Case Studies of Public Provision

We have reviewed some of the problems of which the public has become aware in connection with the public service. This chapter will expose deeper, and often unsuspected, problems - as well as pointers toward what needs to be done to overcome them - from a number of case studies. Because most of the author's research has been in the areas of urban planning and education many of the case studies come from these fields. The objective is, however, to use these particular studies to achieve more general insights.

Housing Research

The first case study illustrating the importance of finding ways of getting public servants to act on information in the public interest arises from some research which my colleagues and I conducted at the British Building Research Station between 1959 and 1963.

What we found[14.1] was that high-rise family housing:

- Was unacceptable to most of its occupants: It imposed a sedentary way of life (because being active would disturb neighbours); it bred isolation (residents had difficulty getting to know their neighbours because they could not see them from their living rooms" and therefore did not recognise them when they met); it was unadaptable to particular needs (because residents could not alter it in the way that - as the growth of DIY has since demonstrated - many owners of two-storey housing do as a matter of course); it led to a deterioration of family relationships (because parents were unable from their kitchens to supervise children at play outside and the noise children made was disturbing inside); and access was often difficult (because the lifts failed or were vandalised).
- Symbolised for its occupants the local authority's control over their lives, regimentation, and uniformity. It expressed in steel and concrete public servants' disdain for the wishes of their paymasters and the fact that there was no effective way in which the public could ensure that their servants complied with their wishes.
- Was more costly to build than equivalent two-storey housing.
- Was more costly to maintain than two-storey housing.
- Accommodated fewer people per acre than two-storey housing - which also had the advantage, if properly developed at the same density, of providing garages, gardens, and access to public open space.

Despite this careful and fully-documented research carried out in-house by a government research unit, little action was taken. The building of high-rise housing continued into the 1980s. The disaster is now recognised for what it is and these expensive blocks are being demolished.

One of the reasons for inaction was that the tenants looked to authority rather than their peers for assistance in dealing with their problems. Another was that public servants felt that they had much more control over large building contractors than they would have had over the multiple

builders of two storey housing. They felt, for example, that builders of two storey housing might evade detection in cutting corners and some might make more than 'acceptable' - institutionalised - levels of profit. The administrative costs of overseeing the work of a single contractor were very much less than those of overseeing the work of numerous small builders and their subcontractors. The process of managing two storey development would be much more difficult than managing the building of tall blocks through a single contractor. Equally more difficult would be the task of managing the lives of the tenants - who knows what they might do! It would be much easier to constrain them within bounds of steel and concrete. The question of 'entitlement' was also important. Many people,- and especially those who administered public housing - felt that public housing was some kind of charity and that the tenants ought to be grateful for whatever they got. It was felt that the tenants should have made the effort to get jobs which paid enough to enable them to purchase their housing. One would really be pandering to the undeserving if one offered them too much choice. The tenants in a sense shared this perception: many felt they had no right to protest and believed that they would have no housing at all if they rejected what they were offered.

Public provision of housing raises many other issues of central importance to this book - such as why have public provision at all? And what steps need to be taken to introduce, administer, and evaluate choice? I have discussed these issues specifically in relation to housing in other articles[14.2]. In this book they are embedded in more general discussions of these issues. The importance of the housing example here is that it shows (i) that one cannot simply expect public servants to take action on the basis of excellent information which indicates what needs to be done and (ii) that failure to act on information is not perfidious but multiply determined. If we want public servants to act on information in the long-term public interest - as is even more emphatically the case in relation to the bio-physical environment than to housing - then we need to understand the systems processes which constrain their actions and to develop additional management processes which will lead them first to seek to understand such systems processes and thereafter act on the total constellation of information in an innovative way in the long-term public interest.

The Educational System

Despite - or perhaps because - education is more obviously a public good, public servants' management of education has been even worse than that of housing. Much of the evidence of state failure has been omitted here so that we can concentrate on the reasons for failure.

For decades, there has been continuous chopping and changing of priorities and development plans in education. Time after time, one 'development' programme has been declared a failure and replaced by another even before it had been fully implemented. Insufficient resources have been allocated to development. The development plans were poorly thought through and little attention was paid to studying the workings of the developments that were introduced in such a way as to learn from the effects of action with a view to improving provision in the future. There was a persistent failure to anticipate what was required to cope with the effects of new policies (e.g. the raising of the school leaving age). There was a failure to invest adequately in evaluation, research, and development indeed no proper arrangements were made to carry out such activities. There was little attempt to create conditions in which people with different priorities could be catered for in different ways. And there was a failure to introduce appropriate, participative, management practices into schools on the one hand and the administrative structures of local authorities on the

other.

Despite the damning record of state failure in education, it is vital to note that, at least in some areas, the public servants concerned did at least try to do things more sensibly and, in doing so, adopted the best practice known to them. Thus they at first established committees of enquiry - such as those chaired by Newsom[14.3], Plowden[14.4], Munn[14.5], Dunning[14.6] and Sneddon[14.7]. When it emerged that these procedures did not work very well, more continuous and flexible arrangements were introduced. To this end, for example, they set up the Schools Council for Curriculum and Examinations in England and Wales to initiate research and development and monitor its effectiveness on a continuous basis. The effectiveness of the arrangements they made were, however, undermined by a number of processes. Newly appointed ministers (never mind new governments with alternative political persuasions), wishing to make their mark and not thinking much of what their predecessors had done, simply swept aside action plans even before they had been completed.

Vested interests also played a part. It was, for example, the teachers' unions, who first lobbied for a greater and greater role on the committees of the Schools Council and, once they got control over it, prevented it tackling issues which, while important from the point of view of children's education and the future of the country, were not in the short-term interests of the teaching profession. But the impression conveyed by this example is too facile. In Scotland, the Scottish Council for Research in Education, established by the teachers unions, remained a remarkably innovative body until its funding was taken over by the Scottish Office and its researchers subjected to contractual arrangements which served the short-term interests of the government of the day and stifled the kind of research which would have been required to introduce an educational system which was genuinely effective in educational, rather than sociological, terms. It follows that the question is not whether vested interests are important, but whose vested interests will win. The important question then emerges as being: 'What arrangements will permit people with competing vested interests to work together for survival?'

But public servants' failure to think about, identify, and tackle systems processes which prevented new developments functioning effectively was of greater importance than any of the processes already mentioned.

To illustrate the point we may consider the forces which lead to 'academic drift' and the steps needed avoid it. 'Academic drift' has been widely noted. The reasons for it have been most fully studied by Schon[14.8], but they have also been noted in institutions such as the School of Independent Studies at the North East London Polytechnic[14.9].

