

**HOW GOOD IS SCOTTISH EDUCATION
AND HOW GOOD IS THE CASE FOR CHANGE?⁽¹⁾**

Andrew McPherson

“Education has ramified so widely ... that any adequate survey of the whole field demands co-operative effort. Few, if any, can speak with authority on all departments of the subject.”⁽²⁾

This was written exactly seventy years ago in 1919, in a volume of essays entitled *Problems of National Education*. Like today, the contributors looked ahead to a period of momentous change introduced by legislation, in their case the Education (Scotland) Act of 1918. Unlike today, however, government and the educational world were then agreed on the fundamentals of change. Robert Munro, the Secretary of State for Scotland, himself provided the introduction to the volume. One doubts whether Mr Rifkind could have done the same for an analogous collection in 1989. Indeed, Conservative education policy for Scotland since 1987 has encountered opposition that is probably unprecedented in its depth and range.

It is worth recalling two features of the 1918 Act. First, it provided for the immediate raising of the school-leaving age to fifteen years, linking this to a system of compulsory part-time education and training to eighteen years. These measures were not effected at the time. Seventy years later, as we implement a two-year Youth Training Scheme (YTS), we are still some way from their realisation. And we have to recognise that our difficulty over the decades in achieving a satisfactory reconciliation of education with training has been so long-term as to point to structural problems that require structural solutions.

The other pertinent feature of the 1918 Act was that it replaced school boards with area education authorities. In doing this, it recognised the fruits of fifty years experience after 1872, namely that a system that divided local control between numerous local agencies was too fragmented to be either efficient or fair.

More than that, we can now see the 1918 Act as part of a growing movement towards state involvement in social and educational affairs that was to culminate in the welfare-state legislation of the Attlee Labour government. This movement affirmed two principles that commanded broad cross-party assent until the 1970s, but that are now rejected by the

present government. One principle was that the effect of the market on life chances should be limited, limited in the name of the rights of citizenship, but limited also in the name of national efficiency. Already by 1918 we had realised that the market alone could not deliver a population that was healthy, or educated, or civic-minded.

The other principle was of longer standing, given to us by high Victorian liberalism, itself influenced by the long history of Scottish democracy. And the principle was this: that public governmental institutions, whatever their day-to-day faults in practice might be, were intrinsically good, and were capable of improving the condition and the civic sensibility of the individual, whether this be done through public-health measures, work-place legislation, housing or education.⁽³⁾

Present government policies, including current educational legislation, are based on a rejection of the argument that citizens' rights and national efficiency are well served by the principles of the welfare state, and a rejection of the argument that government, or, more often, local government, can make things better. In education, the message in the 1980s has been that parents had better look to choosing, because government did not believe that it was possible to ensure parity between schools in quality of provision; that government no longer believed in the possibility of improvement through the comprehensive school system.

The subsequent growth in parental choice was born of the anxiety this message created. And this anxiety is now enshrined in the Self-Governing Schools etc (Scotland) Bill of 1989, which will allow schools to opt out of local-authority control. Consider the logic: Strathclyde Region is not considered competent to run, let us say, Paisley Grammar School; nor Lothian Region to run, let us say, the Royal High School of Edinburgh. What inference do we draw, bearing in mind that it is central government, not parents, that makes the final decision? If an education authority is not competent to run just one of its schools, there are only two possibilities. One is that all schools are equally important, and the education authority is therefore not competent to run any of them. The other is that not all schools are equally important; that the education authority is competent to run the less important ones, but that other schools deserve a better master. Either way, the legislation axiomatically repudiates the capacity of local government to provide quality for all.

And so, when we ask the question, "How good is Scottish education?", we are asking two questions. One is a question about the standards of what is delivered in the schools. The other is a question about the quality of the system through which we deliver education, and its merits relative to a market model in which the role of government is, or is claimed to be, diminished.

Before we address these questions, it is worth reflecting briefly on the development of the educational question in Scotland in recent years. We got the Assisted Places Scheme and parental choice in the early 1980s, but they did not seem at the time to constitute the first stage of an attempt to reorganise education around the market principle. However, the changing context of the 1980s has given these measures a new significance.

