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HIGHER EDUCATION IN IRELAND

COMMENTS ON THE REPORT OF THE COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION 1960-67

The Commission to investigate higher education in Ireland was set up in 1960 by the then Minister for Education, Dr P J Hillery, with the following terms of reference

> Having regard to the educational needs and to the financial and other resources of the country, to inquire into and to make recommendations in relation to university, professional, technological and higher education generally, with special reference to the following
> (a) the general organisation and administration of education at these levels,
> (b) the nature and extent of the provision to be made for such education,
> (c) the machinery for the making of academic and administrative appointments to the staffs of the universities and university colleges, and
> (d) the provision of courses of higher education through Irish (2, p xxviii)

The Commission was given great freedom in reaching its recommendations, the only constraints imposed were the above terms and the provisions of the constitution of the country The Commission, under the Chairmanship of Chief Justice Cearbhall O Dálaigh, was made up of twenty-eight members drawn from various walks of life An average of twenty of these members attended the forty-eight plenary sessions (most of them two-day sittings) of the Commission There were also meetings of working parties and meetings to take oral evidence (from 154 witnesses) as well as seventy-seven visits to educational institutions and authorities, at home, in Britain, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, Germany, Netherlands, Sweden and Switzerland

The present provision for higher education and the likely needs of the future were considered by the Commission All institutions dealing with students receiving education beyond the level of the Leaving Certificate of the Department of Education came within its scope, its report, therefore contains a discussion of professional education in general, education in the fields of medicine, agriculture, veterinary medicine, technology,

teacher training, law, art and architecture, business and administrative studies, social science, music and military training Recommendations of varying degrees of detail were made about education in each of these areas It is perhaps not surprising that a Commission composed of members from a diversity of backgrounds should have difficulty in coming to agreement over such a wide area as the Commission covered, at any rate, twelve of the Commission members submitted reservations to the report

Altogether the Commissioners took seven years over their work In 1967, the long awaited report of over 400,000 words (exclusive of appendices) appeared The first section to be published was a summary of the whole report (1) This was followed by the report proper which appeared in two volumes (2, 3) It is proposed to publish appendices to the report and selections of written and oral evidence in separate volumes

Four people intimately concerned with higher education in Ireland were asked by *The Irish Journal of Education* in January 1968 to write comments on Volume I of the report (Chapters 1-19) Dr R A Breatnach, Professor of Irish Language and Literature at University College, Cork, concerned himself mainly with problems of structure and organisation in higher education Dr Bryan G Alton, Senior Physician at the Mater Misericordiae Hospital Dublin and member of the Senate of the National University of Ireland, dealt with medical education, while Dr Declan M Larkin, Professor of Electron Physics at University College, Galway dealt with problems in the education of technologists Finally, Professor Patrick Lynch of the Department of Economics at University College, Dublin, and Director of the OECD survey teams that produced *Investment in education* and *Science and Irish economic development* made some general comments on the report

REFERENCES

1 IRELAND COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION 1960 67 *I Presentation and summary of report* Dublin Stationery Office, 1967

2 IRELAND COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION 1960 67 *II Report*, Volume 1 (Chapters 1 19) Dublin Stationery Office, 1967

3 IRELAND COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION 1960 67 *II Report*, Volume 2 (Chapters 20 31) Dublin Stationery Office, 1967

I

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The Commission on Higher Education has accomplished a herculean task, as is evident from the first volume of its report In this we have the principal and more fundamental parts of the results of the Commission's labours, namely, those in which the present provision for higher education is critically surveyed, the future demand for it estimated and the most suitable institutional means of meeting the demand recommended The more one studies the volume the more one is impressed by the thoroughness with which the Commission carried out its work Its investigations in depth ranged over a very extensive field and included on-the-spot inquiries in many centres of higher learning abroad, the quantity of oral and written evidence it had to evaluate was prodigious, and the problems for which it had to find solutions were not only complex at the practical level but, in so far as the metropolitan university colleges are concerned, bedevilled by deep-rooted conflicts of opinion and interest By and large the report is a successful exercise of common sense in a field where this natural gift has never played a dominant role

One of the Commission's main tasks was to bring a semblance of order into a situation of institutional chaos Irish higher education does not constitute a coherent system On the contrary it is a congeries of distinct and disparate bodies of diverse origins and constitutions which perform a variety of unco ordinated and overlapping functions related to the needs of the community for highly educated and trained personnel of various kinds The report recognises that the universities and university colleges form the functional keystone of the set-up 'it is scarcely an exaggeration to say that the quality of all our higher studies and scholarship—indeed of the general fabric of the country's education—depends on the standards that the universities are enabled to attain' (1, p 486) It is a matter for regret that the Commission was precluded by its broad (far too broad to my mind) terms of reference from concentrating all its attention on the universities as the central and most urgent of the problems requiring solution Had this been feasible much valuable time must have been saved a report would almost certainly have appeared some years earlier and substantial progress might surely have been made by this time towards providing the country with a modern structure of university education

Despite the rejection by the Government of the findings relating to University College Dublin, and Trinity College, the recommendations in favour of four independent universities, two in Dublin and one each in Cork and Galway, seem to be to be based on sound academic grounds

These are fully set out with admirable lucidity and objectivity in Chapters 15 and 16 For obvious reasons a member of a provincial college will not be expected to comment in detail at the present time on them But it is proper for him to express appreciation of the sympathetic understanding the Commission has shown of the particular difficulties facing the provincial institutions and to record his agreement that, provided certain explicit guarantees are forthcoming, 'there is no reason why, as independent universities, the Cork and Galway colleges should not continue to develop' (p 417) The Commission recommends three guarantees which 'should be of such a nature as to ensure that the two institutions will be equally regarded with any other institution in their claims for further development, that they will be given a due share of the finances made available for higher education, and that they will receive special consideration for difficulties with which they may be faced in attracting and retaining staff adequate in quality and sufficient in numbers' (pp 417-8)

These guarantees could appropriately be written into the functions of the proposed permanent Commission for Higher Education (p 477) or into those of such other statutory authority as may be established in its place A fourth indispensable requirement, at least for the Cork college, is assurance of specially favourable treatment in regard both to capital and current grants for several years to come Failing this offset to chronic under-endowment over many years, there can be no hope of attaining standards of accommodation and equipment comparable with those in prospect in Dublin and appropriate to university status Given these prerequisites and the further safeguard of close institutional association for all purposes of common academic interest in a Council of Irish Universities, as recommended by the Commission (pp 457 ff), the Cork college, in my view, could face the challenge of independence with confidence But the success of the response would depend no more on external factors than on the effectiveness of the internal machinery of government and administration devised and put into operation Indeed it is questionable whether there is any other sphere where *aggiornamento* is more overdue and reform more necessary than here