The term refers to the tendency of teachers and lecturers to, instead of nurturing useful competencies among students, drift toward providing courses which are academic in the worst sense of the word. Lecturers air their hard-won, disciplinary knowledge regardless of its relevance to students' needs, and their research becomes literature-driven and publication-oriented instead of advancing understanding or contributing to the solution of applied problems[14.10].

The reasons for this academic drift are deep-seated. They include a lack of understanding of high-level competence, how its components are to be nurtured, and how students are to get credit for having developed a range of high-level competencies in the social allocation process which primarily determines what happens in educational institutions. Other reasons include the way in which the career structures of lecturers are locked into disciplinary and departmental arrangements, and the impossibility of getting credit for having implemented more genuinely developmental

educational programmes[14.11].

Failure to examine - and deal with - these deep-seated, sociological systems processes[14.12] contributes to the perpetuation of some of the most serious failures of the educational system. Merely examining them would have provided the impetus for much needed reform.

Even the research commissioned by the public service suffered from academic drift. Once again, there are several reasons for this. Instead of encouraging researchers to cross disciplinary boundaries and establish multi-disciplinary teams as some problems require, the funding agencies established single-discipline committees and demanded that evidence of the quality of the outcome be demonstrable through publication in peer-reviewed academic journals. A funding application which had to go to the committees of several disciplines had little chance of success. Researchers had to publish in ways which would advance their careers within disciplines. Instead of accepting that work in new areas would necessarily be controversial and that science advances through public debate between different, even antagonistic, positions, the public service interpreted controversy to mean that the researchers concerned had not done a thorough job of work. As a result, researchers learned to focus on topics which were small-scale, capable of yielding .unarguable answers, and discipline-bound. What was really needed was open-ended, inventive, problem-driven research which provoked the kind of controversy which advances understanding. Even when the research had been done, researchers could not easily follow through into action (thereby learning more about the nature of the problem), partly because the enaction of research results requires enormous dedication, but, more importantly, because such dedication is felt to call the impartiality of a researcher into question. Finally, most research was constrained by the time and other limitations characteristic of academe. Even in the 1960s and 1970s these permitted most research staff to devote only one third of their time to 'research', and this was typically eroded by 'teaching' and administrative duties. Researchers' performance was also constrained by expectations concerning the quantity, nature, and quality ('academic') of the publications they should produce[14.13].

At least of equal importance in restricting the range of projects undertaken was, however, the range of questions thought to be respectable, meriting research, even capable of being researched. Proposals to undertake the kind of research required to examine the systems constraints this book shows to be so important would typically have been unacceptable. Answers to questions such as why teachers did not do the things which had been advocated for more than a century - if they were asked at all - were almost entirely sought within disciplines. Yet, as Schwarz[14.14] has emphasised, the answers typically have little to do with education per se. They stem from such things as teachers' inability to handle conflicts between the values espoused by different clients, the unavailability of insurance to cover out-of-school visits, and the inability of either teachers or students to obtain credit for having engaged in relevant work.

As we have suggested in earlier chapters, however, the most important systems constraints on what the educational system can do stem from the sociological - non-educational - functions it performs for society. These may involve such things as legitimising divisions within society and thus perpetuating the current social order. Yet anyone who had in the past even suggested that such latent functions of the educational system might actually determine what happens in schools more strongly than the manifest - educational - functions of the system would have found it hard enough to get a serious hearing. It would have been almost impossible for them to attract research funds, partly because the methodology required for such investigations would have been denigrated as

'unscientific', but mainly because the very idea was unthinkable - with the inevitable consequence that even entertaining it was discreditable. The further idea that it was crucial to examine these sociological processes and thereafter to invent ways of harnessing them so that they would push educators in the direction in which they wanted to go - rather than in another direction - was inconceivable.

But perhaps at the most basic level there was a failure to appreciate that research is crucial to finding a way forward and to budget adequately for research and development. The money lost in two peak loss-making years by the British Steel Corporation could have funded the main organisation concerned with educational research and development in Scotland since Stonehenge was built. This contrasts with the fact that, as a society we spend far more on education than steel. There has been a persistent tendency to believe that in areas of public policy we know what needs to be done and all that has to be done is to do it. No one questions the myths that underlie education, privatisation, and so on. In reality the truth is much closer to the view that no one knows what is to be done, let alone how to do it, and the barriers which prevent people doing anything are pervasive, deep-seated, and intractable.

The Effectiveness of Committees of Enquiry Followed by Pilot Projects: A Case Study in Teacher Education

More of the problems inherent in the procedures currently utilised for societal management - and what needs to be done to overcome them - can be illustrated by exploring the origins, workings, and results of a committee of enquiry into teacher education in Scotland[14.15].

It had long been widely recognised that there was something seriously wrong with teacher training in Scotland. Accordingly, the Scottish Education Department (Ministry of Education) set up a committee - the Sneddon Committee - to enquire into it and make recommendations for reform. In fact, a whole series of such committees had been established since the Second World War. Each believed it had carried out an adequate enquiry, diagnosed the source of the malady, and made appropriate recommendations. But the problems persisted. Even today further attempts are being made to remedy the problem ... but, in line with the Conservative Government's philosophy, the solution is seen as lying in the central prescription of goals and how to reach them followed by checking to ensure that the designated procedures have been adopted. Such an approach prevents teacher training colleges exercising initiative and discretion. The assumption is that messiness is bad. The claim is that at least some colleges and college staff have proved themselves to be lazy and incompetent and have espoused 'fairy'-tale'[14.16] goals in education.

The most important source of the desire to reform teacher education is dissatisfaction with what goes on in schools: At a most basic level, standards in the 3Rs have not improved in 50 years. Pupils still leave school 'unable to get a job'. (This last is, of course, inevitable given that schools mainly legitimise the allocation of the jobs that are available rather than creating more jobs ... but the schools – and 'poorly performing' pupils [rather than those who will become the leaders and managers of our society] - are nevertheless blamed for that fact that many school leavers still do not get jobs.) But beyond these things, dissatisfaction with the educational system stems from a much more widespread, but less well articulated problem: Secondary education fails to engage the motives of many students and fails to help them to identify, develop, and gain recognition for their talents. More generally, it does not nurture the qualities required for societal development.

However, concern to reform teacher education also stems from widespread recognition that teacher training colleges - colleges of education - are dreary places. Experienced teachers say they learnt to teach on the job and did not get much out of college - and, in particular, that they received no experience of classroom management. There are complaints about the assessment of student-teacher performance and especially about assessment against tutors' invisible, personal, criteria of 'quality of teaching' in a single, stage-managed, lesson which typically diverges sharply from the normal work of the class with whom the student is working. There is no appreciation of the wide variety of different things teachers have to do in schools - such as meet parents, deal with 'discipline' problems, participate in the management of their schools, and work with other teachers outside their schools on curriculum development projects. As a result there is little training in how to do these things.

