

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE OF INSPECTORS
OF SCHOOLS IN THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA: 1875 TO 1970

by

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I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not being currently submitted for any other degree.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.

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A.W. JONES

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the development of the role of the inspectors of schools in the Education Department of South Australia from the assent to the 1875 Education Act to 1970, the year of appointment of A.W. Jones as Director-General of Education.

The first inspector of schools was appointed in South Australia in 1851 with an ill-defined role given to him by the Governor. In fact, Dr. William Wyatt, who was not a teacher, was left to determine his own role, except that he was not to interfere with the religious feelings and prejudices of this generally dissenting and voluntarist Colony of free settlers.

The role that the inspectors were expected to play was first set down in detail, when the young Englishmen, J.A. Hartley, Headmaster of Prince Alfred College, became Chairman of the Central Board of Education in 1874. Following the assent to the 1875 Education Act, Hartley became the full-time President of the Council of Education and proceeded to build a uniform and efficient public system of elementary education, using his inspectors to examine pupils, police Regulations and report to the Council. He introduced a form of payment by results which centred on the inspectors' examination and was designed to raise standards and keep the generally ill-prepared teachers up to the mark as well as to see that the Government got reasonable value for its expenditure on schooling.

After Hartley's death, the Board of Inspectors with L.W. Stanton as Chairman endeavoured to continue Hartley's education policy, but did move to lighten the inspectors' load and to enrich their role by granting exemption from the inspectors' examination to the best schools, and thus providing time for advising and helping teachers. Well-nigh inexplicably

Stanton as Inspector-General cancelled the exemption scheme, which had been readily accepted by the South Australian Public School Teachers' Union.

During the parliamentary recess at the end of 1905, Thomas Price, Premier and the first Labor Minister of Education, drastically reorganized the administration and inspectorate of the Education Department. He shifted Stanton to the position of Secretary to the Minister Controlling Education and Secretary to the Education Department, and appointed the Headmaster of Norwood School, Alfred Williams, as the first Director of Education. Williams did not have the Regulations amended on those aspects of inspections about which he had been so scathing as President of the S.A.P.S.T.U. However, he treated the inspectors, along with outstanding teachers, as professional colleagues, and introduced them to two new, additional roles at teachers' congresses, schools of instruction and public meetings. These roles were inservice educator of teachers and community educator or public relations officer enlightening the public on the aims and methods of the "new education".

The 1913 Regulations put into legislation those recommendations of the 1910-1913 Royal Commission on Education, not requiring amendments to the Education Act, notably that head teachers would take from the inspectors their long-standing task of examining and promoting pupils and so provide them with time to advise teachers. The Regulations also added the assessment of teachers in the form of an Efficiency Mark to the role of the inspectors. This led to penetrating inspection, less advising, and a dominant assessing role.

The long-delayed 1915 Education Act, assented to during World War I, affected the role of the inspectors by creating boards to share inspectors' curriculum building and classification of teachers with teachers and by establishing the position of superintendent, senior to that of inspector.

The period between the end of World War I and the end of World War II was one of world social upheavals, including the Great Depression, and the clash of political ideologies. They were accompanied by a surge for greater individual freedom reflected in the activities of the New Education Fellowship, the psychological movement in education and the move against examinations. The Education Department saw its inspectors as the agents to see that progressive education was put into practice in the schools. Teachers on the other hand saw them as barriers to professional freedom. Furthermore, the bond of trust built between inspectors and teachers during the Great Depression was damaged by the administration making irregular appointments that disregarded the promotion lists. Over this quarter of a century, the inspectorate was transformed from an elderly group of ex-senior Heads of primary schools set on maintaining standards to a youthful, well qualified group looking critically at their own part in educating children.

In the years immediately after World War II, all effort in education was directed to meeting the rapid increase in enrolments and the shortage of teachers, buildings and equipment. Inspectors became educational handymen and recruiting officers. Teachers used their increased bargaining power, because of their short supply, to press for inspectors to have more time for genuine discussion with them to help them professionally and less time spent on administrative tasks aimed at meeting Departmental demands. However, expansion of the system and the consequent promotion opportunities for teachers brought the inspectors' assessing role to the fore. Inspectors were given considerable freedom to advocate changes and to adjust their role to meet the changed circumstances of a non-prescriptive and broader curriculum and of freedom of approach in methodology for teachers.

The establishment of the Recruiting and Training Branch of the Education Department of South Australia provided not only for the professional development of teachers but also for the

development of the role of the inspectors. It removed some of the inspectors' administrative tasks, advanced their role as inservice educators, provided for their own professional development and improved inspector-teacher relationships in such a way that South Australian inspectors did not suffer the confrontation from teachers that inspectors in other states suffered. They also improved their supervisory skills by attendance at the biennial National Seminar for Inspectors of Schools or second-hand from those who had attended. The exercise of the right to send recommendations from conferences to the Director made inspectors agents of change. In addition, they sent through their Guild, which became the South Australian Institute of Inspectors of Schools, submissions to the Australian Council for Educational Research in its survey of primary school inspections.