Four self-governing institutions, associated through representatives for purposes of common academic interests in a council of universities, the powers of which would be partly advisory partly mandatory—that is how the Commission envisages the future structure of university education as an academically coherent whole Having regard to the relative ineffectiveness of the analogous Board of Studies of the NUI, considerable care would need to be taken in drafting the functions of the

council and ensuring their effective operation for, without an academic clearing house, parity of standards would be unattainable Over and above this system there would be a permanent Commission for Higher Education manned by a part-time chairman and eight part-time members none of whom would be drawn from any of the institutions within its scope This authority would be appointed by the Government and would be responsible to the Taoiseach Besides having general powers of planning and review throughout the whole field of higher education, it would, amongst other functions, 'examine institutional budgets and plans for development' and 'advise the government thereon' (p 477) It would also distribute the financial resources made available by the Government to the individual institutions in the form of block grants While it is acknowledged that there is a real need for a body which would serve as a formal link with the Government, submit a co-ordinated statement of the financial needs of the universities to it and allocate the grants made available between them, one is bound to have some reservations about the practicability of the proposal as it stands In fairness it should be said that the Commission has itself considered and rejected no fewer than nine objections, including one to the body being part-time Nevertheless, it is hard to accept that a part-time body could effectively discharge the extensive range of functions proposed A more serious difficulty lies in the fact that restriction of membership to persons not in the service of any of the institutions coming within the ambit of the body would virtually exclude all who, by reason of their special knowledge and experience, have most to contribute to a body charged *inter alia* with responsibility for planning the orderly development of higher education It is more than doubtful that this serious disadvantage would be offset by the provision that representatives of the institutions would be eligible to serve on specialist committees appointed to advise the permanent Commission

One of the reasons advanced by the Commission for its stand on this matter is that representatives of institutions would find it difficult 'to divest themselves of institutional interests', which perhaps is too harsh a judgment A more substantial reason mentioned is that institutional representation would add at least twelve members to the eight envisaged and result in an unwieldy body, too big for the executive functions it would have to perform But the dilemma is of the Commission's own making If one turns to the diagram on pp 491-2 of the report one can readily form an impression of the formidable difficulties the proposed lay permanent Commission would be faced with even if its functions related only to examination of institutional budgets, in balancing the

competing claims on limited financial resources of so many divergent interests and heterogeneous activities No fewer than twelve independent institutions are named—a number of them proposed new foundations—besides subsidiary semi autonomous institutes That a part-time Commission of nine members would be successful in drawing so many separate entities 'into a coherent whole' is hardly credible Indeed it is very hard to see how they could form a coherent whole in any real sense in the absence of any definable common interest which would serve as a basis for a formal relationship between them Institutional cohesion surely is attainable only when institutions perform similar functions In my opinion, all the permanent Commission for Higher Education would achieve is an illusion of unity at the apex of the pyramidal structure It would be an agency based more on expediency than on principle and, charged with a multiplicity of functions it would be much less likely to cater for the special needs of university education than a body with limited responsibilities and of proved effectiveness like the British University Grants' Committee

By and large the report is of necessity much less concerned with principle than with practice At one point, however, the Commission lays aside its habitual pragmatism and takes its stand on theory, with results that can only be described as unfortunate I refer to the passage headed *A View of the University* on pp 121 2, where an attempt is made to define the functions of a university Having said that the university is not a training school for the professions or the universal provider of all forms of higher education or a mere purveyor of academic labels the Commission continues

> The university is a place for the study and communication of basic knowledge The university is the repository of the highest standards in teaching and scholarship The university conserves accumulated knowledge and passes it on to successive generations of students The university re-examines that knowledge and re-states it in the light of new scholarship The university adds to existing knowledge and advances it beyond its present frontiers These are the purposes to which the university must relate its functions, and these are the obligations that the university must be permitted to keep uppermost, no matter what other requirements for professional and technical education fall upon it (p 122)

By way of a first comment on the passage the last sentence of Newman's essay *What is a University?* is not inappropriate 'it is this and a

great deal more, and demands a somewhat better head and hand than mine to describe it well' Newman was attempting to define 'a university in its idea and in its purpose' He did not claim that his magnificent ideal had ever been fully realised, only that it had existed before now 'in good measure' and since he asked 'Shall it be again?' he cannot have been as sure of the future as he apparently was of the past Here and there in the passage intimations of Newman are perceptible, but the Commission speaks on its own authority One would have thought that the occasion was important enough to call for some reference to expert opinion, or is one to infer that it is less important to establish the validity of a philosophical position than say, to elucidate the principles underlying the prohibition of the attendance of Catholic youths at Trinity College? If appeal to authority was necessary in one case it was surely no less necessary in the other In my opinion as a layman, the Commission's view is basically unsound It is unsound first of all because a normative approach to the problem of defining what a 'living' institution is, be it church or state or university, is unsound, because the normative approach imports a theory into reality and may end by tyrannically confining the institution in a strait jacket The political philosopher Bertrand de Jouvenel has warned that 'there is a tyranny in the womb of every Utopia'

The view is also unsound in particulars To take one instance, what precisely is meant by the concept 'basic knowledge'? Newman did not speak of basic knowledge in this or any context He recognised that 'all knowledge is a whole' and spoke of the university as 'a place for the communication and circulation of thought, by means of personal intercourse' and he described this place as 'a seat of universal learning', 'a school of knowledge of every kind' The Commission probably intended to draw a distinction between 'basic' and 'applied' knowledge and to convey that the former was the proper concern of the university while the latter, being useful and tending to subserve utilitarian ends, more especially when application takes the form of professional and technical training might at best be tolerated as a necessary but subsidiary activity not properly coming within the scope of a university But the truth is that there is no real validity in a distinction between 'basic' and 'applied' knowledge, and any attempt to reorganise teaching and research on the basis of such a false dichotomy could only inhibit the university from carrying out one of the primary functions which the Commission rightly attributes to it in one sentence of the passage quoted, viz 'The university adds to existing knowledge and advances it beyond its present frontiers'