The first action of the Sneddon Committee was to commission research. This provided good documentation of all the problems - mentioned above - of which people were already vaguely aware. Having shown that teacher education was of little value, the Committee astoundingly came to the conclusion that there should be more of it: Although more time was indeed to be spent in schools, the length of the course should be doubled! (This is a fairly typical conclusion drawn by committees of enquiry, both in education and in other areas: If what is being done does not work, one clearly needs to spend more time on it!) However, the Committee did say that trainee teachers should spend more time actually working in schools. Unfortunately, they failed to specify what students should practice doing when they were there or what the experienced teachers with whom they were placed should do to promote their development. Most importantly, they failed to say anything about how the role of college tutors should change so as, among other things, to provide more support for master teachers. The Committee never addressed the question of how - given that one of the main complaints about the colleges was that they did not teach the 'modern methods' which, it was said, would enable schools to do better if only they adopted them – students were to practise these methods in schools if their master teachers were not using them.

The Committee set up a pilot programme to implement its recommendations on a trial basis. Unfortunately, instead of setting it up in such a way that it would be possible to learn from its difficulties and modify what was being done accordingly, the many problems that were actually encountered were attributed to such things as the !personality' of the researcher or 'clashes' between the researcher and other members of staff. In fact the difficulties encountered by the pilot project suggest that there was something wrong with the Committee's original conclusions. And indeed there was. They were very seriously flawed, ambiguous, and inadequate. One of the basic problems was that those who were invited to serve on the Committee - like those who were invited onto the Brundtland Commission on the environment - basically accepted the existing system and felt that it could b6 made to work with a little tinkering.

It is important to note that the 'correct' procedure had been followed: A committee composed of the best available experts had been set up to consider a chronic problem. They had collected evidence, considered its implications, and made recommendations. A 'pilot' project had been set up to assess the feasibility of what had been suggested. And an evaluator had been called in to set down what had been learned from the exercise.

Three things were seriously wrong:

(1) The nature of action research - indeed the scientific process itself - was poorly understood by most of those involved. In scientific terms, the object of the exercise was to use the difficulties

encountered by the pilot project to learn more about the nature of the problem and the means proposed for its solution. It was not (as some said) to 'get the bugs out of the system' or (as others thought) to 'test' some of the Committee's beliefs through something like the kind of (classical) 'experiment' they had learned about at school. Nevertheless it was rightly (by some) expected to include investigation of such questions as whether classroom teachers could (and would) do all the things which it would be necessary for them to do if the Committee's proposals were to be implemented effectively. Unfortunately, 'all the things which it would be necessary for teachers to do' had been left unstated and unanalysed by the Committee. 'Testing the hypothesis' thus called for the adoption of 'illuminative' methods which most of those who came into contact with the project - and not least most members of the committee - would not have recognised as 'science'.

(2)   The statement that the difficulties encountered by the pilot project were to was 'personalities' generally accepted - although significantly, and in all fairness, not by the public servants most directly concerned - when they were, in fact, attributable to basic deficiencies in the Committee's understanding of the nature of problems the proposed solution to which the Project was supposed to test. In part because the problems were attributed to personal incompetence and interpersonal tensions, and in part because of the poor understanding of science, there was little scope for those involved in the project to experiment, in a flexible, adventurous, manner, in order to find ways of tackling problems which were not anticipated when the project was set up. Such experimentation would have required many of the participants to behave in ways which had not been anticipated. Worse, since many of the deficiencies in the Committee's recommendations stemmed from systems constraints it had not considered, attempts by the project manager to engage with them were said to be 'outside the Project's terms of reference', thus confirming the suspicion of delusions of grandeur.

(3) Policy monitoring, review, and development was not viewed as calling for a continuous process the conduct of which should indeed be part of the raison d'etre of the colleges.

Ambiguity played a particularly important part in stifling action and the advance of understanding. Enquiry revealed that the ambiguity in the recommendations had been deliberately introduced to conceal disagreements and thus make it possible to produce a report. Indeed, the phrases used had been carefully chosen to mean different things to different people. This ambiguity meant that it was always possible for people to agree that the action project was not tackling the most important problems the Committee had identified because everyone thought the words meant different things. Consensus that the project was doing the wrong thing - and therefore ought to be terminated - was therefore achieved in much the same way as the consensus in the original report.

From this case study - and many others - it would appear that committees are not at all well suited to the task of investigating and solving problems or supervising research - let alone action research. Some other management process is required.

In reality, solution of the problems identified by the committee called for insights which it would have taken years of research to generate. These included understanding the nature of the competencies needed by a wide variety of teachers who would be able to contribute in very different ways to the evolution of a more effective educational system, how these competencies

are to be nurtured, and how their attainment is to be assessed. They included a better understanding of the nature of the wide variety of competencies teachers need to develop in students, and how they are to be nurtured and assessed. Most importantly, it called for a better understanding of the systems constraints which determine what happens in schools on what could be done to influence them.

If it is a mistake to rely on government by consensus and committee management what are the parameters within which an alternative might be sought?

The key seems to be delegation of responsibility in the context of new procedures of accountability. It is on the specification of these procedures of accountability that we need to focus. These should somehow help to ensure that those concerned: (i) initiate the collection of forward-looking information, (ii) sift it for good ideas, (iii) use it to initiate action designed to be in the long-term, public interest, (iv) introduce monitoring procedures which make it possible to learn from the effects of the action, and (v) use that new information to improve the quality of provision in the future.

Besides delegation of responsibility in the context of new procedures of accountability it will be necessary to create a pervasive climate of concern with evaluated experimentation and improvement; a ferment of innovation. We will discuss how this is to be done after we have, through further case studies, highlighted other inadequacies in the management of public provision.

Another Committee of Enquiry in Education

It might be thought that the workings of the Sneddon Committee were atypical. But other committees have done much the same thing. One was the Irish Examinations Committee mentioned in Chapter 11, where its work was used to illustrate how the operation of obscure social processes can result in an appearance of conspiracy[14.17].

Also briefly discussed were the workings of a similar committee - the Waddell Committee[14.18] - in England and Wales. For 20 years, a series of committees associated with the Schools Council for Curriculum and Examinations in England and Wales discussed the possibility of introducing a common system of examinations. These committees never reached a conclusion. Unfortunately, they did not make the reasons why they failed to do so explicit. Had they attempted to do this, it might have led them to recognise the need for a major programme of research to develop the tools required to give pupils get cred~ for a wider range of talents and the administrative arrangements required to handle the problems which the assessment of such talents poses for society. Their failure to analyse a key - apparently procedural - problem which would have led them to new insights arose in part from the kind of deficits in scientific competence mentioned earlier. But the failure to recommend crucial research also had a number of other causes. It arose in part from the committee members' unwillingness to admit the hold which examinations have over what schools do. But also relevant was the fact that they themselves did not know how to do the radical research required to find new directions and were unable to envisage what it might contribute'. But even if they had been able to articulate the need, they would not, collectively, have been prepared to trust anyone they knew with the money required to adventure into the unknown in such a way as to conduct the necessary Research and Development. Indeed, the only organisation they knew which might have been asked to do it would not in fact have done it because it was not set up and managed in a way which would facilitate the execution of innovative research. This was itself - at

least in part - attributable to the way in which its funding was handled by the Ministry concerned - arrangements which themselves stemmed from beliefs about how scientific research 'should' be conducted and managed.