Perhaps three such changes are important. First, it is clear that the market principle is a general principle of government policy, to be applied not just to education, but to many aspects of public provision: to hospitals, for example, as well as to schools. So the Conservative government wishes to develop the market principle within education irrespective of whether there are good educational reasons for this.

Second, the 1988 Education Reform Act in England and Wales has brought in a national curriculum, national testing, devolved control of schools, city technology colleges and, most important of all, opting out. Now here history is repeating itself. Since major educational legislation in England and Wales has always been followed by comparable legislation in Scotland; hence the School Boards (Scotland) Act (1988) (described by Henderson elsewhere in this volume) and the Self-Governing Schools etc (Scotland) Bill. Moreover, it has sometimes been the case that English educational legislation has been designed to remedy the defects of an English system that lagged behind the Scottish. This has meant that remedies for real or imagined ills that did not exist in Scotland, or that did not exist in the same form or to the same degree, have on occasion been transported north of the Border. The current legislation repeats this pattern.

The third important change in context has been in the electoral and party-political situation. Previous checks and balances on extremist policies have been removed by the fact that the Conservative party in Scotland has little or nothing to lose if its reforms go wrong. And Mrs Thatcher has much to gain. In her map of British politics, Scotland represents the last enclave in Britain thirled to collectivist or community values. That is to put these values positively. To put them negatively, and in Conservative terms, they are the values of the dependency culture. But the last thing that a Conservative government wants whilst it is maintaining and expanding selective secondary education in England and Wales, is an example north of the Border of a fully comprehensive public-sector system that maintains an easy pre-eminence over the best that England and Wales can do. So Conservative policy for Scotland arguably has two aims. The immediate, and more easily attainable, aim is to dismantle the essentials of the comprehensive system of school provision. The longer term and more speculative aim is social engineering: the attempt to promote a class of parents and others in Scotland who have a vested interest in supporting a Conservative government. Both aims would be the easier to achieve if

public confidence in the standards of educational delivery were to falter.

I turn then to the first main question of standards. I am not going to discuss standards of resourcing, though I recognise their importance, and the importance of the higher level of unit resource that Scotland enjoys relative to the state system in England and Wales. In passing, we might note that the logic of a fully market model is that the Scottish advantage in resources would disappear because government would not pay. Indeed, the implication of a fully market model is that the devolved government of Scottish education as such would disappear: the Scottish Education Department (SED) and all that goes with it. It is an implication to ponder.

The issue of standards of delivery is dealt with fairly easily. As to primary schooling, I confine myself to two comments. One is to note that people who have read the reports on individual primary schools, prepared by Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools, have found in them no general criticism of standards of attainment. Second, whilst Minister for Health and Education, Mr Forsyth claimed that there had been a dramatic fall in mathematical attainment. But this is not a claim that HMI school reports sustain. Nor is there any credible research evidence to support Mr Forsyth's view.⁽⁴⁾

In secondary education the main evidence concerns measurable aspects of standards, and especially standards of attainment in public examinations. One way of evaluating standards is by international comparison. I recognise the importance of international comparisons, but they must always be made with an eye to the many ways in which national systems differ one from another, and it is difficult in the space available to do justice to the subtlety of the evidence.⁽⁵⁾ My view, in any case, is that the more important measure of standards is growth. How much better is Scotland than it was before? How much better does it show signs of becoming?

Let us go back twenty-five years to the eve of the introduction of comprehensive education. In 1965, 30 per cent of school leavers had passed O-grades or Highers. 70 per cent left with no nationally recognised qualifications. Today these proportions are virtually reversed. Two-thirds of pupils leave with Highers, or with O-grades or Standard Grades at 1-3. Back in 1965, 18 per cent of leavers had passed one or more Highers. That proportion today is virtually double at 33 per cent. This is a higher proportion passing Highers than were passing Highers and O-grades under the selective system.

