

Full Length Paper

Changes to the Education System of England and Wales in the last 70 years Part 5: The 60s and the 80s

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Accepted 22 April 2013

This paper is the fifth in a series and is concerned with the substantial progress made by comprehensive education between 1962 and 1983 to become the dominant mode of secondary education in England and Wales. Some parts of the national system were, however, resistant to the general change. The small township of Skipton, an example of one such locality was part of two LEAs, the West Riding County Council and (post 1974) North Yorkshire County Council. Negotiations under their governance produced numerous plans in attempts to reach agreement on an acceptable form for comprehensive reorganisation. All these attempts foundered and Skipton retained its grammar schools. Explanations for this outcome are the principal topic for enquiry in this article.

Keywords: Secondary Education Reorganisation; Three-Tier Scheme; Direct Grant Schools; Selection at eleven.

Son 70 yıl içinde İngiltere ve Galler Bölgesi Eğitim Sistemindeki Değişiklikler Bölüm 5: 60lar ve 80ler

ÖZET

Bu çalışma serinin beşincisidir ve 1962 ve 1983 yılları arasında İngiltere ve Galler'de baskın mod haline gelen ortaöğretim eğitimi olmak için geniş kapsamlı eğitim ve öğretim tarafından yapılan önemli ilerleme ile ilgilidir. Ancak ulusal sistemin bazı bölümleri genel bir değişime dirençliydi. Skipton'ın küçük bir ilçesi ki konumu nedeniyle iki LEA (Yerel Eğitim Kurumu)'nın, West Riding İlçe Belediyesi ve (1974 sonrası) North Yorkshire İlçe Belediyesi, parçası olan küçük bir ilçesi buna örnek gösterilebilir. Kendi yönetimleri altındaki müzakerelerde, daha kapsamlı yeniden yapılanma için kabul edilebilir bir form üzerinde anlaşmaya varmak için yapılan girişimlerle çok sayıda plan üretildi. Tüm bu girişimler başarısızlıkla sonuçlandı ve Skipton kendi dil okulunu korudu. Bu makalede bu sonuca ilişkin açıklamalar soruşturma için asıl konuyu oluşturmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Ortaöğretim Yeniden Yapılanma; Üç-Aşamalı Programı; Doğrudan Hibe Okulları; 11 yaşta okul seçim testi.

INTRODUCTION

Results from an analysis of documentary data, records of meetings, interviews and personal involvement have suggested several possibilities:

- (a) The voluntary aided status of one of the schools, Ermysted's Grammar School, meant that the governors owned the property of the school. Ownership gave governors considerable advantages in negotiations about the status of the school. This was generally the case throughout the country and some 40% of the grammar schools which remained in 1983 were either voluntary aided or voluntary controlled.
- (b) The system of education in England was traditionally decentralised, which gave room for negotiations between LEAs and central government and within LEAs themselves. This allowed flexibility to meet local needs, though resulting discrepancies have interfered with some general principles such as equal opportunities and have produced variation in the type and amount of provision.
- (c) Negotiation was used by the Skipton Grammar Schools to query the value of the many plans for comprehensive reorganisation put forward. They were, thus, able to delay an intended change for twenty years.
- (d) The grammar schools were able to do this more readily in a climate where there was no empirical evidence to confirm the virtue of the intended change.
- (e) The local status quo was apparently preserved. This proved, however, to be a very fluid situation and the local system in 1983 was, in part, produced by the unintended consequences of decisions and negotiations.

Reorganisation of secondary education was an issue which constantly activated the sub-politics of education in Craven which was part of the West Riding until 1974 and North Yorkshire from 1974 to the present time. During most of the period from 1962 to 1979, LEAs were encouraged with increasing vigour to produce some form of comprehensive reorganisation in their secondary schools. The thrust towards reorganisation was withdrawn with the election of a Conservative government in 1979.

Skipton's refusal to reorganise secondary education on comprehensive lines was effective despite considerable teacher pressure; in defiance of national trends in education and the influence of County Officers; and even following reinforcement by national legislation. The negotiations considered extended over a period of just over twenty years (1962 to 1983).

BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

Skipton is a small town formerly in the West Riding of Yorkshire functioning as a market centre within the Craven area which comprises the upper valleys of the Ribble, Aire and Wharfe. It calls itself the "Gateway to the Dales" and historically owes a great deal to its position within the Aire Gap and the resulting development of communications in the form of the Leeds-

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Liverpool Canal, the Leeds – Carlisle railway and trunk roads through the Pennines to Cumbria and Lancashire. Also important has been the growth of textiles, light industry and tourism, but the town has always maintained a connection with agriculture and the market function has been its most permanent feature.

When local government was reorganised in 1974, a section of Craven around the township of Barnoldswick was included in Lancashire and for a time it seemed that much of the remainder would be administered by the Bradford Metropolitan Borough Council. However, local opposition was successful and, apart from Silsden and areas adjacent to Keighley, it became part of the area governed by the North Yorkshire County Council. Opposition to inclusion within Bradford was a direct result of local feeling that Skipton had more in common with the Conservative shire than the often Labour dominated urban environment. Success was an important factor in fashioning groups determined to preserve what they saw as the essential character of Skipton.

Over many years the Conservative party has been the dominant political influence within Craven with a succession of Conservative MPs and a predominance of Conservative councillors. The Liberals maintained a presence as the second party and, in 1974, came within 600 votes of winning the parliamentary seat.

THE SCHOOLS 1962 to 1974

From 1962 to 1974, the Skipton school system had five secondary schools. There were two 3FE (three Forms of Entry) single-sex grammar schools: Ermysted's Grammar School for the boys and Skipton Girls' High School for the girls. There were three associated secondary modern schools. The largest, Aireville, was 6 FE and was situated in Skipton. The secondary modern school at Barnoldswick was 5/6 FE and served those areas which later (1974) were to be incorporated in Lancashire. Wharfedale was served by a small 1/2 FE secondary modern school called Upper Wharfedale situated in the village of Threshfield near Grassington.

Ermysted's School was founded in the fifteenth century on the basis of a trust set up for the education of boys by William Ermysted. It was, and still is, a small voluntary aided grammar school well built into the infrastructure of the local community in an area from which most people are reluctant to move and to which many like to return. The school had a boarding facility for about 30 pupils. This was, originally, for weekly boarders who lived in the more distant parts of the catchment area especially in Wharfedale. The school also attracted boarders from families where parents had to be abroad as part of their careers.

The Girls' High School was established for the education of girls in 1886 mainly by benefactions derived under a scheme for the administration of the estate of Sylvester Petyt who died in 1719. It was a voluntary controlled grammar school and had a boarding facility for about 30 girls.

In the period being studied, the two grammar schools did not have a tradition of co-operation either social or academic; though they shared a service at the Parish Church at least once a year and they used the same procedures for selection. The staffs did not meet together and there seemed to be a situation of rivalry for prestige within the community. Over the period

covered by this study, Ermysted's was considered to be the more prestigious institution. The sporting tradition of the school with far-flung rather than local rugby fixtures made the school well known over a wide area. Among local people it seemed to have a better academic image and, in a male dominated environment, its old boys occupied many of the position of power within Craven.

Aireville, Skipton's secondary modern school, developed from the Skipton British School founded in the nineteenth century. It occupied several sets of buildings in the town after the Second World War, but by 1962 had been relocated to occupy a very pleasant site in Aireville Park.

The secondary modern school at Threshfield, called Upper Wharfedale or often simply Wharfedale, was built to serve the local population. It was opened in 1956. The school was always small which caused frequent comment within the local teaching profession both in favour of the unit and against it. There was always a vocal group of teachers which felt that the school should never have been built and that all children should have been accommodated in Skipton for their secondary education. The arguments advanced were that Wharfedale was always going to be near the margin of viability and that extra pupils would, in any case, enhance the secondary modern school in Skipton.

The school at Barnoldswick, a secondary modern school until after local government reorganisation, was a 5/6 FE school serving the Urban Districts of Earby and Barnoldswick as well as adjacent parishes within the Craven Rural District.