In any event, a new Minister ordained that a conclusion was required within six months and a new committee - the Waddell Committee - was established to produce it. Given a very restricted brief - simply to answer the question of whether there should be a common system of examinations - this committee rehearsed all the educational, psychological, and occupational arguments pointing to the need for diversity in education. It concluded that, to cater for this diversity (actually hardly at all encouraged by the current educational system) it would be necessary to retain a variety of courses at different levels, syllabi which would cover different content areas within subjects and levels, and, most importantly, to retain different modes of assessment. Only the latter would make it possible for students to get credit for having developed high-level competencies like initiative and leadership.

However, the committee also endorsed the idea of a common system of examinations and, most importantly from our point of view, advised that 'the results should be expressed on a single scale of 7 points in a subject area'. This had the effect of negating everything else the committee had said - for how does one express assessments of 'leadership' on a single scale which also measures knowledge of 17th century history? The result was that, whereas the overall impression given by the report was that the committee had considered and addressed the really important issues, the 'solution' it offered was even more limiting than a recommendation to do 'more of the same'. This might have been produced by a confidence trick or conspiracy. And in the context of what we know about the causes of other 'developments' in education, there may well have been elements of such a conspiracy. But, in reality, the sociological need to have a single, clear, and unarguable criterion of 'quality' to use to legitimise the rationing of privilege (which was never even mentioned in the report - and which makes people uneasy whenever it is mentioned) - combined with other barriers to doing what needed to be done to produce an effect which was exactly contrary to what those members of the committee who were most aware of the educational and social issues intended[14.19].

The most significant, if not the most conspicuous, recommendation of the committee - i.e. that all assessments should be reduced to a single scale - was one which no rational person could have supported. As we will see later, this is a phenomenon which Arrow[14.20] and Miller[14.21] have shown to be characteristic of majority and consensus decision taking in situations in which different sub-groups have divergent interests. It arises from the fact that a series of coalitions have to be formed before any formulation which will command overall support can be attained.

This case study strongly reinforces impressions formed earlier: we urgently need to find alternatives to committees of enquiry composed of the great and the good; more attention needs to be paid to the - almost undiscussable - systems processes which undermine the effectiveness of common-sense action; and finding a way forward is heavily dependent on adventurous research of a kind which many people would not even accept as meriting description as scientific.

Headstart

Another example of the way in which activities motivated by concerns not directly related to the goals of the policies being considered and the needs of groups other than those being targeted can deflect public policy from its goals is to be found in the American Headstart programme[14.22]. This

was initially a programme of the US Office of Economic Opportunity. Its aim was to nurture the qualities disadvantaged adults needed to improve the quality of life. It became a programme of the Department of Education, under whose auspices its goals became to raise IQ, improve school performance, and keep children out of trouble with the police.

The adult competencies Headstart initially sought to nurture included those required to improve the quality of community life (initiative, ability to work with others, ability to understand and influence bureaucratic and political systems), those required to establish mutual help and support groups which would get things done (and, in particular, obtain welfare entitlements), and the knowledge and motivational dispositions required to care effectively for children (with a particular focus on health and nutrition).

It turned out to be remarkably easy to release people's energy into gaining control over their lives when working with others to get their welfare entitlements and directly improve their communities. Unfortunately, as with the Community Development Programmes in Scotland[14.23], those concerned started pressing for their rights under the law and for changes in the way society was organised ...and found that they could do so reasonably easily[14.24]. In the end, however, this turned out to be their undoing - because they were not skilled enough to anticipate (and avoid) the backlash that would come from politicians and administrators.

The use of non-institutional channels to press effectively for entitlements naturally threatened existing politicians and bureaucrats and raised more general fears of the movement threatening the social order. Politicians and public servants became concerned about loss of personal power and ability to move things in the direction they wanted. Actually paying out the benefits people were entitled to threatened to produce budget deficits which would in turn lead to tax increases.

As a result of this unease, public servants were directed to re-orient the project toward a goal which would be laudable but unattainable. This produced the idea of focusing on raising the IQ of children and enhancing their educational achievements. These objectives had many attractive features. In the first place, the target to be achieved was shifted to the next generation. This threatened no immediate change of the current social order. Second, the main goal - raising IQ - was unlikely to be achieved in the absolute sense and was absolutely unachievable in the relative sense. This was because (i) all the evidence indicated that variation in IQ was largely inherited and (ii) the goal was norm-referenced anyway - that is, it dealt with relative position only, so that, however hard everyone worked and however high children scored, there would still be winners and losers. There can be only one Olympic gold medalist, no matter how many beat the world record of 25 years ago. Third, if an increase were achieved, more teachers would then be required to maintain the increase. Still more professionals providing more services would be required to help everyone run faster to stay in the same relative place. The programme would be an excellent way of creating jobs for middle-class people. Most of the funds would go into the pockets of those who were already voting for the government and participating in the system. More importantly, it would increase the number of people voting to perpetuate the present system. The money would not go to the members of groups whose collective economic power was to be feared and whose impoverished individual existence helped to terrify others into participating in the system. Fourth, only professional educators - whose claims to efficacy are actually vacuous, and whose activities were therefore incapable of threatening the social order - would get funding. Theirs was not a self-help, network-based, activity which led to, and reinforced, the growth of competence of ordinary people. Fifth, still more professionals would be required to measure the outcome to show

that the programme 'worked'. Achievement of the goals was neither self-evident nor easily measurable through indices like the take-up of welfare entitlements.

To ensure that the programme would focus only on hard-to-achieve outcomes which conferred few benefits on those concerned, the evaluation contract with the Stanford Research Institute was withdrawn when its researchers started to take seriously the question of whether some variants of the programme were achieving the wider goals which many of those concerned with its implementation on the ground still - despite central government re-orientation - claimed they wished to achieve. These wider goals - now applied to children - included such things as nurturing initiative, self-confidence, the ability to communicate effectively, and the abilities required to understand and influence society.

The re-designed evaluations were not only sufficiently narrow to prevent such outcomes showing up. They were also such that no demonstration of the effectiveness of the programme could coincidentally reveal that it was actually not working in the more important sense that - although scores had gone up - everyone had retained much the same relative position in the hierarchy ... and with the 'target' groups still at the bottom of the heap.