During this period, 1960 to 1970, the inspectors treated the inspection process as a sensitive interaction between professionals rather than as an authority figure influencing a subordinate. The major development of the inspectors' role in this period was as consultants, catalysts or inservice educators in the inservice education programme improved in quality, content, scope, methodology and impact on the quality of education. Their role as administrative handymen was reduced. They shared assessment of teachers with Heads. They inspected biennially. They maintained a good inspector-teacher relationship in times of unrest and educational ferment. They provided unobtrusive leadership so well that teachers saw them as no great threat to their quest for professional status. Though the assessing role still loomed large, the examining role had practically disappeared, the 'looking-into' was not to find fault but to improve the overall fare for pupils, the administrative function was more professional and less routine, and the advisory role had reached a peak of professionalism. In a subtle way the inspectors' role of seeing that the State's children got value for money was still present.

This study shows that the value for money aspect of the role of the inspectors of schools was always present, but that the values sought changed over the period; different aspects of the multi-faceted role were to the fore or in the background at different times; and the role changed from mainly regulatory to mainly developmental as the teachers and, indeed, as the inspectors were better educated and better prepared for their tasks. The study also indicates that the clash between the advisory and the assessing role was greatest when trust between teachers and the administration was at a low ebb, for instance, when in 1913 the inspectors reacted badly to the transfer of their examining and promoting of pupils to head teachers and when in the 1940s the administration promoted teachers without regard to promotion lists. Such situations were brought about by an amalgam of personalities, social, economic and political conditions and the educational thinking of the time.

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My wife's uncomplaining acceptance of a house cluttered with papers for three years and the loss of my company for that time spurred me to complete the task which Dr. W.S. Simpkins had encouraged me to undertake.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	viii
TABLE OF CONTENTS	ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	xii
LIST OF TABLES	xiii
PREFACE	xiv
INTRODUCTION	
The Title	1
The Reasons for the Study	2
The Structure of the Study	6
Reference Sources used in the Study	14
CHAPTER 1 THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND THE INSPECTORATE IN	25
SOUTH AUSTRALIA PRIOR TO 1875	
CHAPTER 2 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE INSPECTORS....	53
FROM THE 1875 EDUCATION ACT TO THE 1881-1883 INQUIRY	
Introduction	53
Pressures for Development of the Role of the Inspectors	62
from the Legislature and Superiors	
Pressures for Development of the Role of the Inspectors	77
from the Inspectors Themselves	
Pressures for Development of the Role of the Inspectors	83
from Teachers	
Conclusion	89

CHAPTER 3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE INSPECTORS ...	94
FROM 1884 TO THE APPOINTMENT OF THE THE FIRST LABOR	
MINISTER OF EDUCATION, 1905	
Introduction	94
Pressures for Development of the role of the Inspectors	102
from the Legislature and Superiors	
Pressures for Development of the Role of the Inspectors	123
from the Inspectors Themselves	
Pressures for Development of the Role of the Inspectors	135
from Teachers	
Conclusion	141
CHAPTER 4 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE INSPECTORS ...	147
FROM THE APPOINTMENT OF THE FIRST DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION	
(1906) TO THE END OF WORLD WAR I	
Introduction	147
Pressures for Development of the Role of the Inspectors	154
from the Legislature and Superiors	
Pressures for the Development of the Role of the Inspectors	173
from the Inspectors Themselves	
Pressures for Development of the Role of the Inspectors	185
from Teachers	
Conclusion	190
CHAPTER 5 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE INSPECTORS....	196
FROM THE END OF WORLD WAR I TO THE END OF WORLD WAR II	
Introduction	196
Pressures for Development of the Role of the Inspectors	205
from the Legislature and Superiors	
Pressures for Development of the Role of the Inspectors	232
from the Inspectors Themselves	
Pressures for Development of the Role of the Inspectors	239
from Teachers	
Conclusion	250

CHAPTER 6 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE INSPECTORS ...	257
FROM 1946 TO THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE RECRUITING AND TRAINING BRANCH, 1959	
Introduction	257
Pressures for Development of the Role of the Inspectors	265
from the Legislature and Superiors	
Pressures for Development of the Role of the Inspectors	278
from the Inspectors Themselves	
Pressures for Development of the Role of the Inspectors	284
from Teachers	
Conclusion	288
CHAPTER 7 THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ROLE OF THE INSPECTORS ...	293
IN A PERIOD OF TRANSITION FROM QUANTITATIVE TO QUALITATIVE PROBLEMS, 1960-1970	
Introduction	293
Pressures for Development of the Role of the Inspectors	302
from the Legislature and Superiors	
Pressures for Development of the Role of the Inspectors	321
from the Inspectors Themselves	
Pressures for Development of the Role of the Inspectors	331
from Teachers	
Conclusion	339
CHAPTER 8 CONCLUSIONS	346
BIBLIOGRAPHY	
A MANUSCRIPT MATERIAL	368
B SOUTH AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS	370
C OTHER GOVERNMENT PUBLICATIONS	375
D JOURNALS AND NEWSPAPERS	375
E ARTICLES AND PAPERS	377
F BOOKS	384
G UNPUBLISHED THESES AND RESEARCH PAPERS	388

