as a preparatory school in 1904¹³, but their remuneration differed proportionately; the Grammar School master received £200 per annum, plus a capitation grant of between £3 and £6 per boy,¹⁴ whereas his lowlier colleague was paid £120 per year with an allowance of between £1 and £4 per boy.¹⁵ Both were required to be graduates of a university of the United Kingdom.¹⁶ Entrance to both schools, in theory, was controlled by an examination demanding an acceptable standard in reading, writing from dictation, and - for the Grammar School - facility in the first four rules of arithmetic

9. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/1, pp.26-27.

10. P.R.O., ED109/416, p.11.

11. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/1, pp.24, 32.

12. Oral evidence.

13. P.R.O., ED109/411, p.3.

14. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/1, pp.21, 23.

15. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/1, p.31.

16. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/1, p.29.

and the multiplication tables, or - for the Modern School - the first two arithmetical rules. In practice, as H.M.I. found out in 1904, almost every boy who applied was admitted,¹⁷ the only qualification needed being the ability to pay the fees. It is interesting to note at this stage that the earlier distinction in the social intake of the two schools, although still exacting lip service, in fact no longer applied rigidly. The retiring headmaster of the Grammar School wrote in 1910 that for several decades it had been unnecessary to have two establishments; the town would have been adequately served by one large school with a modern side.¹⁸ As Table XX shows, the Grammar School had the larger proportion of sons of professional men, approximately 17% of the school population, but the Modern School had 8% in this category and, whilst the bulk of the retail traders remained loyal to the Modern School, a sizeable proportion was now sending its sons to the parent establishment. In all other classes, including merchants and bankers, clerks and artisans, the proportionate numbers are comparable. (Table XX). Judged by numbers attending, the Modern School, despite its inferior status and its poorer buildings, was the more popular choice in the early 1900s. Possibly, the difference in fees was a deciding factor, or perhaps the Modern School's commercial bias was seen to have more relevance to the needs of a manufacturing town. Certainly, personal ties had some bearing; a Board of Education report in 1904 noted that the headmaster, who had held the office for 44 years, was 'held in affectionate regard not only by present boys but by old boys who send their sons to him'.¹⁹

17. P.R.O., ED109/411, p.13; ED109/416, p.9.

18. Wilmot, pp.60-61.

19. P.R.O., ED109/416, p.4.

Table XX

Social Structure of the Macclesfield
Secondary Schools' Intake (Boys), 1904

Class	Grammar School			Modern School	
	Number		Percentage	Number	Percentage
	Boarding	Day			
Professional & Independent Merchant, Bankers etc	3	9	16.7	10	8
Retail traders	1	14	20.8	24	19.2
Farmers		11	15.3	32	25.6
Clerks etc		3	4.16	7	5.6
Elementary schoolmasters		20	27.8	34	27.2
Artisans etc		3	4.16	1	0.8
Fathers deceased		4	5.6	7	5.6
		4	5.6	10	8

Source: P.R.O., ED109/411, p.6; ED109/416, p.2.

Table XXI

Area of Intake of the Macclesfield
Secondary Schools (Boys), 1904

Locality	Grammar School		Modern School
	Boarding	Day	
Macclesfield		39	107
Other places in Cheshire		25	18
Outside Cheshire	4	4	

Sources: P.R.O., ED109/411, p.6; ED109/416, p.2.

That the Modern School was regarded as the town's school is indicated in the enrolment figures for 1904. (Table XXI). Whereas the Grammar School had almost as many outsiders as Macclesfield boys on its books, the Modern School roll was overwhelmingly local.

The Modern School provided the one avenue whereby a Macclesfield elementary schoolboy, unable to pay the fees, might get through to a secondary education - apart from the pupil teacher scheme - and illustrates the incredibly high odds against doing so. With the declared aim of attracting good scholars and encouraging elementary education, a statutory duty was placed on the governors to make available not less than £60 per year for the provision of scholarships covering three years, to the value of £10 per year, for boys who had been educated at any elementary school in the Prestbury division of the Macclesfield Hundred.²⁰ These, two per year, were the only regular scholarships available to boys of the public elementary schools in Macclesfield before the implementation of the 1902 Act. In 1901 only one scholarship was awarded. The omission was highlighted in a local paper whose editor was a member of the School Board.²¹ The Board took up the case with great energy, giving a rough time to its chairman who was, ex-officio, on the Modern School governing body. Eventually an extra award was made in the following year, and justice was allowed to have been done.²² In the final years of the nineteenth century Cheshire County Council started to offer secondary school scholarships to public elementary school pupils between the ages of

20. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/1, p.36.

21. M.C.H., 3.xi.1901.

22. M.C.H., 8.i.1902.

11 and $14\frac{1}{2}$ years.²³ The awards, tenable for one year initially but renewable for two or three years, conditional on good reports, covered books and travel expenses as well as fees, and were valued at £13 per annum. In the year 1898-99 twenty-five boys and eleven girls, throughout the county, were beneficiaries, including two boys from Mill Street Wesleyan School in Macclesfield.

There was no scholarship possibility for the girls up to 1900. In that year one award was made available at the Girls' High School. This was a new gesture made by the County Council,²⁴ perhaps in recognition of its recently acquired responsibilities under the 1899 regulations, and as a county award it was open to children of a wide area outside Macclesfield. The High School at this time numbered 125 pupils, ranging in age from 5 to 18 years and divided into eight classes.²⁵ Fees varied according to the age and stage of the pupils, from £1 1s 0d per term for the kindergarten to £3 10s 0d per term for Forms IV, V and VI, exclusive of extras such as dancing and music.²⁶ Although the salary of the headmistress had been reduced in 1898 because of the school's financial difficulties, there were 47 applicants for the vacant post when, in the following year, a new appointment was made, at a salary of £100 per year plus £1 capitation,²⁷ in Miss F.A. Field - Girton College, Mathematics Tripos, and latterly senior mathematics mistress at Kensington High School.²⁸ Her staff comprised seven full time assistants, in addition to visiting teachers

23. P.P. 1900 (335) lxxiii.59, Return of Scholarships awarded by County Councils in England and Wales in the three years ending 31 March 1899, p.78.

24. M.H.S.G. Annual Report, 1900, p.6.

25. M.H.S.G. Annual Report, 1900, p.8.

26. M.H.S.G. Annual Report, 1900, p.18.

27. Cheshire R.O., CED7/1/1.

28. M.H.S.G. Annual Report, 1900, p.3.

for dancing, drawing, sewing, singing, and piano, and the subjects they covered included English grammar, literature and composition; history and geography; Latin - from Form V only - French and German; arithmetic, algebra, Euclid; botany and physics.²⁹ Girls were prepared for university and for the South Kensington examinations, and annual reports noted successes of former pupils such as the 'B.A. Owen's' and the double first at Sheffield Training College in 1898,³⁰ and the assistant lectureship at Mason College, Birmingham, 1900.³¹ Professor Withers of Victoria Univeristy (Manchester), reporting as an outside examiner in 1902, congratulated Macclesfield on having a girls' school which could be very valuable to the district.³² Prophesying an era of encouragement ahead for higher education resulting from the year's events, he foresaw 'abundant promise of growth' here. The High School could be 'among the best of its type in the north of England' if - he emphasized - it could be housed in satisfactory buildings. Subsequent events show that Cheshire County Council was thinking along the same lines.

With the passing of the 1902 Education Act Macclesfield came under Cheshire's aegis in the sphere of secondary education, and the town's schools were important to the authority's plans. Initially it was envisaged that all three would be absorbed into the county's secondary education scheme.³³ In 1903 the High School and the Grammar School - but not the Modern School - were in receipt of government

29. M.H.S.G. Annual Report, 1902, p.9.

30. M.H.S.G. Annual Report, 1898, p.4.

31. M.H.S.G. Annual Report, 1900, p.6.

32. M.H.S.G. Annual Report, 1902, p.12.

33. Patricia Scares, 'The Development of Secondary Education in Cheshire', (unpublished M.A. thesis, Keele, 1977), p.112.

grants as recognized secondary schools under the Board of Education regulations.³⁴ The High School in 1904 was the largest girls' school and the third largest - after two in Wallasey - of all the county's secondary schools, and was one of the 17 in Cheshire receiving county grants as efficient and government approved.³⁵ Places for girls were in short supply,³⁶ and negotiations began immediately between the L.E.A. and the governors to bring the school into the county network.³⁷ Both the boys' schools, on the other hand, failed in 1904 to satisfy H.M.I. on several counts and, although the Grammar School was accepted initially within the county scheme, for the instruction of pupil teachers and to augment the supply of scholarship places, it was several years before arrangements, involving the closing down of the Modern School, were made to the satisfaction of the Board of Education.

One immediate problem for the L.E.A. - as with the borough authority and its elementary schools - was that of providing adequate accommodation in line with the Board's regulations. The Grammar School building was allowed to be 'generally suitable and in good condition', although it was noted that yearly repairs were an expensive item in the accounts.³⁸ Ironically, the Modern School, under sentence of closure, was seen to be compact and well-built and to cost little in repairs. In both schools, however, lighting was inadequate and there were deficiencies in equipment: desks were antiquated and blackboards too small to be useful; storage space was needed; in the

34. M.H.S.G. Annual Report, 1903, p.4; P.R.O., ED109/411, p.2.

35. Scares, p.225.

36. Scares, p.101.

37. Cheshire R.O., SL76/6/8, 19.xii.1904, 17.i.1905.

38. P.R.O., ED109/411, p.4.

Modern School there was no artificial light, science provision was 'meagre', and all mathematics work was done on slates which, in the inspectors' view, caused eyestrain.³⁹ H.M.I. decided that the schools' facilities were 'inadequate for modern needs' and unable to support the four year course required by the Board of Education in secondary schools.⁴⁰ The Board proposed the merging of the two schools and an increased number of scholarships as conditions for continued acceptance, in addition to the introduction of manual work and more science teaching, including practical chemistry for all, not only those who paid the laboratory fees. Bearing in mind the criticism often made of Morant's policy with regard to its discouraging effect on the science side in education, it is interesting to note that in Macclesfield the Board's insistence, against local practice, resulted in improved provision. One wonders, though, whether the demise of the Modern School owed something to the Permanent Secretary's suspicion of schools biased towards commercial training.⁴¹ The Grammar School was accepted for pupil teacher training in 1905, when a new teacher was engaged to take charge of this work and cope with the influx of new trainees who, with some additional county council scholarship holders, raised the roll from 59 to 99.⁴² It was not, however, recognized for the bursar scheme of 1907 until reorganization plans, incorporating fully the Board's conditions, were offered in 1909. The curriculum criticisms appear to have been acted upon promptly. A report on the work of the school in 1909 noted a satisfactory

39. P.R.O., ED109/411, pp.4-5; Ed109/416, pp.3-4.

40. Wilmot, p.123.

41. E.J.R. Eaglesham, The Foundations of Twentieth Century Education in England (1967), p.63.

42. M.C.H., 29.viii.1905.

improvement all round and science 'entirely re-modelled since 1904'.⁴³ Plans for the merger, on the other hand, were still under consideration. H.M.I. now declared the premises of both schools to be 'quite unsuitable', only to be recognized temporarily, and warned that new buildings were urgently needed.⁴⁴ The delay hinged partly on the views of many Grammar School patrons who did not welcome what they saw as the breaching of the school's exclusive character. 'Professional men of a town like Macclesfield, who cannot afford to send their sons to public schools, deserve consideration as much as elementary schoolboys who are to be admitted to free places', was one view.⁴⁵ Eventually, however, proposals for the amalgamation, whereby the Modern School would close and its boys transfer to the Grammar School, were sent in and accepted by the Board in April 1909.⁴⁶ The reorganized school, in buildings extended by the addition of ten new classrooms, science laboratories, a library, art room, and dining room,⁴⁷ was opened in 1910.

Negotiations over the girls' provision took a speedier course partly, no doubt, because of the need for girls' places but possibly, too, because of the patent inadequacy of the existing accommodation. The school was housed in premises built in 1858 for the School of Art, with whom it had shared until 1900 when that department moved into the newly built Technical School. There were five classrooms including an assembly hall which, being at the top of the house, was unsuitable for drill because of the resultant disturbance to classes below.⁴⁸ Two classrooms were used in the adjoining Technical School where one bench in the chemistry laboratory was reserved for the

43. P.R.O., ED109/412, pp.6,7.

44. P.R.O., ED109/412, p.5.

45. Wilmot, p.138.

46. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 23.iv.1909.

47. Kelly's Directory of Cheshire, (1938), p.251.

48. M.H.S.G. Board of Education Report, 1904, p.2.

girls' use, and drawing was taken with the School of Art. H.M.I. assessed the provision as 'very poor' in 1904, pointing out that physics and chemistry were restricted by lack of facilities - the chemistry laboratory was also the staff sitting room - the library was in the headmistress' room, there was no gymnasium, physical training, or singing, and Form I had no classroom of its own; furthermore, the rooms were dark, the hall was unsuitable, and lavatory provision was inadequate. The inspection team, nonetheless, reported favourably, on the whole, on the work of the school. The assistant staff were, in the main, well qualified and showed sound teaching ability, despite the fact that salaries were considered 'inadequate to retain good teachers', and the school fulfilled its aim of providing a sound general education for girls of the middle class.⁴⁹

The report confirmed Professor Wither's view that it would do excellently with better premises. This deficiency the county authority planned to remedy. As soon as its new powers had been ratified the L.E.A. had inaugurated negotiations aimed at taking over the school to re-house it as part of the county's secondary provision. With the unqualified approval of the Board's inspectors the governors acceded to the proposals, passing the resolution in December 1904 to offer the school to the Cheshire County Council. Cheshire accepted in January 1905, although it was two years later before the transaction was formally confirmed and the High School became the Macclesfield County High School for Girls.⁵⁰

The new building, which was opened in the spring of 1909, had

49. M.H.S.G. Annual Report, 1904, p.4.

50. Cheshire R.O., SL76/1/1, 5.vi.1906.

accommodation for 250 pupils, and the equipment was judged by the Board of Education to be 'fairly complete'.⁵¹ There was a new headmistress, Miss M.E. Windsor M.A.(Dublin) - the third head since 1900 - and the staff had risen to eleven full time members, with two visiting teachers, for music and cookery. H.M.I., inspecting in November, found the staff to be 'generally suitably qualified and adequate teachers', although they noted that the number of graduates was not as high as at some county schools, and complained again that salaries were not high enough in some instances.⁵² The number of pupils, ranging from four years to 18 years of age, was 160, including 24 under-nines and ten girls of 16 years and over; 50% of the pupils were between 12 and 16 years.⁵³ Statistics compiled on the intake in 1909 show, as with the Grammar School, that a number of pupils - 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ % in the girls' case - came from outside the town. (Table XXII). The figures also provide interesting comment on the social structure of the school. (Table XXIII). The 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ % coming from the artisan class corresponds exactly with the proportion of free places available at this stage,⁵⁴ although this does not indicate precise correlation. Fees were calculated on a graduated scale, ranging from £3 3s 0d per year for children under eight years to £11 11s 0d for older girls, with a concession allowed throughout their school career to those who joined at an early age.⁵⁵ Music and dancing were extras as was the special gymnastics class. Boarding facilities, offered by one of the staff, were available at £40 19s 0d per annum for full boarding,

51. M.H.S.G. Board of Education Report, 1909, p.5.

52. M.H.S.G. Board of Education Report, 1909, p.6.

53. M.H.S.G. Board of Education Report, 1909, p.3.

54. Cheshire R.O., SL76/1/1, 12.i.1909.

55. M.H.S.G. Board of Education Report, 1909, p.3.

Table XXII

Area of Intake of Macclesfield
High School for Girls, 1909

Locality	Boarding	Day
Macclesfield		123
Other places in Cheshire		36
Essex	1	

Source: M.H.S.G. Board of Education
Report, 1909, p.2.

Table XXIII

Social Structure of Macclesfield High School for Girls, 1909

Class	Number		Percentage
	Boarding	Day	
Professional, Independent etc		27	16.8
Merchants, Manufacturers etc		38	23.75
Retail traders		30	18.75
Farmers		11	6.9
Commercial manufacturers		36	22.5
Servants (domestic and others)	1	17	11.25

Source: M.H.S.G. Board of Education Report, 1909, p.2.

£31 10s 0d for those who went home at the weekends. The curriculum comprised: mathematics - where a 'large proportion' showed 'poor aptitude'; English, history, and geography; French, Latin - being expanded at the expense of German - and science covering botany, the science of home affairs, and - from form III or IV - physics and chemistry. Art, domestic economy, music, and physical training - ten minutes drill per day - also appeared on the timetable.⁵⁶

Initially Cheshire's interest in the Macclesfield schools arose out of its obligation under the 1902 Education Act to provide a system of secondary schooling over the county. Concentration was quickly focussed on two particular aspects of this responsibility: the provision of free places in secondary schools, and the training of elementary school pupil teachers. In the first area the authority had made a cautious contribution with its award of one county scholarship to the High School in 1900, and in 1903 another award was added. H.M.I. in 1904 noted the recipients' presence in the school, commenting on their competence in arithmetic but lack of French and extreme backwardness in English.⁵⁷ In 1907 three more places were added, avowedly to accord with the new government legislation.⁵⁸ The Education Act of 1907 required grant aided secondary schools to reserve free tuition for a stated proportion of the intake. The statutory proportion was 25%, but the Board of Education was prepared to allow a reduced figure where there were reasonable grounds, and in 1907-08 almost a quarter of secondary schools over the country offered less.⁵⁹ In the case of

56. M.H.S.G. Board of Education Report, 1909, pp.8-14.

57. M.H.S.G. Board of Education Report, 1909, p.6.

58. Cheshire R.O., SL76/1/1, 1.viii.1908.

59. P.P. 1928 3091 ix.39, Report of the Board of Education for 1920-1927, p.24.

the High School, and for several other Cheshire schools, there were financial difficulties involved in covering the recommended proportion, and the Board, acknowledging the hardship, agreed to accept 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ % as the figure.⁶⁰ The school was not allowed to default on this, however; the Board was quick to point out a deficiency in provision of 1% in 1909, and a further award had to be made.⁶¹ There were seventeen scholarship holders throughout the school, at this time, out of a total of approximately 140, excluding the kindergarten.⁶² The number, and percentage, of free places increased gradually as the school expanded, but at no time did the proportion reach 25% in the period up to the end of the first world war. In 1917-18 there were forty scholarship holders in the school's 253 pupils, thirteen in the current year's intake of 80, representing 16.25%.⁶³

The boys were dealt with more generously than the girls in the matter of free places, despite the fact that the Grammar School did not gain government approval as an efficient secondary school until 1908⁶⁴ and therefore was not eligible for the county grant.⁶⁵ Compared with the two awards to the girls, the Grammar School in 1904 had seventeen county scholarship holders as well as the three foundation scholars, in a school approximately half the size of the girls' school. In addition, there were the two foundation scholarships to the Modern School. The newcomers did not apparently settle in easily. H.M.I. noted the headmaster's hopes for a quick improvement, the boys being 'somewhat remiss in conduct and manners';⁶⁶ it would seem that an

60. Cheshire R.O., SL76/1/1, 4.vii.1908; Scares, p.181.

61. Cheshire R.O., SL76/1/1, 12.i.1909.

62. M.H.S.G. Board of Education Report, 1909, p.2.

63. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/89, 5.x.1917.

64. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 21.viii.1908.

65. Scares, p.112.

66. P.R.O., ED109/413, p.5.

increase of nearly 30% was more than the school could assimilate comfortably. In 1910 an amendment to the 1879 foundation scheme enlarged the opportunities of entry for elementary school pupils: whilst reserving to the governors the option of offering awards to any boys, a new clause imposed a statutory obligation on them to provide foundation scholarships for elementary school boys.⁶⁷ Immediately, nine free places were made available for pupils who, with at least 300 attendances per year to their credit, had been for two years on the roll of any elementary school in the Prestbury division of the Hundred of Macclesfield.⁶⁸ Successful candidates were to be selected by an examination, conducted by the headmaster and his staff, in English grammar, dicatation, and an 'easy essay'; geography, and English history from 1066 to 1485; and arithmetic - money sums, weights and measures, reduction, fractions, decimals, and practice.

In 1913, after the amalgamation of the two boys' schools, the Board of Education report noted that rather over a quarter of the pupils were receiving free tuition and an estimated two-thirds had come from the public elementary schools.⁶⁹ It is interesting to note that, even so, the social intake shows little variation compared with that of 1904. (Table XXIV). Secondary education was still exclusive. Since the merger, which H.M.I. rated 'an unqualified success', the school roll had grown steadily, but boys staying on after 16 years of age were still rare; there was 7% of the school population in the 16+ age group in 1912-13.⁷⁰ The average length of school life at the

67. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/35, p.20.

68. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/35, p.42.

69. P.R.O., ED109/413, p.5.

70. P.R.O., ED109/413, p.4.

Table XXIV

Social Structure of Intake for the
Macclesfield Grammar School, 1913

Class	Percentage
Professional	18
Farmers	7
Wholesale traders	21
Retail traders, Contractors	19
Clerk, Commercial agents	14
Public service	6
Domestic service	1
Artisans	11
No occupation given	3

Source: P.R.O., ED109/413, p.3.

Grammar School was rather under three years. This accords reasonably with the 2 years 10 months which Patricia Scares shows was the Cheshire average, but was slightly below the national average of three years.⁷¹ Most Macclesfield leavers went into business although, according to the report, there was an increase in the number going on to university, and in the past two years there had been a science exhibition to Cambridge and a history scholarship to Oxford.