In actual fact, the evaluations which were conducted were extremely bad, by any standard. It was extremely difficult to find out whether any effect had been achieved, still less what had produced it. This was attributable in part to the Federal Government bureaucrats' intervention to change the contractor and limit the responsiveness of the research design mid-stream - an intervention which may itself have been deliberate sabotage. The only evaluations of any merit were carried out by people who had been working in the field for decades, not by those who received the bulk of the 200 million dollar evaluation contracts. The results of these small studies were brought together retrospectively[14.25]. Unfortunately, the differences in the methodologies employed make it extremely difficult to draw any secure conclusion. Of the individual studies, one organised by Weikart[14.26] was the most substantive. It showed that at least one variant of the project - Weikart's own High-Scope Program - did result in raising certain types of IQ and educational performance. It also had the effect of keeping the children concerned out of trouble with the police. Weikart proclaimed it as a great success, arguing that it saved the US treasury billions of dollars a year. Unfortunately, he did not allow for the norm-referenced nature of the programme: the seats of those who had been moved out of special education classes and into regular classes (where they were taught the standard curriculum and thus scored higher on achievement tests), were filled by others who were effectively relegated from their positions at the bottom of the regular classrooms. In other words what happened in this norm-referenced system was that there was a marginal rotation in the people occupying positions at the borderline[14.27]. There were no dramatic improvements and, overall, as a group, the clients of the programme did not benefit. The true beneficiaries were the professionals who catered for them, administrators, and teachers – and the politicians for whom these support groups voted.

What does this case study tell us?

First, like the case study of the British National Curriculum, it tells us that a policy which is presented as being about one thing may well have been deliberately designed - or deliberately manipulated - to be about another.

Second, it shows how processes which are not directly related to the policies and outcomes being considered can have a dramatic effect on the target activities: Thus we saw how unintended social and political consequences of what began as a programme designed to enhance the

competence and quality of life of disadvantaged people resulted in a dramatic revision of the programme's goals and procedures. Likewise, we have seen that the unanticipated threats to the social order which were posed by curriculum development programmes which took seriously the widely endorsed educational goal of encouraging children to think about their society led to the elimination of those programmes. Put like that, the observation seems trite. But it has enormous implications for role of public servants and the way people envisage and go about policy evaluation. It shows that the public servants who designed these programmes failed to consider systems constraints of the greatest importance. Also of moment are the implications for the design of evaluations because a commitment to studying such 'extraneous' causes and consequences is typically missing from such designs. Yet what we have seen is that such processes can entirely nullify the educational effects of educational programmes, and that this can lead to the conclusion that the activities yield no benefits and should therefore be terminated.

Not only do evaluation proposals typically fail to mention the importance of looking at such processes, their discovery by an educational researcher would jeopardise his or her career because it would not be an 'educational' finding which would advance understanding in his or her 'discipline'. It would therefore not be publishable and would invite accusations of unsoundness for crossing disciplinary boundaries. This has major implications for the design of career structures for researchers and evaluators and the criteria which should be applied to their work.

Third, it again illustrates the importance of deep-seated sociological processes. While there was deliberate calculated intervention on the part of politicians and public servants to neutralise the original Headstart programme, most of the change resulted from the operation of much more obscure sociological feedback processes. These forces stifled criticism and calls for change. They operated to maintain and heighten differentials which induced more people to participate in the system. They maintained the perception of poor people as an incompetent group who needed to have things done to and for them by professionals. They therefore operated to enhance the belief in professionalism and thus created more jobs and higher salaries for professionals.

All this should prompt us to think carefully about the new societal management arrangements which are required to run our society in a way which will achieve the manifest or overt goals of policy, about the kinds of evaluation and feedback systems that are required, and about the arrangements that must be made to gain the insights and understandings which are most important in finding a way forward.

Mismanagement by International 'Aid' Agencies

Numerous authors[14.28] have written and spoken about the chronology of disastrous projects funded by international aid agencies and the way in which the funding - augmented by additional funds from the Third World - finds its way back to the West. The most thorough and comprehensive documentation has perhaps been provided by Hancock[14.29]. His account amounts to a damning indictment of the activities of the World Bank, the UK Overseas Development Agency, other similar agencies based in other 'developed' countries, and a number of private Foundations. His conclusions will be summarised in the paragraphs which follow.

All of these agencies have, over the years, persistently obstructed enquiry into their affairs, carefully maintaining a cloak of secrecy while engaging in extensive propaganda and hiring outstanding political 'double-talkers' to represent their organisations. These spokespersons, who carefully craft appropriate images, do such things as appear to accept important problems

highlighted by others, imply that something is being done about them, and not only reassure the public that everything ts all-right but actually portray their organisations as doing the opposite of what they are in fact doing. In Britain information about Aid projects is covered by the Official Secrets Act and therefore confidential. Unsurprisingly, given the outcomes, the World Bank took specific steps to stop Hancock's enquiry - whose conclusions explain a personal experience which has long puzzled me. A couple of decades ago we were involved in an evaluation of a World Bank-financed primary education project in Pakistan. The Bank having apparently insisted on the evaluation, seemed not the least interested in taking steps to ensure that it was carried out effectively. In the light of the information now available, this ceases to be a cause for wonder. We had been taken in by a carefully crafted public image.

In fact, across countries, only about 1% of the tax money officially voted for 'aid' is spent in the country of the 'recipient'. Instead, it goes into the pockets of Aid agency staff (who spend their time globetrotting to make 'assessments'), consultants, Western firms supplying equipment and other materials, and Western staff to maintain the equipment.

Although Government aid agencies are the worst offenders, and while some charities, like Oxfam and the .Save the Children Fund, have low overheads, some others consume 90% of the money raised, .not even sending consultants, foodstuffs, medicines, or equipment.

But let us be clear about this. We are not simply talking about Western countries spending 'their own' (Western) money in the West. The 'recipients' of most government grants of 'aid' are required to 'match' at least part of the money they are 'given' or lent with funds of their own 'in order to demonstrate that they really want' to do whatever it is that is to be done. It is most of this total sum - up to twice the grant - that is spent in the West. In this way, funds are sucked out of poor countries. If loans, instead of grants, are involved, the recipient is often required to both make some contribution to the capital costs of the project and pay 'interest'~ on the money 'borrowed'. The interest, of course, far exceeds the capital 'borrowed'. This drain of money out of the Third World is then exacerbated when, as is usually the case, the materials, equipment, and services the rich countries sell to the poor under 'aid' budgets are not discounted but sold at their full list prices. This means that the recipients have to pay up to 50% more for the goods and. services they get than they would have done had they purchased them on the open market. In this context Pratt and Burgess's[14.30] remark that 'it is not only more blessed to give than receive but also cheaper' appears as a gross understatement.

