

There is no central authority for technical instruction, except that the Science and Art Department has the power: (1.) of deciding what subjects can be reckoned as coming under the head of technical instruction; (2) of settling all questions as to the amount of the subsidy, as to the right of an institution to participate therein, as to the degree and method of representation of the local authority in the administrative committee of any subsidised institution; (3) of determining the conditions on which parliamentary subsidies can be granted for manual and technical instruction.

3.—LEGAL DEFINITION OF TECHNICAL INSTRUCTION.

"Technical instruction" is defined as "Instruction in the scientific and artistic principles applicable to industries and in the application of special branches of science and art to definite industries and occupations. It does not include instruction in the practice of a trade or manufacture or occupation, yet it does include instruction in the subjects of science and art for which the Science and Art Department gives subsidies, and all other kinds of education, including modern languages and commercial and agricultural subjects, which may be approved by the department. . . . The term "manual instruction" means instruction in the use of tools, in the processes of agriculture, and in modelling in clay, wood, or other material."

1. It will be seen that a distinction is made between general "professional," instruction and special, corresponding very nearly to "industrial" and "professional" education respectively.

2. The difference between a "professional" school and an apprenticeship workshop is not very definite. Where a doubt arises the law sets up a central authority, which will judge whether a given class or subject comes under the head of education or under that of apprenticeship. As a matter of fact, the Science and Art Department has had very little difficulty on that score.

But for the provision that the practice of a trade or industry cannot be taught in subsidised schools the Act would have encountered the opposition of all the working-men. It is recognised, however, that for some trades the theoretical and the practical teaching are almost inseparable, and therefore certain classes of "manual instruction" are subsidised, without being required to obtain the approval of the Science and Art Department.

3. Technical education is related in many ways to secondary education, and the Secondary Education Commission (report, Vol. i., 1895) maintains that it is a branch of secondary education. For it must come after primary education, since the trades require the preliminary knowledge imparted in the primary schools, especially in arithmetic, drawing, and elementary geometry. Again, if secondary education prepares some pupils for the higher education, it is most often a direct preparation for the business of life, as technical education is; with this difference: that technical education is a preparation not for an undefined career but for some definite trade or other occupation. The County Councils give a very wide meaning to the term "technical education," and the Science and Art Department makes it include even secondary-school subjects (except the literary and classical), excluding nothing that bears directly upon a student's preparation for the work of his calling.

4. Technical education stands related also to primary education, which it requires for a foundation. Great care is taken in England to emphasize the idea that technical education is not a substitute for primary education, but ought to rest upon it as a foundation.

4.—POWERS OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES.

1. What they can do for technical education:—

(1.) They can establish schools and classes. During the last five years they have taken over forty old schools, and founded ninety-four new ones, seventy of which are finished, the cost of the seventy being £968,000.

(2.) They can subsidise schools and classes, and this is the most frequent form of their intervention.

(3.) They can give scholarships or pay student's fees. As a matter of fact there are too many scholarships. The county of Bradford alone offers 232.

(4.) They can, if they deem it necessary, institute entrance examinations for the schools and classes which they establish or subsidise.

(5.) They can delegate their powers—except those of imposing taxation or raising loans—to committees, consisting in whole or in part of members of the local Council.

2. What they cannot do:—

(1.) They cannot pay for the technical education of children under thirteen years of age who have not finished the course of compulsory primary education. The law does not forbid the giving of this kind of instruction to such children, but the Education Department and the Science and Art Department provide the money required for that purpose, and the primary schools have not time for technical instruction in the strict sense.

(2.) They cannot assist a school of technical education that does not accept the "conscience clause."

3. Other rules: When making grants to schools which they have not themselves established, the local authorities must consider local needs, and must take account not only of the nature and quantity of the instruction—i.e., of the real worth of the school,—but also of its usefulness, so that an inferior school may acquire vested rights to subsidy, and if the subsidy is withdrawn may appeal to the Science and Art Department, though this right of appeal is seldom exercised. The Council which grants a subsidy to a non-official school must be represented on the committee of the school by special delegates, who need not be members of the Council. The subsidies received must be duly accounted for, and the managers are personally responsible for any amount applied to any purpose other than that for which it was granted. Schools that are carried on for pecuniary profit cannot receive grants.