

SAORSTÁT ÉIREANN.

COMMISSION  
ON  
TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

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REPORT

BAILE ATHA CLIATH  
DUBLIN.

FOILLSITHE AG OIFIG AN tSOLATHAIR,  
PUBLISHED BY THE STATIONERY OFFICE.

Le ceannach trí MESSRS. EASON AND SON, LTD., 40 agus 41 Sraid Iochtarach  
Uí Chonail, Baile Atha Cliath.

To be purchased through MESSRS. EASON AND SON, LTD., 40 and 41 Lower  
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Educational Pamphlets.

Irish Free State's Commission on Technical Education. Report. 1927. pp. 271. (Chairman: John Ingram.) M. 1-111. T 2 (f) 271. 1927

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## COMMISSION ON TECHNICAL EDUCATION.

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### TERMS OF REFERENCE.

“To enquire into and advise upon the system of Technical Education in Saorstát Eireann in relation to the requirements of Trade and Industry.”

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### CONSTITUTION OF COMMISSION.

Mr. JOHN INGRAM, B.E., A.R.C.Sc.I., Senior Inspector of Technical Instruction, Department of Education. (*Chairman*).

PROFESSOR DR. A. ROHN, President of the Federal Polytechnicum, Zurich, Switzerland.

Mr. NILS FREDRIKSSON, Member of the Swedish Board of Education and of the Board of Governors of the Royal Technical High School, Stockholm, Sweden.

Mr. JOHN GOOD, T.D.

Mr. HUGH COLOHAN, T.D.

Mr. JOHN J. O'CONNOR, Headmaster, Technical School, Mallow, Co. Cork.

MISS BRIGID STAFFORD, M.A., Superintending Officer, Department of Industry and Commerce.\*

Mr. WALTER DOOLIN, B.A., Principal, Department of Finance.

Mr. TIMOTHY O'CONNELL, F.R.C.Sc.I., Senior Agricultural Inspector, Department of Lands and Agriculture.

Mr. ROBERT O'CONNOR, Technical Instruction  
Branch, Department of Education.  
(*Secretary*).

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\* Appointed in the place of Miss Haire Forster, Employment Branch, Department of Industry and Commerce, who died on 6th November, 1926.

The Commission desires to place on record its appreciation of the valuable services rendered to the Commission by the late Miss Haire Forster whilst one of its members.



**COMMISSION ON TECHNICAL EDUCATION.**

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**INTRODUCTORY.**

*To the Minister for Education.*

The Commission appointed by you to enquire into the system of Technical Education in Saorstát Eireann has now the honour to present its Report.

Its Terms of Reference were :—

“ To enquire into and advise upon the system of Technical Education in Saorstát Eireann in relation to the requirements of Trade and Industry.”

At its inaugural meeting on October 5th., 1926, the Chairman read the following letter received from you :—

An Roinn Oideachais,  
Baile Atha Cliath,  
30th. September, 1926.

A Chara,

The Commission of which you are Chairman has been set up to enquire into and advise upon the system of Technical Education in Saorstát Eireann in relation to the existing and probable requirements of Trade and Industry. As you are aware, the system of Technical Instruction at present in operation was established more than a quarter of a century ago at a time when the conditions and prospects of the country were very different from what they are to-day. The great changes that have taken place since then, coupled with the industrial and economic progress that may be expected to result from the Shannon Electricity Scheme and other recent or pending industrial developments, make it imperative that the Government should have the fullest information on the present and probable needs of the country in the matter of Technical Instruction, and the best and most expert advice available as to how these needs may be effectively provided for. In view of the importance of these matters I have come to the conclusion that their investigation should be entrusted to a Commission which will examine fully how far trade and industry, including our main industry of Agriculture, are being kept back through lack of technical training and will advise as to how existing needs may be most

effectively met, and probable developments assisted by an improved system of such training.

One of the chief tasks of the Technical Instruction Commission, therefore, will be to investigate this very important problem, since without such information as to the present and prospective needs of industry and commerce it will be difficult if not impossible for the Commission to discover what system of Technical Instruction can meet these needs. With this governing information at their disposal it is hoped that the Commission may be able to advise fully as to the most suitable and effective system of Technical Instruction in regard to :—

- (1) The nature and extent of the Technical Education that will be necessary to meet the needs of the community (*a*) in Urban Districts, (*b*) in Rural Districts, and (*c*) in the Irish Speaking Districts.
- (2) The method of administering and financing such a system of Education in the various types of districts.