Nor is this the end: Equipment supplied as aid is often known to be substandard or incapable of meeting the regulations applied in Western countries. It is therefore of no actual value on world markets. Likewise, it is often known to be unsuited to the conditions in which it is to be used. These products injure their users and incur unusually heavy maintenance and repair charges. Consultants often know nothing about the problems about which they profess expertise and less about the country in which they will be working. Aid programmes are a means of off-loading the useless at the expense of the poor.

Multilateral aid organisations suck funds from poor to rich countries in an astonishing profusion of ways. All the countries of the UN contribute to its budget - but the West draws out the largest share in salaries, accommodation, and consultancy charges. Britain contributes to the funds of multilateral aid agencies... but the contracts it gets for supplying goods and services are worth several times what it pays in. (As might be expected, Japan obtains the highest return on its membership dues.)

The specifications for the projects to be funded are usually drawn up on the slenderest of evidence based on very brief 'field' visits by a number of, continuously changing, jet-lagged, personnel whose contacts are mainly with their opposite numbers in the public service of the recipient country - not with the public the programme is intended to serve (and we have already seen that public servants' first concern is, despite their words, not always with the welfare of their clients). There is rarely any study of the context in which the project will be situated. Most projects are based on expatriates' 'solutions' grounded in conventional wisdom and often with virtually no knowledge of local conditions or local situations.

The litany of absurd aid projects itemised by Hancock is long. It includes:

- Highway construction in Brazil. The main beneficiaries were the logging, mining, and ranching companies who obtained rapid transportation. The World Bank also supplied huge sums of money to move thousands of poor people from Brazil's cities to carve 'farms' - by slash and burn - out of the rain forest, which was destroyed at a rate of 3.6 million acres a year. But the land turned out to be unfit for agriculture and the soil cover rapidly disintegrated.

- The movement of 10 million people to outlying islands of the archipelago in Indonesia. This land was simply taken from its traditional owners, and horrific military reprisals were vented on resisters. 150,000 people were, in the process, slaughtered in East Timor (which had itself been acquired by military force) alone. 2.3 million hectares of tropical forest were destroyed. The migrants were dumped on deforested land without tools. Many thousands flocked back to the cities.

- Cattle and sheep ranching in the western Kalahari. In the early 1970s the World Bank paid $10 million to fund this project. It was subsequently found to have conferred no economic benefits. Undeterred, in 1977 a further $13 million was approved for more of the same. And then another $11 million.

- Worldwide, the Bank spent $1 billion in 15 years on ill-conceived projects in the livestock sector alone.

- Poorly-conceived construction of dams for electricity generation and irrigation. These have cost vastly more than the livestock schemes. Many met with the fate Foster[14.31] had described in the early 60s. Local peoples were unable to maintain the technology; the canals silted up and became clogged with algae; the land became saline. No lessons appear to have been learnt from such public-sector mistakes, well documented over a quarter of a century ago. One dam in Ghana alone displaced 1% of the entire population of the country and led to the river-blindness of 100,000 people - yet it did not lead to any sale of local commodities, all the ore smelted using the electricity generated having to be shipped in from abroad. Nearly all large dams have a similar effect. In Pakistan more than half the Indus basin canal system command area - some 12 million hectares - is waterlogged and 40% saline. Half the world's irrigated land is salinised. Many of the huge reservoirs that are constructed quickly silt up, some after only 4 years. India constructed more than 1000 dams in the space of 10 years. One dam alone displaced 70,000 people without compensation. They moved uphill, destroying forests and groundcover. The flooded area consisted of agricultural land and 12,000 acres of pristine rain forest. The water brought malaria, cholera, and other waterborne diseases to millions of people. The total number of people displaced by the schemes on a single river

amounted to 1.5 million, mostly tribal, people. In one area canals fed water to areas earmarked for tobacco growing. But no tobacco was ever grown. Officially at least, the Bank is, above all, concerned to promote international, currency-earning activities so that the economies concerned can become part of the world trade system. The Bank never seriously considers alternatives to big dams.

- The Kenana sugar project in the Sudan. The initial cost estimate was $150 million; the final bill $613 million. The project involved the construction of a huge power station, irrigation canals (a number 20 miles long), and a huge water pumping station. It was meant to export sugar ... but the nearest port was a thousand miles away. And, as should have been known, there is a huge surplus of sugar on the world market. The sugar was unsaleable. The beneficiaries of the project are the 400 expatriates who run the entire enterprise.

There is very little evaluation of Bank funded projects. Such studies as exist reveal a horrifying picture: Out of a representative sample of 189 Bank projects worldwide, 60% had serious shortcomings or were complete failures. Only 50% of the 'successes' were sustainable on completion! In really poor countries 75% of all agricultural projects fail. Other government 'aid' agencies turn in a similar performance.

Even small-scale projects reveal a chronology of disasters. 'Small-scale' solar electricity generating plants require high-tech equipment - such as computers to control them. They require continual maintenance by highly qualified technicians. Naturally, both the equipment and the technicians come from the West. And the resulting electricity is too expensive for poor rural consumers. $4.5 million was devoted to a project to produce gas from dung in Mali. It turned out that dung was scarce, the work required to fill and clean the plant exhausting, and the gas produced too expensive for potential consumers.

Objective evidence of such blunders is, in the absence of a series of independent investigative evaluations, hard to come by. But the material Hancock summarises strongly suggests blunders are the rule, not the exception. The chronology goes on and on: Project after project; donor country after donor country; agency after agency.

The causes of this horrific situation are not far to seek: Bank merit awards and promotions go exclusively to those who have been able to lend the most money in the shortest period of time. Nothing else counts. Under such circumstances, who would undertake careful assessments of need or viability? Who would undertake careful evaluations? Who would be interested in small, useful, projects? It becomes clear that the objective is to help the West, not the Third World. Helping the Third World is convenient, tear-jerking, advertising copy.

Once again, then, we find every reason to be sceptical of the good intentions of authority, a need to insist that whatever we are looking at is unlikely to be what it seems or claims to be, a need for access to public and private sector organi6ations to find out what they are really doing, a need for thoroughly questioning, comprehensive, investigative evaluation of the effects of the activities that are undertaken, and a need for media which will disseminate counter-information and alternative viewpoints and promote discussion of what is in the public interest. We see a need to question the claims of economists and 'development' 'specialists'. More specifically, we see a need to invent fiscal arrangements and societal management arrangements which will in fact deliver benefits for the poor.

A Particular Inability to Handle Problems Deriving from the Combined Effects of Scale and Systems

One of the most important reasons for the very existence of the public service is the need to manage large-scale, socio-economic-physical systems. Unfortunately, the application of current understandings of the management process to such problems is particularly likely to lead to inappropriate outcomes.