The story is also one of improvement when we look at the proportions of school leavers qualifying for higher education. In 1965, only 12 per cent of school leavers qualified for higher education by passing three or more Highers. Today this figure stands at 21 per cent. In the rest of Britain, only

15 per cent of leavers from schools and from further education colleges qualify for higher education by passing two or more A-levels.⁽⁶⁾

There is an important lesson to be learned from this comparison. Scotland's public-sector schooling is fully comprehensive. By contrast, the comprehensive schools in most education authorities in England and Wales are creamed either by private schools or by the significant numbers of grammar schools that survive. Yet Scotland does better. In particular, we should note that the introduction of a fully comprehensive system in Scotland has not been at the expense of excellence, and has not been at the expense of substantial growth in the proportions of school leavers qualifying for entry to higher education.

One can extend this argument. Whilst Scottish qualification rates for higher education have been growing, we have been even more successful in those areas where the failure of the selective system was more apparent and where the needs of industry and commerce were pressing. Take the area of the middle 40 per cent of school pupils. Comprehensive schools have begun to make significant inroads into the pools of ability that the old selective system did not tap, especially in working-class communities and especially among girls.⁽⁷⁾ Let me take just one example. Throughout the history of Scottish education, girls' mathematics attainment at sixteen years has lagged behind that of boys. But, in the past ten years, this difference has disappeared. Standards have improved for boys, but girls have improved even faster and now perform at the same level. There has been a process of simultaneous improvement and equalisation.⁽⁸⁾ This concurrence of improvement and equalisation also characterises trends in school attainment among the different social-class or occupational groups. The attainment of children of fathers in non-manual employment has improved. But the attainment of children of fathers in manual employment has improved even more.⁽⁹⁾

The 'equalisation' of social-class differences in attainment refers only to a *trend* towards equality. Large social-class differences still remain. But comprehensive schooling has started to erode these differences, and this process could go much further. The New Towns – Cumbernauld, Livingston, East Kilbride, Glenrothes, Irvine – point the way and set the standard. In the New Towns, social-class differences in attainment are only two-thirds the national average. Another way of putting this is that the New-Town schools are more successful at capturing and promoting talent in whatever social group they find it. The better the social mix of local school systems, the better the exploitation of the pools of ability that lie untapped among working-class pupils.⁽¹⁰⁾

When we talked about gender equalisation in secondary-school attainment, we mean more than a trend towards equality. We mean absolute equality. In fact the attainment difference now slightly favours

girls. Curriculum differences go the other way, however, and girls' access to science is still much less than it should be.⁽¹¹⁾

Gender equality and social-class equality are two criteria by which we can judge a system. A third is the success of schooling among minority groups. Here the record of Catholic schools in boosting their pupils' examination attainment is distinctive, as is their record in boosting access to higher education.⁽¹²⁾ On education for Gaelic-speaking communities and for ethnic minorities, less, unfortunately, is known.

A further criterion of quality is regional equality. The evidence is that regional variations in the quality of service delivery are very small. A particular mention might be made here of the Glasgow Division of Strathclyde, singled out by Mr Forsyth for repeated criticism of its standards of pupil attainment. In fact the quality of schooling delivered in Glasgow in the last decade has improved at least as fast as schooling in the rest of Scotland, and is now above the national average. This improvement must be understood against a background of social change in the last decade which has seen the social disadvantage of the Glasgow school population increase relative to the rest of Scotland. For example, a much higher proportion of the Glasgow school population today is from single-parent families than was the case ten years ago, or is the case elsewhere. One Glasgow school leaver in five now comes from a single-parent family and, nationally, such pupils tend to have lower attainments. Social deprivation on a wider front also confronts Glasgow schools in particular. In the face of such circumstances they take much credit from their improving standards of performance.⁽¹³⁾

The changing social composition of Glasgow schools is part of a wider process of social change under way in Britain today. We are growing wealthier, but we are polarising, socially and spatially. The 'north/south' divide is one aspect of this polarisation. Another is the shift of population within regions from more to less deprived areas. An increasing proportion of deprived families is housed in public-sector housing. Most people are better educated and better off. But they are leaving behind, both geographically and in terms of life chances, a growing 'underclass' of households whose inability to share in the growing prosperity is made less tolerable by its status as a minority.⁽¹⁴⁾ The implications of current policies for parental involvement in schooling must, I think, be understood against this background of social and spatial polarisation. There is a danger that it will lead to a polarisation of educational provision and will return us to a two-tier school system similar to that of the period before 1965.