Given the theoretical viewpoint of the Commission, it is obvious that

the next step is to remove or exclude 'applied' studies from the university, and this is precisely what is recommended not alone in the case of technological education, where the specialised nature of training may, in some measure, justify the proposal, but also in the cases of the vocationally orientated New Colleges and agricultural and veterinary education and research, where the proposal cannot be as easily justified But the Commission is far too pragmatic in its approach to be swayed by theory alone Practical considerations play the decisive role in its decisions These are the dominant influences in relation to the recommendation concerning the so called New Colleges They are introduced in a way that suggests a desperate remedy for a hopeless situation 'It is our judgment that, in the conditions of Ireland, an attempt to provide in a short period of years both for the present under-endowment of the universities and for an increase in their size to meet the whole of the extra demand for higher education cannot be contemplated' (p 123) This being so—and given the atmosphere of the time, the attitude of the Commission is understandable—it is argued that a new type of institution called a 'New College' is needed which would provide three-year courses leading to bachelors' degrees in arts, science and commerce and, in these areas, relieve the universities of some of the anticipated extra demand on them Each New College would be a separate self-governing entity but initially there would be provision for 'a form of academic tutelage' (p 129) Compared with the universities, we are assured, the New College would not be 'an inferior institution in any pejorative sense' but would award 'a different kind of qualification based on a different kind of course' (p 130) with a 'stronger vocational bias' (p 127) A later recommendation provides in addition for incorporation of teacher-training colleges The proposal is hardly the happiest put forward in the report Two of many objections to it may be mentioned here Firstly, it seems very unlikely that the general public could be convinced that the kind of education offered, however intrinsically good and useful it might be, was not—what in fact it is—a mere substitute for the genuine article Secondly, there is no evidence that the establishment of the new institutions would make any significant contribution to a solution of the basic problems Having contemplated for a moment what a university ideally ought to be and reverted to the realities of the situation in Ireland, the Commission may be excused for mistaking a blind alley for a way out of the difficulties It is disappointing that it saw fit to reject the unanimous advice of the university authorities who told it that given the necessary money they could solve their problems of staff accommodation and equipment Of course, in addition, rigorous control of numbers

entering the universities would be necessary Happily in the interval the Government has given clear indications of a new attitude to university education, and there is now good reason to hope that it will recognize the need for a long-term policy of planned amelioration of conditions which have been allowed to deteriorate to the point of crisis

There is no reason to doubt that the decision to recommend the establishment of the New Colleges was strongly influenced by realisation of the seriousness of the crisis It is not clear to what extent, if any, the same consideration influenced the recommentation that a new National College of Agricultural and Veterinary Sciences should be set up A layman can only express surprise at finding in a report characterised in general by common sense and moderation a proposal which not alone, as is admitted, is 'revolutionary' and without precedent in Western Europe, but involves a wholesale transfer of premises, faculties, facilities and personnel from the universities and their merging and re-organisation under a single autonomous authority Moreover a feature of the pro posal is that the college although not constituted as a university would be empowered to award higher degrees I leave it to others to judge how much good sense there is in 'rationalisation' on the mammoth scale proposed The Commission appears to have been so fascinated by the grand design presented to it that it permits itself to suggest that removing these studies from the university might be said to mean 'an enrichment' of the university The word 'enrichment', it should be observed, is intelligible only in the light of the theoretical stand taken in the assertion already quoted 'The university is a place for the study and communication of basic knowledge' The real import simply is that by confining itself to the pursuit of knowledge as an end in itself the university would be assured of 'enrichment' More particularly, in regard to agriculture the way of salvation is 'by concentrating its resources on preparing [undergraduate] students in the basic sciences and in carrying out research in the sciences' (p 170) Professional training would be withdrawn from the university, 'but only because it is not appropriate for the university to serve the profession as it should be served' (p 168) Moreover 'it is not appropriate for the university to engage in directed and applied research such as the needs of the agricultural industry demand' (p 168) So the case is built up by means of unsupported and indeed tendentious statements Far from meaning 'an enrichment of the university', I would contend that the scheme proposed would seriously impoverish all the universities by depriving them of several of the, actually and potentially, most fruitful areas of research in which an Irish university could be engaged Apart from that, there is the more fundamental

objection already mentioned to the separation of basic or pure from applied science—a separation which no academic scientist whom I have consulted will entertain for a moment

It falls to me to consider briefly only one other section of the report, viz Chapter 9, of which the theme is teacher-training and educational research The valuable survey of this sector throws into relief a number of anomalies and inconsistencies which are characteristic of unplanned and piecemeal development Only two of the matters dealt with concern the universities directly (i) the pedagogical training of secondary teachers and educational research and (ii) the problem of associating teacher-training colleges with the universities so that trainee-teachers might proceed to a degree In regard to the first the Commission comments

> In our opinion, the study of education should not be regarded as the 'poor relation' of university studies It should be given equal importance with other studies It would be wrong to conceive of the function of university departments of education simply as departments for the training of teachers in pedagogics We recommend therefore, that the university departments of education should all be staffed and maintained at a level and to an extent appropriate to a major university department (pp 220-1)

One must hope that university authorities will take these sensible words to heart and act accordingly But one would also hope the direction of research would be away from the 'philosophical, historical, economic and sociological' implications of education mentioned with seeming approval and into the neglected empirical field of pedagogics and applied psychology such as is being carried out in the Educational Research Centre at St Patrick's College, Dublin

The solution for the second problem is one which needs to be worked out by all interested parties Clearly it is desirable that students of training colleges should have an opportunity of proceeding to a university degree The basic problem appears to be to devise a type of academic course which would be acceptable to the university and which would run concurrently with a professional course of training Prima facie, one cannot see any insurmountable difficulty in arriving at a satisfactory solution

REFERENCE

1 IRELAND COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION 1960 67 *II Report* Volume 1 (Chapters 1 19) Dublin Stationery Office, 1967

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Discussion of the report of the Commission on Higher Education is naturally influenced by one's personal and initial reaction to the document In the writer's case, this was one of mild irritation and it was only after considerable thought that the reason for this became clear There is no doubt that the Commission collected and tabulated data with painstaking care and that it unerringly highlighted the problems of each discipline Its weakness lay in the fact that it had been overtaken by events, most cruelly so in the case of the proposed UCD-TCD merger, that it had been unduly influenced by the requirements of the State and by civil service economics, and that it had been over-ready to solve problems by setting up new organisations and control structures