The provision of free places was one reason for Cheshire's concern in the affairs of the Macclesfield secondary schools. Another - and in 1903 it could have seemed the more urgent - was the question of the training of the elementary school pupil teachers. The existing pupil teacher training system was another area about which Morant held hostile views. He deplored the narrowness and lack of cultural background which he believed resulted from it, and was determined to raise the educational standard of elementary teachers by bringing their training into the secondary educational sphere. The changes in teacher training in the early 1900s have been discussed earlier. The age of recruitment for pupil teachers was raised from 14 to 16 years, and a two year part-time course of study at a centre attached to a secondary school, or a similarly accredited establishment, was declared mandatory in 1903. Local authorities were warned to be ready to start the new system by April 1904. Cheshire was unable to find sufficient places to meet this deadline and was granted a year's grace.⁷² Thus, it was January 1905 when the two Macclesfield secondary schools - the High School and the Grammar School - received the

71. Scares, p.173.

72. Scares, p.101.

first pupil teacher intake, under the county scheme, receiving from the Cheshire authority the sum of £10 10s 0d per pupil per annum.⁷³

The pupil teacher scheme must have had a dramatic effect on the nature of the secondary schools, far greater than the introduction of the scholarship holders in the short term. At the boys' school the roll by August 1905 had jumped to 99 from the 59 attending in July 1904, largely owing to the influx of county sponsored pupils, 25 of whom - 20 from Macclesfield itself - entered the senior school as pupil teachers or probationers.⁷⁴ At the girls' school the 43 pupil teachers - 20 from the borough - represented one quarter of the school population.⁷⁵ There were certain anxieties beforehand. H.M.I. inspecting the girls centre in 1905 admitted that he had feared two dangers: the swamping of the school by the newcomers or the isolation of the group within the school; and he was gratified that neither threat had materialized. In the boys' school, too, it was noted in a report in 1904 that the headmaster, already experiencing some difficulties with the large cohort of scholarship boys, viewed with a certain degree of apprehension the possible effects of admitting half-time students.⁷⁶ Writing a few years later, the head revealed that a number of old boys had been against the scheme but, as it was 'strongly urged' by H.M.I., they considered it unwise to put up any opposition.⁷⁷ His own view appears to have been rather more tolerant - at least in retrospect. He approved the aim 'to give wider education and broader horizons' to prospective elementary school teachers, and he was

73. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/23.

74. M.C.H., 29.viii.1905.

75. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/30, p.6.

76. P.R.O., ED109/411, p.13.

77. Wilmot, p.119.

determined to integrate the new pupils. He found it strange, he recalled, that men who showed their belief in the value of secondary education by sending their own sons to the school should oppose its extension to others who were clever and industrious.

Whilst there were slight differences in organization - the High School made Saturday a free day and worked on a fortnightly basis, whereas the boys had half day sessions on Wednesday and Saturday and a weekly time-table - all students alternated daily between the secondary school and their elementary schools, with first year pupils pursuing their studies whilst the second year pupils were engaged on the school practice side, and vice versa. Because of the half time nature of their week the trainees had to be treated as separate groups within the host schools, and in the boys' school, although not in the girls, a special teacher was engaged to deal with them.⁷⁸ As their respective schedules show, the girls took needlework and, unlike the boys, did not have the choice of studying Latin, otherwise the content of their studies was similar. (Table XXV and XXVI). In admitting that his early fears had proved groundless, the inspector of the girls' centre professed himself very satisfied with both the social and the academic aspects of the scheme, and at the Grammar/Modern School prize day, about the same time, the Bishop of Chester adjudged 'the new and difficult experiment' to be working successfully.⁷⁹ These were initial reactions. A few years later, although the Grammar School headmaster recalled with approval that pupil teachers had played for the school teams in cricket, football, and athletics, and

78. Wilmot, p.119.

79. M.C.H., 29.vii.1905.

Table XXV

Macclesfield High School
Pupil Teachers' Curriculum, 1906

Subject	Preparatory pupils - p.week	1st Year p. fortnight	2nd Year p. fortnight
Reading & recitation (incl voice production)	40 mins	40 mins	40 mins
English lit. & lang.	3hrs	3hrs 30 mins	3hrs 30 mins
History	1hr 20 mins	2hrs	2hrs
Geography	1hr 40 mins	2hrs	2hrs
Maths & Arithmetic	3hrs 50 mins	1hr 20 mins	1hr 20 mins
Science	1hr (Th) 2hrs (Pr)	1hr 20 (Th) 1hr 40 (Pr)	1hr 20 (Th) 1hr 40 (Pr)
Drawing	1hr	2hrs	2hrs
Music (singing)	30 mins	1hr 40 mins	1hr 40 mins
Needlework	1hr 20 mins	2hrs	2hrs
P.T.	30 mins	1hr	1hr
French	3hrs 30 mins	3hrs 50 mins	3hrs 50 mins
Scripture	40 mins	-	-

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/21.

Table XXVI

Macclesfield Grammar School
Pupil Teachers' Curriculum, 1906

Subject	1st Year - p.week	2nd Year - p.week
Reading & recitation (incl. voice production)	1 hr	1 hr
English lit. & composition	1 hr	1 hr
History	1 hr	1 hr
Geography	1 hr	1 hr
Mathematics	2½ hrs	2½ hrs
Science	2 hrs (1 hr pract)	2 hrs (1 hr pract)
Drawing	1 hr	1 hr
Music	½ hr	½ hr
P.T.	1 hr	1 hr
Scripture)		
History)	1 hr	1 hr
French or Latin	2 hrs	2 hrs
Writing & setting copies	1 hr	1 hr

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/23.

had joined the regular classes for mathematics and other subjects, at the High School the Board of Education report of 1909 commented on the difficult time the school had experienced since the last report four years earlier, its work having been hampered by 'the large number of pupil teachers most imperfectly prepared, and an equal number of candidates for pupil teaching of very poor attainment'.⁸⁰ The girls' school had larger numbers to deal with, which might have had some bearing on the issue, but one suspects the headmaster, writing a history of the school at the end of a long career, of indulging in nostalgia and omitting to mention the practical problems. A difference in experience may also account, in some degree, for these opposing viewpoints. Being under county control, the High School not only bore the brunt of the influx occasioned by the change in regulations concerning pupil teacher training, it was also required to make new adjustments, as part of the county provision, when subsequent change brought in the bursars. Although the appreciable fall in the number of teacher-students, which followed the changeover, should have made the task easier, in 1909 the final set of pupil teachers had only just been phased out. The Grammar School, whilst accommodating the male pupil teachers for three years, failed to gain recognition for the bursary scheme on its inception.⁸¹ When it achieved acceptance in 1908 the number of applicants among the boys had dwindled away. There were only two bursars at the boys' school between 1908 and 1911,⁸² when the Board of Education, with the approval of the Macclesfield

80. M.H.S.G. Board of Education Report, 1909, p.16.

81. Wilmot, p.124; Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 23.iv.1909.

82. Scares, p.244.

Education Committee, removed it from the list of centres since no pupil teacher had been trained there for the past two years.⁸³

The bursary system for training teachers was introduced in response to widespread criticism concerning the detrimental effects of the broken week on the academic progress of pupil teachers. The Board of Education's alternative plan, presented to the local authorities in 1907, was a further move towards Morant's objective of making secondary schools the training ground for all teachers. Teacher training was removed completely from the elementary schools. Under the new scheme a bursary would be made available to intending teachers at 16 years of age, but only after a two year (later three year) course of secondary school study. Cheshire adopted the new plan immediately and the pupil teacher centres closed after little more than three years of existence. The bursars continued at the High School, but the special arrangements were discontinued and the students integrated fully into the school community. Although not as drastic as the boys, there was a noticeable drop in the bursar numbers as compared with the pupil teachers. In the interim year of 1907-1908 there were nineteen pupil teachers, in their second year, but only four bursars,⁸⁴ and up to 1914 the total bursar figure, over the seven year period, was twenty.⁸⁵

It is important to bear in mind that any action which took place on the secondary education front in Macclesfield was the result of initiative on the part of the county council, the Part II authority, and that the Cheshire L.E.A. was interested in the schools from the

83. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 17.ii.1911.

84. P.P. 1908 (349) lxxxiii.421, List of Pupil Teacher Centres recognized by the Board of Education between 1 August 1907 and 31 July 1908, p.7.

85. Scares, p.244.

viewpoint of the county rather than the town. The borough, the Part III authority, took little interest in the secondary sphere which lay outside its own jurisdiction. Preoccupied with their problems concerning the elementary school buildings, the town's leaders were content to let Cheshire County Council go its way. The borough council was represented on the governing bodies of the secondary schools, with four representatives on the boys' and three on the girls,⁸⁶ but there is no evidence to show that members were concerned with anything other than domestic details. In 1907, stirred no doubt by the public interest surrounding the parliamentary legislation of that year, there was a flurry of interest in the issue of free places on the Primary Education Committee. A Liberal spokesman proposed that the Macclesfield L.E.A. should award bursaries tenable at the secondary schools to girls and boys of the borough's elementary schools, as Congleton did for its scholars.⁸⁷ The proposal had some support but, the voting being even in a poorly attended meeting, it was lost on the casting vote of the chairman. In the same month the Committee made a special request for a particular girl from a local school to be admitted to the High School, to no avail.⁸⁸ In 1908 the delay of the Grammar School in coming to a decision regarding its merger with the Modern School caused the Part III authority some concern. Two boys from a local elementary school had been nominated for bursaries at the Grammar School, but since the school was not recognized by the Board of Education the Committee decided it had better withdraw the nominees and send them to the Municipal Secondary School at Stockport,

86. M.H.S.G. Board of Education Report, 1909, p.2.

87. Cheshire R.O., SL76/1/1, 15.x.1907.

88. Cheshire R.O., SL76/1/1, 3.x.1907.

in which case, as well as tuition fees, the borough would have to cover the cost of rail fares.⁸⁹ As it happened, the need for the move did not arise. The critical decision was made just in time.

The early years of the twentieth century re-shaped the character of the secondary schools, but outside their walls there was little apparent change in the application of the system in Macclesfield. There was a slightly improved chance of higher education for the few, but for the whole of Cheshire the increase in secondary school places between 1906 and 1913 was less than 600 (2,178 to 2,761),⁹⁰ the girls faring better than the boys, taking 73% of the increase. Allowing that a percentage of Cheshire children attended schools outside the boundary, the secondary sector was still the province of a small elite. A comparison of the social intake of 1904, at the Girls' High School, with that of 1913 reveals this fact. (Tables XXVII and XXVIII). Whilst the unskilled worker is represented in the later list, little change is shown for the nine years which included the legislation designed to accelerate the provision of free places and provide opportunity for the clever working class child. Administratively, as part of the wider county scheme, secondary school development in Macclesfield was divorced as effectively after the Balfour Act as it had been pre-1902 from the elementary system. Possibly this was a significant reason why not until the early 1920s did the issue of secondary education arouse more than perfunctory interest among educational leaders in the borough.

89. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 23.x.1908.

90. Scares, p. 172.

Table XXVII

Social Structure of Intake of the Girls'
High School, Macclesfield, 1904

Class	Number	Percentage
Professional & Independent	26	16.9
Merchants, Bankers	55	35.7
Retail Traders	29	18.8
Farmers	14	9
Clerks	15	9.7
Elementary schoolmasters	3	1.9
Artisans etc	5	3.2
Fathers deceased	5	3.2
Not stated	2	1.3

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/8, p.3.

Table XXVIII

Social Structure of Intake of Macclesfield
County High School, 1913

Class	%
Professional	20
Farmers	5
Wholesale Traders	27
Retail Traders & Contractors	26
Clerks & Commercial Agents	11
Public Servants	3
Domestic Servants	2
Artisans	5
Labourer	1

Source: M.H.S.G. Board of Education Report, 1913.

Chapter Eight

The Secondary Schools Between the Wars:

Progress or Stagnation?

Chapter EightThe Secondary Schools Between the Wars:
Progress or Stagnation?

One development arising out of the first world war was a growth of interest in education. Public concern resulted in the Education Act of 1918, and was in turn stimulated by it. One aspect of this interest was the increased call for secondary provision.

Dr. Cruikshank has commented on the growth in demand generally for grammar school places, resulting from the higher wages earned by workers during the war;¹ Professor Simon, noting the same trend, quotes a report of the Board of Education which revealed a serious insufficiency of provision in the secondary area in the early 1920s;² and Professor Bernbaum, remarking on the overcrowding in secondary schools after the war, claims that 10,000 fee-payers and the same number of scholarship holders were excluded from secondary schooling in 1919-20 because of lack of accommodation.³

In a modest way the progress of the two Macclesfield secondary schools supports the observations made regarding the position nationally. A noticeable feature in their development throughout the war years, and in the short boom period which followed, was the steady climb in pupil numbers. At the Grammar School, H.M.I. noted in 1922 that the school was not built for the large numbers it was

1. Cruikshank, p.114.

2. Simon, p.15.

3. G. Bernbaum, Social Change and the Schools (1967), p.14.

taking in.⁴ Housed in new building in 1910, it was now having to use four rooms in the old building and one hired room outside the premises for the overflow, the roll having risen in increasingly larger yearly steps, from 227 in 1914,⁵ when reorganization following amalgamation with the Modern School was in the early stages of operation, to 353 in 1921.⁶ In like fashion the figure for the Girls' High School, at 388 in 1922,⁷ was almost double the 1913 total of 203,⁸ following a rapid spurt from 1917 onwards.⁹ The number on roll here in October 1922 reached a peak for the two decades between the wars, of 394.¹⁰ Although this school was purpose-built in 1908 by Cheshire County Council, by 1920 one senior form was having to utilize the assembly hall as a form room, and a junior class had to wander round the building using whatever room was otherwise unoccupied at the time.¹¹ A Board of Education report in 1923 noted the serious difficulties of accommodation of the past few years, commenting on 'the strain which was becoming intolerable'.¹² It welcomed the extension recently opened which added three classrooms, with cloak-room accommodation, designed to house ninety girls; but a recommendation that these rooms should not be used as an excuse for admitting pupils above the present number suggests that the demand was still

4. P.R.O., ED109/414, p.4.

5. P.R.O., ED109/413, p.3.

6. P.R.O., ED109/414, p.2.

7. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/162, p.3.

8. P.R.O., ED109/406, p.3.

9. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/89-152.

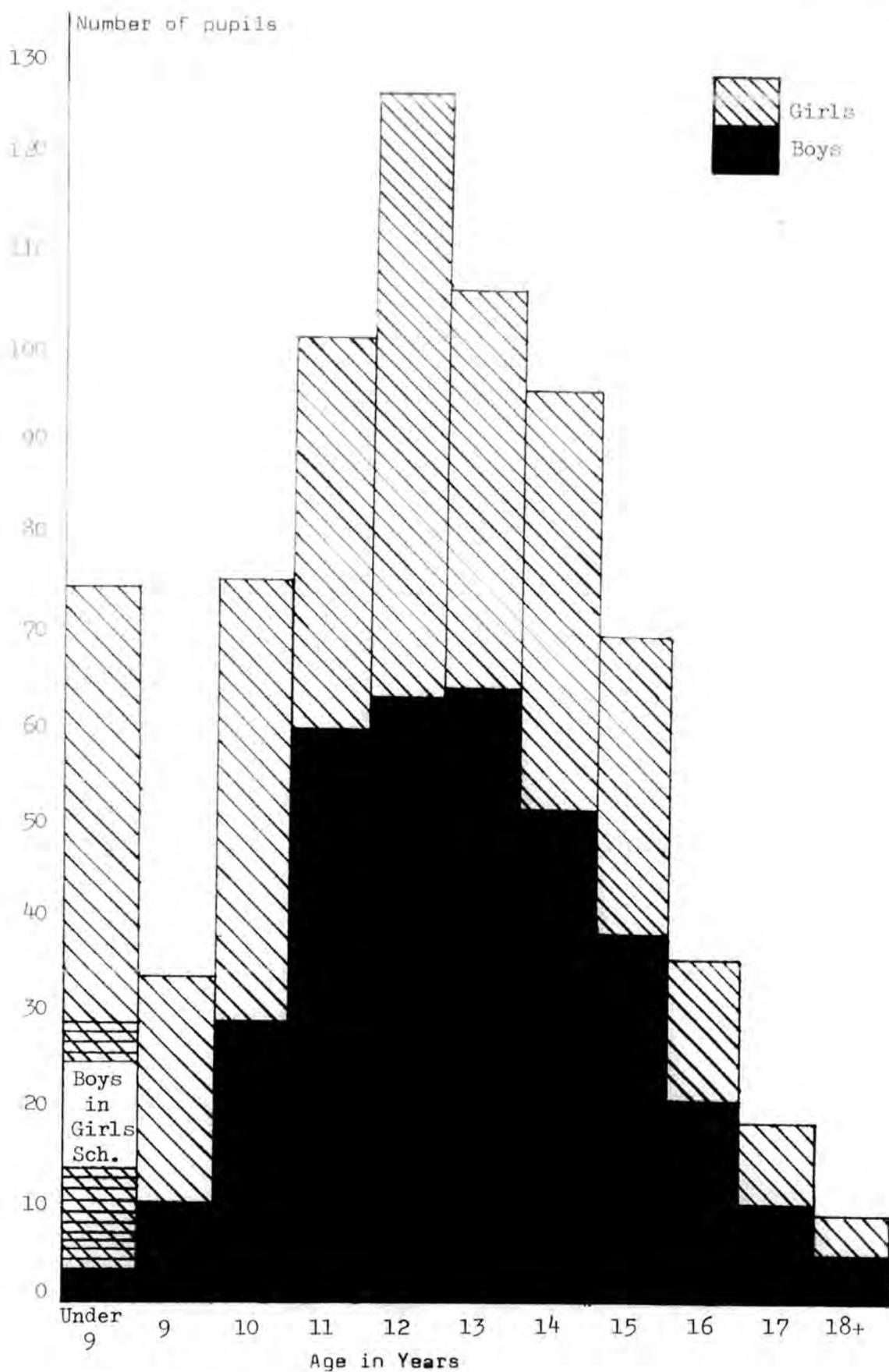
10. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/156.

11. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/144.

12. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/162, p.4.

Figure III

Age Distribution of Boys and Girls in the Macclesfield Secondary Schools
31st July, 1921



Sources: P.R.O., ED 109/414, p.2,
Cheshire R.O., CED 7/59/161, p.2.

not satisfied. At first glance the urgency would appear to have been in the primary age range. H.M.I. recorded in the report that the upper forms could 'without difficulty hold rather more pupils', and in 1921, as Figure III shows, over a third of the total roll fell in the under-eleven year age bracket. Further consideration shows, however, again indicated in Figure III, that the upper forms to which H.M.I. referred were those accommodating the 15 to 18 year olds, and that about half of the school was made up of pupils between 11 and 14 years of age. In the boys' school, to an even greater degree, interest in secondary schooling is indicated by the bulge in the 11 to 14 year band.

It is interesting to study the secondary schools' intake by age groups in relation to the demand for secondary education. The boys' grammar school, by its amended scheme of 1910, provided instruction for pupils aged 8 years to 19 years. In 1921 it had on roll 42 boys between the ages of 8 and 10 years, and the 11 to 15 year range provided the bulk of the school population. Although there was a sixth form of 81 boys, in three classes, comparatively few pupils stayed on after the age of 16 years. (Figure III). Over the past three years almost one-third, i.e. 32%, had entered the school at 10 years or earlier, while 62% started secondary life at 11 or 12 years.¹³ The average leaving age was 15 years 7 months, and the average length of school life over 12 years was 3 years 2 months. H.M.I. noted the 'unduly high proportion' of 30% leaving at 15 years.¹⁴

13. P.R.O., ED109/414, p.3.

14. P.R.O., ED109/414, Appendix, p.2.

The girls' school presents a rather different picture in its age weighting. Although it was a county high school, taken over and rehoused by Cheshire in new buildings, as part of the authority's scheme for fulfilling its obligations in the secondary education sphere according to the 1902 Education Act, it had a large kindergarten and junior department, including boys up to 9 years. In 1922 its roll of 388 included 24 boys and 71 girls under 10 years of age in addition to 47 ten year old girls, making up 36.9% of the whole.¹⁵ Rather more than half the school - 57% - was accounted for by the 11 to 15 year group. (Figure III). About 44% of the pupils entered before the age of 10 years, with a similar proportion starting at between 10 and 12 years of age.¹⁶ The average leaving age here was 16 years, and the average school life over 12 years was 3 years 9 months.

As Part II establishments both schools served a wide area outside Macclesfield. In 1922 pupils gaining free places came from as far afield as Bramhall, Marple, Sandbach, and Congleton.¹⁷ Cheshire's influence is seen in the increasing proportion of scholars coming in from the county. In 1913, when the Grammar School had recently added the Modern School's intake to its own, 63% of its roll came from the town;¹⁸ in the year 1920-21 this figure had dropped to 46%.¹⁹ Likewise with the girls, whereas in 1913 Macclesfield families supplied 76% of the school's pupils,²⁰ nine years later the borough's share was down to 56%.²¹ Apart from the two Macclesfield schools there were

15. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/162, p.2.

16. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/162, p.3.

17. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.24.

18. P.R.O., ED109/413, p.3.

19. P.R.O., ED109/414, p.3.

20. P.R.O., ED109/408, p.3.

21. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/162, p.3.

only ten other secondary schools (six county schools and four non-provided) to cover the whole of Cheshire,²² and although some schools outside the L.E.A.'s boundary were used to supplement the supply of places for Cheshire children, by arrangement with neighbouring authorities, the Macclesfield schools were vital to the county's secondary coverage, particularly with regard to the statutory obligations concerning free places.

The large number of unsuccessful scholarship entries was another indication of an unsatisfied demand for secondary schooling in the early 1920s. Figure IV shows the position in the borough; and in 1922 in the county district served by the Macclesfield secondary schools only 20 pupils gained awards out of an entry of 120, the combined borough and district position being 38 out of 198.²³ It was the free place issue which roused the Macclesfield authority to show active interest in the secondary schools, at this stage. With its own area of responsibility strictly limited to the elementary sphere, the Macclesfield Education Committee had been content hitherto to leave the secondary field entirely to the Part II authority, Cheshire County Council, under whose aegis it lay. After the first world war, however, there was a change of attitude on the part of the local body. In 1923 members of the Committee remarked on the growing call for advanced instruction in Macclesfield, borne out, they claimed, by teachers' statements, the repeated observations of the teachers' representative on the Committee, parents at meetings of the Juvenile Employment Committee, and frequent comments to the

22. P.R.O., ED35/252, 27.vii.1921.

23. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.24.

staff at the Education Office.²⁴ This was in line with public opinion generally. In the nation at large between the two world wars there was a concentration of concern in the field of education upon the needs of the adolescent. Fisher's Act, among other requirements, directed local authorities to provide adequate facilities for transfer to secondary schools where appropriate under the 1902 Act, and the abolition of exemptions to the 14 year minimum school leaving age in many places brought in a whole new age range to be catered for. Later in the period there was mounting pressure to extend school life still further and to provide secondary education for all. Macclesfield's practical expression of the general concern took form in the opening of two single-sex central schools, but greater interest was shown, too, in the older secondary schools. From 1922 onwards a report on the Cheshire County Council free place awards formed a regular annual feature of the meetings of the Macclesfield Education Committee, and the results were discussed at length. It may be significant that the Committee's first report was compiled as the appointed day for the implementation of the new school leaving regulations brought an additional 200 senior children into the elementary schools sharpening the awareness of all involved in education of the added responsibilities.

