

STATEMENT

TUESDAY 12 APRIL 1983

HOUSE OF COMMONS

REFORM OF SCHOOL CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT IN SCOTLAND  
STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE FOR SCOTLAND  
(MR GEORGE YOUNGER)

WITH PERMISSION, MR SPEAKER, I WISH TO MAKE A STATEMENT ABOUT SECONDARY EDUCATION IN SCOTLAND.

ONE OF MY MAIN CONCERNS SINCE COMING INTO OFFICE HAS BEEN TO ADVANCE A DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME DESIGNED TO INTRODUCE RADICAL NEW ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CURRICULUM AND ASSESSMENT OF ALL 14 TO 16 YEAR OLDS AT SCHOOL IN SCOTLAND, BUILDING ON THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE MUNN AND DUNNING REPORTS PUBLISHED IN 1977. I GAVE FULL DETAILS OF OUR PROGRAMME IN RESPONSE TO MY HON FRIEND THE MEMBER FOR ARGYLL ON 31 MARCH 1980.

I AM GLAD TO HAVE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE STERLING EFFORTS OF ALL THOSE WHO HAVE TAKEN ON THE BURDEN OF THE DEVELOPMENT WORK SINCE THEN AND WHO HAVE ENSURED THE SUCCESS OF THE PROGRAMME. THE RESULTS OF THEIR WORK WERE FULLY REPORTED IN THE CONSULTATIVE PAPER "THE MUNN AND DUNNING REPORTS: FRAMEWORK FOR DECISION", WHICH I PUBLISHED IN SEPTEMBER LAST YEAR. I RECEIVED SEVERAL HUNDRED COMMENTS UPON THAT PAPER AND I AM VERY GRATEFUL FOR THE TIME AND THOUGHT WHICH WAS PUT INTO THEM. THE RESPONDENTS OVER-WHELMINGLY SUPPORTED THE PRINCIPLE OF THE INTRODUCTION OF THE ARRANGEMENTS PROPOSED IN THE PAPER. I HAVE CONSIDERED THEIR COMMENTS AND I HAVE DECIDED TO IMPLEMENT THE NEW SYSTEM ALONG THE FOLLOWING LINES.

I BELIEVE THAT THE 8 MODES OF STUDY PROPOSED BY THE MUNN COMMITTEE PROVIDE A CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK WHICH ALL SCHOOLS SHOULD ADOPT, TAKING ACCOUNT OF THE PARTICULAR NEEDS OF EACH SCHOOL AND ITS PUPILS. WITHIN THIS FRAMEWORK ALL PUPILS SHOULD STUDY ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE, AND THERE WILL BE CONSIDERABLE SCOPE FOR PUPIL CHOICE

OF OTHER SUBJECTS. I ACCEPT THE DUNNING COMMITTEE'S PROPOSAL FOR ONE CERTIFICATE FOR ALL PUPILS BASED ON THE 3 LEVELS OF SYLLABUS OF FOUNDATION, GENERAL AND CREDIT. PUPILS WILL BE ASSESSED AGAINST PERFORMANCE STANDARDS RELATED TO THE SYLLABUSES THEY ARE STUDYING. PRACTICAL SKILLS WILL BE ASSESSED INTERNALLY AT ALL LEVELS WHERE APPROPRIATE AND INTERNAL ASSESSMENT WILL ALSO BE USED FOR OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SYLLABUS OF THE NEW FOUNDATION LEVEL COURSES. IN THE LIGHT OF FURTHER EXPERIENCE OF THE USE OF INTERNAL ASSESSMENT FOR CERTIFICATION PURPOSES, I SHALL AT A LATER DATE REVIEW THE PLACE OF INTERNAL ASSESSMENT IN RELATION TO ALL THREE SYLLABUS LEVELS. MY AIM IN ANY SUCH REVIEW WILL BE TO MAINTAIN AND INDEED RAISE STANDARDS AT ALL LEVELS.