I happen to believe that equity is valuable. That is a value judgement. But a system which increases equity at the same time as improving standards overall, is nationally an efficient system, efficient in the special sense understood by the legislators of 1918. This was that no pool of ability be

overlooked, whether for reasons of social background or religion or area of the country. With gender they were, perhaps, less concerned, mainly, I suspect, because women had only just got the vote. This illustrates a point I think fundamental: that in the last analysis educational standards are a function of citizens' rights, of the health of political democracy.

As it has turned out, the Conservative government in Scotland has not been able to sustain a credible case against the quality of Scottish educational provision. All political parties now, including the Conservative Party, agree that standards have risen. These were Mr Rifkind's words when opening the Commons debate on the 1989 Bill:

"Over the past ten years, education standards in Scotland have continued to improve, to the benefit of all the pupils in Scotland"⁽¹⁵⁾

It is when we move into the area of post-school education and training that the doubts about quality begin to arise. First of all, there is the entrenched ageism of the system which has made few concessions, well-supported by finance, to the need for recurrent education and training. But we have not done well for the young either. The YTS has proved highly successful as a job-placement programme, boosting the chances of employment of the unemployed who enter it. As a training programme for the entire youth workforce, however, it has been less successful to date. This is not so much because of the content of the courses, which can be high. It is because YTS has been regarded by many young people and employers as second-best to getting a good job through academic qualifications from school, and then receiving on-the-job training, if any is received, that is specific to that particular job. In general, British employers are not prepared to pay for general vocational education that would promote job mobility by imparting skills that might lose employers their employees.⁽¹⁶⁾

Another area where we have done badly in the 1980s is access to higher education. Provision of public-sector education in the colleges has happily been expanded. But the provision of higher education as a whole has lagged behind the growth in school productivity. The result has been an appalling fall in the chances that a qualified school leaver would go directly to university, or into any form of higher education.⁽¹⁷⁾

Whilst Secretary of State for Education, Mr Baker called for a system of mass higher education in Britain and talked of a rate of access to higher education of thirty per cent of the age group for the next century.⁽¹⁸⁾ Most of his English colleagues, and the Treasury in particular, see this as a pipe dream. I believe, however, that a 30 per cent access rate is easily attainable in Scotland. There are short-term reasons for thinking this on which I will not enlarge.⁽¹⁹⁾ But there is also a longer-term reason for believing that a quantum improvement in standards and in access to higher education is possible. The parents of today's pupils were themselves at school in the

1940s and 1950s, were themselves the beneficiaries of the universal system of secondary schooling provided by the welfare state. Crucial questions are, "What is the benefit to the children in the schools today of their parents' own experience of education? Do higher levels of education among today's parents produce higher standards of attainment in the child?" The answer is that they do. If either parent stayed on at school beyond the minimum leaving age, the child's chances of staying-on at school and of qualifying for higher education are substantially boosted, even if the parent only stayed on at school for one extra year.⁽²⁰⁾

The boost that parental education gives to the child's attainment is very important, for three reasons. First, there will be many more educated parents in the 1990s. These will be the parents who themselves were part of the substantial expansion of post-compulsory schooling in the 1960s. We have already, therefore, built into the population an increased capability for high attainment, a potential demand for higher education that is large and growing, always provided, of course, that we have the right educational structures to release that demand. In projecting future student numbers, the SED has now recognised the importance of parental education,⁽²¹⁾ but so far the Department of Education and Science (DES) has not.

Second, the effect of parents' education on the child's attainment is net of, or independent of, the father's occupation. It works whether or not the father is in a managerial occupation or a manual occupation. This means that the pessimism about the ability of education to operate independently of the class structure of the country is misplaced. The social-democratic paradigm that underpinned the welfare state was essentially correct in this respect. Education itself can raise standards, can pull itself up by its own bootstraps.

