

RECOMMENDATION No. 10

concerning

SCHOOL INSPECTION

(1937)

The International Conference of Education,

Convened at Geneva by the International Bureau of Education and being assembled on the 19th July at its sixth session, adopts on the twentieth July, nineteen hundred and thirty-seven, the following recommendation:

The Conference, holding the view,

That it is of great importance that discoveries resulting from a more exact knowledge of child psychology should be translated into action as rapidly and as completely as possible by the adoption of more and more active, intuitive and concrete methods;

That for this purpose it does not suffice to rely upon the improvement in the methods by which future teachers are trained in Institutes of Education, Training Colleges, etc.,

That in-service teachers also require support, encouragement and guidance;

That this duty is essentially one which should be carried out by inspectors of all grades;

Considering also that neither authority imposed from without nor routine methods make education really effective, but only the zeal of teachers for their vocation;

That, in all grades, teachers should have great liberty in the choice of methods and their application, just as they have the right to expect that their intellectual liberty shall be preserved;

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That, whenever the authority of the inspector is called into action, it should be exercised, assuring to the teachers the necessary guarantees against arbitrary action and injustice;

That, in order to be fit for their work, inspectors not only have need of sound knowledge of psychology and education, but also should be endowed with moral and intellectual qualities enabling them to guide with sympathy and understanding the teachers in their charge;

That in the majority of countries, inspection is thought to be necessary for elementary, secondary and vocational education, but generally speaking is not considered appropriate to the highest forms of education;

Recommends to the Ministries of Public Instruction in the various countries:

- 1) That the choice of inspectors of all grades should only be made after a very searching investigation into the moral qualities and intellectual attainments needed for this most delicate function;

- 2) That no one should be appointed to the inspectorate who has not previously shown an interest in and an understanding of general educational problems, either in a period of probation or by following a special course organized by a post-graduate institution. In this training there should be a place for the study of comparative education and of systems of school organization in other countries;

- 3) That the examination to discover fitness for the one who analyses, where such exists, should deal not only with knowledge properly speaking, but also (by the introduction of concrete examples of the problems which an inspector may meet) with capacity to administer with intelligence, tact and justice;

- 4) That the point of fundamental importance in the life of an inspector is that he shall understand the teachers in his charge and be able to advise them, bearing in mind that he must at all times respect their intellectual freedom and encourage the spirit of initiative in educational matters;

- 5) That, in order to be able to carry out their duty properly, and to keep pace with educational progress, inspectors should not be in charge of districts too large nor have duties which are unduly complex—that in secondary education particularly, administrative control should be in the hands of other officials, and that direction in purely educational matters should constitute the proper mission of the inspectors;

6) That, by means of visits abroad, by probationary periods and special courses of work, and by collaboration with eminent leaders of thought in Institutes of Education, Training Colleges (or Normal Schools), in various educational researches and enquiries, they should keep abreast with modern educational thought;

7) That they should establish amongst themselves such general agreement on broad issues as is compatible with the preservation of freedom of action to the individual;

8) That, in the interest of the children and of the private schools themselves these latter should be subjected to inspection as are the public schools;

9) That, even if the specialisation of inspectors may be in practice difficult, as for instance, in elementary rural schools, specialisation should be established wherever possible;

That, for example, instruction in infant schools, in short courses, in schools for the blind and the deaf and dumb, should have the benefit of the guidance and advice of specialist inspectors;

That, for elementary schools, at any rate in large towns, there should be special inspectors in charge of art education, physical education, manual work and domestic science; that these inspectors should be entrusted with the duty of guiding, as far as their subject is concerned, the inspectors in charge of elementary education in the small towns and in rural schools, and that these specialists should pay regular joint visits to the schools, with the district inspector, in order to assist and advise him; that with regard to secondary education and vocational education, where the conditions are most favourable, specialisation of inspectors should be considered the normal thing.