In its overall approach and recommendations the section on medical education is of considerable value Realising the complexity of the outside factors involved in this particular subject, the Commission was less inclined to suggest basic changes and, consequently, was not caught so much off balance by the proposed merger as it had been when dealing with other faculties Indeed, it is obvious that there were many suggestions which must have been discussed and put aside because of the then prevailing climate and which now may very well become realities The report's general observations concerning the basic problems of medical education, the relationship between the faculty and the hospitals, the place of research and the provision of finance for all these different aspects were highly relevant, practical and well worthy of implementation

Broadly speaking, the Commission took the view that we are taking on too many medical students, that we are obliged to train them too cheaply, and that because we have a poor student staff ratio we are teaching them badly

On the first of these points the Commission maintained that we should qualify about 140 Irish doctors each year and that this number, allowing for permanent emigration, female wastage, etc , would provide the 100 doctors required each year to meet the country's needs To achieve this output, the Commission suggested that only 170 students should be accepted in the medical schools each year instead of the 400 which is the present quota This very positive statement was poorly supported with inconclusive data and was a viewpoint of great temerity in view of recent experience in England Some years ago the Willink Report (1) recommended a 10 per cent cut back in English medical schools for similar reasons Within a very few years the situation had deteriorated and there was an acute shortage of doctors for which the Willink recommendation must bear a large measure of responsibility

In Ireland, the main objections to the Commission's proposal are two-fold In the first place, even accepting better entrance standards, improved tuition, etc, it seems unlikely that the drop-out rate will fall as low as the 15 per cent estimated by the Commission and which would be required if 170 students were to produce the yearly quota On page 243, the report (3) shows that in recent years the output of Irish doctors has been around 150, a figure not greatly in excess of the estimated requirement Granted, the intake into the medical schools some six-seven years ago was somewhat lower than the present figure, but the difference is not all that significant Secondly there is no doubt that more doctors are required throughout the country This is particularly noticeable in the hospitals where there is a great shortage of junior staff It is important to emphasise that many young Irish doctors go abroad, not because of lack of positions in Ireland, but for many other reasons Sometimes the available posts carry poor remuneration or doubtful promotional prospects, sometimes there is a desire to get further specialised training and in many instances the young man has, plainly and simply, wanderlust On the surface, it would appear more rational and better policy to utilise our production of doctors in an efficient manner rather than to try and limit the number of graduates

While a complexity of factors makes it difficult to apply the information contained in the recent report of the Royal Commission on Medical Education (2) to the needs of this country, it would appear as if our basic requirements for medical personnel would be provided, at the present time, by the induction of 200 Irish medical students each year This number may be expected to increase to 300 in the course of the next twenty years With our higher overall proportion of foreign students and our greater tendency towards emigration it would probably be most undesirable to consider any reduction in our present intake of medical students

The Royal Commission also recommends that, for economic and educational reasons, the yearly intake of a medical school should be in the region of 150-200 students, preference being towards the latter figure, and that this size of medical school would require 2,000 'acute' hospital beds The report does not advocate the university hospital type of system and, indeed, states that it is of the opinion that it is not possible to have the medical expertise required to teach a broad range of clinical subjects in one hospital building Based on current costs, the financial backing for such a medical school would be in the nature of £1 to £1 5 million per year It is interesting to note that the merging of the medical schools of UCD and TCD will provide a unit of the size

recommended by the Royal Commission The creation of two great hospital complexes in Dublin, one in the north city and the other in the south as recommended in the report of the Consultative Council of the General Hospital Services (4) will provide the necessary number of 'acute' hospital beds to cope with the current and future needs of such a medical school

Based on its predictions about size of medical school, the report of the Commission on Higher Education developed the theme that two, or at the most three, medical schools would be adequate for this country Rather illogically, it then proceeded to demonstrate that it would not be possible to reduce the present number It maintained that the medical schools in Cork and Galway must continue to exist because of the effect they have in raising the standard of the medical services in the provinces It ignored the even more valid point that the large number of medical students in these colleges tends to expand and make more viable the basic sciences departments Without those medical and other students who require science teaching in their early undergraduate years, there is little doubt that the departments of Physics, Chemistry, Botany and Zoology would be very depleted indeed For this, more than for any other reason, the medical schools in Glaway and Cork should continue to be maintained

The report also argued the case for the continued existence of the Royal College of Surgeons of Ireland In view of this institution's long tradition, the fact that it provides a quota of trained overseas graduates which act as a contribution from Ireland to the developing countries, and that it is inexpensive to run and largely self-supporting, the Commission decided that it was probably advisable to preserve its separate existence and review its position some years hence There was also the incidental but not unimportant point that the college provided a sort of minor tourist industry during the off-season

At the time of their presentation, these reasons were still valid, but it is hard to see how, in the present trend of merging, it would be possible to obtain proper streamlining of medical education in Dublin without incorporating the Royal College of Surgeons in some fashion To achieve such streamlining would almost seem to necessitate the total absorption of the College of Surgeons Yet one would not like to abandon completely the policy of training overseas students Perhaps a reasonable interim solution would be a period of partial integration in which RCSI students were permitted to sit for the M B degree of the new University of Dublin, the college maintaining its right to examine and award the licentiate

The report then went on to deal with the possibility of establishing one super-centre for medical training, research and post-graduate education. This is an excellent concept because, even though Ireland is a very small and relatively poor country, it would be a sad state of affairs if it could not maintain one first-class complex on the scale envisaged in the report. Dublin is obviously the site of choice and what was quite a pipe-dream of the Commission becomes a real possibility with the proposed merging of TCD and UCD. The proposed centre would have a very large core of highly qualified personnel whose work would be fully abreast of the times and who would be well capable of applying new medical techniques as these developed. This would obviate the present time-wasting necessity of periodically sending senior staff abroad in a scrabbling effort to keep up to date.

The Commission's concept of this super-centre might seem to carry with it the rather dismal corollary that the other centres would be permitted to exist only at average levels. The report, however, was very careful to emphasise that only a difference in size and scale would distinguish the provincial centres from the Dublin one. This reads well but it would be very difficult to maintain and only rigid adherence to the above principle would prevent medical education in the provinces from becoming second-rate. It must be clearly understood that Cork and Galway would have first-class medical schools differing only from that in Dublin in the number of staff and not in facilities. To this end, adequate finance would have to be allotted and it would appear vitally important that there should be close harmony and frequent interchange of staff between the three centres. Under this kind of arrangement, the concept of one super-centre with two first-class but small provincial units could function very well.