It was the borough's share of the free place awards which became the focus for the awakening interest of the Macclesfield L.E.A. in the early post-war years. The distribution between town and district provides another indication of the extent to which the two Macclesfield schools served basically the county, the town's needs being catered for as part of the larger area. Thus, whereas 43 free place awards

24. M.C.H., 9.vi.1923.

were made in 1921, and 38 in the following year, the share for Macclesfield was 25 and 18 respectively.²⁵ The High School admission registers show that for girls, at least, county scholars continued to take the larger share in the later 1920s and into the 1930s. In August 1923 there was a debate in the Education Committee regarding Macclesfield's quota of the awards, following the publication of figures which showed that whereas in part one of the examination, which was a written test, the borough gained 15 successes to the district's 18, after part two, an oral conducted by the secondary school headteachers and representatives of the county council, the final results gave places to all 18 of the district candidates but to only five borough pupils.²⁶ Members were informed that free places were granted in proportion to the number of entries, but there was evident dissatisfaction, and a resolution was adopted requesting the Cheshire authority to explain how the children were chosen. In December reference was made to a meeting held earlier, between the Committee and the county's secretary for higher education, regarding the scholarship question in Macclesfield.²⁷ Discontent had been exacerbated by the fact that only one candidate out of 22 entrants had been offered a free place at the 12+ level. Local feeling was assuaged, however, to some extent - and the issue is put into perspective - by the publication of a results table in which Macclesfield, in the current year, topped the boroughs concerned, ahead of Hyde, Crewe, Stalybridge, Dukinfield, and Congleton, towns which also depended, although not wholly, on the Macclesfield secondary schools.

25. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.24.

26. M.C.H., 18.viii.1923.

27. M.C.H., 1.xii.1923.

At the beginning of the 1920s, for several years, entries from the Macclesfield elementary schools for the free place examinations to the secondary schools reached between 70 and 80, but it is noticeable that from 1926 onwards, up to the start of the second world war, the numbers were consistently considerably lower.(Figure IV). In 1935 the borough entry was 65, and there was an inexplicable low of 22 in 1923,²⁸ otherwise the figures range numerically between 31 in 1936 and 59 in 1931. The marked decline in numbers of entrants from 1926 onwards may have been a result of economic difficulties, although the silk industry on which Macclesfield depended, had been badly depressed since 1921, and 1926 itself was a relatively good year. Even in these years there was a markedly high proportion of unsuccessful entrants, indicating a desire for secondary education which was not being met. An equally probable reason, however, for the decline in entries in the mid-twenties, and the continued low numbers, was the opening of the Central School. Tom Mellor, secretary to the Education Committee, asserted more than once that, on the whole, parents preferred the Central School, with its earlier leaving age, to the older secondary schools where the expectation was that a pupil would remain up to 16 years, at least, and where there were likely to be extra expenses.²⁹ 'There appears no doubt', he claimed, at the end of his report on the special place awards in 1935, 'that one of the main reasons for the low number of entries in Macclesfield is that parents appreciate the facilities of the Central School'.³⁰ The Central School provided a four year course,

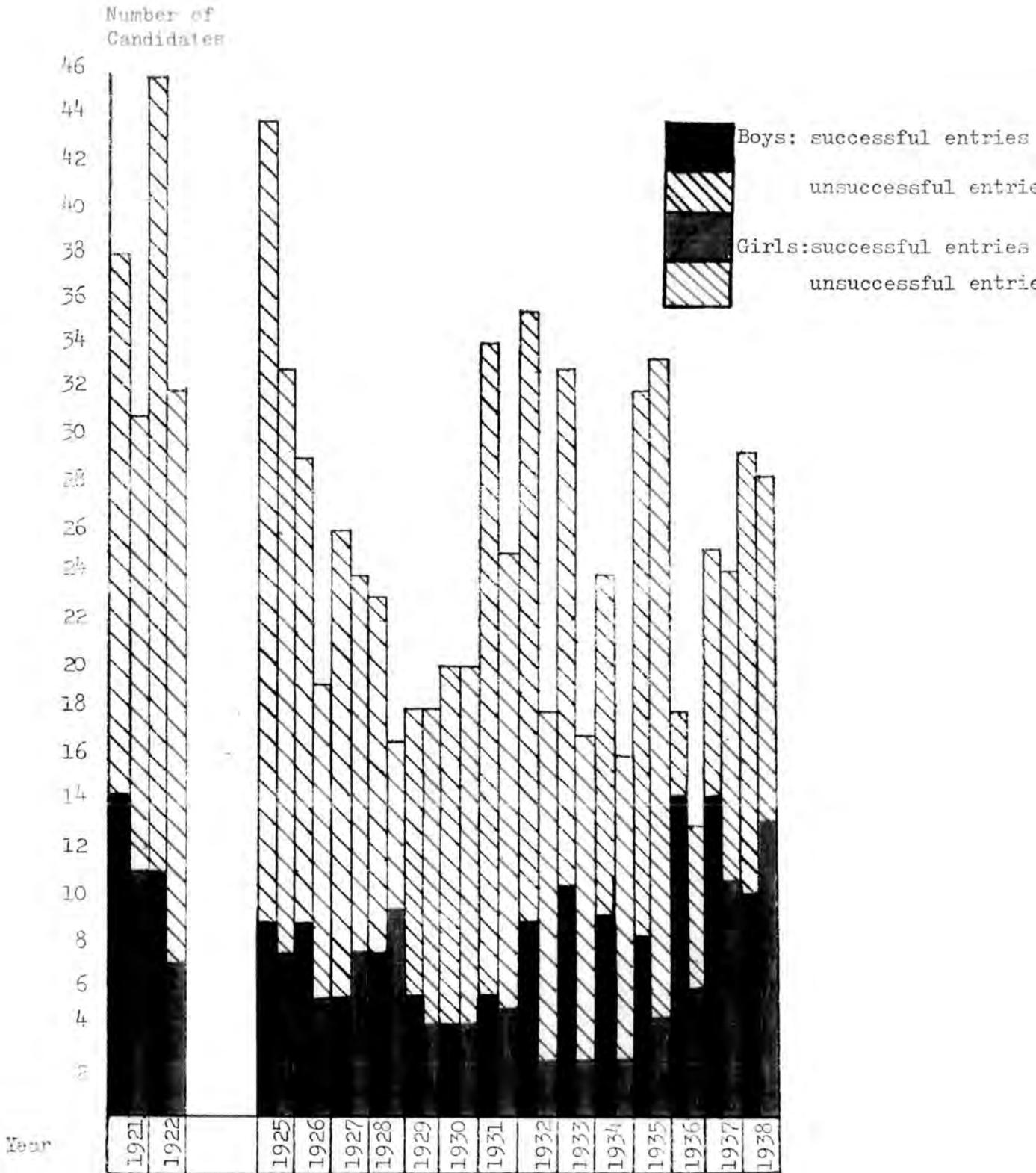
28. M.C.H., 1.xii.1923.

29. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, pp.77, 236a, 247.

30. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.77.

FIGURE IV

County Council Free Place Awards to Macclesfield Elementary School Pupils 1921-1938



Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4-5, CED7/36/8

but many pupils left as soon as they reached the 14 year minimum leaving age, after little more than three years.³¹ The headteacher of the boys' department supported Mellor's assertion. Questioned on the reasons for the small number of Central School entrants for the Grammar School examination in 1934, he declared that parents did not favour the extra year.³²

Although the total number of county awards - borough plus district - remained fairly constant, between 36 and 41, up to 1935, borough successes dwindled in the late 'twenties. This was a time of increasing difficulty in the silk industry culminating in the bleak years of the early 1930s when the world-wide recession brought widespread poverty and unemployment to the old industrial areas, including the textile towns. Figures do not reveal the numbers of children who passed the scholarship examination but refused a place, or who did not make an attempt. As contemporaries recall, however, secondary education was a luxury many had to forego, whatever their capabilities. In 1932, when the girls' figure was down to two awards, the free place was changed to the special place, a move which undoubtedly contributed to the low success rate since it further discouraged many able children from entering the examination. Now, parents, were expected to pay part or all of the tuition fee, and any other expenses, according to means. (Table XXIX). In 1933 all the girls who won places - 16 from borough and district combined - were exempted from any tuition fee, but of the 21 successful boys three had to pay one-third of the fees, one was charged two-thirds, and

31. P.R.O., ED21/24866, p.5.

32. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.247.

Table XXIXCheshire County CouncilScale of Aid for Special Place Awards. 1934.

Parental Income	Exemption	Book Grant
Up to £180 p.a. + £26 p.a. for each dependent child	Full	Full
£181 - £208 + £26 " " "	Full	Half
£209 - £234 + £26 " " "	Full	-
£235 - £286 + £26 " " "	$\frac{2}{3}$	-
£287 - £312 + £26 " " "	$\frac{1}{3}$	-
Grant for Fares considered where necessary		

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.360.

four paid the full amount.³³ In the following year 32 of the 36 awards were free places;³⁴ but in 1935 ten of the forty successful entrants had to pay all or part of the fees.³⁵

An early move to supplement the supply of free places to Macclesfield children by borough awards was defeated in 1907, but a small number of pupils, throughout the area of intake, gained admittance through various charitable bequests. Congleton, for example, had exhibition foundations specially reserved to its own children from the days before the first world war. The Grammar School held two of these scholarships in 1914, when a request was made that the Board of Education should accept them as contributory to the 25% of free places required for grant qualification;³⁶ and there are several references to similar awards at the High School between 1918, when three were listed in the preliminary returns for 1917-18,³⁷ and 1930, by which time there were only two.³⁸ These exhibitions were tenable for three years,³⁹ and seem to have been awarded triennially. Gawsworth and Odd Rode, small villages in the area, also had their own periodic scholarships, through bequests: one each at each school, until 1931 when the former, at the girls' school at least, gained an extra place.⁴⁰ Macclesfield pupils had a small number of additional chances of entry to the secondary schools through charities. The

33. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.236A.

34. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.359.

35. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.462.

36. P.R.O., ED35/252, 3.vii.1914.

37. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/91.

38. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/193.

39. M.H.S.G. Admission registers.

40. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/193.

Roe Foundation provided one award for girls and two for boys, and in 1933 there was a Dashwood scholarship at each school for pupils from 'the ancient township of Macclesfield'.⁴¹ These, too, were awarded at three-yearly intervals. In 1930-31 the High School, in all, had twelve free places, throughout the school, from these sources, in addition to the normal county awards.

The 1930s, despite economic problems, saw a degree of expansion in secondary school opportunities. The 1931 total of free places at the girls' school included five new county awards, at intermediate level, which were matched for the boys. These were open to pupils of 12 years of age, throughout the county. Covering such a large area, the chances of success were slight, but in 1934 a Central School boy achieved the distinction.⁴² For the boys ten extra places were offered from 1933 onwards, called the Arthur Horsfall scholarships, after the benefactor who endowed them.⁴³ The family of Horsfall provided several benefactors to education in Macclesfield. One member was the chief financial backer of the Pupil Teacher Centre, opened in 1900, and at the Grammar School there was a Maths. exhibition tenable at St. Catherine's College, Cambridge, in memory of a W. Horsfall.⁴⁴ Arthur Horsfall had already contributed handsomely to the Grammar School awards in 1920. In that year he had returned to Macclesfield for a holiday having made his fortune as a brewer in Australia. He had been a pupil at the Modern School in the 1880s, under its long-serving and popular headmaster, J. Jackson, and he

41. P.R.O., ED35/252,3.vii.1914; Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/193; CED7/28/4, p.175.

42. Cheshire R.O., CED28/4, p.359.

43. M.C.H., 21.viii.1933.

44. P.R.O., ED35/252, July 1915.

obviously had lasting and grateful memories of his school days. Before he went back to his home in Cronulla, New South Wales, he presented a cheque for £1,000 to the Grammar School, which had absorbed his own school ten years previously.⁴⁵ "The advantages of education cannot be over-estimated," he declared, and he promised that the gift was a fore-runner of 'more substantial provision' after his death. The money was to provide grammar school places for children whose parents were too poor 'to undertake the responsibility,' and the donor made a specific request that the offer of a place should not necessarily depend upon an examination. For this reason it was decided that the awards could not be called scholarships, and it was arranged that the successful candidates should be chosen by the governing body on the basis of good conduct and industry, as certified by their primary school headmasters.⁴⁶ The Horsfall scholarships appearing in 1933 were, presumably, the fruit of the promised bequest. The new awards covered half the tuition fees of the beneficiaries for the whole of their school lives, to whatever stage they stayed, and were open to boys between the ages of 10 and 14 years. As with the earlier gift a condition stipulated that recipients should be from families which stood in need of aid. Unlike the 1920 arrangement, however, the new scholarships were awarded on the results of an examination, covering English, arithmetic, general knowledge - including history and geography - and, for candidates over 12 years, in Latin, French, algebra, and geometry. Failure to sit one or more subjects was declared no bar to success, but the demands, as well as the necessity of finding half the fee, would seem necessarily to limit

45. P.R.O., ED35/252, 16.ix.1920.

46. P.R.O., ED35/252, 15.ix.1920, 28.x.1920.

the field of entrants. Nevertheless, despite the scheme being open to the out-of-town intake as well as the borough, the town's elementary schools supplied seven of the seventeen successful entrants to the Grammar School through this door in the first year of its operation.⁴⁷

In 1935 trade was climbing out of the depths of the depression and, possibly reflecting the improvement in the economic scene, the special place entry from the borough schools was up by 25 on the previous year, although the number of successes was only one more. The subsequent drop in the following year can be accounted for by a local change in regulations. Candidates now became eligible only in their 11+ year - allowing one chance to sit the examination - instead of between 10 and 12 years as was previously allowed.⁴⁸ At the same time, the number of special places made available was increased by almost 50%, and Macclesfield's share went up correspondingly. (Table XXX) The number of county awards made, and Macclesfield's success rate, were maintained in the two succeeding years when the borough's quota proportionately also increased markedly. The increase is the more noteworthy in that it was made despite the restricted age range. As Figure IV shows the total number of entries for 1938, when only one year group was eligible, compares favourably with most of the preceding years, when candidates came from a two year age band and were allowed two attempts at the examination. This would seem to indicate renewed interest in secondary schooling in the later 1930s, particularly with the girls.

47. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.236A.

48. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.463.

Table XXX

Cheshire County Council Awards for the
Macclesfield Secondary Schools, 1932-1938.

Year	Awards to borough	Awards to district
1932	10	31
1933	11	26
1934	10	26
1935	11	29
1936	20	39
1937	24	34
1938	22	34

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, pp.75, 236,
359,462;
CED7/28/5, p.98.

In 1938 the girls results outstripped the boys' figure, by 13 to 9, for only the third time in eighteen years. It was a noticeable feature of the examination reports that girls invariably took up fewer places than did the boys, and often many fewer. Discussing the lower success rate in committee in the early 1920s, the secretary to the Education Committee reported that girls, and their parents for them, were not as keen on extended education as boys; the 16 year leaving age of the secondary schools, to which parents had to pledge adherence, discouraged them, and the usefulness of girls in the home militated against their acceptance of homework.⁴⁹ He quoted the views of headteachers who, he claimed, often told him that they had to put in girls who wanted to try the examination rather than those who, in the opinion of the staff, would benefit from secondary education. This attitude towards advanced and extended schooling was undoubtedly a significant factor throughout the two decades between the world wars. Added to which, it was always easier for girls than boys to find work in Macclesfield, and in the early 1930s, when only six girls in three years went to the High School under the special place scheme, there were strong economic reasons urging them towards the earliest leaving date legally possible, as well as towards part time work whilst still attending school, which was incompatible with the secondary school regime. In 1938, however, again perhaps reflecting an upward trend in economic conditions, girls not only outnumbered boys in the special places examination but also gained three out of the four new scholarships offered by the county to elementary school pupils of 12+ years, tenable at secondary schools outside the town, in Altrincham, Sale,

49. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.24.

and the Wirral.⁵⁰ This was a new opening in that the move breached the monopoly of the two Macclesfield schools. In 1932 the question of comparative scholarship provision for the borough's primary schools had come up again. Mellor had continued to point out in his scholarship reports throughout the 1920s and 1930s that Macclesfield pupils were at a disadvantage compared with the children of other towns because of their restricted opportunities. Whereas pupils in neighbouring Cheshire towns might sit for two or three scholarship examinations, the borough's scholars were limited to the one.⁵¹ In 1932 an official comparison was made between Macclesfield and comparable towns in East Cheshire, basing the study on the percentage of the elementary schools' average attendance to gain scholarship awards. Macclesfield's figure was .25%. This was better than Dukinfield and comparable with Congleton, but lower than Stalybridge, and sadly behind Hyde and Crewe. (Table XXXI). Crewe's position, in particular, was regarded as enviable since, in addition to being able to allocate 38 special places in its own Secondary School, it sent eleven pupils on scholarships to the neighbouring Nantwich and Acton Grammar School, and three to other Cheshire schools.⁵²

Figures are not available for the Grammar School but the High School records show that by the start of the 1930s numbers on the school roll had levelled out after the rapid increase of the late war years and immediate post-war period. From 388 in 1922 the overall school population had dropped to 280 in 1930.⁵³ The decline, however, was considerably greater, proportionately, in the junior and

50. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, p.98.

51. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, pp.77, 242.

52. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.76.

53. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/193.

Table XXXI

County Council Scholarship Chances
in East Cheshire, 1932.

Town	Population	Average attendance at Elementary Schools	Number of Candidates	Number of Scholarships	Percentage of average attendance
Macclesfield	34,902	3,995	53	10	.25
Hyde	32,066	3,774	128	27	.72
Crewe	46,061	6,238	199	52	.83
Dukinfield	19,309	2,549	44	2	.08
Congleton	12,885	1,777	30	4	.23
Stalybridge	24,823	2,897	43	8	.28

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.76.

kindergarten end, leaving the 11 to 19 year age group practically unchanged at 242, compared with 245 of eight years earlier. There was probably a similar pattern at the boys' school since the form structure was unaltered throughout the period.⁵⁴ The proportion of free place holders increased steadily at the High School, after a sudden rise at the start of the 1920s. At the beginning of the school year 1920-21 nine free places were awarded, which represented 12.4% of the yearly intake at the appropriate age.⁵⁵ The same number of awards was made in the following year,⁵⁶ but in September 1922, with a full general inspection in the offing, the free places were increased to 18, representing 25.7% of the current new entrants and bringing the tally of scholarship girls throughout the school up to 74.⁵⁷ At this time rather less than half the 11 to 19 year age range came into the school from the public elementary schools.⁵⁸ The Board of Education raised the maximum allowed for free places to 40% in 1924, and in 1927 the national figure was 37.6%,⁵⁹ rising to 69.3% in 1938.⁶⁰ The High School did not match these numbers, but in 1926, 28.6% of the admissions at secondary level were free place awards,⁶¹ and in 1930 the quota reached 30%, excluding the seven charity awards and the five county intermediate scholarships throughout the school.⁶²

54. Macclesfield Grammar School, School Magazines 1919-1938.

55. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/144.

56. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/145.

57. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/156.

58. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/162, p.3.

59. P.P. 1928 Cnd. 3091 ix.39, Report of the Board of Education for 1920-27, p.25.

60. P.P. 1938-9 Cnd 6013 x.666, Report of the Board of Education for England and Wales, 1938, p.14.

61. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/174.

62. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/193.

In 1934 121 girls had total exemption from payment of fees, 38.5% of the whole school or 42% of the secondary age range.⁶³ Later figures are not available for the boys but in 1922 around 25% of the Grammar School admissions were free entry, and approximately two-thirds of the secondary intake were ex-elementary school pupils.⁶⁴

Within the schools awards, on a limited scale, were available to pupils for aid with fees or as university exhibitions. At the Grammar School, where the provision was considerably more generous than at the girls' school, five scholarships, valued at between £6 and £15 per annum, were awarded annually to boys in their sixteenth year of age⁶⁵ - possibly to encourage able boys to stay for the extra year. The Horsfall Fund also provided a reserve to assist 'deserving pupils'. In addition, there were three leaving exhibitions designed to enable sixth form boys to go through to university. Each was valued at £40 per annum and was tenable for three years. A fourth award, of from £30 to £60 per year, was open to Macclesfield and three other schools. Two of the £40 exhibitions, awarded triennially, derived from Brocklehurst bequests made at the turn of the century, and a third member of the family, William Coare, was responsible for the High School's university scholarship, again awarded at three-yearly intervals, of £50 per annum for three years.⁶⁶ Here, the governing body offered annually three one-year internal scholarships to the girls of the school.

The Board of Education report in 1922 commented on the Grammar School's large VIth form, provision for which included advanced

63. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/203.

64. P.R.O., ED109/414, p.3.

65. P.R.O., ED109/414, p.4.

66. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/162, p.3.

courses in Science and Mathematics and in Modern Studies.⁶⁷ Sixteen boys followed the former course, and the school was commended on the 'very creditable' physics and its encouragement of the reading of modern research. Modern Studies, incorporating ancient history and literature, was also adjudged 'very satisfactory', particular reference being made to the good use of library. In the school in general English, history, geography, mathematics, physics, and French were assessed as 'extremely good', but regret was implied in the comment on the 'very slight use being made of the excellent manual work room'. The girls' school, in contrast, had fifteen in its VIth form in 1923 - although its 16 to 19 year age range, at 26 pupils, was only eight fewer than the boys'. The girls followed mainly a literary course, but two girls were following an advanced mathematics course.⁶⁸ In the three years up to 1923 nine girls had entered university, and four had gone on to other places of further education, most probably bursars to teacher training colleges. The school had a two-form entry at 11 years, the more able children taking Latin in the second year, with the less advanced giving extra time to English and French and doing some domestic science and needlework. The number of girls failing to complete the full five year course, from 11 to 16 years of age, concerned the Board of Education inspectors who hoped that the recent introduction of a school life agreement would effect some improvement in that direction.⁶⁹ In 1927 the average school leaving age nationally for girls was 16 years 2 months, with free place holders staying seven months longer, on average, than

67. P.R.O., ED109/414, p.6.

68. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/162, pp.2,5.

69. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/162, p.3.

fee-payers.⁷⁰ There are no accurate statistics for Macclesfield on this issue in the later 1920s and in the 1930s, but the High School records show a trend in accord with the national position regarding the earlier leaving of the private pupils. Of the 1928 intake only one of the 19 free place holders left before 16 years compared with five from the 22 fee-payers; with the pupils starting in 1931 the figures were respectively three from 31 and five from 35; and of the 1935 cohort, whose later school careers ran into the war years, all seventeen of the special place holders stayed at school until 16 years at least but five of the 32 fee-payers left before that age.⁷¹ In the earlier years more scholarship holders stayed on into the VIth form. The figures for 1928 and 1931 show, respectively, 11 free places to 4 paid pupils and 19 free to 10 paid, but in 1935, when most girls left in 1940 and 1942, private pupils dominated, 11 girls - or 34.4% - staying into the Lower VI, at least, compared to 5 award holders - 29.4%. Similarly, in the success rate at fifth and sixth form levels, although scholarship girls scored highly in the School Certificate examination, there was a deviation from the pattern at Higher School Certificate level in 1935. These examinations had been introduced generally in 1917 in an attempt to reduce the number of examining authorities currently existing and to standardize the system. The High School entered its first School Certificate candidates in 1919, under the Northern Universities Joint Matriculation Board, and from 1920 a small number each year attempted the Higher School Certificate.⁷² The first entry for the lower examination was 36.

70. P.P. 1928, Board of Education Report, p.26.

71. M.H.S.G. Admission registers.

72. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/149.

There is no record of the success rate but in 1922 there was a substantial drop in the number of candidates, to 17.⁷³ In 1924 there were 24 successful candidates out of 41 entries, and the following year just under half - 16 out of 33 - gained their certificates.⁷⁴ A similar pattern of entry was maintained up to the mid-thirties, whilst the pass rate steadily improved, showing 20 out of 34 in 1930⁷⁵ and 22 out of 29 in 1934.⁷⁶ For the Higher School Certificate entries varied between three and seven up to 1934. Five girls passed in this year, otherwise two or three per year made up the usual success rate. A rising trend can be detected in the later 'thirties, at this level also, when seven, six, seven were the pass scores respectively for 1937, 1938, and 1939 before dropping slightly throughout the war years.⁷⁷ Of the pupils who started school in 1928, most of whom took their first examination in 1933, eleven scholarship holders and six fee-payers gained their school certificates, with three free-places and two private pupils going on to win the higher award two or three years later.⁷⁸ For the 1931 year, again greater success went to the scholarship pupils, with 23 school certificates and four at the higher level, as compared with eleven and three to the fee-payers. With the 1935 group, however, whose examination years were, in the main, 1940 and 1942, whilst the special award winners maintained their superiority in the first examination with 12 successes for the 14 girls who finished their schooling at the High School, against 19 out of 30 for the paying pupils, of the latter group nine went on to success at the higher level, with only one scholarship girl.

73. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/156.

74. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/174.

75. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/193.

76. Cheshire R.O., CED7/59/203.

77. M.H.S.G. Record of school scholarships and university degrees.

78. M.H.S.G. Admission registers.

The Board of Education Report in 1927 stated that twice as many free place holders as fee-payers went on to university.⁷⁹

Although the total number involved was minimal, the High School records bear this out for the girls between 1926 and 1929, four out of the five university entrants coming from the county award winners. If the category is widened to include teacher training college, domestic science, art, and music colleges, the county scholars still provided double the private pupil number of entrants, at 14 to 7. From 1930 onwards, however, the position altered substantially. Overall, there was a marked increase in the number of girls going on to further education, and the fee-payers' share expanded considerably. Scholarship girls won five of the seven W. C. Brocklehurst scholarships to university, but fee-payers took two Jubilee scholarships in addition to their two Brocklehurst awards,⁸⁰ and between 1930 and 1936 the private pupils took up twelve university places to the county scholars' five. If college entrants are included, 44 fee-payers, compared with 21 special place holders went on to further academic education. Table XXXII, taking three separate years across the period, shows that the most popular occupation for leavers in general was clerical work, and for the free-placers this was overwhelmingly so, particularly if the civil service is included in this category.

If the High School is a guide, standards - judged on examination results - were rising steadily, if slowly, throughout the inter-war period. Progress can be seen, too, in the increased proportion admitted to the schools on ability only. Official figures put the number, nationally, of free or special places at 69.3% of all secondary

79. P.P. 1928, Board of Education Report, p.27.

80. M.H.S.G. Admission registers.

Table XXXII

Occupations taken up on leaving by pupils starting at
Macclesfield High School for Girls, 1928, 1931, 1935

Occupation	1928		1931		1935	
	Schol.	Fee-payer	Schol.	Fee-payer	Schol.	Fee-payer
University, college	3	1	4	8	1	10
Civil service	2		4	1	2	1
Bank, clerical work	7	5	18	5	4	3
Commercial college		2				
Nursing, radiography	3	2	1	2	1	2
Research I.C.I.						1
Shop Assistant	1			1	1	
Dancing				1		
Uncertificated teaching			2			
Special coaching				1		
Switzerland for languages, board- ing school		1				1
Hairdressing				2		
Warehouse work		1				
Stayed at home	1	2	2	8	1	2
Transferred	3	6	1	4	3	4
Left because of accident				1		
Not known		2		1	4	5

Source: M.H.S.G. Admission registers, 1926-1936.

admissions in 1938.⁸¹ Macclesfield's secondary schools did not match this, but the increase of Cheshire County Council scholarships in 1938 over 1921 represents approximately 30%. Even so, it was only from 1936 onwards that an appreciable increase was made. For fifteen years the position was virtually static, unless one takes into account the country's falling birthrate. (In Macclesfield's elementary schools the average year group dropped by between 80 and 90, the 11 year age group, for example, falling from 524 in 1921 to 447 in 1938).⁸² From the borough schools' viewpoint progress regarding the availability of secondary education was barely discernible. The 25 awards of 1921 - the most successful year of the period, and considerably more so than any of the succeeding fifteen years - represent 4.77% of an average year group. In 1938 the proportion of the year was 4.84%. Secondary education was still outside the expectation of the very large majority of pupils. Post-primary opportunities had been extended on another front in the establishment of the selective central school. This establishment, opened in 1924, accommodated approximately 380 pupils in the 1930s. Regarded locally as a 'superior' type of school and accorded special treatment regarding capititation and resources, it was, nevertheless, part of the elementary system, and many pupils left at 14 years of age. In the years between the two world wars, and up to reorganization after 1944, the Macclesfield secondary schools still formed, to a large extent, a parallel system to the elementary schools. The ladder of opportunity had been made more widely accessible in social

81. P.P. 1938-9, Board of Education Report, 1938, p.14.

82. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, p.153; CED7/28/5, p.33.

terms, to some degree; greater concern was shown for the chances of its own scholars, and a greater awareness of the issue, by the borough L.E.A.; but the period, while seeing developments within the schools, was largely one of stagnation in the sphere of secondary provision.

Chapter Nine

Towards Secondary Education for All

Chapter NineTowards Secondary Education for All

The main area of concern in the field of education in the years between the two world wars was the education of the adolescent. The issue, backed by the weight of informed public opinion, formed a vital component of Fisher's Act, passed some months before the ending of hostilities in 1918.¹ Herein, full and half time school exemptions were abolished, effectively raising the school leaving age to 14 years for the large majority of children, and continuation schools were envisaged for the provision of compulsory part time education for all in the 14 to 18 year age group not in full time schooling. In addition, local authorities were directed to provide facilities for transfer to secondary schools, where appropriate under the 1902 Act, and advanced instruction for senior elementary school pupils, with special reference to central schools or classes. In 1926 the same issue provided both the brief and the title for the Board of Education's Consultative Committee when, under the chairmanship of Sir William H. Hadow, it produced its report supporting the current call for an extended school life to 15 years and recommending secondary education for all. The largely abortive 1936 Education Act, the Spens Report of 1938 and, in the midst of the second world war, the 1943 Norwood Report, are other landmarks indicating continuing public interest and government involvement in the debate throughout the era.

1. Education Act, 1918, Sections 2, 3, 8, 10, 11, 12.

The 1918 Act was greeted joyfully by contemporaries who saw in it the promise of the new world, the establishing of which alone could make bearable the memories of the horrific loss and suffering incurred in four years of war. William Elliott, retiring president in 1919 of the Macclesfield branch of the N.U.T., 'hailed it with delight', calling it 'the children's charter',² and Professor Simon quotes the N.U.W.T. president - in an appeal to the minister to stand out against proposed economy cuts in 1922 - addressing Fisher as 'author of the greatest Education Act that has ever been put on the Statute Book'.³ Elliott welcomed, 'at last', the abolition of the half time system and the end to school fees, both of which issues had been subjects of bitter criticism by the town's teachers from the early days of the school board era. "Our children", he emphasized, were to have what their German counterparts had had for many years, an extra year at school and continued part time education up to 18 years of age. He also foresaw much needed improvements in medical services, school buildings, and - in his view a prime necessity - a larger, better trained teaching force, attracted by the higher salaries which must result from Fisher's promise of government cover for three-fifths of the salary bill. This was the dream of the early months of the peace after the end of the first world war, but the bright dawn soon faded, to be replaced by the bleak day of recurrent economic crises which were to shape the implementation of the Act and retard the extension of the education service in the ensuing twenty years. Fisher's main innovatory feature - proposed part-time education up to 18 years of age - did not develop. G. Bernbaum notes

2. M.C.H., 1.ii.1919.

3. B. Simon, The Politics of Educational Reform 1920-1940 (1974), p.45.

the resistance to the proposal in 1918, reported in the Times Educational Supplement, of a sizeable sector of the employers who feared the expense and organizational difficulties which they foresaw for industry.⁴ Simon maintains that the scheme was killed off by the opposition of the Federation of British Industry,⁵ and there is something of that view revealed in a remark made by the West Riding chairman, at the North of England Education Conference in 1925, that continuation schools had died out where tried because they had proved to be 'incompatible with industry'.⁶ When the appointed day was fixed, 22 October 1922, for the implementation of the 1921 Education Act, which consolidated the 1918 statute, the continuation school requirement was notably omitted from the list of the local authorities' new responsibilities.⁷ When Fisher departed from the political scene with the fall of Lloyd George's coalition government in 1922, the idea was already being relegated, except in Rugby, to the realm of failed experiments.

The continuation school fell victim to the first wave of economy cuts which followed the trade recession beginning to make itself apparent at the end of 1920. The influence of the inimical industrialists in a period of low trade was one discouraging factor, but of equal importance, it would seem, was the growing call for extended full time schooling embodying secondary education for all children. K. Evans points out that the 1918 Act, whilst encouraging the extension of secondary education to a larger section of the school population, assumed the retention of the established elitist system,

4. G. Bernbaum, Social Change and the Schools(1967), p.23.

5. Simon, pp.59, 61-62.

6. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.131.

7. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.13.

with a large number of pupils still limited to elementary education - a continuation, on a more liberal scale, of the Morant design.⁸ Viewed in this light the Act would seem to mark the end of an era passed rather than the start of a new one. By the early 1920s the call for reconstruction of the educational system to make secondary schooling available to all - raised by the T.U.C. in the 1890s and included as an issue in the Labour Party's declaration of policy in 1905⁹ - was being pressed with increasing vigour. Representatives of the Macclesfield Education Committee, reporting back on a conference they had attended of the Association of Education Committees in 1920, largely devoted to consideration of post-primary provision, retailed the views expressed by Councillor Wilkinson, Chairman of York Education Committee, that education should be provided up to 15 years, or 16 years if pupils would stay, and that all present elementary schools should be turned into preparatory departments for children up to 12 years, the remaining pupils to be accommodated in senior schools staffed and equipped on secondary school lines.¹⁰ This was the stand which the socialist movement adopted in the early 1920s and presented in R. H. Tawney's Secondary Education for All, published in 1922. The old concept of secondary education as the preserve of the middle class, running alongside the elementary schools designed for working class children, with a narrow bridge between the two, must be replaced by one unified system in which the term 'secondary' would denote a stage of schooling for all instead of a type of schooling for a privileged few; for this to be educationally viable

8. K. Evans, The Development and Structure of the English Educational System (1975), pp.79-80.

9. Olive Banks, Parity and Prestige in English Secondary Education (1955), p.117.

10. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, p.63.

it would be necessary to raise the school leaving age, preferably to 16 years but at least to 15 years. Other parties, whilst expressing concern regarding the need for improved post-primary education, were slower to commit themselves to the new pattern. The Conservative manifesto in 1924 declared for reform in provision for the older age range but included the possibility of development of the central school idea in their calculations.¹¹ Fisher was still pleading the case of the continuation school in January 1925, on the grounds that an extended school life, and the consequent loss of earnings, would cause widespread hardship,¹² but the cause was already lost. Later in 1925 all political parties accepted the principle of full time education to 16 years, and in 1928 the Board of Education, under a Conservative government, adopted the Hadow Report's recommendations, based on an inclusive junior/secondary system, as official policy. Hereafter, throughout the thirties and into the war years, debate revolved around the question of type of secondary schooling to be provided, the timing, and the practicalities of achieving the aim in the unfriendly climate of a depressed economy.

With its main provisions failing to become operative it is easy to dismiss the 1918 Education Act as an ineffective piece of legislation, but Macclesfield provides an instance of its positive effects. In line with current educational thought, provision for its older pupils was the borough's preoccupation in the 1920s and 1930s, and the one section of the Act which did take full effect, i.e. the abolition of all exemptions to the 14 year school leaving age, was the initial spur. Alone, it was an important change in the

11. Banks, p.119.

12. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.131.

law, not only in its direct influence on the length of school life for the majority of the town's children, but also because of the way in which it affected the attitude of the local administrators of elementary education: the Macclesfield Primary Education Committee. Despite the economic stringency of the times and its own traditionally thrifty regard for the rates, this body was noticeably urged on towards expansion of the education service by the enforced addition of the extra senior pupils in the school: three-quarters of the 13 year old group. In 1919 when the Education Committee was faced with a request from the Board of Education for a scheme of educational development incorporating the recommendations of the 1918 Act one member, calculating that £9,000 would be needed, suggested delaying the reply as long as possible, the inference being that the Committee might be able to avoid the expensive commitment.¹³ In the same year the editor of the Macclesfield Courier and Herald, commenting on the advice of the medical officer of health that the town needed some new schools, came to the conclusion that, with rates going up already, such a measure could only be undertaken if there were urgent need.¹⁴ The two reactions indicate the extreme reluctance of an influential sector of the town's leadership to involve the borough in expense over education. The raising of the school leaving age supplied the urgent need for action, although in the event, the resultant venture involved remarkably small cost.

In 1918 Macclesfield's elementary school system comprised two council schools and twelve non-provided schools, four of which catered for juniors only. The total number of pupils on roll was

13. M.C.H., 1.xi.1919.

14. M.C.H., 29.iii.1919.

4,623, and the average number of children per year group, up to 12 years, was 500+. ¹⁵ To appreciate the extension to school life effected by the ending of exemptions one has only to look at the composition of the upper age groups at this point and compare it with that of 1924 by which time the new regulations had become fully operative. (Table XXXIII). In 1918 more than 75% of pupils left school at 13 years of age and, although there was a steady annual increase in the number staying on in the early post-war period, in the final year before the law took effect still barely half the age group remained in school. Of those who did stay, a number were there as half-timers, as were a large proportion of the 12+ group. In 1918 almost half the scholars enrolled in the 12 to 14 age range were attending classes only part time, fitting in their schooling alongside employment which would require their energies for up to 36 hours per week. The first full year clear of exemptions was 1924 and, although the school population was declining over all by this time, the 13+ range, equating with the younger age groups, shows a figure well over four times greater than the 1918 enrolment. It is interesting to note, in this same period, the considerable increase in the numbers of those staying on voluntarily after the statutory leaving age, indicating a rising demand in a sector of the elementary schools' intake for an extended schooling.

In 1922 when the new ruling was due to take effect Macclesfield still had no special provision for the extra pupils, and few opportunities for advanced education at all for its elementary scholars. It was the imminent prospect of an additional 200 to 250 senior pupils in the schools which induced Mr. Tom Mellor, the

15. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/6, p.174.

Table XXXIIIAttendance by Age Groups in the
Macclesfield Elementary Schools, 1918-1922

Age in Years	1918 31 Jan.	1919 31 Jan.	1920 31 Mar.	1921 31 Mar.	1922 31 Mar.	1923 31 Mar.
10-11	536	530	542	524	496	529
11-12	519	515	513	537	520	494
12-13	499	507	494	493	516	500
13-14	107	129	190	210	269	419
14-15	5	6	26	22	33	51
15-16	1	2	0	3	3	2

Sources: Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/6, pp. 174, 196;
CED7/36/7, pp. 152-3.

recently appointed secretary to the Education Committee, to introduce the plan, in May 1922, whereby the borough's provision was extended two years later to include the Central School.

Alongside the mounting call for an all-inclusive secondary system in the early 1920s, extended post-primary provision was being advocated within the elementary code, through the development of the central school. The central school prototype emerged in pre-war years in response to the demand, not satisfied by the existing secondary provision, for advanced work for elementary scholars. London County Council, opening its first in 1909, within three years had 31 schools of this type in use. Several other authorities followed before 1914, of which the most notable was Manchester. Whilst administered within the elementary school regulations and designed for children leaving at 15 or 16 years of age, the first central schools were selective and, in London at least, the intention was that they should have equal status with the secondary schools, scholarship winners being given the option of taking up a place at either type of school.¹⁶ After the war the central schools gained popularity, particularly in industrial towns where there was a dearth of secondary provision. In 1924 Manchester had 18 of these schools, and the Director of Education, Mr. W. Spurley Hey, was an enthusiastic advocate of them as a cheap and speedy means of making up the shortfall where there was an insufficiency of places in the secondary sphere. His arguments made a strong impression on Macclesfield delegates at the conference of the Association of Education Committees in 1920. Here, he pointed out that central

16. Banks, p.98.

schools supplied a good four year course, and could provide twice the number of places possible with secondary schools for the same money since Board of Education regulations allowed larger classes, smaller teacher salary bills, and less space per pupil; central schools cost between £35 and £50 per head whilst secondary schools needed £150 to £180 per place.¹⁷ Expounding on the duty of L.E.A.s to provide more exacting work for all children who would benefit from it, he exhorted his colleagues to prepare schemes embodying any variety of provision for the full and part time education of the 12 to 16 year group, and a motion to this effect was carried unanimously. There is a suggestion that he saw central schools as a temporary expedient in his comment that, in his opinion they had a big part to play in the educational scene 'for at least 10 years'.

The issue of the central schools in Macclesfield had been raised in the previous year, after the 1919 conference when, it was reported, this was 'the one subject' everyone talked about.¹⁸ Spurley Hey's speech in 1920 called attention to the overcrowded and ill-equipped elementary schools up and down the country and to the able scholars unable to get into secondary schools. He deplored the situation where these children were 'marking time', repeating work in the upper standards because, when they reached the top of the school one year, or two years, before the statutory leaving age, there was nowhere else for them to go. This was a recognizable situation to the two Macclesfield men. In the town's elementary schools in 1920 there were twenty 11 year olds and seventy of 12 years in standard VII, and sixty-six 11 year olds in standard VI.¹⁹

17. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, p.63.

18. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, p.25.

19. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, p.52.

Following the 1920 conference the Education Committee appointed a Scheme sub-committee, but there was no apparent further action until the naming of 'the appointed day' brought the influx of extra pupils to the school doors. It was at the end of his report on the current year's 'free places' results that Mellor raised the question of the central schools again in June 1922, reminding those present of its urgency.²⁰ He put it to the Committee that a way could be found to provide two schools - one each for girls and boys - without having to build. This condition was vital by now since, apart from the reluctance of the L.E.A. to incur expense, the Board of Education had issued a strict warning three months previously, in circular 1197, against costly building projects, in view of the country's serious economic state.²¹ Mellor must have worked out his scheme carefully, and undoubtedly there had been some work done behind the scenes by the Scheme sub-committee, including visits to central schools in other towns,²² for in October of the same year the proposal was finalized by this body and passed to the School Management Committee for action.²³

The central school plan involved the adaptation of Byron Street, the town's first council school, built in 1911. Since the school's opening Macclesfield's population had declined, from 34,804 (1911 census) to 33,846 (1921 census), and consequently the school population had dropped; from 5,171 on roll in 1910,²⁴ the figure was down to 4,452 in 1922.²⁵ Byron Street, built to accommodate 1,050 pupils,

20. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.24.

21. M.C.H., 28.vii.1923.

22. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.34.

23. M.C.H., 14.vii.1923.

24. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/6, p.170.

25. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/4, p.54.

in three departments, in 1922 had a surfeit of 425 places.²⁶ The two-fold aim of the plan was to house the new central schools in the accommodation of the existing boys' and girls' departments, and to reorganize the infants' section as a junior school. The availability of the building was, without doubt, the critical factor in the comparative speed with which decisions were arrived at regarding the establishment of the central schools. It has been shown how strong local feeling was against expensive building, even before the force of the economic crisis had struck, and one can sense the relief of the Education Committee in the gratified expressions of its members when it was put to them that the estimated cost of this scheme involved little more than a penny rate, at most amounting to £300 per year for two years, with one-fifth of the expense qualifying for refund from the Board of Education.²⁷

In November 1923, all preliminary arrangements having been made, the press announced to the public the imminent opening of the schools.²⁸ 'A landmark in the educational history of Macclesfield', claimed the Courier in a congratulatory leading article. After the first year, when special conditions would hold so that all places would be filled, the schools would offer, free of charge with books and stationery provided, a four year course of advanced instruction. By this time several authorities were opening non-selective central schools for their senior pupils,²⁹ but Macclesfield followed the Manchester model involving selection; admission would be dependent on a successful examination result. The examination was planned in two parts,

26. M.C.H., 9.vi.1923.

27. M.C.H., 14.vii.1923.

28. M.C.H., 3.xi.1923.

29. Banks, p.100.

the first round open to all elementary school pupils of standard V and above aged between 11 and 13 years on 1 April in the year of the examination, and the second to those who survived this hurdle. Private school pupils were also eligible. (Later in the decade the age range was changed to the two years between 10 and 12 in line with the secondary free place regulations).³⁰ A mark of 50% was decided on as qualifying a candidate in the preliminary test for entry into the competitive second examination. Here, an adequate standard would be required in: arithmetic, carrying 150 marks; English, 100 marks; dictation and general knowledge, 75 marks each; and essay writing, 50 marks. There would be an oral reading test, and each child would be interviewed by a panel comprising the secretary, chairman, and two members of the Education Committee, in addition to - boy or girl - the relevant central school head teachers. This arrangement in practice was quickly reduced to interview by the head teacher only. School record and primary head's report would be taken into account. Some idea of the content of the subject examinations is indicated in the 1931 report of H.M. Inspectors where it was noted that the arithmetic test for entrants consisted of ten minutes of mental sums and eighty minutes of mechanical arithmetic, whilst for the English essay topics such as, 'describe a wheelbarrow', were chosen in preference to subjects demanding imagination, to facilitate standardization of marks.³¹

The four year course was planned to provide training for commercial careers. There were several nostalgic references to the old Modern School in this connection. The Courier reminded its readers

30. P.R.O., ED21/24866, 27.xi.1931.

31. P.R.O., ED21/24866, H.M.I. Report, pp.2-3.

that there were many in the town and county holding responsible positions who had received their schooling at the Modern School before it had been absorbed by the Grammar School in 1910.³² It was hoped that the Central School would supply a similar education, in its turn, for the rising generation of boys. For girls the value of practical instruction in cookery and needlework was emphasized in addition; although provision for the teaching of practical subjects for both departments was markedly deficient until into the 1930s. The curriculum of both schools was designed to cover English, mathematics, science, French, art, history and civics, and commerce which included shorthand and bookkeeping. The girls were also to take geography, and their science would comprise domestic science and botany where the boys studied physics and chemistry.³³

All elementary school pupils in the appropriate age group were expected to take the examination, although no one was compelled to accept a place at the central schools. In practice, for the initial round of the first examination, when the eligible section numbered 1,413, 1,171 candidates were entered, including a number of private school pupils and some out-of-town children.³⁴ Part two of the selection procedure took place in January 1924. Parents' wishes came into consideration at this stage, and whilst 992 candidates qualified to continue the competition only 537 accepted the proffered opportunity. No doubt, insistence on a parental undertaking not to remove the child for at least eighteen months was a deterrent in some cases

32. M.C.H., 3.xi.1923.

33. M.C.H., 1.iii.1924.

34. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.90.

in the older age range. Pupils successful in gaining a Central School place in the first intake numbered 437.³⁵ It is a significant comment on the educational standard in the age group overall that out of this selected band, supposedly the top 25% of the elementary schools, a noticeable number were children of low attainment, but consideration must be given to the large number of refusals, approximately 46% of the possibles, after the first part of the examination.³⁶ Miss Jones, H.M.I., reporting on the schools' progress in their first year, remarked on this feature. She accepted that the low performers were admitted in order to fill all the places, but she was obviously concerned that the abler children should not be held back through the problems engendered by the need to cater for scholars of widely disparate abilities. In order to provide more advanced education than in an ordinary elementary school she advised streaming at second year, into two groups: one a fully commercial or academic class, the other a class with a practical bias providing 'training for industrial life'. One wonders how different the picture would have been had the full quota of qualifying entrants in the first phase been prepared to complete the examination and take their places. Possibly Macclesfield would have been better served if resources had been put into non-selective secondary provision.

The Education Committee felt a great sense of achievement in the establishment of the new schools. Robert Brown, who became the first chairman of managers, was expressing a general sentiment when he declared that they were on a higher plane than any other elementary

35. M.C.H., 1.ii.1924.

36. P.R.O., ED21/24866, 20.iii.1925.

school in the town.³⁷ The teachers, selected for their advanced qualifications, were paid on a higher scale, and throughout the inter-war years their favoured position was reflected in the considerably higher capitation allowances they enjoyed compared with the other schools: in 1928-29 the rates were set at 10s 0d for boys and 9s 6d for girls as against the 4s 6d per head for other senior schools or departments:³⁸ and in 1938 the figures were comparable at 11s 0d, 9s 0d, and 5s 0d respectively.³⁹

The Central Schools opened on 1 April 1924, with approximately 80 boys and 80 girls of 11 years and 140 of each sex aged 12 and 13 years,⁴⁰ about 28% of the age group. Miss Jones reported 'a healthy spirit' among the boys and 'excellent tone' in the girls' school, at the end of the first year. She expressed confident expectation of a good standard for the future, despite the schools' initial difficulties, once the more rigorous entrance examination which she recommended had raised the minimum requirements. There was one serious deficiency emphasized in her report, in the lack of facilities for practical instruction. This criticism applied to the local authority's provision for its senior schools in general. For the whole town in the mid-1920s, with 1,555 scholars of 11 years and upwards on the school registers, there was only one centre for practical subjects which all the schools used. The L.E.A. responded to the criticism, but difficulties ensued over the purchase of the necessary land adjacent to the school and it was not until April 1930 that the new accommodation was ready for use, when woodwork and metalwork rooms,

37. M.C.H., 1.iii.1924.

38. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/9, p.39.

39. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, p.43.

40. M.C.H., 5.iv.1924.

including a forge, were made available to the boys, and a laundry and cookery room, with practice flatlet, to the girls.⁴¹

With the school population dropping steadily, early expectations with regard to numbers attending the central schools were not realised and, possibly to achieve a higher standard following Miss Jones' report, the proportion of the town's total school intake dropped in the following years. In 1931 with a reduced 270 pupils between them, 55 from out-of-town, the two schools together accounted for just under one-fifth, 19.5%, of the borough's secondary age range. A second inspection was made in this year. Again the girls' school was commended, for the value of its work to the borough and its 'excellent tone' throughout, and a tribute was paid to the 'unsparing efforts' of the headmaster of the boys' school.⁴² A comment on the latter institution queried whether it was too examination-oriented in a school where the majority of pupils did not stay to take examinations. Many boys left at the end of the third year or after the first term of the fourth year; and there was an even bigger proportion of early leavers among the girls, for whom employment was easier to find. In the current year in both schools, because of insufficient students there was only one third year form and one fourth year, and some of the brighter children from the younger group were working with Form IV. It must be remembered in this context that 1931 was a particularly black year for unemployment; but the pattern was probably consistent throughout the period, to judge by chance references and the recollections of

41. P.R.O., ED21/24866, 27.xi.1931.

42. P.R.O., ED21/24866, 27.xi.1931.

people who remember the era. There was little relaxation in the depressed state of silk, which was still the staple industry, and clerical work - indeed, work of any kind - was hard to obtain; the pressure was on pupils over 14 years to take whatever job they could, as soon as they could.

In Macclesfield it had always been more difficult for boys than girls to find occupation locally. The Central School boys were luckier than most of their contemporaries since the headmaster made it his responsibility to ensure that no boy left without suitable employment. He was doubtless helped in this task by the high regard in which the school - and the girls' school - was held by the townsfolk. Many people living in Macclesfield today will testify enthusiastically to the high reputation of both. In the years between the wars Tom Mellor frequently referred to their standing in public regard in making his annual returns of secondary scholarships. There were few entries for the Grammar and High Schools' scholarship examinations, he believed, because parents preferred the Central Schools.⁴³ H.M.I. Burney, who conducted the 1931 inspection, put it another way. There was great competition for the Central Schools places, he thought, because there were so few scholarships to the older secondary schools.⁴⁴ The local man may well have been more accurate. The early leaving at the central schools does not suggest a large-scale demand for an extension of opportunities. Manchester's Spurley Hey made a similar claim regarding the popularity of the central school in his authority at meetings of the Association of Education Committees; in 1922 he reported that in the current year's

43. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, pp.77, 236A, 247.

44. P.R.O., ED21/24866, H.M.I. Report, 27.x.1931, p.3.

examinations for central and secondary places ten out of the top twenty-five had opted for the former type of schooling.⁴⁵

Public examinations were taken by the scholars, albeit relatively few, who completed, at the minimum, up to the end of the first term of the fourth year. The custom was for pupils to enter for the Cambridge Junior Local examination after three years and one term - the school year beginning in April - and then proceed to School Certificate at the end of the fourth year.⁴⁶ In the seven years from 1924 to 1931 the boys achieved 56 passes - two with Honours - in the earlier examination, and 12 School Certificates, again with two gaining Honours; one boy went on to gain a Kitchener scholarship to Manchester University. In the same period the girls gained 10 successes in the Cambridge Locals and 3 School Certificates; the girls' school also sent 13 pupils on to the High School on junior county scholarships.⁴⁷ Modest though the results were, with the entry to secondary school restricted to a minimal number, the Central School represented the most realistic avenue of post-primary schooling for the majority of Macclesfield children aspiring to higher education between the two world wars.

In addition to its central schools' intake Macclesfield Education Committee had responsibility for 1,000 to 1,100 other pupils of the age group, in the seven senior departments of the elementary schools. In the later 1930s the focus of attention was switched to these children. The Association of Education Committees, which was perhaps the most potent influence on the Macclesfield L.E.A. in this

45. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.70.

46. P.R.O., ED21/24866, H.M.I. Report, 27.x.1931, p.5.

47. P.R.O., ED21/24866, H.M.I. Report, 27.x.1931, p.21.

era, continued to press for government action throughout the period. The conference in 1924 headlined again the twin topics of a lengthened school life and a distinctive system of schooling for all post-primary pupils,⁴⁸ and after the publication of the Hadow Report the pressure increased. In 1927 the Association passed unanimously a resolution calling on the government to name a date for the raising of the school leaving age,⁴⁹ and it continued to press the point in subsequent meetings. In July 1929 the President of the Board of Education declared the date: 1 April 1931.⁵⁰ All this the delegates from Macclesfield reported with approval to a sympathetic committee. Action designed to meet the demands was not so forthcoming.

Apart from the Central School and Athey Street Council School, built in 1912, the Macclesfield elementary schools were the nineteenth century buildings brought up to minimum standards and grudgingly accepted by the Board of Education in the decade leading up to the first world war. The school medical officer commented on the unsatisfactory condition of several of them in his 1917 report when he recommended the building of one or two up-to-date schools, at least, to replace the old ones.⁵¹ He cited Hurdsfield Boys' and Duke Street as particularly bad specimens from a sanitary point of view, with Beech Lane and Crompton Road as little better. This report, because of wartime pressures and shortage of staff, was not published until 1919, and the L.E.A. refuted the criticisms, claiming that adequate improvements had been made in the meantime,

48. Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/8, p.114.

49. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.251.

50. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.254.

51. M.C.H., 29.iii.1919.

including a new heating and hot water system in Hurdsfield Boys'. Nonetheless, when the Board of Education initiated a campaign against unsatisfactory accommodation in 1924, this school was on the list, together with St. Paul's, St. George's, and Hurdsfield Girls'. The Board was particularly concerned about the teaching of two classes in one room. For the past ten years it had approved the Macclesfield arrangements conditionally, and had accredited several rooms for more than the total numbers of the two classes using them. (Table XXXIV). Thus, on paper there was no shortage of school places and, although in quality the provision was deficient, on the face of it there was no 'urgent need' for financial outlay on new buildings. In the early 1920s local caution on expenditure was reinforced by national policy as, resulting from the trade recession, urgent economy became the rallying call of the Board of Education. In 1923 Mellor noted, 'the Board of Education continues to warn against expensive building schemes'.⁵² At the beginning of 1924, however, under the Labour government's President of the Board, Sir Charles Trevelyan, there was some relaxation in the restrictive attitude. In conjunction with the drive against the practice of two classes being taught in one room, a move was made to get rid of classes of more than 60 pupils, and schools were forbidden to have more than 60 names on a register for one teacher.⁵³ Although Macclesfield had its quota of the former group, there is no evidence to suggest that classes in any school at this time exceeded 60, although some may have been nearing that figure. Four years later,

52. M.C.H., 28.vii.1923.

53. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.85.

Table XXXIV

Macclesfield Elementary Schools with
Rooms used by Two Classes, 1924

School	Accommodation recognized by Board of Education	No. of classes	Numbers using room
Christ Church	60	2	32(St.VI) and 28(St.VII & ExVII)
Hurdsfield Girls	100	2	38, 30
St. Paul's Mixed)	110	2	42, 47
)	80	2	39, 50
St. George's Mixed	96	2	46, 32

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.85.

when the Board was working to reduce the maximum class size to 50, it was found that there were 18 classes out of the 112 in the L.E.A.s province numbering more than 50, and this was after there had been some reductions in 1926 and 1927.⁵⁴

Trevelyan, speaking in the House of Commons in April 1924, declared his readiness to receive sympathetically plans for educational development.⁵⁵ He was out of office before he could do much to follow up his words, but his Conservative successor continued in the same direction. After inspection by H.M. Inspectors local authorities were officially informed about their inadequate accommodation under two headings. One list included those buildings which the Board considered irredeemable and consigned to closure; the other cited premises which required considerable alteration before further recognition could be allowed. Macclesfield had no schools in the first group, but in the second, Category B, St. Paul's, St. George's, and Hurdsfield Boys' again appeared.⁵⁶ Letters from the L.E.A. were sent in February 1925 to the managers of the defaulting schools 'for their early consideration' and plans for improvements.⁵⁷ At first it appeared that the Chester Diocesan Church Schools Association would organize a scheme of relief,⁵⁸ as it had done, successfully, for other Macclesfield voluntary schools a decade earlier, but hopes of aid from this quarter did not materialize. There followed seven years of delays and exchanges between the Board, the L.E.A. and the

54. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.228.

55. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.29.

56. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.107.

57. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.108.

58. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.121.

three sets of managers. Superficially it would appear that history was repeating itself, but unlike the voluntaryists' campaign in the first decade of the century there was no spirit of defiance now. As Marjorie Cruikshank has observed, denominationalists in general were finding difficulties in keeping up with rising costs and increased educational demands in the 1920s and 1930s.⁵⁹ The slow progress in remedying the deficiencies of the church schools was the result of serious insufficiency of funds and the problems managers found in raising money in particularly stringent times. It is perhaps a measure of the increased expectation generally regarding quality of accommodation that there was no attempt by voluntary managers, as there had been twenty years earlier, to excuse deficiencies or to argue the point, and also an indication of the change in local attitudes, over the years, concerning the authority of central government. One aspect which did echo the past was the time-consuming dedication to the task shown by those responsible for the schools.

Eventually Hurdsfield and St. George's succeeded in effecting repairs to the satisfaction of the Board, although not without disruption to classes in the interim. In 1929, for example, Hurdsfield Boys', coping with an influx of displaced pupils from St. Paul's, had three classes in four groups - standards V, VI, and VII - in an undivided upper room which H.M.I. considered ill-lit and dangerous of access.⁶⁰ When the Board refused to allow the arrangement to continue, emergency plans were put into operation involving an inconvenient redistribution about the building. Hurdsfield, in July 1932, and St. George's six months later, were removed from the

59. Cruikshank, p.123.

60. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.245.

black list,⁶¹ but for St. Paul's, after all this time, there was only temporary acceptance.

St. Paul's was the school where disruption to the senior pupils was most serious. Early in 1928 the Board refused to allow the upper floor to be used any longer because of unsatisfactory access. The managers declared their willingness to give the school over to the L.E.A. and informed the Bishop of Chester to this effect.⁶² There was no reaction from this quarter and in December the school's intake was restricted to juniors and infants only, a move which entailed the displacement of 100 senior girls and 87 senior boys.⁶³ The L.E.A. arranged to rent an old school building - Lord Street, abandoned in 1911 - but it was warned by H.M.I. that this was illegal, and the children had to be dispersed to other schools in the town. Negotiations continued throughout 1929, 1930, and 1931, between the Board - whose chief architect was brought in to advise - the L.E.A., and the school's managers.⁶⁴ At the same time the Board was pressing the authority for a redevelopment programme in line with the Hadow recommendations,⁶⁵ and St. Paul's fate became bound up with this.

The Board of Education had requested the Education Committee in 1927 to prepare a scheme of reorganization for the period 1930-1933. By January 1930 no proposals had been produced, and the Board sent a further request reminding the L.E.A. of the urgent need to prepare for the imminent rise in the school population as the date approached for the raising of the school leaving age.⁶⁶ Possibly the L.E.A. had been lulled into complacency after the opening of the

61. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.104.

62. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.205.

63. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.231.

64. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, numerous entries 1929-1931.

65. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.270.

66. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.270.

Central School by a fall in school numbers. From a tally of 1,555 in the 11 to 15 years group in 1924, the roll in 1929 had dropped to 1,347. In 1930 it was to drop still further before rising again to the levels of the early 1920s. (Table XXXV). At the same time there had been a noticeable increase in the number staying on after the age of 14 years, for whom little provision had been made. A rise from 87 in 1924 to 186 in 1929 could not, by any means, be accounted for by Central School pupils, who alone had been given extra facilities. With the situation at crisis point, the L.E.A., holding committee meetings almost weekly, speeded up its negotiations, and in July 1930 produced its plan.

The delay on the part of the L.E.A. could be blamed partly on the irresolution of the St. Paul's managers, whose problems were still not resolved in mid-1930 when the local authority decided that it would build whatever the outcome. A proposal was sent in for the building of a new central school, and the Board approved promptly, commending the scheme, based as it was on Hadow lines, and proffering help and advice.⁶⁷ By the following February a site had been found in Buxton Road and two months later the loan was approved for its purchase. On 1 October 1932, however, following an announcement by the Prime Minister calling for economy all round, as the trade depression deepened drastic cuts in educational spending were announced, putting an effective brake on development for more than four years. A Board of Education circular entitled School Buildings: Economy in Construction, issued in July 1932, spelled out the prohibitions,⁶⁸ and the raising of the school leaving age was postponed.

67. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/3, p.282.

68. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.44.

Table XXXVNumbers on Roll of Senior Pupils in the
Macclesfield Elementary Schools, 1924-32

Year	Senior Pupils - over 11 years	14+ years
1924	1,555	87
1925		143
1926	1,673	140
1927	1,584	144
1928	1,474	163
1929	1,347	186
1930	1,187	161
1931	1,312	155
1932	1,485	108

Sources: Cheshire R.O., CED7/36/7, pp.11, 53, 64;
CED7/3/8, p.98.

To fill Macclesfield's gap in accommoation St. Paul's was now recognized, but temporarily, pending the district's eventual reorganization, and it remained on the black list.

The rescinding of the Board's policy of economy as the depression eased, was announced in a letter of 6 January 1936 which enclosed Circular 1,444. This outlined the new Administrative Programme of Educational Development, 'a complete inversion of the Board's policy since 1 October 1931', summarized Tom Mellor.⁶⁹ The ban on new buildings was swept away and local authorities were released, for a short spell, from financial restrictions. Among other recommendations the authorities were exhorted to press forward with reorganization schemes, to remedy defective buildings, and to prepare for the extra year when the new date was named for raising the leaving age - as it was later in the year. The 50% grant towards building costs, which had been reduced to 20% in 1931, was restored. Lowe remarks that local authorities leapt at the opportunity of resuming their building programmes.⁷⁰ Such cannot be said of Macclesfield. On all counts listed, the borough had need to move but the Education Committee, which had been geared up to decisive action in 1931, by 1936 had lost its impetus. Its redevelopment programme was complicated too, by the return, in a mild form, of the religious interest of the Edwardian era. The Education Act of 1936, which announced the government's renewed resolve to raise the school leaving age to 15 years, gave local authorities increased powers to aid the enlargement and building of denominational schools for seniors, allowing financial assistance of between 50% and 75% of

69. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.470.

70. Seaborne and Lowe, p.118.

the expenditure on construction. As Cruikshank points out, the Church authorities were unwilling to lose their senior pupils and there was a spurt of proposals for new accommodation from this source.⁷¹ The Bishop of Chester saw in Macclesfield, where the majority of children were attending church schools, the possibility of building one of the five senior schools which the Diocesan authorities were planning for the county.⁷² In the event, at a meeting of all interested parties in August 1937 the Bishop, acknowledging the superior understanding of the circumstances of his local staff who did not support the proposition, agreed that the school he had envisaged would not be big enough to meet Macclesfield's needs.⁷³ The Church party, whilst reserving the right of consultation in future development schemes, withdrew its immediate claim amicably, but the negotiations had delayed the borough's plans for fifteen months. By November 1937 the Board of Education was pressing the L.E.A. hard. An inspectorial report compiled in December 1935 was causing serious concern. Whilst acknowledging a sufficiency of school places in the borough, H.M. Inspectors assessed the accommodation as 'far from satisfactory'.⁷⁴ It failed to come up to modern standards 'in any respects', they reported, and most buildings fell below the standards of thirty years ago. The strictures, including lack of assembly halls, small playgrounds, doubling up of classes, and restricted facilities for physical training, were directed mainly at the non-provided schools, which accommodated about 60% of the

71. Cruikshank, pp.124,134.

72. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, pp.521,538.

73. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, pp.539-40.

74. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.467.

borough's senior children and 78% of the juniors and infants, but criticism of the inadequate provision for practical instruction, science, and craft, applied generally. A meeting of central and local representatives to discuss the provision for older pupils, requested by the Board in November 1937, took place in the following month.⁷⁵ There was a difference of opinion between the two bodies concerning the type of school considered appropriate. The Committee planned to reorganize its senior accommodation in three schools: Athey Street, the Central Schools, and Buxton Road, with the first two as non-selective and the new one run on the lines of the existing central schools. The Board would have preferred three non-selective secondary schools. It agreed, nonetheless, to defer to local wishes provided schemes were submitted promptly,⁷⁶ but in February 1939 the proposals had still not been received.⁷⁷ The Board warned that the 50% grant for building was at risk; if there were any further delay it would be 'compelled to take a very serious view of the way in which the L.E.A. was carrying out its duties'.⁷⁸ The rebuke was not unexpected in Macclesfield. Several Committee members had expressed fears of this at a previous meeting,⁷⁹ and one, at least, thought it well deserved. In fact, the latest delay was not the fault of the Education Committee. After four years of debate during which, as one participant of the discussions put it, the topic had been "worn threadbare", and following long talks between two H.M.I. and the local authority's chairman and secretary on the urgency of the issue,

75. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, pp.673,688-9.

76. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.689.

77. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, p.115.

78. M.C.H., 16.ii.1939.

79. M.C.H., 26.i.1939.

Mellor had produced a completed draft of the borough's programme of development, including the Roman Catholics' plan for a new senior school which the Board had been pressing for, and some junior school provision. He obviously expected a straight go-ahead when he presented the plan at the December meeting of the full council, and this would have given him time to get the draft to the Board of Education before the deadline of 31 December 1938. Instead, it was returned by the finance committee for a further breakdown of figures, to check whether the cost could be reduced at any stage, and the capital expenditure staggered.⁸⁰ In March 1939, with savings accomplished sufficient to reduce the extra education costs from a 5 $\frac{3}{4}$ d rate to 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ d,⁸¹ the way seemed cleared. But now arose a new altercation.