MY CONSULTATIVE PAPER LAST AUTUMN SET OUT A 4-YEAR IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME COVERING MOST OF THE SUBJECTS IN THE SCHOOL CURRICULUM. SEVERAL RESPONDENTS COMMENTED THAT THIS WAS TOO SLOW. IN VIEW OF THIS EVIDENT ENTHUSIASM TO PROCEED MORE QUICKLY AND IN ORDER TO MINIMISE THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD I HAVE THEREFORE DECIDED TO IMPLEMENT THE NEW SYSTEM IN THREE YEARS RATHER THAN FOUR. THIS WILL BE DONE BY BRINGING INTO THE THIRD YEAR OF THE PROGRAMME ALL THOSE SUBJECTS ORIGINALLY PLANNED FOR THE FOURTH. IN ADDITION TO THESE CHANGES I HAVE DECIDED TO INTRODUCE GERMAN AT ALL 3 SYLLABUS LEVELS AND TO INTRODUCE ITALIAN, RUSSIAN AND SPANISH AT GENERAL AND CREDIT LEVELS IN THE THIRD YEAR.

ONE IMPORTANT ASPECT OF IMPLEMENTATION IS THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT THE PROGRAMME. IN THE CONSULTATIVE PAPER WE STATED THAT THE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME AND OTHER PRIORITY CALLS ON STAFFING COULD BE CARRIED OUT WITH OVERALL NATIONAL STAFFING ABOUT 4% TO 5% OVER THE BASIC LEVELS SET OUT IN WHAT IS FAMILIARLY KNOWN AS THE RED BOOK. I REMAIN OF THE VIEW THAT STAFFING AT ABOUT THIS LEVEL WILL BE SUFFICIENT ONCE THE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME HAS BEEN COMPLETED. NEVERTHELESS I RECOGNISE THAT THERE WILL BE AN EXTRA BURDEN UPON TEACHERS DURING THE TRANSITIONAL PERIOD, PARTICULARLY NOW THAT WE HAVE SPEEDED UP THE PROGRAMME. I INTEND THEREFORE TO PROVIDE FOR STAFFING ABOUT 5% TO 6% OVER RED BOOK/<sup>\*</sup>PERIOD. I SHALL ALSO BE WILLING TO CONSIDER APPLICATIONS BY EDUCATION AUTHORITIES FOR REDUCTIONS IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL YEAR FOR IN-SERVICE TRAINING AND SYLLABUS

\* LEVELS, EXCLUDING THE PROBATIONER ALLOWANCE DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION

DEVELOPMENT RELATED TO IMPLEMENTATION. WE WILL CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE PROGRAMME THROUGH SECONDMENTS OF DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS, WHICH HAVE BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL IN PREVIOUS WORK.

THE COMMENTS I RECEIVED FROM BODIES REPRESENTING PARENTS EMPHASISED THE NEED TO ENSURE THAT PARENTS FULLY UNDERSTAND AND ARE FULLY CONSULTED ABOUT THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS. I APPRECIATE THE ANXIETIES WHICH PARENTS WILL HAVE, PARTICULARLY IF THEIR CHILDREN ARE IN THE THIRD AND FOURTH YEARS OF SECONDARY EDUCATION DURING THE IMPLEMENTATION PERIOD. THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS WILL BE WIDELY PUBLICISED AND EXPLAINED TO PARENTS CHILDREN AND EMPLOYERS.

DETAILS OF OUR PLANS ARE SET OUT IN A CIRCULAR WHICH MY DEPARTMENT IS SENDING TO EDUCATION AUTHORITIES TODAY, COPIES OF WHICH HAVE BEEN PLACED IN THE LIBRARY. I HOPE TO MAKE FURTHER ANNOUNCEMENTS IN THE COURSE OF THE SUMMER.

THE MUNN AND DUNNING COMMITTEES RECOMMENDED MAJOR CHANGES IN SECONDARY EDUCATION. OUR PLANS OFFER ALL PUPILS FOR THE FIRST TIME A COMMON CURRICULUM STRUCTURE AND COURSES SUITABLE FOR ALL LEVELS OF ABILITY LEADING TO A SINGLE CERTIFICATE FOR ALL. THE IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME IS A MAJOR UNDERTAKING AND I DO NOT UNDER-ESTIMATE THE HEAVY BURDEN OF WORK STILL TO BE DONE, BUT I AM CONFIDENT FROM THE COMMENTS I HAVE RECEIVED THAT ALL INVOLVED ARE ANXIOUS TO SET ABOUT THE TASK AND WILL ENSURE THAT IT WILL SUCCEED. TOGETHER WITH THE PROGRAMME RECENTLY ANNOUNCED IN "16-18s IN SCOTLAND: AN ACTION PLAN", THIS REFORM WILL BRING ABOUT MAJOR IMPROVEMENTS IN THE EDUCATION OF ALL YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCOTLAND.

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