There is no doubt that the Commission's recommendations as to finance and staffing should be implemented at the earliest possible moment. Finance and staffing are closely inter-related and a brief comparison with British figures shows the true state of the deficit in Ireland. For example, the average cost per student at a British medical school is about £1,600 per year; at one of the NUI colleges, it is something between £200 and £300 per year. As far as staffing is concerned, the medical school in Manchester University may be used for the purposes of comparison. This is a good choice in that it serves approximately the same population as do the combined medical schools in Ireland. In Manchester the student/full-time-staff ratio is 4 to 1; in Ireland it is about 17 to 1. There is obviously an appalling amount of leeway to be made up.

Also relevant to the question of finances is the Commission's principle that hospitals should be regarded as an integral part of the organisation and provision of medical education It urged that facilities for clinical teaching in these units should be regarded in the same light as laboratories and classrooms in the medical schools and it is of the opinion that the medical schools should take over the direct financial responsibility for the provision of such facilities This was a most important recommendation because the existing arrangement is that, apart from teaching fees, the university is financially responsible only for minor items of equipment such as projectors, etc It has never, since its hospital associations commenced, paid for any of the basic teaching essentials — lecture halls, cloakrooms, proper libraries, furniture, heating and lighting, not to mention student residences or recreation facilities In the past, the hospital constructed and maintained such necessities out of private resources but this is no longer possible—such income as it now receives comes almost entirely from the State and is strained to the limit in providing for the welfare of the patients This situation is almost Gilbertian in that the Department of Health disclaims responsibility for the financing of medical schools, and indeed, under the present legislation is unable to assign monies to the hospitals for teaching purposes, the Department of Education, in its turn, regards hospitals as being outside its bailiwick and considers that, if anything is to be done, it should be arranged through the university Over the years, the universities have done nothing about adequate finances and the hospitals feel very frustrated There is little doubt that if the university authorities were to exert themselves, satisfactory financial arrangements could be very speedily organised

The remainder of the chapter on medical education deals mainly with the basic principles which will have to be followed if satisfactory teaching facilities are to exist within the hospitals The need for an elucidation of these principles arises from two sources—the dependence of the university on the hospital for teaching facilities and the possibility of friction between those clinical teachers who are university appointees and those who are not The report made the point that a university hospital—one which is owned by the university, whose staff is recruited by the university and whose policies are directed by the university—is the most satisfactory arrangement for a medical faculty It avoids, however, the statement that this is the ideal solution and, indeed, current medical thought is rather opposed to it on the grounds that there is a tendency for such hospitals to become too in-bred, too academically orientated and lacking in the challenge provided by outside influences

The Commission recommends that the authorities in hospitals that

work in conjunction with medical schools should keep their teaching functions constantly before their eyes and it emphasises that, in the making of certain appointments to teaching hospitals, the requirements of the medical school should be recognised These principles have now been accepted for many years and the hospitals have given the universities a right to appoint the professors, lecturers and tutors who will work in the hospitals and also the power to ratify all other teaching appointments Consequently, curious and lop-sided arrangements have come into being which pay scant respect to the hospital as a key factor in the education of the medical student Firstly, the hospital professors are completely outnumbered by non-hospital professors in the medical faculty Secondly, the professorial units within the hospital are very independent and totally orientated towards the university This has resulted in a tendency to concentrate the teaching more and more in the university units and, while the other beds of the hospital are also used for teaching, the potential of the part-time clinical teachers is being utilised less and less In their endeavour to respect the paramount right of the medical school where teaching is concerned, the hospitals have sacrificed a considerable amount of their autonomy and have permitted the setting up, within their walls, of independent units whose authority is completely vested in the university The possibility of co-operation is further diminished by the fact that while the medical faculty has direct representation on the hospital boards the hospitals have no direct access to the faculty or the university This fact was plainly brought out in evidence before the Commission It is regrettable that the Commission did not see fit to make recommendations strongly emphasising the rights of the hospitals as well as those of the medical faculty It may well be that it felt that such a statement would be outside its terms of reference

Lastly, the report considered the problem of medical research It very clearly felt that the medical faculty, like any other university faculty, has an obligation and responsibility to initiate and sponsor research There is no doubt that the Medical Research Council is an excellent and very necessary body which ensures that funds are provided to back worthwhile projects, especially those related to the country's needs Its viewpoint however, is not that of an educational institution and it cannot be expected to regard research as being essentially a mind-training exercise It would therefore appear to be fundamental that the medical faculty be provided with funds so that it may encourage the development of basic research

In conclusion, the chapter on medical education was one which tended to tread warily but which nevertheless was very positive and definite in

matters which are basic in the development of a vigorous and progressive programme of medical education and in the creation of a competent medical service Amongst the more worthwhile recommendations are the early implementation of improved staffing and financing of the medical schools, the provision of one superb national centre with two first-class provincial schools, and a more tightly bound truly representational co-ordination between the medical faculties and the hospitals which service them

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III

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In all the advanced countries of the world the demand for higher education has increased and has become especially pressing in the last decade Vast sums of money have been spent and are being spent in meeting this demand Americans anxiously compare their system of higher education with that of Russia Each country develops its educational system as it would any natural asset this is not just a question of prestige, it is one of survival Each additional trained mind, each additional disciplined thinker, is an asset of incalculable value to a nation To lack such trained minds is to invite stagnation and disaster

How do we in Ireland stand in the matter of higher education? After some forty years of self-government, our institutes of higher learning are under-financed, under-staffed, poorly equipped and for the most part badly housed Fortunately for the country however the universities have, despite manifest difficulties, performed their functions rather well over the years, and now provide the basis for a growth and an expansion that is long overdue

Quite suddenly in this country interest in higher education has been stimulated The reports *Investment in education* and *Science and Irish economic development* have appeared, and finally, after many frustrating years, the report of the Commission on Higher Education is available It appears that now, at long last, we may expect to see a massive investment in higher education The infra-structure exists, some guidelines have been provided by the Commission on Higher Education the individual colleges are formulating plans, and all seems ready for fruitful expansion

It is, of course, of fundamental importance, that any expansion be planned, controlled and organised so as best to serve the cause of education and the interests of the nation Furthermore, it is important that the function of the universities be correctly understood and that their role in relation to the economy and to the industrial and scientific development of the country be correctly defined While the pursuit of knowledge and the development of disciplined thinkers will remain the primary function of universities, they can and must also help in the economic and industrial development of the nation The situation which we find in Ireland at the moment is that of a country on the threshold of economic expansion, at the start of an industrial and an agricultural revolution The universities too have already begun to expand, students overcrowd the corridors of our colleges How can the universities develop and grow and at the same time best serve the nation's immediate needs? How can our universities expand as centres of scientific excellence and

at the same time provide the scientific manpower to advance the science and technology of Irish industry and agriculture?

