



ENGLISH GRAMMAR SCHOOLS
BEFORE AND AFTER 1902

The legal and administrative process by which
(the great majority of) Endowed Grammar Schools
in England were assimilated into the system of
publicly financed Secondary Education developed
under the Balfour/Morant Act of 1902, considered
in its educational and social content - 1864-1928.

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Table of Contents

Chapter I	Introduction	1-22
Chapter II	Secondary Education in England Before the Act of 1902	23-42
Chapter III	The Changing Social Matrix	43-57
Chapter IV	The Government and Management of Secondary Schools in England Before and After the Education Act 1902	58-73
Chapter V	Teacher Training	74-95
Chapter VI	Curriculum	96-120
Chapter VII	Finance	121-142
Chapter VIII	The Direct Grant Schools	143-157
CONCLUSION		158-164

Appendices

- Appendix I - Public Record Office Class No. 12/307 B of Ed. File No. S609 B of Ed. List 61 HMSO (11) 28350 Confidential List of Schools eligible for grant in England 1914-1915 (eighth issue) With Supplementary List 165-243
- Appendix II - Table Showing the year and Number of New Schemes of Government based on: Public Record Office Class No. 12/89 B of Ed. File No. S604 B of Ed. List No. 53 HMSO 10167 Preliminary List of Secondary Schools in England revised 7.4.1908 244-246
- Appendix III - Graph showing overall number of Secondary Schools in England 1907-1926 within the purview of the Board of Education divided according to origins 247-248
- Appendix IV - Table showing numbers of pupils receiving Secondary Education either as fee-payers or as pupils receiving education under Board of Education Free Place Regulations 1907 249-263
- Appendix V - Board of Education Regulations for Secondary Schools 1907 264-299
- Appendix VI - Board of Education Circular 568 8th July 1907 300-305
- Appendix VII - a) Notes on the Various Types of Pupil-Teachership
b) Table Showing the Changing Pattern in the Origins of Intending Teachers 306-308
- Appendix VIII - Education Act 1918 Grant Regulations No. 4 309-312
- Appendix IX - Board of Education Circular 1259 2nd May 1922 313-315
- Appendix X - Board of Education Circular 1381 23 July 1926 316-318
- Appendix XI - Table showing Numbers of Secondary Schools and Board of Education Expenditure 319-320
- Appendix XII - Table showing Numbers of Pupils Receiving Secondary Education 1914-1915 with Reference to Free Places and Grant Monies 321-322
- Appendix XIII - Table showing Increasing Expenditure on Secondary Education 1913-1923 323-324
- Appendix XIV - An Analysis of Direct Grant Schools According to their Geographical Distribution (with accompanying map and explanatory notes) 325-328

<u>Appendix XV</u> - A Comparison of Numbers of Grant Aided Secondary Schools and Secondary School Pupils 1914-1915 and 1928-1929	329-331
<u>Appendix XVI</u> - An Analysis of Board of Education List 60 1928-1929 Showing the Distribution of Secondary Schools and SEcondary School Pupils.	332-334
List of Office Holders at the Board of Education	335
Bibliography	336-346

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study is to determine the way in which the ancient endowed schools developed as a result of the changed circumstances resulting from the Education Act 1902. The study also explores the increasing involvement of the local authorities in the provision of secondary education as well as the ways in which the Board of Education influenced the supply of secondary education by the provided and non-provided schools.

The Education Act 1902, though not universally popular, was the culmination of great effort on the part of educationists, administrators and legislators. This legislation had profound and lasting effects in both social and educational terms, providing the corner stone for much of the ensuing reform in England.

At the outset 304 ancient endowed schools were identified. These had been examined and reported on by the Schools Inquiry Commission (1868) and subsequently came within the purview of the Board of Education (1914-1915). Many of these schools enjoyed a new lease of life, benefitting greatly from the increased financial assistance afforded them by the Board and in many cases by the Local Education Authorities as well. These ancient endowed schools provided a nucleus of secondary education in 1902 and an administrative model for the new secondary schools provided by the Local Education Authorities. The supply of provided schools increased steadily and after 1915 the majority of secondary school pupils in England were being educated in them.

The evidence shows that the majority of ancient endowed schools relinquished their autonomy by conforming to the Regulations for Secondary Schools 1907; this they did to benefit from the enhanced grants provided by the Board of Education. While these schools ensured their financial viability, they became almost indistinguishable from the provided schools and in the process developed in a way not intended by their founders.

A thorough going reform of the funding of secondary education initiated as a result of the Education Act 1918 and refined as a consequence of the Committee on National Expenditure (1922) was completed in 1928 when non-provided schools chose either to become schools maintained by the Local Education Authorities or schools receiving their financial assistance directly from the Board of Education. The latter became the so-called "Direct Grant Schools".

It was found that fifty-nine ancient endowed schools adopted "Direct Grant Status" thereby retaining their own unmistakable individual ethos. Many of these schools remained within the purview of the central authority for four decades until the Direct Grant was abolished in 1975.

It was concluded that the policy of giving the oversight of secondary education to a central authority, while requiring Local Education Authorities to improve the provision of secondary education in areas where it was inadequate, enabled existing secondary schools to develop in line with Board of Education requirements. This resulted in local needs

being catered for and a rich variety in English secondary education unknown in either France or Germany. English secondary education after 1902 enjoyed a flexibility which enabled the ancient endowed schools to develop in the way that suited them best.

Author's Statement

The author certifies that the writing of this thesis and the original research were her own undertaking and that to the best of her knowledge and belief it does not contain material previously written or published by another person except when due reference is made in the text.

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"The value of education is often overestimated by those who have had little of it and underestimated by those who have had much of it".

L.A. Selby-Bigge, The Board of Education. London 1929 p.66