THE SCHOOLS 1974 to 1983

Local government reorganisation made a significant impact on the system of schools because Barnoldswick, Earby and associated parishes were incorporated into Lancashire which had already reorganised its adjacent secondary schools. Barnoldswick County Secondary School became an 11-16 comprehensive school and the Skipton grammar schools lost approximately one-third of their catchment area.

Two other schools in Craven became important in the late 1970s and early 1980s when falling rolls provided spare places and the 1980 Education Act allowed parents to exercise an option to move their children away from normal catchment areas. Settle (17 miles from Skipton), and in the Ribble valley, had its own comprehensive school which became a 13-18 High School shortly after local government reorganisation. This school was attractive to a number of pupils who normally attended schools in Skipton from within Malhamdale.

The other school which became important during the course of the negotiations about reorganisation in Skipton was the South Craven School at Cross Hills (6 miles from Skipton) which was established in the late 1960s as a developing 11-18 comprehensive school. It catered for the population which had fed into the Keighley grammar schools before they were reorganised or which had been accommodated in secondary modern schools at Silsden and Cross Hills if they were not selected.

The changes which took place between 1962 and 1983 in the functions of schools and their

status were considerable. The decision by Keighley to opt for comprehensive reorganisation made it necessary for changes to occur in Craven. The result was a large comprehensive unit at South Craven. The High School at Settle became co-educational, comprehensive and enlarged its sixth form. Both Settle and South Craven were able to compete for pupils from within the Skipton system, especially after the 1980 Education Act, but even before that because of the way in which North Yorkshire interpreted parental choice.

The grammar schools maintained their position as grammar schools, but after 1974 had some difficulty over numbers because of the loss of the Barnoldswick district from their catchment area. The position was eased by increasing the percentage of pupils selected which reduced the number of pupils, especially relatively able pupils, available to the secondary modern schools. Following the 1980 Act, the grammar schools were able to attract customers from a much wider geographical areas and so extended their potential catchment area.

The changes in the status and the catchment areas of the schools had the effect of reducing the perceived value of the secondary modern schools, especially Aireville. It is instructive to examine the processes that were instrumental in producing the changes.

Following the 1944 Act the developments in Craven were typical of the West Riding and the nation as a whole: the pre-war situation had to be tidied up; the response to the Act and the management of expansion was bipartite (called tripartite). Upper Wharfedale County Secondary School was built and completed as a small school in the Dale (1956). Aireville County Secondary School was amalgamated on the one site in Aireville Park following many years of operating in split sites all over the town. The Secondary School at Barnoldswick was already established. Children who were not selected to attend either Ermysted's School or the Girls' High School (both grammar schools) attended these schools. Both schools had a tradition of boarding education so that children from long distance could board throughout the week before returning home for the weekend, or could indeed board for the whole of a term. The grammar schools also took boarders from further afield and there was some movement into them from other parts of the area, such as Addingham.

On the other hand, the Keighley schools (also single-sex grammar schools within the excepted district) exerted a strong influence and took selected children from as far afield as Settle and from the area which was later to be served by South Craven School.

It has been possible to divide the period between 1961 and 1974 into five stages: the preparation of early schemes; the influence of 10/65; active teachers; reaction and the influence of 10/70; assertive teachers; the last rites of the West Riding, under the general heading of Attempts to Reorganise Secondary Education in Craven by the West Riding. The whole sequence is summarised in Appendix 1 and 2.

PHASE ONE: THE PREPARATION OF EARLY SCHEMES

During the period 1962 to 1965 when the early schemes were formulated, negotiations were much prescribed with relatively few people involved and with no public consultation. There was a concern in the locality and in much of the country, about the efficiency and fairness of the system of selection at eleven-plus. The desire to resolve the problem came from within the

locality, but the means depended upon County and the governors of Ermysted's School because of their respective powers. The means were not clear as there was no nationally agreed package which could be applied. LEAs and localities were left to experiment within the constraints of existing buildings and staffs, and without the benefit of extra resources. Notions of reorganisation were thus inevitably decentralised in these early stages and there was a great deal of negotiation involved. As negotiations progressed they became more complicated with external agents and professionals both exerting diversifying influences.

