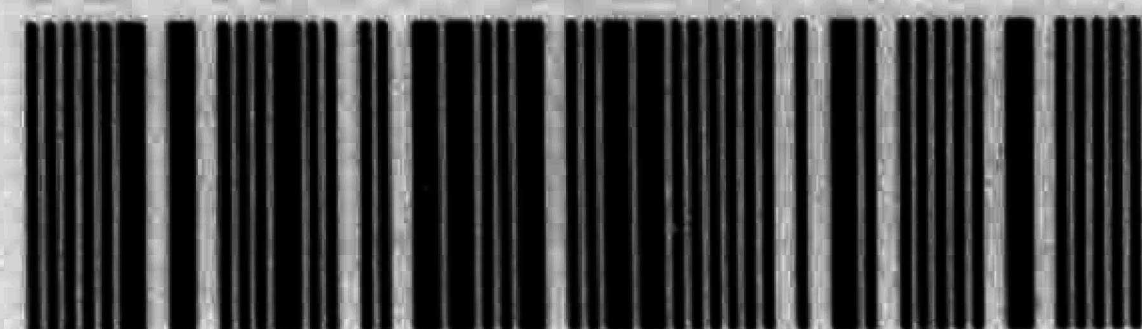


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The Rt.Hon. Harold Wilson, O.B.E., M.P., speaking in Glasgow, on Sunday, 8th September, said:

"Today, I want to speak about our plans for higher education.

"We have expressed our determination to end the vicious system of educational segregation at the 11 plus stage and we have outlined the measures we shall take to deal with it. But we face the danger of a no less indefensible 18 plus problem in the next few years.

"Lord Taylor's working party has shown the gravity of the problem. The great increase in the birth-rate immediately after the war which created the so-called 'bulge' problem in primary and secondary schools in the 1950's will result in vastly more young men and women of college-entrance age in the next year or two. But this is not all: more and more boys and girls are staying on at school, they and their parents are anxious that they should go on to universities, colleges of advanced technology and other technological institutes and teacher training colleges. As things are, a very considerable proportion of them will end their school careers with the necessary qualifications at A level, and find further education barred to them through lack of places. Already last year, over 5,000 students, - a quarter of the applicants - with the right passes at A level failed to secure entry, and this year's figures of application suggest that a much higher proportion is likely to be turned away.

"This problem will grow to intolerable proportions, intolerable because it is neither fair to those excluded from higher education nor acceptable in a nation whose need for more trained men and women is so great in a world of remorseless scientific and technological challenge.

"For these reasons, the Labour Party has announced a short-term

crash programme to make fuller use of existing universities and college facilities, together with an urgent programme to create new universities and technical and teacher training colleges.

"But today, I want to outline new proposals on which we are working, a dynamic programme providing facilities for home study to university and higher technical standards, on the basis of a University of the Air, and of nationally organised correspondence college courses.

"These will be intended to cater for a wide variety of potential students. There are technicians and technologists who perhaps left school at 16 or 17 and who, after two or three years in industry, feel that they could qualify as graduate scientists or technologists. There are many others, perhaps in clerical occupations, who would like to acquire new skills and new qualifications. There are many at all levels in industry who would desire to become qualified in their own or other fields, including those who had no facilities for taking G.C.E. at O or A levels, or other required qualifications, or housewives who might like to secure qualifications in English literature or geography or history. There is the whole wide area at present covered by extra-mural, W.E.A. or N.C.L.C. classes, whose work could be vastly enriched by the provision of special T.V. and radio features and courses. The recent decision of both T.V. authorities to introduce adult education courses is a most valuable step.

"What we would envisage is the creation of a new educational trust, representative of the universities and other educational organisations, associations of teachers, the broadcasting authorities, publishers, public and private bodies, producers capable of producing T.V. and other educational material. This Trust would be given State financial help and all the Government assistance required. Broadcasting time could be found either by the allocation of the fourth T.V. channel, together with appropriate radio facilities, or by pre-empting time from the existing three channels and the fourth, when allocated.

"Educational programmes would be backed by the provision of text books and other material related to the courses and facilities would be provided for supplemental study at education institutions such as technical colleges. Arrangements would be made for papers to be set and marked, probably under the aegis of individual universities, technical colleges or professional institutes. Correspondence courses not themselves based on T.V. or radio programmes would also be available and the experience of existing correspondence colleges would be utilised.

"The Trust would be asked to make arrangements with one or more established universities to provide examination facilities and to award external degrees and diplomas to students reaching a high enough standard in the examinations.

"One year diploma courses could be provided in many subjects, e.g. foreign languages. Industrialists would be pressed to pay a bonus on salary to sales and other staffs qualifying for the diploma. But I believe there would be many who, for non-vocational reasons, would welcome such facilities - families intending to holiday abroad the following summer might wish to take a winter course in French, German, Italian or Spanish. But, of course, existing T.V. experience shows that there are hundreds of thousands, including many older members of the community, who, with no thought of degree or diploma, would wish to enrich themselves by a more passive participation in the educational programmes.

"There is valuable experience to be learnt not only from the experiments so far undertaken by the B.B.C and Commercial Television companies, but also from more advanced work abroad. In the U.S., T.V. companies and university broadcasting groups have already developed courses on the lines of a university of the air and educational publishing companies have done valuable pioneering work in the use of visual aids in school, college and T.V. teaching, including the use of push-button teaching machines. What is so far lacking is the sponsorship of this work on a national basis.

The Soviet Union, for its part, has developed State-sponsored correspondence courses as an integral part of its national system of higher education. On my last visit to Moscow, I was told that 60 per cent of their graduates in science and technology were the products of correspondence courses, followed by University examinations on the basis of the same papers sat by full-time University students.

"We, in Britain, can draw on these experiences, and work out a system integrating T.V., radio and correspondence courses under the guidance and examination discipline of the best of our leaders in higher education.

"In my view, a scheme on these lines would be of the highest advantage both to countless thousands in their homes and to the nation. Investment in the nation's education, whether vocational, technical, scientific or in the humanities, is an investment in Britain's future which cannot be measured in terms of money or of price."