Under this latter head will come such questions as :—

- (1) Whether Technical Education should be compulsory, and if so, within what limits in respect to the (*a*) age, (*b*) attainments, or (*c*) occupation of the pupils.
- (2) If Technical Education should be compulsory, the extent to which the State and the local authorities should assume liability for the cost inside the compulsory limits, and the extent to which those bodies should assume liability for the cost of such education outside these limits.
- (3) The manner in which provision for the cost of Technical Education should be made.
- (4) The question of the control of Technical Education.
- (5) The question of the training of Technical Teachers.

Under this head will also come the question of Scholarships and such other provision of facilities as may be considered necessary.

In investigating these questions two of the chief problems to be dealt with will be :—

- (*a*) the question whether it should be the policy of the Department of Education to provide for Technical training prior to employment or parallel with employment, or both ;
- (*b*) the connection of such training with the apprenticeship system.

Unless there is clear evidence that employers and employees consider an effective training in an apprenticeship school a satisfactory method of entrance to a trade there can be no guarantee that it will be practicable to incorporate the Schemes of Technical

Training as an essential part of the apprenticeship system. While schemes of training apprentices in Technical Schools may supply a large body of well-educated, highly skilled and efficient craftsmen, the cost of such schemes may greatly exceed their value to the nation if there is no guarantee that the craftsmen trained under them will be absorbed by the trades and industries concerned. One of the chief tasks of the Commission, therefore, will be to discover as far as possible to what extent the employers and the employees consider that a specialised training in the Technical System can and should become one of the main methods of entrance to skilled trades.

In addition to these and other problems which will arise in connection with the system of Technical Instruction in the country as a whole, there are special problems connected with the provision of trade-training for youths in the Irish-speaking districts and the Commission on the Gaeltacht consider it of very great importance that as part of the general schemes for improving the economic condition of the population in these districts provision should be made (a) for giving preparatory trade training to youths, and (b) for the giving of instruction bearing on winter-employment and other seasonable part-time occupations for the small holders and manual workers. I wish, therefore, to draw the special attention of your Commission to these two matters with a view to discovering how such instruction can be best and most economically supplied.

In dealing with these and other problems of Technical Instruction I feel confident that your Commission will handle them on the fundamental principle that Technical Instruction can have and should have as profound an educational and civic value as any other form of education, and that no matter how effective a system of Technical Instruction may be in the narrower vocational sense of the word it will fail in one of its chief purposes if it does not uplift every man not merely as a member of his trade, but as a member of the community and a member of the State.

Mise,

Le fíor-mheas ort,

J. M. O'SULLIVAN.

JOHN INGRAM, Esq., B.E., A.R.C.Sc.I.,

Chairman of the Commission on Technical Education,  
14 Hume Street, Dublin.

The Commission held 75 meetings, at 47 of which evidence was heard from Government Departments, members of local technical instruction committees and committees of agriculture, and their

officers, from Chambers of Commerce, from organisations representing employers, workers, teachers and other important interests and from twenty-six individual witnesses. In all, evidence was heard from one hundred and twenty-nine witnesses.

Visits were paid by members of the Commission to representative schools and classes throughout the country, and also to the important works in connection with the Shannon Power Development Schemes and to the Irish Sugar-Beet Factory, Carlow.

The Report of the Commission comprises fourteen chapters. The historical development of technical education in the Saorstát and the facilities that exist at the present time are described in Chapters I. and II. respectively. Chapters III. to VIII. as well as Chapter XI. deal with educational questions; Chapter III. the relation between primary and technical education, Chapter IV. continuation education, Chapters V., VI. and VII. the relations between technical education and the various forms of occupations and trades and also the conditions of apprenticeship, Chapter VIII. the higher forms of technical education. The special problem of preparatory trade training and of instruction bearing on winter-employment and other seasonable part-time occupations for youths in the Gaeltacht is dealt with in Chapter XI. The remaining Chapters IX., X., XII., and XIII. deal with the method of administering and financing the educational schemes in both urban and rural districts, the system of control, the training of teachers, their salaries and conditions of service.

The principal recommendations presented by the Commission are summarised in Chapter XIV.

The Report is as follows :—