The First Scheme

The first phase started with the decision by the Divisional Executive to recommend the abolition of the eleven-plus examination. In January 1962, the Divisional Executive resolved that "this meeting feels that the policy of selection at eleven-plus is wrong and recommends that the advice of the LEA be sought as to the possibility of an alternative policy for the Craven Area" (Craven Divisional Executive, 28/2/64). The main worry of the Executive (in common with much of the rest of the country) seems to have been the inefficiency of the process of selection at eleven. A sub-committee was established which met Alec Clegg (CEO) and Mr Petty (Assistant Officer for Secondary Education). In August 1962, Clegg submitted a scheme which was based on junior and senior high schools. It was similar in design to the schemes implemented in Leicestershire. The sub-committee met representatives of the teachers' unions (the NUT was in favour but the Joint Four was opposed) and the Heads of secondary schools to discuss the scheme. It also met with representatives from Keighley (Report by the DEO to the Craven Divisional Executive, 28/2/64). A measure of co-operation was considered if only because Keighley traditionally served the south of Craven.

In this first scheme it was envisaged that the senior high schools would be Ermysted's School and the Girls' High School, with Aireville, Barnoldswick and Upper Wharfedale acting as the junior high schools. The grammar schools would need to be extended. A new school at South Craven would also be a junior high school but would feed into the Keighley senior high schools. For the purpose of assessing accommodation it was assumed that 50% of the children would transfer to the two senior high schools at age fourteen. The perceived advantages were that selection at eleven-plus would be abolished and the use of existing accommodation would be maximised. (Ibid) The Divisional Executive adopted this scheme as its own. (Ibid) The scheme was similar to that adopted by Keighley and was in accord with what was known of Clegg's thinking about schemes for reorganisation.

Clegg's Three-tier Scheme

The Divisional Executive had developed its junior\high school plan in ignorance of Clegg's developing thinking about patterns of reorganisation and was thrown into some confusion when the Chief Officer suggested that the ideal solution would be to develop a middle/upper school system in Craven. (Ibid) In this new proposal the schools at Barnoldswick, Aireville, Upper Wharfedale and some in the South Craven area became middle schools with the grammar schools becoming high schools (Ibid). Clegg's three-tier scheme caused considerable disquiet in the area as when the teachers were consulted they expressed almost unanimous opposition. (Ibid) The Divisional Executive was also disturbed as it felt that it already had a scheme which had the blessing both of Clegg and its members. It did modify its

own scheme, however, on advice from the teachers to change the age of transfer to the senior high schools to thirteen. (Ibid) This period of professional and political negotiations was responsible for the initial failure to implement comprehensive education. They were important in the development of the relationship between the locality and the County.

There was, thus, an early split between the groups favouring the abolition of the eleven-plus examination, with the Divisional Executive and the Divisional Officer allying itself with the excepted district of Keighley rather than with Clegg's developing thinking. The quarrel was not about whether selection at eleven-plus should be abolished, but how its abolition was to be achieved. Clegg was less than pleased with the Keighley stance and when there were problems in that area at a later date he was not very sympathetic (Gosden and Sharp, 1978 op cit). The Craven Divisional Executive stuck to its guns and in August 1964 adopted the slightly modified (movement to high school at age thirteen) original scheme which was a variant of the Leicestershire Plan (Minutes of the Craven Divisional Executive. August 1964)

Attempted Consultation

The Divisional Executive, through David Matthew (Divisional Education Officer) attempted to consult with the governors of Ermysted's school. Matthew was in a difficult position as he had to reconcile the views and feelings of both the Divisional Executive and those of the Chief Officer. He attempted to follow procedures by consulting with the governing bodies of the local secondary schools on the basis of the scheme adopted by the Executive, i.e. the variant of the Leicestershire scheme. In the case of the governors of Ermysted's School this proved very difficult as the chairman, Mr A C Coe did not respond to Matthew's letters and could not be reached on the telephone. Matthew wrote four letters between August 1964 and January 1965 requesting consultations. The letters were different in tone and all were ignored (Letters from D Matthew (DEO) to A C Coe (Chairman of Governors of EGS) 14/8/64, 11/9/64, 15/9/74, 6/1/65). A copy of the sub-committee's report was sent for each governor, with the request that the contents should be kept confidential (Letter from Matthew to Coe (15/10/64). It is not clear whether the tactic of delay was unintentional or intentional. What is clear is that it was very effective.