In April 1939 the L.E.A. received a request from the Board of Education to reconsider its decision to make Buxton Road selective. This followed the receipt by the Board of a letter of protest from one of the Education Committee members, supported by thirty other signatories.⁸² The leading dissident was William Elliott, one-time head of St. Paul's C. of E. School, which was in the area of the proposed new school. His opposition was based on hardship grounds for the Buxton Road children who did not gain entry to the selective school; they would have a long hill to climb up and down and they would meet traffic hazards. Elliott maintained that non-selective schools would suit the borough's needs better, but he protested in vain. After a stormy and acrimonious meeting, voting reaffirmed

80. M.C.H., 5.i.1939, 26.i.1939.

81. M.C.H., 2.iii.1939.

82. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, p.29.

strongly the previous decision, and the Board was informed to this effect.⁸³

Buxton Road was not to be, however. In May preparatory work was going ahead, but in August, when the architect's plans were studied, the site - bought in 1931 - was abandoned as unsuitable, on the grounds that there was insufficient land for a playing field, expensive levelling was needed, and sewers under the surface presented building difficulties.⁸⁴

A new, larger site was quickly found in the area of Tytherington, which had come into the borough with a boundary change in 1936. It was a plot of twelve acres and, declared one councillor, it would support a school of which the borough could be proud; but before the next meeting of the Committee war was declared. Once again development plans, and the raising of the school leaving age, due to take effect on 1 September 1939, had to be shelved, and in 1944, when the new Education Act abolished the Part III authority and made it a division of Cheshire County Council's education service, provision was unchanged. Elliott and his minority party of dissidents now saw their policy triumph, although not on the parochial basis which had underpinned their protest. The Education Act eliminated the central schools with the rest of the elementary system for seniors. Cheshire decided to reorganize its secondary sector on the lines of separate grammar and modern schools. In August 1945 a phased transfer was started in the borough - completed in 1948 - of all 11+ elementary scholars to three secondary modern schools, but the buildings were those already in use: Athey Street, under the new name of Parkroyal, Central Boys' and Central Girls'. (The school built in Tytherington,

83. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/5, p.126.

84. M.C.H., 31.viii.1939.

on the alternative site to Buxton Road, first mooted in 1939, was not opened until January 1965).

Assessed in the light of what might have been accomplished with a few more months of peace, concrete provision for the extension of educational opportunities for the adolescent in Macclesfield, in the years between the two Education Acts of 1918 and 1944, was disappointingly limited. With secondary education - which was outside the Education Committee's aegis - still the perquisite of the few, facilities making available advanced post-primary education had been provided by the borough for about one-fifth of the school population of the requisite age group, in the development of the two central schools. There were still, however, approximately 1,500 children of the age range being taught in all-age elementary schools in 1939, a sizeable number of them in the same nineteenth century buildings which had been on, or near, the black list for many years. On the other hand, a noticeable change had taken place in the general attitude to children and the expectation for them. In 1919 the editor of the Courier, himself a member of the Education Committee, warning his readers of the imminent enforcement of the 1918 Act, could commiserate with parents on the loss of earnings entailed in the compulsory extra year at school for their offspring.⁸⁵ In 1939 such an attitude would have been unacceptable in any public sphere. The voluntary attendance figures, too, of children staying on after the statutory 14 years, indicate a growing demand from a sector of the general public for extended education. The increase was marked over the 1920s. There was a reversal in the depth of the depression in 1932 and 1933, but the trend built up again in the later 'thirties

85. M.C.H., 1.ii.1919.

although, with a school population remaining fairly static - apart from spasmodic periods of extension from official and unofficial evacuees - there was a downward tendency over the war years. (Tables XXXV and XXXVI). In the local administration, whilst implementation of its plans might be delayed by governmental stop-go policies, the saving of a $1\frac{1}{4}$ d rate, local discord, and poor judgement in choosing a school site, the principle of a four-year course for all as the minimum, in distinctive senior schools, had been accepted without question. A government report in 1917 asked, 'Can the conception of the juvenile as primarily a little wage-earner be replaced by the conception of the juvenile as primarily the workman and citizen in training?'⁸⁶ This change in viewpoint, at least, was effected in Macclesfield in the inter-war period.

86. Maclure, p. 168.

Table XXXVI

Numbers on Roll of Pupils aged 14+ years
in the Macclesfield Elementary Schools, 1931-1944

Year	Number of Pupils
1931	155
1932	108
1933	96
1934	190
1935	181
1936	182
1937	185
1938	177
1939	170
1940	161
1941	181
1942	171
1943	153
1944	164

Sources: Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, pp.138,628;
 CED7/28/5, pp.33, 130,
 226, 295, 563-4.

Chapter Ten

Further Education for a Silk Town's Work Force

Chapter TenFurther Education for a Silk
Town's Work Force

A crucial consideration in educational developments in the early years of the twentieth century was the rising apprehension felt regarding the country's commercial and industrial soundness. In the last two decades of Victoria's reign Britain's claim to industrial supremacy, achieved in the earlier 1800s, came under increasingly fiercer attack as the United States of America and the countries of Europe - particularly newly-unified Germany - turned their national energies towards their own industrialization, catching up, and in some areas overtaking, their older-established rival as the turn of the century approached. With the heightened challenge came a growing call, amongst other proposed remedies, for improved facilities for the training of the labour force.

Disquiet regarding the economy was active as early as 1872 when, arising out of Britain's comparatively poor showing at the Paris Exhibition in 1867, a Royal Commission was appointed under the chairmanship of the Duke of Devonshire, to enquire into the area of Scientific Instruction and the Advancement of Science. The investigation revealed an extremely unsatisfactory situation, calculated to restrict seriously Britain's future economic performance. The Devonshire Report concentrated mainly on higher education establishments, although the elementary school level was mentioned. Ten years later the Samuelson Report focussed more directly on technical instruction for the working classes. The brief here was to enquire

into the provision in rival countries and compare it with the British situation. Although the findings were not entirely pessimistic the warning was underlined, that foreign competitors were gaining ground rapidly. Deficiencies in educational opportunities for the British worker were noted, and the extension of technical education was recommended at some length. More secondary and technical schools were called for, with scholarships available to able young workers, and basic scientific education was advocated for the mass of the population. Despite the declared support given to technical education, however, it was unequivocally stated that the state could not be expected to bear the financial responsibility; local resources must meet the costs.¹ In 1888 the Local Government Act provided county and county borough councils, and when the Technical Instruction Act was passed in the following year these authorities were empowered to promote technical education, to the limit of a penny rate, through Technical Instruction Committees. Government funds were made available through the 'whiskey money', and further grants could be obtained from the Science and Art Department which, until the formation of the Board of Education in 1899, was the central supervisory body in the science and technical field.

The Evening School movement also received a boost in the 1890s, with something of the same motivating force behind the measures: the call for a better educated labour force. In 1893 the age limit of 21 years was removed, and restrictions were lifted to allow a broader curriculum than hitherto. These schools, often called continuation classes, were usually under the direction of the school

1. Maclure, p.125.

boards subject to Education Department regulations, until the passing of the Education Act of 1902 brought them, and technical establishments, under the aegis of the county and county borough councils.

In Macclesfield the bogey of foreign competition was a familiar concept, and of longer standing than in most industrial towns. A member of Samuelson's Commission might say, 'a few years ago we were not conscious of competitors',² but the years of prosperity which other textiles, and British manufacturers in general, had enjoyed from mid-century to the 1870s had been precarious always for the silk trade. There was hardly a time when France was not a feared rival. And for just as long, the superior training of the foreign workers had been regarded as a vital reason for the greater success of the French manufacturers.³ The Macclesfield School of Art and Design had been founded in 1851 in an attempt to emulate the envied Lyons School of Art by training local artistic talent to the benefit of the town's staple industry.⁴ By 1880 German silk manufacturers, based at Krefeld, had entered the field, and again the link between sound education and trading success was observed. A deputation returning from an official visit to Germany insisted that a technical school in Macclesfield was imperative.⁵

Reflecting the tenor of industrial views in the country at large, the Chamber of Commerce which was dominated by the silk manufacturers, initiated a campaign in 1882 to provide facilities for the further training of silk workers. A Technical Education Committee

2. Lawson and Silver, p.346.

3. Macclesfield Useful Knowledge Society Reports, 1844, 1845, 1846, and others.

4. J. O. Nicholson, 'Macclesfield Past, Present, and Future', unpublished essay, 1866, n.p.

5. Davies, p.203.

was appointed, supported by promises of money and looms and, a teacher having been engaged at a salary of £2 per week, a start was made immediately with classes in aspects of silk weaving, throwing, and dyeing.⁶ As well as private donations the school received occasional grants from the City and Guilds of London Institute but, although the classes prospered (one imagines that pressure was brought to bear on workers to attend) the financial side was insecure, and the Technical Instruction Act was seized upon with alacrity. Acceding to a request from the Chamber of Commerce to adopt the new measure, the town corporation agreed in 1890 to aid the classes to the extent of a maximum halfpenny rate, and in 1893 after receiving money through the county council under the 1890 Local Taxation Act (whiskey money) it took over the school entirely. A building fund had been opened in 1887 but problems regarding sites delayed progress, and the remainder of the decade was occupied with planning and construction details before the Macclesfield Technical and Science School was opened in 1900, on the site of the old Useful Knowledge Society, adjoining the building occupied by the School of Art (and the Girls' High School).⁷ The total cost of the venture was £8,453, and the hopes of the manufacturers can be seen in the financial support they gave, headed by the Brocklehurst family. In 1887 £1,500 was raised by subscriptions, W. C. Brocklehurst heading the list with a gift of £500; in 1900, when £2,000 was needed for completing and equipping the building, the same donor led the way, again with £500, and a brother added £100;⁸ and this was in addition to numerous

6. M.C.H., 20.ix.1900.

7. M.C.H., 20.ix.1900.

8. M.C.H., 24.iii.1900.

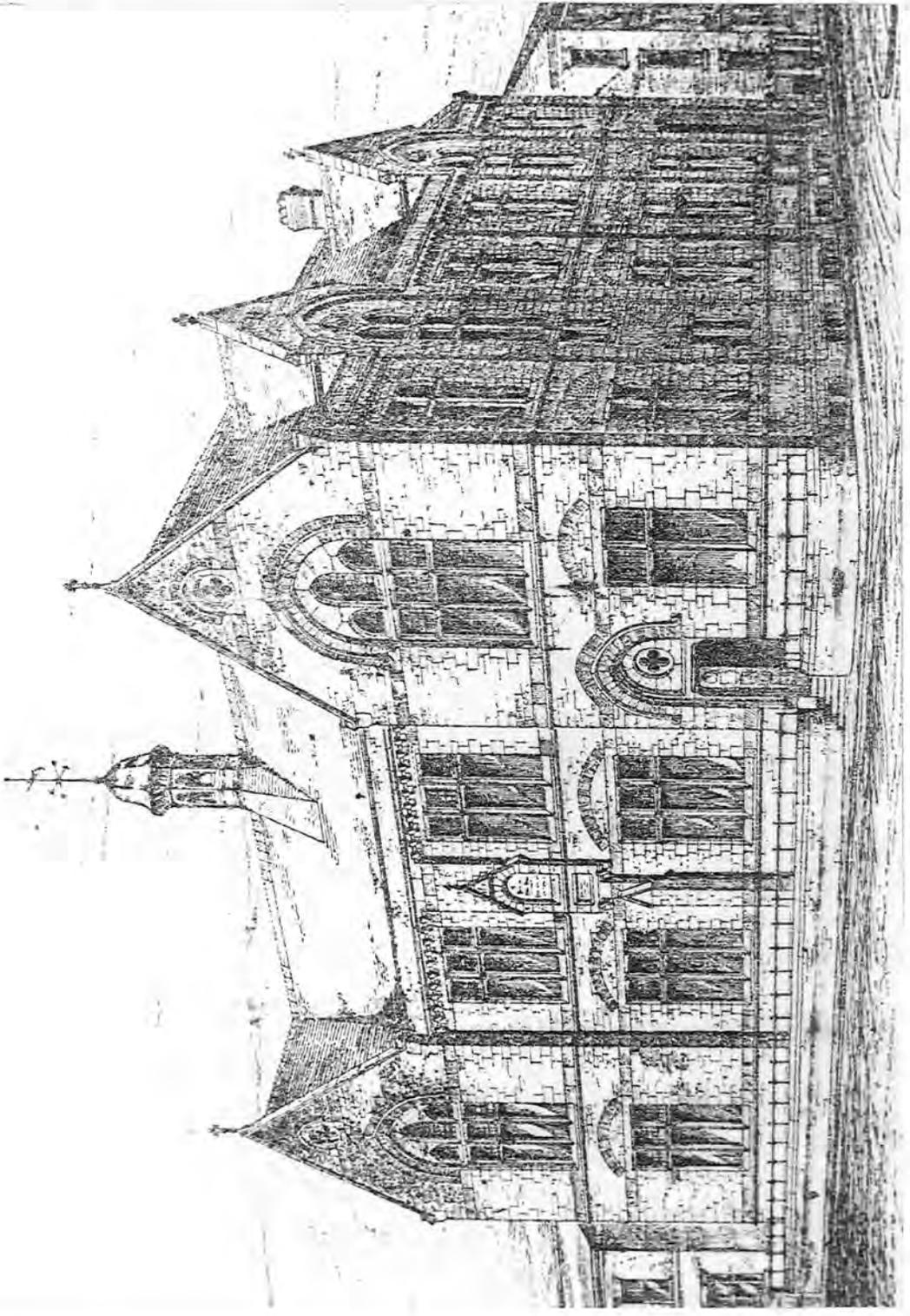


Plate IV

The Proposed Technical School, 1893

Cheshire R.O., CED7/65/1.

smaller donations from the firm and from individual members of the family over the years. The Municipal Schools of Science and Technology, as the Courier entitled them on their opening, were designed to provide 'sound knowledge in the scientific and artistic principles relating to the various trades and industries of Macclesfield', and the subjects covered were: practical, plane, and solid geometrical drawing; human physiology and hygiene; machine construction and drawing; building construction, carpentry, and joinery; mathematics, magnetism, electricity, and inorganic chemistry; physiography; silk weaving, draughting, throwing, and spinning.

Thus, when reorganization of the educational administration took place after the passing of the 1902 Education Act, the Technical School was a soundly established, if modest, enterprise housed in a modern, purpose-built building catering, however, for evening classes only. In addition, Macclesfield's further education service included the School of Art - corporately run, and recognized for grant by the Board of Education - the School Board's Evening Continuation School, and the Pupil Teacher Centre, which was organized by the Macclesfield and District Teachers' Association with the approval, and much active co-operation, of the School Board, the Technical Instruction Committee, and the School of Art. Under the 1902 Act all these areas passed, with secondary education, into the control of the Cheshire County Council. For practical purposes their administration became the province of the Macclesfield Higher Education Committee, a sub-committee of the County Council and responsible, through periodic reports, to the parent body.⁹

9. Cheshire R.O., CED7/79/1, pp.1, 15.

The Cheshire authority was already actively involved in the sphere of technical education under its powers deriving from the Technical Instruction Acts, and it was on the strength of his experience as the county's Organizing Secretary in this sphere that R. P. Ward was appointed Director of Education in March 1903.¹⁰ Evidence of the authority's involvement is seen in the award of L.E.A. scholarships, as allowed under the Technical Instruction Act of 1891, piloted by Sir Henry Roscoe specifically to legitimize the use of public money for this purpose. Cheshire's scheme was modest, in no way comparing with that of the West Riding of Yorkshire, for example, about which P. R. Sharp writes,¹¹ but in 1898-9, as well as 36 junior scholarships to secondary schools, six senior awards were granted, tenable at University College or 'other higher seats of learning', several for the local agricultural college at Holmes Chapel, worth £31 per annum for three years, and one each for music, domestic subjects, and art. The art award, valued at £50 per annum and tenable at the Royal College of Art, South Kensington, went to a girl, the daughter of a coal dealer, from the Macclesfield School of Art.¹² The university and college awards numbered six - five boys and one girl - and it is interesting to note the occupational strata from which the recipients came: two had schoolmaster fathers and one was the child of an assistant inspector of schools, while the remaining three were offspring of a shopkeeper, a draughtsman, and a mechanic. In 1902 when a survey was made of the county's

10. Scares, p.95.

11. P. R. Sharp, 'The Origin and Early Development of Local Education Authority Scholarships', History of Education, Vol. 3, January 1974, p.37.

12. P.P.1900(335) lxxiii.59, Return of Scholarships awarded by County Councils in England and Wales, year ending 31 March 1899, p.78.

provision for higher education, twelve secondary and five technical schools were being aided by the Technical Instruction Committee for day classes in science and art.¹³ As L. O. Ward observes, the demands of secondary and technical education were not separated out in the early years,¹⁴ and the cost of scholarships for day students for the year ending 31 March 1903 was listed as £868 12s 4d for technical and secondary jointly.¹⁵ There had been a slight degree of expansion in the county's provision since the turn of the century. In 1902-3 there were twenty scholarship holders covered for fees and travel expenses at university or college, and forty-one receiving free tuition and board at Holmes Chapel Agricultural College. Underlining the agricultural nature of much of the county, 47 awards were made allowing tuition fees and board for ten week courses at Worleston Dairy Institute. There were also three residential scholarship holders at the Chester School of Domestic Economy, three at the Royal College of Music, Manchester, and two at the Royal College of Art, South Kensington. In addition, 167 awards were made for evening and Saturday students in science, art, and commercial subjects.

At working level, reorganization following the 1902 Education Act made little impact initially on the Macclesfield further education institutions. James Ward, headmaster of the Art School and secretary to the late Technical Instruction Committee, was appointed secretary to the Higher Education Committee, at a salary of £50 per annum, with special responsibility for his former area: art, science, and technology classes. William Grieves, the School Board's chief clerk, in addition

13. Cheshire R.O., CCE2/4, p.5.

14. L. O. Ward, 'Technical Education and the Politicians (1870-1918)', B.J.E.S., XXI, October 1973, p.34.

15. Cheshire R.O., CCE2/4, p.9.

to his appointment as secretary to the Primary Education Committee, became assistant secretary to the Higher Education Committee, continuing his supervision of the Evening Continuation School;¹⁶ and the instruction continued unaltered. A question hovers over the attendance figures at this transition period. The survey of the state of higher education in Cheshire puts Macclesfield's numbers for 1902-3 at 703 for the Technical and Art Schools and 675 for the Evening School,¹⁷ whereas Macclesfield's own figures show the overall enrolment at the end of 1903 as 837.¹⁸ Either there was a considerable drop, of over 500, for the first session of the new regime or one or other set of figures was inaccurate.

In 1907, when the first full set of statistics was published by a newly appointed superintendent, total admissions numbered 1,167 at the end of October, with the domestic economy courses claiming the highest number of students, closely followed by commercial subjects; the technical and science students together made up about 29% of the total. (Table XXXVII). In June of this year the Committee received a report on the schools based on visits made in the previous December by H.M.I. H. Lloyd. The inspector's chief criticism focussed on the lack of co-ordination and consequent overlapping in the courses, resulting, he felt, from the unwieldy division of responsibility between the two superintendents.¹⁹ There appears to have been some awareness of this locally. At the start of the 1906-7 session a new superintendent, Dr. George Beach, had been appointed to take over

16. Cheshire R.O., CED7/79/1, p.9.

17. Cheshire R.O., CCE2/4, p.2.

18. Cheshire R.O., CED7/79/1, p.32.

19. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, pp.20-21.

Table XXXVII

Macclesfield Higher Education Committee
Technical and Evening Schools
Admissions and Attendance, 31 October 1907

	Technical School	Science School	Domestic School	Commercial School	Continuation School		TOTAL
					Boys	Girls	
On register	100	232	299	281	174	81	1,167
Av. attendance	81	194	249	238	136	65	963

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.32.

Table XXXVIII

Macclesfield Higher Education Committee
Technical and Evening Schools
Scheme of Organization, 1911-1912

Boys	Girls	Approx. age at entry
Primary Day School	Primary Day School	
Continuation Class	Continuation Class	13½ years
Preliminary Science and Technical	Preliminary Commerce	14½ years
School of Art	Intermed. Commerce	15½ years
Science Course	Intermed. Domestic	
Elem. Technical	Advanced Domestic	16½ years
Higher Technical	Advanced Commerce	
	Advanced Science	

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.130.

the Evening School²⁰ and, as H.M.I. noted, some moves had been made towards a streamlining of the courses. For the following session, acting on Lloyd's recommendations, Beach was given responsibility for the Evening School and Technical School combined.²¹ It was a part-time post. At this time Beach was headmaster of Christ Church School, professionally highly qualified, and a well respected educational authority in the town. When he retired from Christ Church it was said of him that there was 'no better qualified primary teacher in the county'. He was an efficient administrator and kept meticulous records in his new post. In his first year he visited continuation schools in Derby, Southport, Kidderminster, and Worcester, at his own expense, and after a two hour long discussion with H.M.I. Lloyd he decided that a complete reorganization of the schools was required.²² This task he accomplished for the start of the next session, providing a scheme of co-ordinated courses to replace the isolated class structure which he took over. (TableXXXVIII). The progress made was commented on approvingly in March 1908 by Lloyd and a colleague, as being in line with their recommendation to provide complete three-year courses leading on to higher education.²³

As TableXXXVIII shows, there were three main lines of study available, outside the School of Art. The Domestic School included classes in needlework and millinery, in addition to cookery, and there was a weekly session in sick nursing taken by the medical officer of health, Dr. Hedley Marsh; the Commercial School, as well as book-keeping, shorthand, and typing, at varying levels of efficiency,

20. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.1.

21. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.28.

22. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.31.

23. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.43.

covered English, French, office routine, and commercial law; the Science programme - dealing with the technological theory - comprised building construction, mathematics, technical drawing, physiology, physiography, and aspects of chemistry and physics, whilst the Technical course provided instruction in purely manual crafts in trades regarded as applicable to the area, the two courses leading to more advanced technical studies for the abler students.