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

A.A.I.I.S.	Australasian Association of Institutes of Inspectors of Schools
A.C.E.R.	Australian Council for Educational Research
A.N.Z.A.A.S.	Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science
Assembly	House of Assembly
C.A.E.	College of Advanced Education
col.	column or columns
Council	Legislative Council
Education Gazette	The Education Gazette South Australia
G.R.G.	Government Records Group
Guild Chronicle	The Guild Chronicle
H.M.I.	Her (His) Majesty's Inspector
Inspectors' Guild	The Guild of Inspectors of Schools of South Australia
L.E.A.	Local Education Authority
n.a.	not available
N.E.F.	New Education Fellowship
Q.C.	Qualifying Certificate
q.	question
qq.	questions
S.A. Archives	South Australian Archives
S.A.C.A.E.	South Australian College of Advanced Education
S.A.G. Gazette	The South Australian Government Gazette
S.A.I.I.S.	South Australian Institute of Inspectors of Schools
S.A.I.T.	South Australian Institute of Teachers
S.A.P. Debates	South Australian Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)
S.A.P. Paper	South Australian Parliamentary Paper
S.A.P.S.T.U.	South Australian Public School Teachers' Union established in 1896, sometimes used the same title after its 1917 Constitution declared its name to be South Australian Teachers' Union.
S.A.T. Journal	The S.A. Teachers' Journal, S.A. Teachers' Journal, The South Australian Teachers Journal are all used. Volume and Number are too erratic to be included.
S.P.F.	Schools Patriotic Fund
UNESCO (Unesco)	United Nations Scientific and Cultural Organisation

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
TABLE 2.1 EDUCATION DEPARTMENT DATA 1876	59
TABLE 3.1 EDUCATION DEPARTMENT DATA 1884	96
TABLE 4.1 EDUCATION DEPARTMENT DATA 1906	151
TABLE 5.1 EDUCATION DEPARTMENT DATA 1919	201
TABLE 5.2 SALARIES OF HEAD TEACHERS	214
TABLE 5.3 SALARY QUOTAS FOR HEAD TEACHERS	215
TABLE 6.1 EDUCATION DEPARTMENT DATA 1946	259
TABLE 7.1 EDUCATION DEPARTMENT DATA 1970	295
TABLE 7.2 AGE OF INSPECTORS ON APPOINTMENT	298

PREFACE

The purpose of this study is to examine the development of the role of the inspectors of schools in the Education Department of South Australia from the assent to the 1875 Education Act to 1970, the year of appointment of A.W. Jones as Director-General of Education.

There are personal reasons for the study related to the writer's long association with the South Australian inspectorate. As a teacher he had been reported on favourably by inspectors, who encouraged him to write articles for journals and The Education Gazette, to produce mathematics text books and to enter the inspectorate. He was in turn an inspector of schools and an inspector of secondary schools, and Director-General of Education in South Australia. He had been assistant director, director and keynote speaker of the biennial National Seminar for Inspectors of Schools during the years from 1965 to 1977. He had produced a training film for newly appointed inspectors. He believed that the experience in leadership as an inspector was a pre-requisite for senior administrative positions in a state education department. He made the position of inspector of schools the most senior position for which leave would be granted to study for higher degrees. This policy greatly benefited the inspectorate and particularly its younger members. He was known to be called "the inspectors' man". He complained to the Schools Commission when inspectors, whose task it was to encourage innovativeness in teachers, were excluded from the state committees supervising the Schools Commission's innovations program.

Some of his actions, however, were detrimental to the status of the inspectors. The Freedom and Authority Memorandum told Heads of schools that they were in "undisputed control" of their schools. They used this statement to convince the Teachers Salaries Board that their responsibility was greater

than that of the inspectors. Then followed the creation of the position of Principal A. The positions were advertised openly and the successful applicants selected by a panel on which the Education Department was minimally represented. The Teachers Salaries Board awarded a salary for the position of a secondary school principal A considerably higher than the salary of an inspector of schools. Next came the reorganization of the Education Department on functional lines. The positions of Director of Primary Education and Director of Secondary Education, around which the inspectors rallied, were replaced by a Director of Curriculum and a Director of Personnel administering curriculum and staffing respectively from Reception to Year 12, thus leaving the inspectors without a base. They had been offered the position of an independent cell, akin to the H.M.I.s' position, evaluating the system without being beholden to a director's policy, but reporting to a chief inspector. However, they would have none of that. In addition the extension of regionalization of administration meant that some inspectors of secondary schools were required to reside in country districts and report to regional directors, whereas their base had always been head office in Adelaide.

The writer, when himself outside the system, considered that the story of the development of the inspectorate's part in education, prior to the events of 1970 onwards, had been neglected, yet was important and should be told. The hope is that others will write further on the South Australian inspectorate.