Third, the effects of parental education show that the welfare-state model of schooling that we have operated until recently passes the market test of individual judgements of value. Educated parents are able to judge the value of their own education in terms of what it has done for them in the marketplace. These are precisely the sort of judgements that current Conservative policy wishes to introduce into the organisation of schools and further education colleges. Yet, these judgements are already being made. Parents are making them in the light of their own working experience, and they are deciding that it is worth their while to support their child in staying on at school, in investing in continuing education and in qualifying for higher education, if that lies within the child's capabilities.

Thus the effects of schooling are cumulative. Schools contribute to the social good a first time by educating the pupils, and then a second time through the cultural capital, if you will, that educated pupils as parents can then pass to their own children. This cultural capital is judged by parents to be human capital, valuable for work, valuable for life. The creation of this

cultural capital and its distribution among society's different social groups is a major achievement of education in the welfare state.

Just as with financial capital, what made possible the creation of this cultural capital was confidence: confidence in the possibility of improvement through public institutions, confidence on the part of individual parents that government itself was confident of the possibility of improvement. This confidence has been at the heart of the Scottish achievement literally for centuries, and it has made it possible for individuals and families to invest in the public system. If standards of attainment in Scotland are good, and they are good, they are good because of this confidence. It is the abdication by the present government of this notion of the public good that I see as the most serious internal contradiction of the market model.

The government justifies much of its current educational policy in terms of such a model, and I want to comment briefly on several aspects of it. First, as I have said, markets require confidence. The logic of the government's legislation is axiomatically to repudiate that confidence. It is easy to be wise after the event, but perhaps the Opposition parties could have made more of this point in recent debates on self-governing schools. Michael Forsyth's argument is that he is not destroying the comprehensive system, merely providing the means for parents to do so, if they so wish. So he neatly turns Labour's argument against itself. Labour says, "there is no evidence that Scotland wants this legislation". "So be it", says the Minister, "the legislation will do no harm. It is merely permissive. If it is not wanted, it will not be used". But, the point is, government is not neutral. Government itself is sending out the message that government does not work, that it doubts the quality of local schools. It is this that creates the market in choice, that starts the bandwagon rolling.

Second, a full market model can have no place for universal or compulsory education and training. In practice, of course, the government is proposing a market model for education and other policy areas only when this will undermine the institutions with which it has come into conflict: the doctors, the Health Boards, the local authorities, the universities, the unions.⁽²²⁾ There is no proposal, for example, for government to relax its control over policy for curriculum and certification. Moreover, the local management of schools under the School Boards (Scotland) Act of 1988 will, if anything, strengthen central-government control of those schools. One way this will happen will be through a system of performance indicators.⁽²³⁾ Any system of performance indicators for secondary schooling introduced nationally in the next seven years or so will produce misleading and distorted information on the quality of teaching offered in many of our secondary schools. This is because we do not have adequate measures of pupils' attainment on entry to secondary school, such that the 'value-added' component of their attainment arising from their secondary

schooling can be identified.⁽²⁴⁾ Industry would not tolerate the poor quality control that a national system of performance indicators is likely to bring. Nor would an industrial concern tolerate accounting systems that did not identify correctly the value-added component of each of its processes. This is the key to identifying efficiency, local efficiency and national efficiency. In the same way, national efficiency in education demands that we do not judge schools simply by their examination output, taking inadequate account of the quality of the inputs, material, human and otherwise.

Moreover, the sad conclusion on parental choice is that, in aggregate, the parents who move their children tend to be the parents who themselves have higher levels of education; and they tend to gravitate towards schools of higher social status and towards the former senior secondaries, irrespective of whether the value-added component of teaching in those schools is high.⁽²⁵⁾ This is not the parents' fault. The market can only produce efficiency if market signals are not distorted. We do not have the information systems to produce non-distorted signals about schools. Educational research has in recent years made great advances in methods for identifying efficient schools. But we lack the political conditions in which these advances can be put to the service of national efficiency. Parental choice, through no fault of the parents, is not an efficient mechanism of quality control, and is not an efficient mechanism for identifying the schools that should close.