The Commission on Higher Education goes to great pains to define a technologist and his functions Quite rightly it states that it is not the function of universities to train students in applied techniques Universities must continue to train young minds to master basic disciplines, to educate students to a degree standard and to develop these students further in active post-graduate schools where advanced study and basic research are pursued The end product of this training is a trained mind which can turn to the problems of applied science with confidence and drive

It may be argued that Irish industry needs technologists, applied scientists, and specialists of every kind and that the need is immediate I agree that the need is great and pressing, that even now technologists are in short supply and cannot be imported in quantity, but who better to master industrial problems than those who have already mastered the basic disciplines I am convinced that the basic scientist can solve the problems put to him, can in the shortest time master a given technology, and can provide the scientific and technological arm of Irish industry and agriculture

This poses the question—can the universities provide a sufficient number of well-trained scientists to meet the needs of expanding industry and agriculture? Before the question can be answered in the affirmative a fundamental problem must be solved In Ireland, as in the United Kingdom and the United States, not enough university students are studying science In fact the relative number of science students has declined in recent years This is a world-wide phenomenon and a cause of grave concern It is especially disturbing in this country at its present stage of development Every possible step must be taken to reverse this trend and to ensure that the science population in our universities at least equals the British figure of one quarter of the total student body Indeed, I would suggest that in Ireland we should aim at a figure of one third This may prove quite difficult to achieve One reason for the decline in Ireland is that our science departments have for the most part been understaffed, poorly housed and poorly financed It is gratifying to record however that in this regard some positive steps have already been taken UCD has its magnificent new science buildings at Belfield, Galway and Cork will shortly have theirs Money, too, is now becoming available to increase professional and teaching staffs These steps will undoubtedly help to increase the numbers studying science in Irish universities They are not however likely to raise the number sufficiently since

not enough students are studying science in our post-primary schools There are too few science masters and too few schools in which science is taught, with a few notable exceptions, science laboratories, where they exist, are poorly equipped Better science graduates are not attracted to teaching because science teachers, and indeed all school teachers, are inadequately paid here again the need for massive financial investment is manifest The underpaid teacher is not, of course, a peculiarly Irish phenomenon Recent trends in America, however, show that the problem is recognised, and in the better schools in the more progressive states the teacher is well on his way to proper recognition May we hope for a similar enlightened approach in this country?

Various forecasts have been made of the number of students expected to enter higher education in the years immediately ahead It is reasonably certain that these forecasts will prove to be under-estimates because of the free education schemes recently introduced by the Department of Education Of interest, however, is the question of the size of a university student body How large should a university be? Opinions differ on this issue, and the members of the Commission on Higher Education did not give a lead on the matter However, opinion in Britain and elsewhere, particularly in recent years in connection with the foundation of new universities, seems to favour a figure of five or six thousand students I find myself in agreement with this In a university of five thousand students, there is adequate subject coverage and adequate spread of specialisation students can participate in the life of the university as they should, the administration is not too cumbersome If a residential university is envisaged the numbers are still realistic In larger institutions any advantages which arise from larger numbers are far outweighed by the accompanying disadvantages

In a university of five or six thousand students some seventeen hundred students would, it is hoped, follow courses in science These would be made up of about 1,100 undergraduate and 600 postgraduate students A university of this size in Galway would graduate enough scientists to service the technological needs and manage the industry of a thriving community in the West

I have argued that a university in Galway, or elsewhere, should not have a student body in excess of six thousand students This figure will probably be reached in Galway in 1985 There is no problem involved in limiting the student body A graded per capita grant, large for small numbers of students, and diminishing with increase in student population, will ensure a ceiling on student numbers It is interesting to note that the Queen's University of Belfast intends to limit its student num-

bers to seven thousand, to keep Queen's within its limits, the New University of Ulster has been founded Surely we can anticipate a university developing in Limerick in the same way For historical and other reasons the Dublin colleges present their own particular problems It is certain, however, that serious difficulties associated with size will arise in Dublin if numbers are allowed to grow without a ceiling being placed on student intake

If our universities are to develop as institutions comparable with the best abroad, then there must be an increase in postgraduate education in Ireland It would be completely wrong, however, as has been suggested, to concentrate all postgraduate facilities in a single college A strong postgraduate school is essential for the very life of any university The development of sizable postgraduate schools will, however, entail considerable organisation and even some changes in the undergraduate curriculum Firstly the primary degree in Science must not be overspecialised In Britain specialisation begins in school and is intensified in the universities It is to be hoped, however, that for those proceeding to higher education in Ireland, the Leaving Certificate examination will remain as broadly-based as possible

In a university of 5,500 students, about 600 should be postgraduate science students These students would follow formal courses for two years and would then concentrate on research in their speciality It is of great importance that the lecture courses in any discipline should have a good spread in order that the graduate student be educated in breadth as well as in depth A present day student in the sciences must expect to see profound changes in almost all factual information, and occasionally even in the basic concepts, which he will be taught in his university years The most important necessities in graduate education surely are the acquisition by students of standards of rigour and depth coupled with a breadth which should flow from the broad basis of education laid down in earlier years It is in this regard that the American scientist scores and indeed it is generally agreed in Britain that the postgraduate system there should be modified somewhat in the American manner

It is to the postgraduate school that we must look for the scientists to man Irish industry Here also we would expect to see active co-operation between the universities and industry Quite often problems of technology raise questions of the greatest interest to pure science, more generally, academic science has much to gain from contact with industry and management The graduate school would have another very important function namely the production of teachers of science Science teachers must be graduates of course but they must also know how to teach In a

postgraduate school I suggest that attention be given to this most important aspect of education