The difficulties can be illustrated by considering the management of the Himalaya, discussed by Thompson[14.32]. In the Himalaya, one has a host of problems having to do with management of mineral and forest resources, a wide range of people from different tribes owing allegiance to different countries, and management of power and water supplies affecting not only people far away downstream but even, through the effects of the area's vast forests on the atmosphere, people on the other side of the globe. Thus there is not just one problem - such as power - but multiple, interrelated, physical, social, economic, and political problems. Conditions vary dramatically from place to place. There is a gross lack of information on most of the relevant economic, ecological, and social processes. Most of the people involved are simultaneously part of the problem and part of any solution. Only one thing is certain: Distant decision taking which ignores this complexity and which focuses on one issue at a time cannot be other than disastrous. Equally inadequate will be the effects of a series of small-scale changes if the long-term, distal, and cumulative effects produced in reciprocal interaction with other changes are not properly monitored. There are numerous short and long feedback loops which result in actions which are, in the short-term, to a one community's advantage rebounding over the longer term, often via their destructive effects on other communities.

The problem of managing the Himalaya poses in stark form many of the problems involved in the management of modern society and we will discuss the way forward in greater detail later. But clearly, the need is for sophisticated information-based management. What is not at all clear is what this actually implies in such huge and messy contexts which are actually typical of the problems which will have to be tackled to create a sustainable society.

One must be wary of thinking that all problems can be anticipated and avoided. Many problems only arise as others are successfully tackled. Thus the population problem currently facing the globe is, in part, a product of the very success of developments in medicine and agriculture. Europe's butter mountains and wine lakes are the product of extremely successful agricultural policies which have resulted in too much food rather than too little. What these problems point to is the need for a mechanism for continuously monitoring what is going on across outcomes that few people even think important, an ability to change direction accordingly, and to then diagnose and set about tackling new problems caused by the developments.

The kind of process required may be illustrated in connection with grain storage: As one set of problems was solved by increasing the scale of the silos, other problems - created by density and the ability of previously unimportant fungi to create heat - emerged. These problems were not only unanticipated, they were largely unanticipatable. They were systems problems. To detect and find ways of dealing with them it was necessary to appoint people with specific responsibility for them and with authority to engage appropriate professionals to make them explicit and then analyse them. A whole new creative process was consequently required. Common sense would not do. High-level, specialist, up-to-date, technical knowledge - not general knowledge - was required and,

as scale increased, new kinds of professional expertise.

Developments which did not pose serious problems when they were small-scale and diffused can pose major threats when they are generalised. Examples include:

- Degradation of the biosphere by post-industrial scale emissions of CO_2 and CFCs.
- Cumulative degradation of the seas by dumping of wastes including industrial chemicals and industrial and domestic sewage.
- The vast increase in the reach and scale of the global market - one of the most disastrous oversights in Adam Smith's market theory. (When traders were multiple and small many of the market's defects were insignificant - and could in any case be corrected by such things as injunctions to act in the interests of the local community rather than solely for financial gain. Now that the actors are huge, international, and impersonal the system's flaws are extremely serious and cannot be corrected by such things as appeal to people's better nature.)

There was no way of anticipating problems like the ozone-depleting effects of CFCs. They were inherently unpredictable. The questions are therefore: What arrangements can be established to look out for potential new problems that no one has previously thought of, and, once they have been, noticed ensure that they are properly investigated? How can awareness of the problems be integrated with recognition of the importance of the problem the solution to which created the problem on which attention is currently focused? How can networks of problems be connected one with another and with the underlying processes of which they are a symptom? The quest for answers to such questions has led us to the suggestions made later in this book.

Reason[14.33] has suggested that the Chernobyl accident is an example of a problem of this sort. While it was, in a sense, anticipatable, there were many ways in which it was not. There was a society committed to getting something it wanted (energy) no matter how perilous and how large-scale the operations had to be. There was a system which was hazardous, complex, tightly coupled, opaque, and operating outside 'normal' conditions. There was a management structure which was monolithic, remote, and slow to respond. There were operators who possessed only a limited understanding of the system they were controlling and who, in any case, were set a task that made violations of rules and guidelines inevitable. Many of these features are present in most public-sector operations. At Chernobyl, as in some aircraft disasters, operatives over-rode built-in safety reactions when they seemed counter-intuitive. The Chernobyl reactor went out of control when it was shut down too far. But the disaster was mainly due to an interaction of minor infringements and irregularities each of which had been made with impunity many times before but which, in this particular combination, led to an unforeseen, and largely unforeseeable, pattern of events.

It is in fact extremely difficult to design fail-safe systems because it is almost impossible to know what those concerned are liable to do with the system. When vital components of fail-safe systems for power stations were removed from designs and the emasculated designs circulated to design experts, very few noticed the absence of the crucial components.

These observations mean that many more people - and, in particular, critics, 'cranks', mavericks, and heretics - need to be encouraged to participate in the design of systems and their comments need to be taken seriously rather than dismissed as the views of the 'uninformed'.

One reason why public projects tend toward large-scale is that monitoring one small project

requires almost as much central office time to approve, monitor, and review as a large one. Unfortunately, off-loading these monitoring costs on to large-scale contractors (who are supposed to have the architects, accountants, etc. required to do it efficiently) often results in higher costs in the end because these quality control personnel take short cuts and accept sub-standard work to maximize the profits of their employers. The cost of correcting defects arising from inadequate monitoring of large-scale construction projects is much higher than the cost of repairing the deficiencies of one or two small builders.

Large-scale public projects are also much more difficult to stop than small ones, no matter how misguided they turn out to be - and even if, like Headstart, they are introduced as 'experiments'. The reasons why they are so hard to terminate include:

(i) The fact that the administrators who initiated the projects are still around and cannot admit to having made a mistake.

(ii) Public budgets have been committed and the money would have to be 'given back' to the Treasury if the projects were terminated. This would not only cause embarrassment. Accountants are not used to re-absorbing money and find it difficult to do so. Worse, the sum given back would be deducted from the departmental budget for future years so that equivalent money would not be available for other uses.

(iii) A great deal of effort has to go into getting approval to release the money. As a result, public servants are extremely reluctant to relinquish their hold on any money they have secured.

(iv) Numerous articulate professionals depend on the programme for their income and would protest loudly, publicly, and vigorously (claiming that they were acting in the interests of the programme's clients) if serious consideration were given to closing it down without creating another. What is more, since they would have all sorts of redundancy rights, it would be argued that one might as well get something for the money.

The solution to problems reviewed in this chapter does not, therefore, only involve more systematic monitoring and evaluation. It will also be necessary to provide security for those whose livelihoods are at stake if public debate and sophisticated evaluation shows that the programmes to which they have become attached are, in reality, of little value.