As the name suggests, the continuation class was an extension of the elementary school curriculum, mainly for the 13 year old school-leavers. It offered arithmetic, reading and writing, geography, history and citizenship, and any ex-elementary school pupil enrolling within six months (later twelve months) of leaving school was admitted free of charge.²⁴ This was the area which caused the greatest concern to the superintendent and the Committee on account of the high drop-out rate. The issue has been discussed earlier, in relation to the elementary school half-timers and early leavers. The continuation classes were designed, in the main, to cater for this section of the youth of the town, but for a large proportion of young workers the classroom held little attraction at the end of a working day. It would seem to have been a general state of affairs. D. W. Thoms quotes an observation by E. A. Waterfall, written in 1923, which refers to 'the almost complete failure of the Evening School to attract the adolescent . . .'²⁵ Beach frequently lamented the 'wastage', and deprecated the frivolous attitude which favoured walking the streets or attending places of amusement and recreative

24. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.9.

25. D. W. Thoms, 'The Emergence and Failure of the Day Continuation School Experiment', History of Education, Vol.4, Spring 1975, p.37.

classes in preference to serious study.²⁶ He drew attention to the experience of employers such as Frost Bros. who undertook to cover the fees for forty pupils per year. In 1908 thirty places were taken up, but numbers had declined each year until in 1912 there were no takers.²⁷ Writing of irregular attendance, at the same time he bewailed 'the lack of enlightened hunger for self-improvement'. He was not alone in his apprehension regarding the deterioration of standards - as he saw it - in the youth of the day. Harry Hendrick comments on the fears commonly expressed in Edwardian England of undisciplined working class youth released from the control of school into the culture of the streets, indulging itself in leisure hours in music halls and other popular gathering places.²⁸ Beach felt the answer lay in compulsory continuation classes. 'Boys and girls will not attend unless forced', he declared.²⁹ Again, he was expressing a widely held view. Thoms, discussing the question of day continuation classes, observes that a number of local authorities and teachers' organizations urged the Board of Education in the early years of the century to make evening school compulsory,³⁰ and Runciman's Bill in 1911 brought the issue into Parliament. Locally, many employers favoured the idea, and the Primary Education Committee declared its support for government compulsion in 1909.³¹

Although registers are incomplete, it would seem from data available that the bulk of the male students were in the early to

26. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, frequent references 1907-1913.

27. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.129.

28. H. Hendrick, "'A Race of Intelligent Unskilled Labourers': the Adolescent Worker and the Debate of Compulsory Part-Time Continuation Schools, 1900-1922", History of Education, Vol.9, June 1908, p.161.

29. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.128.

30. Thoms, p.37.

31. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/1, 23.iv.1909.

mid-teens age group. In 1905, when total admissions - male and female - numbered 553,³² 203 male students were listed, of whom 142 were between the ages of 12 and 16 years, with only eleven above 18 years.³³ Pressure from employers was probably a significant factor here. Beach noted in 1907, with appreciation, the support of the Macclesfield Tradesmen's Association, the Co-operative Society, Frost Bros., and others in 'inducing and at times compelling employees to attend'.³⁴ The postmaster arranged the hours of the telegraph messengers to allow for their attendance, and Frost Bros. registered their boys in batches of twenty or so,³⁵ paying the fees - as did the Co-operative Society - for regular attenders.³⁶ The girls' registers of 1907 show a wider age span. Apart from the continuation classes where the 13 and 14 year olds predominated, adult students formed an appreciable proportion of the whole. Of 73 listed in one register, whilst 30 were between 14 and 16 years, 35 were of 20 years or older, up to 38 years.³⁷ Doubtless, the domestic and sick nursing courses attracted many women in this group. Another interesting difference between the girls' intake and the boys', in the continuation classes particularly, is in the educational standard reached before leaving school. Of 97 girls in 1907 where data is recorded, 52 left at standard V level, 30 at standard VI, and 10 at standard VII, with three ex-VIIs,³⁸ whereas with the boys, in 1905, one left at standard IV and seven at standard V, whilst 52 had reached standard VI, and 54 standard VII.³⁹ It is noticeable that the intake, at this stage, came almost exclusively from the elementary

32. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.2.

33. Cheshire R.O., SL211/2/1.

34. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.37.

35. Cheshire R.O., SL211/2/1.

36. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.26.

37. Cheshire R.O., SL211/1/1.

38. Cheshire R.O., SL211/1/2.

39. Cheshire R.O., SL211/2/1.

schools. Two ex-secondary school girls are recorded, and there were no boys from that sphere. Occupationally, the intake reflected the dependence of the town on the textile industry and associated trades. Of the 203 males admitted in 1905, the largest single group was made up of the silk piecers who numbered 31 (21 from Frosts), but there were 36 other pupils directly involved in silk manufacturing processes, in addition to ten cotton weavers, a shirt cutter, and eight warehouse boys; 17 pupils were engaged in clerical work of some kind, and there were ten telegraph boys.⁴⁰ The largest group among the female intake comprised those who stayed at home, of whom there were 42, plus three 'married'. Following this, there were 28 machinists, 22 teachers, 17 dressmakers, and 15 weavers, with 12 engaged in some form of domestic service.⁴¹

As there were no higher education daytime classes at the Technical School the staff were part-timers, mainly employed locally. Teachers from the elementary and secondary schools formed the core, and a number of commercial classes were taught by members of the clerical staff attached to the Higher and Primary Education Committees. Salaries in 1912 ranged from 4s 0d per session of two hours to 10s 6d - for French and technical/scientific subjects - and there was a special rate of 15s 0d, with travelling expenses, for the incorporated accountant from Stockport who taught advanced bookkeeping and accountancy, and for the machine construction instructor.⁴² There were two full time teachers in the instructors for manual craft and cookery, who taught the groups of children sent on rota throughout the week

40. Cheshire R.O., SL211/2/1.

41. Cheshire R.O., SL211/1/1.

42. Cheshire R.O., SL82/1, p.131a.

from the elementary schools to the Technical School centres, but for their daytime work these were employees of the Primary Education Committee.

Apart from the removal of magnetism and physiography from the list of subjects taught, there was no apparent change in the Evening School curriculum up to the start of the first world war. There was, however, an appreciable shift in the occupational structure of the students attending. Of the 233 male pupils who enrolled for the 1913-14 session, 75 were employed in clerical work, in addition to eight solicitors' clerks and five office boys. Although the silk warehousemen at 19, including five apprentices, made up the next most numerous group, there were only 15 other silk workers, plus one dyer; and 14 joiners, with seven bricklayers, came next in the list.⁴³ Women students admitted for the same session numbered 445. Here, the largest single group, as previously, came from those who stayed at home, numbering 61, but 170 (nearly 40%) were employed in some branch of silk or cotton manufacture, in addition to 31 in the making-up trade (including 14 shirtmakers), 23 bowmakers, and 16 on ladies' neckwear; teachers now numbered eleven. A noticeable change can be seen, too, in the number of secondary school pupils attending. Although the balance was still one-sided, the girls' total had risen to 54, compared with 378 ex-elementary school pupils, and there were 36 secondary school boys out of the total of 233.

1913 is a convenient point at which to assess the direction Macclesfield's system of further education had taken since reorganization. By now it was apparent that the merger of the Evening Continuation School and the Technical School in 1903, and the sub-

43. Cheshire R.O., SL211/3/1.

sequent re-grouping in 1906-7, had resulted in the former absorbing the latter. The Technical School, on which the late Victorian manufacturers had placed such confidence, was the name of the building, but the technical work was only a section of the Evening Institute, taking its place with commercial domestic, and general education. In all departments much of the work was of an elementary character. In a report book entry in 1912 the superintendent commented on the dislike of artisans to learn more theory than was absolutely necessary for the job,⁴⁴ and at another time he observed that the less attached to bread-winning the less likely was a subject to attract attendance.⁴⁵ One can imagine that, with discouragingly minimum basic educational qualifications, higher education was beyond the aspirations of many of the students who enrolled on leaving school. Examinations could be taken under the regulations of the Board of Education, City and Guilds of London Institute, London Chamber of Commerce, Royal Society of Arts, and Union of Lancashire and Cheshire Institutes, but in 1913, out of 678 students, there were only 58 successes, with 51 in the following year.⁴⁶ Nonetheless, individual students did succeed in getting sufficient grounding to pass on to more advanced studies. 'Many students are receiving better wages as artisans or general or shipping clerks because of the Evening School', wrote Beach in 1912, and others went on to become teachers, accountants, and solicitors.⁴⁷ For advanced studies, students were usually sent to Stockport or Manchester. 'Macclesfield looks to Manchester for certain classes of high character', reads

44. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.124.

45. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.127.

46. Cheshire R.O., CED7/79/2, p.192.

47. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.129.

one entry.⁴⁸ Medals, prizes, and awards for further study were offered by various bodies on the results of examinations. In 1912 when, according to the superintendent, the results of the silk class had never been surpassed, a scholarship was awarded by the Drapers' Company to the value of £60 per annum for two years, tenable at any approved technical school with a daytime department.⁴⁹ The same company also funded three £10 awards for two years at an evening technical school, as well as medals and a money prize of £3. City and Guild medals and money prizes - one for masonry - were also won. Over the first ten years of the century the silk class won more than £1,000 from the Drapers' Company.⁵⁰

The technical courses were organized in close conjunction with the School of Art, particularly with regard to classes in silk processes, painting, and decorating. When Beach was appointed to the Technical School, James Ward remained as headmaster of the School of Art and, for a time, as secretary to the Higher Education Committee. The School of Art was, in any case, a separate entity and, unlike the Technical School, it took in a number of daytime students. In 1906, when there were 16 day scholars and 190 evening students, it was the largest technical establishment in Cheshire in the total number of classes offered, drawing a Board of Education grant of £318 for the year.⁵¹ In 1909 there were 246 students on roll, and the end of year report presented at the prize-giving ceremony showed a fair degree of success.⁵² In a national art competition attracting 13,270

48. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.138.

49. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.133.

50. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.109.

51. P.P.1908, Board of Education Report, p.237.

52. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.82.

entries Macclesfield gained 17 awards, and the school received five of the six prizes offered by the Society of Arts. In advanced art examinations 25 students were successful at first class level, and 51 gained second class certificates in painting, drawing, and design, whilst three pupils won Board of Education free studentships. A small venture in day release, two firms allowed successful apprentices - one each - to pursue their studies at daytime classes.

Beach was warmly appreciative of the co-operation of the School of Art, in several references, and in 1912, commenting on a Royal Commission suggestion that Macclesfield should become the technical centre of the silk industry, he approved the proposal remarking that this would put the School of Art in a position it had earned.⁵³

Indicating an awareness of deficiency in the authority's provision, he concluded with regret that the proposition was not possible until the Technical School furnished day courses. 'The School of Art will continue to be handicapped until this advance is made,' he wrote. Beach retired from his day school headship in 1913, and further education became his preoccupation. In addition to his work at the Evening Institute, he was president of the Macclesfield branch of the Workers' Educational Association. The W.E.A. was founded in 1903 to promote adult education in conjunction with university extra-mural services. In 1912 the local group planned to hold a tutorial session with Manchester University, and requested the use of two rooms weekly in a local school.⁵⁴ Beach pressed the Primary Education Committee to accede to the request, and to support an

53. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/1, p.129.

54. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/2, p.110.

appeal to the county authority to grant £15 from the higher education fund. The Primary Committee approved both proposals wholeheartedly, and in 1913 two of its members were elected to the W.E.A. Council.⁵⁵

Macclesfield's pattern of development in technical education up to the first world war accorded with the slow progress generally throughout the country, in this sphere. Michael Argles quotes from the Thomson Report of 1918 that only 7% of the working population was getting trade instruction in 1914.⁵⁶ It was a pattern to be perpetuated in the two decades between the wars. By 1939 a limited number of junior technical schools were in operation over the country, higher and ordinary certificates and diplomas were introduced in various technical fields from 1921 onwards, and the day release scheme was steadily expanded, but Lord Eustace Percy's vision in 1930, recorded by Argles, of 'a really coherent educational road' from elementary to technical college⁵⁷ was nowhere near fulfilment at the start of the second world war. Macclesfield Evening Institute, continuing on its pre-first world war lines, built up its numbers and expanded its instruction in the years immediately after the war. In the 1924-25 session engineering science, engineering mathematics, and engineering drawing were being offered at first and second year levels, and a four year course in dyeing and chemistry was well attended.⁵⁸ In March 1925 course enrolments numbered 323 technical, 142 domestic, and 328 commercial students - but it must be borne in mind that these figures do not show how many students were registered for more

55. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/2, p.114.

56. M. Argles, South Kensington to Robbins (1964), p.65.

57. Argles, p.69.

58. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/2, p.124.

than one course. Attendance averaged about two-thirds of enrolment in each department, but contraction had already begun. The fifty classes in this session were eleven less than in 1924, and by 1927 the industrial depression had caused the engineering courses to be abandoned, whilst numbers overall were reduced to 386, of which 83 were school leavers.⁵⁹ In this climate there was no hope of radical developments. A Board of Education inspection report comments on the out-of-date equipment and inadequate accommodation at this time.⁶⁰ There was some regeneration in the mid-thirties, however. In 1932 Dr. George Beach, well on in his seventies in age, resigned the superintendency, on the grounds of ill-health, after 26 years in the post - and 66 years in teaching.⁶¹ The Evening Institute could be said to be largely his creation, and within its limits it was efficiently run. H.M.I. in 1927 recorded, 'his zeal and experience bring success'.⁶² The post was filled immediately with the appointment of Solomon Lawton who, as secretary to the Higher Education Committee, had worked closely for twenty years with his predecessor. The appointment was made with the aim of preserving the continuity of the Evening School's work, and there was little appreciable change of policy. There are, however, indications of a rise in the standard of work, although not necessarily all due to the change in leadership. There had been a marked increase in the number of students entering from the central and secondary schools in the 1920s. In 1927 approximately one-third of the total came from this educational sector;⁶³ and at the lower end academically concentration

59. P.R.O., ED114/45, p.3.

60. P.R.O., ED114/45, pp.2,7.

61. Cheshire R.O., CED7/79/3, p.37.

62. P.R.O., ED114/45, p.2.

63. P.R.O., ED114/45, p.3.

on the continuation classes - which had been changed to preliminary classes - was obviated with the abolition of exemptions to the fourteen year school leaving age in 1922. Another indication of rising standards is seen in the quality of the staff, almost all of whom had the appropriate professional qualifications: M.Sc., B.Sc., A.M.I.E.E., etc. H.M.I. congratulated the L.E.A. on the calibre of the teachers in 1927, 'an excellent body of men and women'. No O.N.C. or H.N.C. courses were introduced in the period leading up to the second world war, as might have been, the certificate being attainable through part time study, but in the 1933-4 session a matriculation course, covering English literature, mathematics, French, history and geography, appeared on the prospectus.⁶⁴ In January 1933 there were 440 individual students on roll, attendance averaging 849; in October 1934 the numbers rose to 485 with an average attendance of 1,232; and the 1934-5 session attracted the largest attendance for fifteen years with 544 individual students.⁶⁵ Engineering was back on the prospectus and, perhaps indicative of a more hopeful economic climate, gifts were received from three firms of new machines, including the latest Jacquard silk weaving loom.⁶⁶ A grocery course was also on offer. (Table XXXIX). In 1936, at the request of the Silk Manufacturers' Association, hosiery knitting was brought in, and on the representations of the Motor Traders' Association a class in motor engineering was included, the gift of a motor car following, to be broken down for instructional purposes.⁶⁷

The School of Art continued to operate alongside the Evening Institute unchanged in its aim - the advancement of industrial arts

64. Cheshire R.O., CED7/79/3, p.63.

65. Cheshire R.O., CED7/79/3, pp.57, 81, 93.

66. Cheshire R.O., CED7/79/3, p.69.

67. Cheshire R.O., CED7/79/3, pp.102, 115.

Table XXXIXCourses at the Macclesfield EveningInstitute, 1934-35

1. Preliminary Technical and Rural: English, drawing, calculations, woodwork, P.T.(boys).
2. Preparatory Technical: English, practical mathematics, practical drawing, science.
3. Building: Building geometry, construction, and calculations, carpentry and joinery, brickwork, masonry, and concreting, woodworking, plumbing, gas-fitting.
4. Engineering: Engineering mathematics, drawing, workshop processes, power development and transmission.
5. Chemistry: Silk dyeing, chemistry.
6. Textile: Textile mathematics, mechanics, fibres and silk throwing, textile science.
7. Grocery: Grocery and provisions, commercial arithmetic, book-keeping, methods of business.
8. Matriculation and Modern languages.
9. Commercial: Junior, senior, advanced, including mercantile law, company law, secretarial practice, history, accounts and auditing, modern languages.
10. Domestic: Cookery, English, P.T., needlework.
11. Preliminary, preparatory, and junior courses mainly for day school leavers under 16 years of age.

Source: Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/2, pp.3,7,9,13,14.

and crafts - and with little alteration in content of courses or organization. Drawing, painting, modelling were its main departments, and in 1928-9 it had 171 pupils, of whom more than two-thirds were boys.⁶⁸ The School was still geared closely to the silk industry, supplying a six year course calculated to provide complete training in textile design and weaving.⁶⁹ Unlike the Evening Institute it had a full time headmaster whose staff comprised one full time assistant teacher, a weaving demonstrator and tackler, and seven part time teachers.⁷⁰ In 1936 it had 180 students, including ten full time day students, seven of whom came from outside Macclesfield, and 18 part time day pupils, eleven from outside the town.⁷¹ In addition to its main work, English and calculations were taught to a class of twenty school leavers who attended three evenings per week for a preliminary Art course. As H.M. Inspectors noted in a report for that year, apart from this group classes were small, and there was a lot of individual teaching and studying. The Board's officials noted that there was a steady demand from the silk trade for ex-students, but they felt that the school was running down, resting on past achievements.⁷² They blamed partly the totally inadequate and depressing building, seeing a need for the school to extend its training to include spheres outside the silk world, which was the dominant influence on its provision, but acknowledging that lack of accommodation put almost insuperable difficulties in the way. An overhaul of premises and equipment was 'most essential', concluded the

68. Cheshire R.O., CED7/79/3, pp.4,53.

69. Cheshire R.O., CED7/79/3, p.83.

70. P.R.O., ED114/44, p.3.

71. P.R.O., ED114/44, p.5.

72. P.R.O., ED114/44, p.10.

report, to get rid of much out-of-date material and to facilitate the structure of a more modern programme.⁷³

It was after the Board of Education report on the School of Art that education officials and concerned councillors, at county and borough level, began to discuss seriously the possibility of a new building to accommodate both further education establishments. Extensions had been mooted previously in view of the growing numbers at the Technical and Evening Institute, and the Corporation had bought land adjoining the Institute in 1929.⁷⁴ In January 1937 it was suggested that Macclesfield should give the plot to Cheshire County Council as the site for a new College of Technology, and the county authority responded to the proposals with interest.⁷⁵ The government had announced in its programme of educational development that £2 million would be available for technical education projects, and Cheshire Education Committee was eager to participate in the expansion foreshadowed. A scheme to build technical colleges at Macclesfield, and three other centres, for daytime technical and commercial instruction was included in the triennial report for 1934-37.⁷⁶ With all parties pressing the urgency of the matter, negotiations progressed steadily throughout 1937 and into 1938. There was a disadvantage, however, in the size of the plot, which was too small to allow for playing fields.⁷⁷ The Higher Education Committee recommended that the whole area should be bought up for what was now, definitely, to be a new College of Technology, and on 26 July 1939 it was arranged that the county council valuation officer should assess

73. P.R.O., ED114/44, pp.3,4,7,10.

74. Cheshire R.O., CED7/79/3, p.112.

75. Cheshire R.O., CED7/79/3, pp.122,125.

76. Cheshire R.O., CED /X/3, p.10.

77. Cheshire R.O., CED7/79/3, p.160.

its worth.⁷⁸ This, unfortunately, was the stage negotiations had reached when, as with the secondary school project, the outbreak of war put a stop to developments.

In addition to causing the abandonment, for the duration, of the ambitious plan to build a College of Technology, the war had an immediate effect on the Evening Institute in seriously reducing recruitment figures. In December 1939 textile classes, and some others, were discontinued because of low numbers.⁷⁹ At first glance one is tempted to link this with the diversification in Macclesfield's industrial structure occasioned by the war. Although, turning with the country as a whole to essential warwork, the silk trade prospered, the staple industry lost its monopoly in the labour market as engineering firms, and other sources of employment, moved into the town. It is hardly likely, however, that such changes would have been noticeable in the first three months of the war. More likely reasons responsible for the decline in evening class numbers at this early stage of the war period were blackout, overtime at work, recruitment, or expectation of recruitment, into the armed services, A.R.P. activities and other voluntary wartime occupations, and the general disruption to the established way of life and people's expectations. In the following session, 1940-41, a distinct change is seen in the attitude of the Higher Education Committee regarding the purpose of the Institute. From an instructional establishment geared to career prospects, the Evening School had come to be regarded as a necessary wartime amenity providing useful and recreative courses for the refreshment of a population living under the stress of war. The textile courses now offered were simple forms of weaving; useful

78. Cheshire R.O., CED7/79/3, p.199.

79. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/2, p.209.

skills, particularly for times of austerity, could be learned in homecraft and self help, mothercraft, gardening, horticulture, rug weaving; and dramatic art, elocution, and orchestral music were other non-vocational courses provided.⁸⁰

As in the earlier years of the century, in the inter-war period local employers supported the Technical and Evening Institute, encouraging their employees to attend and often paying the fees, but the expectation generally was that the student would give the time. Michael Le Guillou points out that in 1921 there were only 22,000 day students in technical schools throughout the country;⁸¹ and Harold Silver observes that the day release scheme embraced relatively few apprentices from industry up to the second world war.⁸² In Macclesfield the practice was barely known. As H.M. Inspectors recorded in 1936, painters and decorators sometimes allowed half a day per week, chiefly in winter, but in the silk industry there was nothing.⁸³ It was noted that the school authorities and local industry were considering day release to replace some of the evening classes, in the belief that students would be more receptive, but that appears to be as far as the move went. Possibly the considerations were linked to the move towards expansion of technical provision which was beginning to stir towards the end of the year. The existing facilities, based only in the School of Art, could not have supported a large scale project of daytime classes.

Technical education, reined back in the early 1900s through Morant's secondary education policy, made slow progress in the country

80. Cheshire R.O., CED7/82/2, p.213.

81. M. Le Guillou, 'Technical Education 1850-1914', in G. Roderick and M. Stephens (ed.), Where Did We Go Wrong? (Lewes, 1981), p.182.