If the hopes of those engaged in higher education are to be fulfilled, and plans so hopefully formulated are to be developed, the amount of money spent on education must be greatly increased The present system whereby each university college presents its demands for a further year and bargains with the government as best it can, is not satisfactory for either party The government should allow the universities to present a blueprint for some reasonable period, say, a decade and following agreement, finance that development in the most advantageous way An example of this is the graded per capita grant which I adumbrated earlier This would allow Galway, for example, to grow to a university of 6,000 students in a planned way The intake of students could be controlled, the building programme, the staffing programme, and the introduction of new disciplines and faculties could proceed at a planned pace The government plan to provide for free university education, together with the raising of entrance requirements is an excellent one One must pay tribute to the late Minister for Education, Donogh O'Malley, who inaugurated this scheme and to his successor Mr Lenihan who is implementing it Free secondary education and free university education will mean that greatly increased numbers will seek university entrance and that universities will depend more and more on the public purse This is not in the best interest of the universities which should make every effort to obtain finance from private sources In the first instance, fees must be raised to a realistic level By any standard, student contribution in the form of fees is quite inadequate The proposed government scheme of free university education, subject to a means test, will bring this matter to a head It is said that the Minister for Education favours a grant scheme With this I agree but I would suggest that grants given to students in postgraduate education be repayable, at least in part Students in many American universities obtain loans and repay them, such loan schemes are well established and might well be considered in this country

Another source of income which the universities might investigate is the voluntary contributions of graduates Industry too should contribute to university education a few firms in Ireland have been exemplary in this respect With the anticipated growth of industry and higher education, may we hope for a large investment by industry in higher education?

An issue of basic and fundamental importance is the financial support to be given to the universities in the provinces as compared with the Dublin colleges The universities in the provinces must be at no disad-

vantage whatsoever with respect to the Dublin colleges The report of the Commission on Higher Education is brief but quite specific in this regard An unbalanced situation, with a concentration of the best facilities in the Dublin colleges and the consequent impoverishment of the provincial universities, must not be allowed to develop The problem of the uncontrolled development of the Dublin area must be faced if we are to prosper as a country If it is not solved at the intellectual and scientific level then it will not be solved at any level The changes which would occur with the development of a 'Pale' would be irreversible and no effort should be spared to prevent this disastrous development May we hope for a resolute commitment to the development of the provinces, even at the expense of the 'Pale'?

The important question of the merger in Dublin now dominates the university scene It should not, however, be used as an excuse to halt all progress in the field of higher education The provincial colleges have their plans and these plans should not be held up until the Dublin situation is resolved The provincial colleges are not secondary to the Dublin establishments, they are institutions of equal standing They should be able to develop independently of each other, and independently of the Dublin colleges, and to draw on all corners of Ireland for their student population The prospect of a number of viable, well-financed universities m Ireland of the highest academic standards is one that can become a reality in a few short years The goodwill, co-operation and effort of all parties concerned will ensure success and enable these institutions to add immeasurably to the well being and prosperity of all sections of the community

IV.

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The report of the Commission on Higher Education is an historic document The task of the Chief Justice, Cearbhall O Dalaigh as Chairman of the Commission was undoubtedly one of the most exacting of the many distinguished public services that he has ever performed His name will be uniquely associated with this report

The Commission produced the first fully comprehensive survey of higher education in Ireland This enormous undertaking justified the long years of public-spirited effort by its members The many reservations of individual members—comprising, in all, nearly half the Commission—may be taken as a regrettable departure from the unanimity for which the Chairman must have striven For my part, however, I welcome the reservations, not merely as expressing a diversity of opinion which it is right to expect on a great academic subject, but as revealing distinctive individual viewpoints, which, one presumes, were forcefully expressed during the sessions of the Commission Indeed, the character and quality of the individual reservations, ranging from the position of Catholics in Trinity to the Irish language, make all the more valuable the recommendations upon which there is unanimous agreement

The Commission rightly favoured quality rather than quantity in university education It was to be expected that it would recommend the elimination of the anomalies of the present system in the National University This it has done, though there may be doubts about some of its recommendations The real disappointment in the report, however, concerns the relationship between Trinity College (TCD) and the Dublin College of the National University (UCD) There was a real problem here which the Commission left unsolved, though its representative composition was ideally equipped to solve it It hardly required a Commission on Higher Education to recognise that the Catholic regulations about Trinity constituted 'a matter of conscience for those to whom they relate' (1, p 444) The problem of Trinity was clearly within the Commission's terms of reference One welcomes, therefore, the courageous and unequivocal reservations of Dr J J McElligott and General Costello which, in clear language, deal with the educational and economic issues involved It is indeed a pity that the Commission so completely abdicated to the Minister for Education the finding of a solution to the problem of the two colleges in Dublin, subsidised by the taxpayer and drawing their students from the same common pool of citizenship The continuance of this situation would obviously exacerbate the competition for students, prestige and money that still exists between Trinity and University College, Dublin

Trinity is a university which could offer precious places to many more Irish students if the restrictions imposed by the Catholic Church were relaxed Until comparatively recently many of these places were going to foreigners while Irish students of at least equal ability found that there were no places for them except in the overcrowded National University I feel that many of the clerical and lay members of the Commission may find the finger of history ironically rebuking them for their complacent and compliant silence on this problem If there are defects in the later solutions sought by the late Minister for Education Mr O'Malley and his successor Mr Lenihan, these Ministers could say that they were inadequately advised by those commissioners who were so well equipped to advise them

The recommendation to break the federal union of the colleges of the National University and its acceptance by the Government has been well received The arguments for using Galway as the main academic means of promoting Irish and some specialised subjects in higher education seem admirable

The proposal that university presidents should be appointed for a period of five years seems thoroughly undesirable and one cannot imagine any Government accepting it A president, as chief executive, should be appointed to influence and take decisions, he should not be required to have his eye on his own prospects of re-election Presidents in academic institutions should be appointed for life if they are to have the independence necessary for such a crucial and decisive position, they should not be appointed unless they have the qualities necessary for life tenure

The Commission was obviously right in opposing proposals for the erection of new university institutions The pressing national problem is to find staff of the right calibre for our existing universities But the setting up of New Colleges is not a proper solution for difficulties There is no reason, however, why the establishment of a liberal arts college in Limerick in association with a college or colleges of technology should not be a useful stage towards providing the Limerick region with higher education of full university status And there is no reason why the Institutes of Public Administration and Management, and the Economic and Social Research Institute should not have close association with the new university organisation in Dublin

On teacher training there is much that is debatable in the Commission's Report Teacher training, it suggests, should be associated with the New Colleges, yet, entry requirements for teacher training are already much higher in the existing training colleges than those required for the proposed New Colleges There is obviously much to be said for having

teachers educated in universities especially since they satisfy entrance requirements