Summary

We can say that the way forward involves a major investment in professional evaluation. It involves systems analysis to make explicit the distal effects of what is going on and to identify unsuspected feedback loops and pressures perpetuating a particular system. It involves finding ways of surfacing multiple definitions of the problem and initiating numerous monitored experiments based on those definitions. It involves the development of ways of encouraging those who have made counter observations to articulate them. It involves the development of better ways of learning from the effects of action. Above all it involves the development of mechanisms to compel action on the basis of information and a means of checking that the actions taken are not corrupted by other forces within the system. Eternal vigilance is required: New ways of exposing the behaviour of public-servants to the public gaze are needed. This means that we need new definitions of citizenship. This prompts the realisation that we have as yet said little about the role of the citizen in the context of the enormous role played by government management in modern

society. How are citizens to cope with the fact that there are so many decisions to which they should contribute? How are they to know which are the most important, who to contact, and who is responsible for taking what action? In the 19th century people, could get a great deal done as individuals, but the kind of problems to be tackled in modern society requires group activity.

Nevertheless it is already clear that we need to look to fellow citizens, rather than authority, for the services we require to maintain the quality of our lives, the help we need to monitor what is going on in our society, and take the actions that are needed. We need to find ways of holding our politicians, managers, and other public servants accountable to the public rather than to those above them for acting in an innovative way in the long-term public interest.

In the next chapter we will examine some of the forms of organisation are needed to do this.

Notes

14.1   Raven, 1967; Stone, 1961a&b

14.2   Raven, 1988, 1989

14.3   Newsom (1963) which was a particularly illogical report.

14.4   Plowden Report, 1966. Bernstein (1975) has charged that the words in which this were couched were particularly obscurantist and deceptive.

14.5   Munn Report, see SED, 1977b.

14.6   Dunning Report, see SED, 1977a.

14.7   Sneddon Report, 1978

14.8   Schon, 1983

14.9   Adams, Robbins and Stephenson, 1981

14.10 The reasons for this have been discussed by Raven (1985) and Schon (1983).

14.11 Raven, 1985; Schon, 1983

14.12 What is implied by the term 'systems processes' may be biological or physical. These are nicely captured by the way Gaia maintains herself as a living organism~ But they may also be sociological. For example, a network of feedback - fueled among other things by the sociological imperative that the educational system legitimise the hierarchical allocation of jobs and rewards - maintaining the current system in being. Heavy and 'jargonistic' though it is, it has therefore been found necessary to continue to use the phrase 'sociological systems processes'.

14.13 For a fuller discussion see Searle (1985) and Raven (1994).

14.14 Schwarz, P.A., 1985

14.15 For a fuller account of this enquiry and an evaluation of one attempt to follow through on its recommendations, see Raven (1987a&b).

14.16 John Major, 11 January 1993

14.17 Although the workings of the Inter-Cert Committee were described in a previous chapter, some readers may appreciate the following fuller account. In Ireland, the Intermediate Certificate examination is taken at around age 15. Some schools and their representatives and some members of the Department (Ministry) of Education were aware of the serious constrictions which the examination had on the ability of secondary schools to meet pupils' needs. Unfortunately (a) those who recognised the importance of certifying other outcomes did not know how to assess progress toward them, (b) some members of the Committee were utterly opposed to a change toward certifying higher level outcomes either because they would have to work harder to achieve them or because they recognised that changing the assessments would interfere with the way in which the educational system contributed to the maintenance and perpetuation of the social order, and (c) there was considerable unease about certifying qualities like 'initiative' because it was apparent that these were somehow linked to values and there was no way of handling the moral dilemmas which this posed. The net result was that all members of the Committee recognised that it would

take a long time to do anything, and some hoped that nothing would ever happen.

The more progressive members of the Committee then developed an action plan to deal with the more reactionary. The latter were approached in the bar and plied with alcohol by the others who arrived in a pre-determined sequence. What was to be achieved was agreement on the establishment of a Moderation and Educational Assessment Service which would have a staff of researchers and others concerned with curriculum development and be empowered to establish a network of collaborating teachers to develop new curricula and ways of assessing them. But then came a twist that resulted in an exactly contrary outcome. The Department (Ministry) of Education declined to make any substantial funding available for the wider work. It was therefore agreed by the Committee that the unit would 'initially' focus on 'improving' what was already being done. This, of course, meant that the fundamental work which was required to find ways of achieving and assessing the broader goals would get no attention at all, and that all attention would focus on improving the reliability and 'academic' predictive validity - but not the construct validity - of the assessments which were already being made. No provision was even made for schools to insist on something that had been at the heart of the proposals - namely the development of tools which would make it possible for them to have their pupils' certificates based on what they we're good at.

The final report faithfully acknowledged the major problems inherent in the current system of examinations, was replete with phrases alluding to vitally important educational and assessment issues, gave the impression of being forward-looking and thorough but, at the same time realistic and reasonable, recognising the need to proceed in a step-wise rather than revolutionary manner, but in practice made recommendations which could, and did, have the opposite effect to that intended by the more progressive members of the Committee. While it is true to say that the reactionaries won, it would not be true to say that they did so by employing Machiavellian tactics. The progressives were defeated by systems processes which the public servants concerned failed to understand and tackle. But it was a senior public servant who tried to get the Committee to consider the social functions of education and how to come to terms with them. At the end of the day it was we who failed him. In a sense, this book is a very real attempt to compensate for this.

14.18 Waddell Report (1978)

14.19 Almost exactly parallel observations to those we have made about the Irish and English examinations committees could be made about the Munn and Dunning Committees (SED, 1977a&b) which dealt with much the same topics in Scotland. Their reports are in some ways more coherent and forward-looking than the English and Irish ones, but they are seriously flawed in that they perpetuate the divide the Schools Council for Curriculum and Examinations in England and Wales was set up to bridge (but had never in fact succeeded in bridging) between curriculum and assessment. While the Munn Report, like both the Waddell Report in England and Wales and the Irish Intercert Report, acknowledged the developments needed in assessment to facilitate essential developments in curricula, it neither recommended the range of research and development activities, nor the developments in managerial arrangements, which would be required to move forward.

14.20 Arrow, 1963

14.21 Miller, 1992

14.22 For a selective review of the vast literature dealing with Headstart, Homestart, and Follow Through, see Raven (1981).

14.23 Graham and Tyler, 1993

14.24 See Marris and Rein, 1972.

14.25 Lazar, 1979

14.26 Schweinhart and Weikart, 1977; Weikart et al., 1978; Love et al., 1976

14.27 See also Hope (1984) and Raven (1980).

14.28 e.g. Ekins, 1986; George, 1988; Ghandi, 1991.

14.29 Hancock, 1991

14.30 Burgess and Pratt, 1970

14.31 Foster, 1967

14.32 Thompson and Warburton, 1985

14.33 Reason, 1987