82. P.R.O., ED114/44, p.5.

83. P.R.O., ED114/45, p.3.

generally throughout the first four decades of the twentieth century, with regional variations. Only in the later 1930s was there any widespread move towards technical education's expansion. Macclesfield was caught up in the movement to extend provision, and local industry reflected the contemporary increasing interest in day release for its trainee workers, but the initiative came too late to achieve concrete results before war imposed its clampdown. For a capable and persistent student the Technical and Evening Institute provided a means to advancement in technical and commercial education. There was help from the L.E.A., the Cheshire Education Committee, for the continuation of more advanced work beyond the limits of the local establishment. The 1927 Board of Education report noted that small numbers of students, usually in building, went on each year to the Manchester College of Technology.⁸⁴ For the most part, however, up to the second world war the Macclesfield Technical and Evening Schools filled the place of a further education establishment providing foundation courses in a limited number of areas at the lower level of expertise. Extension of its work to daytime courses and instruction at advanced levels had to wait until the period after the second world war.

84. P.R.O., ED114/45, p.3.

Conclusion

Conclusion

The years between the passing of the Balfour Education Act in 1902 and the 1944 Butler Act covered Macclesfield's career as a Part III local education authority. In many ways the town changed little over the period. Population, declining in the earlier decades, recovered by the end of the second world war to a figure comparable with that at the start of the century: the town boundaries were enlarged to include small peripheral areas, but the borough remained recognizable in size and shape; the civic leaders continued to come from the same field of interests, and often from the same families; and, although wartime exigencies brought into the town new engineering firms and other sources of employment in the early 1940s, the principal industry in 1944 was still silk. Changes were to come in this area in the post-war era, but the expectation that the town would pick up the threads at the end of the war where it had left off in 1939 is seen in the move of the Silk Trade Employers' Association in August 1945. Claiming that silk was as sound an industry as any in the British Isles, in association with the Higher Education Committee it issued a booklet entitled Silk as a Career. This was designed to publicize the courses at the Technical Institute and the School of Art, which had been in abeyance during the war, and to illustrate the promising prospects for those taking up work 'in the staple industry of the town'.¹ Not all citizens had confidence in the silk trade's ability

1. M.C.H., 24.viii.1945.

to support the borough, but even among the critics there was a ring of familiarity, a harking back. The call, 'Macclesfield must have new industries', headlined in the local press in October 1945, above the report of a town planning consultation meeting devoted to a discussion of the dangers of reliance on one trade, and attended by the mayor, councillors, and industrial and labour leaders,² echoed over the decades Colonel Brocklehurst's view, proclaimed in his election speeches in 1906; and the president of the Macclesfield and District Association of Building Trade Employers was repeating the colonel's very words when he told his audience in February 1945 that what the town had needed throughout his lifetime was an infusion of "new industries . . . (to) provide work for men".³

The apprehensions regarding the future prosperity of the borough were founded on hard experience. Although the two wartime periods had brought full order books, and there had been intermittent bursts of prosperity, the miseries of depressed trade, unemployment and short time had dogged the town for as long as most people could remember. Educational development in any place is linked, within the national system, to the demands and resources of the locality. In Macclesfield the growth of the public education service from 1902 to 1944 was controlled to a large extent by the social and economic pressures of an economically insecure and largely static community.

As an overall assessment of Macclesfield's educational progress in the period perhaps Tom Mellor's opinion is as valid as any.

2. M.C.H., 13.x.1944.

3. M.C.H., 2.ii.1945.

Mellor retired in June 1945 from the post he had held for twenty-three years as Secretary to the Education Committee. He had joined the Committee's clerical staff in a junior capacity in 1903 and, having 'come in' with the 1902 Act and finished with the 1944 Act, his career covered exactly the existence of the L.E.A. Many tributes were paid on his retirement to his enthusiasm and efficiency. His own summing up was that he had prepared many schemes of development but progress had not been what he would have wished.⁴

Mellor was referring to the frustrating years of his stewardship between the wars when government edicts, L.E.A. parsimony, site problems, parochial discord, religious interests and, finally, the outbreak of war had, at various times and in varying degrees, delayed and, in the end, foiled his schemes; but the issue of halting progress was of longer duration than this. For the whole of the period between 1902 and 1944 the continuing problem in Macclesfield was the standard of elementary school accommodation. From H.M.I. Ward's first blast in 1903 to the failure of the Buxton Road scheme just prior to the onset of the second world war, the state of the voluntary school buildings was a priority issue. Condemned as substandard at the start of the century the majority of the buildings - renovated in varying degrees - remained in use, forming a recurring topic of contention up to 1939, and the object of attack in 1944 when the chairman of the Education Committee, referring to the 'dingy and dismal' premises of some schools, designated one or two as 'slum property'.⁵ In 1935 the church schools accommodated 60% of the borough's senior children and approximately 78% of the junior and

4. M.C.H., 23.iii.1945.

5. M.C.H., 28.iv.1944.

infants.⁶ A new council school, Ash Grove Junior and Infant School, took in approximately 250 pupils in 1936 (rising to 320 in 1937), but there was no other appreciable change until after the second world war. In forty-two years three new buildings were erected - the two all-age council schools before the first world war, and the one for younger children late in the inter-war period. Whereas buildings are not the sole guide to, or requirement for, progress, the Macclesfield provision was an inhibiting factor in development. H.M.I. noted the deleterious effects of the lack of facilities for science, craft, and practical instruction, the distractions caused to classes working in rooms which were also thoroughfares, and disruptions caused by emergency measures arising out of defective premises.

In the pre-1914 era the saving of the church schools from enforced closure was motivated by sectarian fervour, supported by considerations of economy and local pride. The conflict illustrates the intense voluntaryist feeling still abounding among Anglicans at local level - although, as James Murphy points out, not at popular level.⁷ The conviction which, as Dr. Cruikshank has shown, resulted in the foiling of three Liberal attempts to abolish the dual system,⁸ was faithfully reflected in the Macclesfield experience.

After the war the violently partisan attitude abated but the frugal policy with regard to public spending, on the part of the Town Council and its committees, was a continuing characteristic and controlling factor in Macclesfield's elementary educational progress throughout the period. Apart from the standard of accommodation,

6. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.465.

7. Murphy, p.96.

8. Cruikshank, pp.93-111.

provision numerically was not entirely satisfactory for much of the time. In his criticism of the school buildings in 1935 H.M.I. Burney observed that in earlier years the L.E.A. had had difficulties in fitting its scholars into the available premises.⁹ The shortfall was always marginal or temporary, however, and adequate, if not satisfactory, solutions had been found, as in the case of Hurdsfield Church Street in 1915, when the roof threatened collapse, and the re-arrangements over the non-recognition of part of St. Paul's in 1928-29. With a contracting school population for most of the period there was no urgent need, at any point, to impel the L.E.A. to accept the expense of new building, and urgent need, as the Courier observed in 1919 - at the height of official and public enthusiasm for educational expansion, it should be noted - was the only acceptable reason for such a course. Regard for the interests of the rate-payers was offered to the Board of Education as an excuse for tardy action regarding current building problems in 1909. In 1938-39 the deferment and subsequent paring down of Mellor's re-development plan, to effect the saving of $1\frac{1}{4}$ d rate, echoed the plea. Seaborne and Lowe advance the view that provision of school buildings in the public sector was regulated by the principle of minimum accommodation necessary, incurring the lowest possible expenditure.¹⁰ There was certainly something of this attitude in Macclesfield's policy with regard to its elementary school provision for much of the period under review.

Although the pattern of accommodation altered relatively little in four decades, there were perceptible changes of attitude among those responsible for educational provision in Macclesfield, reflecting

9. Cheshire R.O., CED7/28/4, p.465.

10. Seaborne and Lowe, p.xvi.

current movements in the nation at large. Growing anxieties regarding the nation's fitness and its commercial competitiveness, combined with a rising demand for social justice, focussed public concern on the schooling of the nation's youth. The first world war marked a watershed, highlighting the problems and strengthening the call for action. In 1919 society had new aims and expectations and educational expansion was a major factor in its considerations. The changes most immediately noticeable in Macclesfield in the post-war era, were the disappearance of the sectarian spirit which had been such a feature of the earlier days, and the development in the Education Committee of a corporate confidence, with a more professional and open approach. As the 1920s moved on, it became apparent that the L.E.A., whilst still a conservative body, had turned from purely parochial preoccupations, and concern for the preservation of the old order, to a more outward-looking stance from which, albeit cautiously, it was prepared to consider innovation, with the proviso always, that it did not incur more than minimum expense. The change of attitude owed something to time and usage. In the early days of the 1902 reorganization the L.E.A. saw the Board of Education, with its constant demands for expensive action, as an alien threat to its independence. After seventeen years in operation, the machinery of administration and the relationship of its components - local and central - had been accepted as an integral part of the educational scene. Too, wartime conditions had brought added responsibilities and, perhaps most important, the 1918 Education Act had extended the powers of the L.E.A. and put greater demands on it.

Fisher's Education Act made a strong impression on Macclesfield educationists. The main practical effect of it arose from the

measure extending compulsory education to fourteen years without exception, which incurred for the Education Committee the responsibility for the provision of between 250 and 300 extra school places for seniors. The policy adopted for the solution of the problem, the opening of the Central School, owed much to the influence of the Association of Education Committees. This was perhaps the strongest formative influence in the thinking of the Macclesfield L.E.A. throughout the two decades between the wars. The secretary and, usually, the chairman attended conferences regularly, and the Macclesfield representatives were particularly impressed by such men as Manchester's Spurley Hey, the West Riding chairman, Percy Jackson, and James Graham of Leeds, who expounded on the topics of the day, and led the urban local authorities' resistance to the government's economy cuts. Professor Simon points to the growing pride of the L.E.A.s in their educational systems in the inter-war years.¹¹ Macclesfield, although not one of the pioneering authorities, reflected this feeling, and undoubtedly found support and inspiration in its association with the nationally representative body.

The Central School was the one educational innovation in Macclesfield in the inter-war period, the scheme being introduced by Mellor almost immediately following his appointment as secretary to the Education Committee and, fortunately involving no building and little expense, put into operation relatively quickly. Although early leaving was a problem, in many respects, the school was extremely successful and was held in high repute in the town. In

11. Simon, p.286.

two ways, however, it might be seen, possibly, to have held back overall progress. In the first place, it removed the pressure on school places - as was the intention - and, taking pride of place in the estimation of the L.E.A., it tended to mask the need for a thorough reorganization of provision for senior pupils. Secondly, it satisfied the local authority's sense of responsibility with regard to wider post-primary education, which was currently the priority topic generally. As H.M.I. Burney noted in 1931, and Mellor in 1932, opportunities for Macclesfield pupils to gain secondary places were very limited. The provision of the places was not the duty of the Part III authority, but there could have been greater pressure applied by it on the providing authority, Cheshire. Tardy progress on the first issue cannot, however, be blamed solely on the L.E.A. Responding to the general economic circumstances of the era, central policy played a critical part. At the time of the Central School negotiations there were severe limitations on educational spending, but these were in accord with Macclesfield's own policy of financial stringency, and had minimal effect on local decisions. At the end of the decade, however, having been galvanized into action by the Board of Education in 1927, the authority, strongly influenced by the Association of Education Committees, was applying itself zealously to a development scheme on Hadow lines. There was the customary apprehension regarding expenditure, and progress was halting, but a proposal was prepared for acceptance by the Board of Education when the government-imposed ban on school building arrested developments for four and a half years, and snuffed out the local authority's initiative. The government action was crucial. When the restrictions were lifted in October 1936 the authority had lost its impetus and, with the

series of delays caused by the intervention of the Bishop of Chester, the official complaint of the St. Paul's dissidents, and the problem of the site, there was insufficient time for the completion of the development plans before the start of the second world war caused all schemes to be shelved.

The problem of school accommodation shadowed the educational scene in Macclesfield from the early years of the century, but there were other developments. In contrast to the large number of individuals and interests involved in that issue before the first world war, one man was mainly responsible for effecting the progress made in the sphere of child welfare. The career of John Hedley Marsh provides an example of the effect one person can have on public affairs. The operation of the service was subject to the same paring down as other sectors of educational provision in the borough. In 1929 Dr. Muriel Bywater, assistant to the Board of Education's Chief Medical Officer, criticized the follow-up work which was hampered, she claimed, by a shortage of school nurses.¹² Nevertheless, in its provision of the Pierce Street centre and the remedial services associated with it, the authority, stimulated into action by its forceful school medical officer, showed up favourably against the background of development generally, in areas of like size and circumstances. The building up of the school health service was an integral part of the life's work of a man who was dedicated to the ideal of a healthy community. Marsh was to the forefront in his profession in his views on public health, and he had the ability to get things done. His drive was noticeably missed when he was no

12. Cheshire R.O., CED7/32, p.68.

longer on the scene, and it is surely a measure of his stature that today, more than fifty years after his death, numerous inhabitants of the town can recount impressions and anecdotes, from first or second hand, of this forceful character.

As a Part III authority the Macclesfield L.E.A. was restricted in its responsibility to the area of elementary education. It would seem to have been an in-built weakness of the 1902 legislation that, in divorcing elementary from secondary education with this category of administrative organs, interest was focussed on the former to the exclusion of the latter, in the areas concerned. Before the dissolution of the School Board, the Baptist minister, E.A. Hobby, greeted the 1902 Act with enthusiasm, as an avenue for the promotion of secondary education,¹³ but in the deliberations of the new controlling body the issue was relegated very much to the background, particularly after the bursar scheme removed pupil teacher training entirely from the elementary sector. Secondary education was the province of Cheshire County Council and the Macclesfield L.E.A. was content to leave the initiative to that body. Interest grew in the inter-war period, when the education of the adolescent was to the forefront in public concern, but up to the later 1930s the entry of borough children to the secondary schools via the free or special place scheme was limited. An ex-High School pupil recalls that she and her husband were the only recipients of scholarships to the secondary schools in their respective year groups at Bryon Street Junior School in the early 1930s, and there was no award to the school in the year in between;¹⁴ and entries in the log book of

13. M.C.H., 17.i.1903.

14. Oral evidence: Mrs. E. Cleaver, Pott Shrigley.

Mill Street Methodist School, customarily top of the scholarship league, show that, whereas thirty or more pupils might pass on to the Central School each year, between two and six was the quota for the grammar and high schools combined.¹⁵ The point was made several times in Education Committee meetings that there was little demand for secondary education in Macclesfield as parents preferred the Central School, but it is indicative, it would seem, of lack of opportunity rather than choice in the 1930s that in 1944, under more prosperous conditions, both secondary schools were overcrowded, the girls' school (including the junior department) having reached 521 pupils.¹⁶ In the later war years, as in the first world war, improved wages and full employment resulted in a marked rise in the demand for greater educational opportunities, highlighting an unfulfilled need in the preceding period. In August 1944 it was recorded that many promising scholars were being refused admission to the two secondary schools because of lack of accommodation,¹⁷ and in October of the same year there were more fifteen year olds than ever before staying on at the Central School.¹⁸

Internally the secondary schools had developed considerably in the four decades from 1902, in educational standards, as well as numbers. In 1912-13 there were 14 boys and 20 girls of sixteen years and upwards, in the two schools. In 1944 King's School (the grammar school, re-named in 1939) broke its own record when 21 Higher School Certificates and 75 School Certificates were gained, whilst the girls, in 1945 with a more modest 6 at the higher level,

15. Cheshire R.O., SL79/4.

16. M.C.H., 28.vii.1944, 20.x.1944.

17. M.C.H., 4.viii.1944.

18. M.C.H., 20.x.1944.

achieved 45 successes in the lower examination.¹⁹ Still, in 1944, the schools, under Cheshire's aegis and taking in a sizeable proportion of out-of-town pupils, were largely outside the borough's educational circle, but from 1938 there was a link through the boys' headmaster, T. T. Shaw, who, coming as a stranger to the area, entered into the town's life with zest, and was member of the Education Committee until it dissolved in 1945.

As with the secondary schools, the Technical and Evening Institute fell within the province of the Cheshire county authority. Unlike the secondary schools, however, this institution, entrusted by the county to a local sub-committee, the Macclesfield Higher Education Committee, served basically the borough and the borough's interests. The Technical School, founded before the turn of the century in the sanguine belief of the town's manufacturers that herein lay the answer to part, at least, of the silk trade's ills, did not fulfil its destined role. Although, under the efficient administration - for much of the period - of George Beach, commercial and technical classes were organized, enabling a competent and determined student to progress to advanced work, for the most part instruction was at the lower levels of expertise. With its tradition of early school leaving, the town had a large pool of sketchily educated youthful workers to cater for, and almost up to the mid-1920s the evening continuation side played the major role. It is in the deliberations of the Higher Education Committee that concern among the town's manufacturing and educational leaders for the low educational standards of the young work force is seen most clearly. There was a

19. M.C.H., 28.vii.1944, 12.x.1945.

genuine desire to improve the level, and there were many individual and corporate gestures of encouragement made to that end, but the expectation was that education would be a leisure time pursuit. Up to the start of the second world war there was little interest shown in day release, and the Technical Institute continued to provide evening classes only, throughout the period. The failure of technical education to expand in Macclesfield reflected the slow development nationally. The borough and the county authorities were eager to take advantage of the government's attempt to stimulate activity in this sphere in the late 1930s but, as with the elementary schools scheme, the move to build a college of further education in the town was thwarted by the outbreak of war. Mellor was clerk to the Higher Education Committee, too, at this time. It must have been disheartening to see yet another of his hopes for the borough come to nought.

Since progress is seen in the positive decisions of the L.E.A. rather than in the efforts put into forward movements which failed. Mellor's part in the development of Macclesfield's educational service only became apparent as his career - and the career of the authority - drew to a close, and appraisals were being made. His own remark concerning the failure of the development schemes indicates the gap he saw between his own aspirations for the borough and the realization of them. Councillor H. Bloor underlined the difference when, paying tribute to the retiring Secretary, he declared that had the town "followed Mellor's progressive views it would not have been left behind as it had".²⁰ A regular attender of the conferences

20. M.C.H., 1.vi.1945.

of the Association of Education Committees, Mellor doubtless kept abreast of current developments and gained professional confidence through his involvement with this body.

In the second world war, as in the war of 1914-18, education became a focal point of keen public interest, arising out of the clamour for change which had been growing in the inter-war period. Again as in the earlier conflict, new legislation gave expression to society's hopes for the future. The Butler Act, which was entered on the statute book in August 1944, put an end to Macclesfield as a Part III authority. The borough did not relinquish its hold easily. The enthusiasm with which it had seized the opportunity in 1903 to maintain local control of its elementary schools was undiminished in 1944. Whilst the Bill was in its early stages in Parliament, attempts were being made locally to ensure the retention of part, at least, of the borough's autonomy by becoming an excepted districted.²¹ When the effort was seen to have failed, under the new law, a strong protest was sent to the Minister of Education concerning the provisions governing divisional education areas.²² Cheshire County Council was accused of favouring retention of power rather than delegation in discretionary areas, and the borough complained that there had been no consultation. Macclesfield had no alternative course open to it, but the county authority's administrative scheme under the Act was accepted only under protest.²³

Thus, on 27 October 1945 Macclesfield Education Committee held its final meeting, and the borough became No. 10 Executive Committee of the Cheshire L.E.A. The chairman, Alderman F. Wood, who had

21. M.C.H., 28.iv.1944.

22. M.C.H., 20.x.1944.

23. M.C.H., 27.x.1944.

served on the Committee for forty years, conducted proceedings. One of his final tributes was to the teachers of the authority. It was 'more satisfying than anything', he felt, to see how the 'scholastic profession had tried to model child life'.²⁴ The warmth of his reference was in marked contrast to the curt rejection in 1907 of teacher representation on the Committee, and to the attitude of one member in 1919 who saw teachers as recalcitrant 'servants'. It was a measure of the rise in status of the profession over the period. As Dr. Cruikshank shows, the teachers and their largest association, the N.U.T., had become an influential force in educational politics in the years between the wars,²⁵ and the war years, bringing increased responsibilities, had enhanced their standing.

The outstanding characteristic of Macclesfield's educational development was the slow rate of change. It is, perhaps to be expected that a small, relatively isolated town, with a precarious livelihood, should be in the rear of innovatory movements. Economic and social conditions were calculated to perpetuate the established pattern. With no new industry introduced into the town there was no infusion of new ideas through that avenue, and with a static or slightly declining population, the borough, numerically, had no compelling accommodation problems to inject urgency, at any time, into its educational policy. Accustomed over generations, as the town was, to the practice of child workers, among pupils, parents, and employers, educational expectations were low. It is not surprising, therefore, that the outstanding feature of educational policy was caution - if not outright resistance - with regard to

24. M.C.H., 1.xi.1945.

25. Cruikshank, pp.128-131.

change. It was not an atmosphere to promote visionary schemes, and it did not. Ideas had to permeate into the town's consciousness, and the process was slow. Its limited status as a Part III authority was also a constraining influence on the L.E.A. Confined to the elementary sector it was natural for the Committee to interest itself in the schools as they were, rather than in the wider scene involving higher education. Thus, in the early years the old-established partisanship was fiercely perpetuated, and between the wars the Central School became the Committee's pride to the exclusion of broader secondary considerations.

Slowly, throughout the four decades, attitudes did change, and new ideas gained credence; and in official quarters the Committee's secretary played his part here. It was on Mellor's initiative that the central school idea was introduced. Outside local interests, the Association of Education Committees had the greatest influence on the L.E.A.s deliberations, and its conferences inspired the opening of the central school, the one speedy decision of the Education Committee - although it is doubtful whether the execution of the plan would have been so swift if there had not been a suitable building available and little expenditure needed. When the war started in 1939 the ideal of a school leaving age of fifteen years, with secondary education for all senior pupils, had been accepted officially. Government policy, with its long clampdown in the early 1930s, must carry a measure of responsibility for the failure to translate plans into practicalities but, throughout the period, the L.E.A., ever reluctant to spend, was prodded into action only by the demands of the central authority. The large local authorities might set the pace and initiate progressive schemes, as

Professor Simon indicates,²⁶ but in Macclesfield, without the insistence of the Board of Education, it is difficult to visualize positive action. Seaborne and Lowe quote Karl Otto, writing in 1966, '. . . schools are . . . the visible symbols of the educational conceptions of their time'.²⁷ On this reckoning, Macclesfield had considerable leeway to make up. Perhaps Tom Mellor had something of this in mind when he referred to the 1944 Education Act, 'from which great things are expected'.²⁸

26. Simon, p.286.

27. Seaborne and Lowe, p.xv.

28. M.C.H., 23.iii.1945.

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