Even if individual parents were well informed about schools, as the market model assumes, there is a much more fundamental reason why parental control will not produce national efficiency. This reason concerns the conflict between legitimate individual self interest and the public good. Schools are neither firms nor housing associations. Schools are where the nation's future resources of talent are to be found, in each and every school, every inner-city area, every declining community, every community that is socially deprived, every green-leaf suburb. I have mentioned the social polarisation which is part of the price we are paying for industrial reorganisation and for rolling back the boundaries of the welfare state. I have also talked about the cultural capital that educated parents give to their children, a cultural capital that helps the child develop its talents. We have large, unexploited pools of ability. Do we exploit only the talent in areas where educated parents can capitalise the educational process? Or do we exploit all talent? The answer has to be that we aim to do the latter.

The great insight of the welfare-state view of education, a view to which all political parties subscribed until the 1970s, was this: that in a market economy, it is not logical to leave the supply of talent to the market. I believe that this insight is still valid. The market economy works by rewarding parents with higher income, status and life-chances, by rewarding them with privilege that can be passed on to their children, and rightly so. In doing this, however, the market economy constantly under-

mines the basis of its own renewal by restricting the supply of that most basic of resources, the talents of the next generation. In other words, a market economy needs an education system that is run not for the consumer, but for the citizen. And this is something, of course, which the tradition of public education in Scotland knew long before the welfare state.

My fear, and it is a fear that is supported by research on the early years of parental choice, is that in the last five years or so we have started to run the film backwards. Up to the mid 1980s we were making the social mix of schools more equal, and this helped to boost especially the attainment of working-class pupils. That process has, I think, now been reversed, especially in the cities. One of the main dangers confronting education in the 1990s is that we accompany the social polarisation that is occurring with a polarisation of the quality of educational provision. The privileged, and their children, will move further ahead, but the gap between them and the majority will grow. This will reduce the national efficiency with which we exploit talent. It may also reinforce that peculiar British equation of vocational education with low status.

Finally, the quality of our educational research in the 1990s will have a major effect on the quality of our service delivery. But, however good our educational research, however good our school-performance indicators, they will never tell the full story of education, never alone produce enough of the right information from the market to enable the system to run efficiently. To get good information flowing backwards and forwards between teachers and parents, between practitioners and policy-makers, we must also have a vibrant, representative, and above all, truthful policy community.

It was to assist precisely this that the Education (Scotland) Act of 1918 also provided for an Advisory Council of professional and lay persons to temper and inform government policy.⁽²⁶⁾ That development led, in its turn, to the much more elaborated system of consultation and communication that came in the 1960s with the Examination Board, the old Consultative Committee on the Curriculum, the General Teaching Council and other bodies. Great strides were made in the seventies in broadening the representation on those bodies, to reflect the daily life of our education system.⁽²⁷⁾ I find it ominous for the prospects of future partnership between education and industry and between teachers and parents that, at the very time that the doors are being opened to sections of industry and to parents, they are being closed in the face of representatives of other sections of industry, and in the face of the representatives of large sections of the educational community whose values and expertise should contribute to the dialogue of the policy community.⁽²⁸⁾ To return to the epigraph: no-one can speak with authority on all departments of the subject of education; it demands co-operative effort.

My conclusion, therefore, is the old conclusion of Scottish democracy, of the democratic intellect. It is that standards of attainment are, in the last analysis, a reflection of the quality of the democratic process: of a concern for equity and for truth, and of a respect for the expertise and opinions of others, even though their values may not be one's own. Standards of attainment in Scottish education are high and rising. These standards, I believe, reflect the quality of our political culture since 1918, since 1945, and since 1965. If that is so, one must be concerned for the direction that standards in the future will take.

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1. Adapted, with minor amendments and additions, from the author's address to the Conference 'Scottish Education: The Challenge of the 90s', sponsored by the EIS, the *Glasgow Herald*, the SC(DI), the CBI, the STUC, the Industrial Society and COSLA, and held at the Albany Hotel, Glasgow, 10 May 1989. The revisions were completed before the Self-Governing Schools etc (Scotland) Bill received the Royal assent.
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 16. For this paragraph, see A Furlong and D Raffe *Young People's Routes into the Labour Market*, Edinburgh, Industry Department for Scotland ESU Research Paper, No.17, 1989; also M Shelly 'Has the bottom dropped out of the youth labour market?' in D Raffe (ed) *Education and the Youth Labour Market*, Lewes, Falmer, 1988, pp.100-116; D Raffe 'Going with the grain: youth training in transition', in S Brown and R Wake (eds) *Education in Transition: what role for research?*, Edinburgh, The Scottish Council for Research in Education, 1988, pp.110-123; D Raffe 'Modules and the strategy of institutional versatility; the first two years of the 16-plus Action Plan in Scotland', in D Raffe (ed) *op cit* pp.162-195; and C Bell, C Howieson, K King and D Raffe *Liaisons*