Indeed, I would suggest that candidates for primary, secondary and vocational education should have a primary university degree Subsequently they might have access to the specialised post-graduage studies of their choice A great deal of what primary and secondary teachers endure as part of their practical training today has little relevance to the world in which we live I see no reason why primary teachers should have their basic teaching segregated from other undergraduates St Patrick's College in particular has reached the position in which I feel it should be part of a Dublin university where its members would associate with students in other disciplines I know this may be novel thinking But all over the world there is a revolution in thinking about higher education St Patrick's, I suspect, would not be averse to change, if change meant a closer integration of teachers at primary, secondary, vocational or university levels There have been suggestions of an Institute of Education in Limerick or Athlone divorced from the university setting I have never believed that there was an official foundation for such suggestions The place for the education of teachers is obviously in a university, and not in any isolated school or institute This is true of teachers at all levels For me, the most important teacher of all is the primary teacher, a generation of experience in university teaching has confirmed this belief

It would be desirable that every Irish university student should have at least one term away from home or lodgings, in a university hostel, whether he was a student of Arts, Medicine or Engineering Only in this way can the Newman idea of a university be realised in the twentieth century in Ireland I look forward to the building of student hostels associated with University College in Belfield, but I hope that the integration of St Patrick's, Drumcondra, in the new University of Dublin can take a pioneering initiative, and play a part in advance of that contemplated by the Commission on Higher Education

As an economist, I feel strongly and completely in agreement with the recent statement of Mr Gareth Williams of the OECD Directorate for Scientific Affairs

> Economists and the other ' ists' who have invaded the domain of education in recent years often repeat the somewhat arrogant slogan that 'education is too important to be left to the educators' thereby giving themselves the right to make a wide variety of *ex cathedra* statements about education 'from the economic viewpoint',

'from the sociological viewpoint', 'from the psychological viewpoint' etc (3)

Economists, I hope, can help educationists on how to make the best use of scarce resources, but the clearly defined objectives of education must surely be recognized before the support and advice of the economists is sought

It was satisfactory that the Commission should have placed such stress on the need for raising admission standards to Irish universities The National University has, in fact, already decided to raise very considerably the levels of admission, but this points to the issue, so obviously confronting the Commission throughout its sessions, whether quality or quantity should be the main criterion in higher education

The proposals of the Commission for the financing of higher education are, in many ways, disappointingly conservative Improvements in scholarships are of course, recommended, so too are grants for deserving cases But the suggestion that loans should be added leaves one with the impression that much has been left out There seems to be no complete examination made of the social and economic implications of financing education by way of loans If any real thought is given to problems of the sociological structure of Ireland I think it will be generally accepted that only in a most peripheral way can loans help in the financing of higher education in Ireland A loan system must naturally tend to help most those who do not really need it International experience confirms this view

A revolutionary recommendation of the Commission was that the normal requirement for a first degree should be four years full time attendance instead of three years as at present This first degree should be a master's degree, in future the B A would be awarded by a New College after a three year course of study A careful reading of the report fails to disclose any compelling arguments for this radical proposal beyond saying that the Commission was convinced of the educational need and advantage of the longer course The effects of the proposal on staffing or on accommodation are not discussed There are academic, intellectual and emotional issues here which are entirely ignored

The report is wholly admirable in its emphasis on the paramount importance of research without which no university department can justify its existence It also stresses the role that the university must play in fundamental studies in business and administration but it is strongly defective in its discussion of the proper relationship between the universities and the Irish Management Institute and the Institute of Public

Administration These fundamental issues remain, unfortunately, unsettled, and the case for the proposed New Colleges is urged without conviction and indeed disposed of in a number of well reasoned reservations

Too little public attention has been given to such reservations as those of the Most Reverend Dr Philbin and Dr C F Carter Both these Commissioners appear to share common ground on the role of the university in regard to professional studies Dr Philbin wrote 'Many scientific studies can function only with the help of practical work and experiment and sometimes these exercises require to be partnered step by step with the highest theoretical knowledge, whose natural home is the university' (2, p 937) He added ' "Pure" and "applied" knowledge, although distinguishable in theory are not always separable in practice' (p 937) Dr Carter is even more pungent, and is characteristically penetrating in his distinction between a New College doing the work which the university ought to be doing and a new college meeting a *new* need such as (I suggest) may exist, perhaps, in Limerick for the present Dr Carter totally disagrees with the statement that 'The university is a place for the study and communication of basic knowledge' which, as he says, 'can only mean that the growth of applied studies in universities should be inhibited The statement is not historically true' (he continues) 'since important branches of study such as Medicine and the Law have always been essentially practical and vocational The suggestion that another institution might give students "a specific preparation for livelihood that the university, with its broader obligation to scholarship, could not properly be asked to undertake" (paragraph 4 35) seems to me, as a generalisation, total nonsense Since when has scholarship been inconsistent with vocational preparation?' (p 889) These are strongly-expressed views, but I agree with them It was the failure in the past by Irish universities to accept these as part of their functions that has led largely to the proliferation of academic institutes and research organisations outside the universities One hopes that future university organisation, especially in Dublin, will avoid these academic and economic pitfalls

The recent proposals of the Government for Trinity and University College, Dublin, have of course, gone much further than the rationalisation contemplated by the Commission Their main aims appear to be to retain the essential academic features of both institutes while breaking the religious and social segregation which has been a feature of university education in Dublin in the past In so doing they hope that by the avoidance of unnecessary duplication of teaching and research facilities

economies will in the long run be attained There may be few, if any, short term economies The numbers of students participating in higher education, despite the constant raising of entry standards, will certainly expand enormously here as elsewhere over the next decade While academic freedom and autonomy must be preciously preserved and resolutely defended by the universities, the Government has the obligation to provide for the next generation as well as this one, and that means finding the resources so that Dublin may continue, in the changing circumstances of a new age, to be able to offer university education and higher research facilities comparable to the best to be found elsewhere in the world Unless we maintain international standards our universities will wilt and wither While retaining academic integrity, we must eliminate all departmental duplication which is not academically and educationally necessary Many of us present-day university teachers and research workers may find the results of this rationalisation of resources inconvenient and, even personally, unpalatable As academics, however, I, for one, believe we are obliged to pay this price and to take a longer and a broader view in the interests of our educational system generally

This is probably the most significant report of any Irish Commission since the Irish state was founded We are indebted to the Commissioners who contributed to this vast investigation which will shape so decisively our country's future policies in education and training and which, one way or another will have such a potent influence on the eventual structure of higher education in Ireland generally and in Dublin in particular Even if here and there one disagrees with their answers, one must admit that the Commissioners have courageously raised, and forcefully asked all but one of the relevant questions

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