

on the ability or sympathy of a teacher for so important a choice. Finances do influence the choice of school to a certain extent; scholarships in graded amounts are awarded by county councils and by the schools.\* But the greatest determinant is the social sense of the parents. A secondary school, because it costs money, because it offers a preparation for middle-class labor, and because it is traditionally more acceptable, is infinitely preferable to a vocational school.

In a statement on the setting-up of comprehensive schools, Dr. Hillery recognized the judgment which has been placed on the vocational school:

I felt that the vocational stream had to be extended to a three-year course instead of two, to bring it up to a level with the Intermediate Certificate, and so that the examination would equal the Intermediate in the minds of the people, equal it in esteem as well as in standard.

And what is the comprehensive school? It is a unit which will not eliminate vocational and secondary courses, but will combine them by offering a hard core of subjects which are now shared by the two areas, e.g. Irish, English, history. Pupils will be able to choose additional subjects from an elective program which might include Latin, Greek, woodwork, or rural science. The schools will be built to accommodate not less than 150 pupils from within a ten-mile radius. The proposed administration system is interesting; there will be a managerial group of three: a representative of the religious authority in the area, one from the Vocational Education Committee, and one from the Department of Education.

It is too early to view the efficacy of these schools, but the idea, in spite of some practical difficulties, comes so close to offering a panacea that it deserves more serious consideration than it has yet received.

#### Secondary Level

Every branch of education has its own problems but, of course, I was most interested in those of the secondary schools. By comparing certain areas with American standards, I could see room, not for imitation, but certainly for experiment. Let's just take a quick look into pigeonholes labelled "faculty" and "curriculum."

#### Faculty

I suppose staff rooms in schools in any country are areas for expressions of discontent. But at least in Ireland the kinds of discontent are easily identifiable. Always there are complaints about salary but, in Irish staff rooms, complaints relate quite clearly to prestige. A secondary teacher must complete three years, sometimes four, for an arts degree. He is then required to take a year's course in education, complemented by a minimum of five classes a week of practice teaching, all unsalaried. For registration he needs a probationary year of teaching. For that year, he does receive a basic salary from the school, now a minimum of 250 pounds. Until a few years ago, no government salary at all was given for this year; now a "grant" of 200 pounds is awarded, so the prospective teacher can look forward to a grand total of 450 pounds per annum, not quite nine pounds a week, after four years of preparation. By comparison, national teachers, after a two-year preparation, receive a salary of 430 pounds for single men and women, and 505 pounds for married men. Therefore, many protests have been voiced to say that salary should reflect preparation and responsibility, as well as amount of work done. It would seem that the arbitration board, which had fixed a salary ratio between primary and secondary teaching scales, could produce a less controversial solution. The strongly supported and vociferous Irish National Teachers Organization is, to a large extent, responsible for the increased financial recognition given to its members. Lay secondary teachers, because their

\* Of the 2400 Council scholarships awarded in a recent year, 23 were used for technical schools, and 18 of those were to schools in the Dublin area.