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17. P Burnhill, C L Garner and A F McPherson, 'Social change, school attainment and entry to higher education 1976-1986', in D Raffe (ed) *op cit*, pp.66-99; 'Opportunity snapped shut', *Glasgow Herald*, 24 November 1988; 'Fear over opportunity block for a generation', *Scotsman*, 31 January 1989; and 'Older students 'masking' cut in opportunity for school leavers', *Scotsman*, 7 February 1989. The provisional estimates for 1986 used in these articles have now been revised. In general, among qualified leavers, participation levels in 1986 were no lower than in 1984. But they were lower than in 1982 or 1980. Copies of the revised tables may be obtained direct from the Centre for Educational Sociology, Edinburgh University.
 18. *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 13 January 1989.
 19. We already qualify more than 20 per cent of our school leavers for higher education, and we have the Action Plan in place to improve on this after school. The main restriction is not the pool of ability nor, in a period of demographic decline, is the availability of places or resources a problem. The main restriction is the early leaving of pupils in the summer of S4. If we are serious about 30 per cent access, then the quickest way of achieving it is to raise the period of compulsory education to embrace the diet of Highers in fifth year. This is not a radical suggestion. We already require that one third of our S4 pupils continue to Christmas in S5. Adding another five or six months to their education, whether in school or elsewhere, would be no great restriction of their liberty given the increment to their qualifications. Research suggests that this increment is considerable and could be larger; see N Yibas and C Robertson 'The effects of conscription on attainment in Scottish schools', Glasgow, University of Strathclyde, unpublished. An alternative approach would be to forbid the employment of any 16 year olds unless their employers guaranteed that they would receive a high level of part-time education and training, with prospects of progression.
 20. P Burnhill, C L Garner and A F McPherson in D Raffe (ed) *op cit*; and L Paterson 'Multivariate measures of the socio-economic status of school pupils', Centre for Educational Sociology, University of Edinburgh, unpublished.
 21. Scottish Education Department 'Higher education projections for Scotland' *Statistical Bulletin*, No. 7/J1/1988.
 22. As reported in the *Times Higher Education Supplement* of 4 November 1988, the use of this strategy with regard to the universities was made explicit by Robert Jackson, the Under Secretary of State for higher education, in papers he prepared for a July 1988 ministerial meeting at Chevening.
 23. Coopers and Lybrand *Local Management of Schools: A Report to the Department of Education and Science*, London, HMSO, 1988.
 24. See J D Willms and S W Raudenbush 'A longitudinal hierarchical linear model for estimating school effects and their stability', *Journal of Educational Measurement* 1989 (in press); and A F McPherson 'Political and social aspects of the devolved management of Scottish secondary schools', *Scottish Educational Review*, November 1989 (in press).
 25. M E Adler and G M Raab 'Exit, choice and loyalty: the impact of parental choice on admission to secondary schools in Edinburgh and Dundee', *Journal of Educational Policy*, Vol.3, No.2, 1988, pp.155-179; and F H Echols, A F McPherson and J D Willms 'Choice among state and private schools in Scotland', Edinburgh, Centre for Educational Sociology, University of Edinburgh, 1989.
 26. J Young 'The Advisory Council on Education in Scotland', Ph.D thesis, University of Edinburgh, 1986.
 27. See A F McPherson and C D Raab *Governing Education: A Sociology of Policy Since 1945*, Edinburgh, Edinburgh University Press, 1988.
 28. For example, all but one of the EIS nominations for membership of the final Consultative Committee on the Curriculum were rejected by Mr Forsyth, thereby breaking with previous practice.