Governors' Questions

Coe finally replied on the 8th of January 1965 and said that the governors had considered the report and that there were several questions which they would like to ask (Letter from Coe to Matthew 8/1/65). Matthew replied briefly and confidently. "I have consulted with the chairman of the working party and he has said that replies to the questions submitted by the governors will be sent within three days of receipt". Matthew was quite firm on one point that the proposals should not be communicated to the Old Boys' Association or the Parents' Association until the Divisional Executive "have been informed". (Letter from Matthew to Coe) Coe did not challenge this particular decision by Matthew.

Coe's reply included a list of 17 questions. Some were related to broad educational considerations; some were questioning the details of the scheme; but, understandably, the majority of the questions were about the changed nature of Ermysted's School. (Letter from Coe to Matthew 22/1/65). The educational considerations raised by the governors were difficult

to answer because of a lack of experience and knowledge. The governors asked about the educational arguments for change and how these could be judged by a comparison of grammar and comprehensive schools: exam results, the percentage of the cohort (boys and girls separately) entering the sixth form; the percentage going on to university; the percentage leaving school before taking O level.

The questions about details of the scheme were evidence of incomplete planning and might have been resolved by negotiations. The governors were concerned that: the plan envisaged involved changing from a straight Leicestershire arrangement in 1970; the scheme depended on only fifty percent of the male cohort opting for Ermysted's School; the staff should be safeguarded; the staffs at the other grammar schools should be as qualified as those at Ermysted's School; the standard of education in the primary schools should not be made worse.

The governors were also concerned about detailed changes in Ermysted's School. Some of the concerns resulted from incomplete planning, but equally some could not be resolved because of lack of knowledge: the handling of admissions to the school; the provision and cost of extra accommodation; the difficulty of maintaining grammar school standards and curricula with a diluted intake; the difficulty of attracting high calibre staff; the staying on rate of children from the grammar schools feeding into Ermysted's School.

Despite his earlier confidence, Matthew could not answer the questions and accordingly had to look for assistance from County. He wrote to Dr. Owens including a copy of the questions and asking for "any help ...in replying as authoritatively as possible to the letter" (Letter from Matthew to Owens 25/1/65). On the same day, he also wrote to Clegg asking for help and sympathy. He bemoaned the fact that the chairman had taken so long to reply in the early stages and that even now they (the governors) had not suggested that they wished to meet the working party. He also explained that his problem was that he had promised an early reply to the governors once the questions had been received and he needed help from County quickly. Matthew's biggest problem was stated quite briefly: "Quite frankly we have not considered certain matters on which there are questions since we are more concerned with how far we can get agreement on our proposals". His concluding sentence, "I am arranging a small committee to discuss the matter on Friday evening of this week", was in the nature of a plea for a quick reply. (Letter from Matthew to Clegg 25/1/65)

Matthew also had to try to maintain his credibility with Coe and his reply to Coe contained two distinct sections. The first one, following initial pleasantries, asked for a date (before Friday) when the governors would meet members of the working party. The second was a P.S. which attempted to explain why it was not possible to answer the questions in three days. "I assumed that I would receive these questions on Friday 29th January, the day following the meeting of your governors referred to in your letter of 8th January. The meeting of the working party on Friday 29th January was tentatively fixed with this I mind and cannot now be altered. Hence I regret we cannot adhere to the three days referred to". (Letter from Matthew to Coe 26/1/65)

Matthew was not helped by Clegg's reply. He wrote: "It is very difficult now for us to help you to answer these questions many of which are similar to those which Dr. Owens and myself put to your working party when we came down to see them a few weeks ago...Some of the

questions turn upon local details on which you are better informed than I am". He dealt with some of the questions generally but concluded: "On the general question of the merits of a Leicestershire type arrangement it is difficult for me to help you since in an address I am about to give this week...I shall be very critical of the educational and social wisdom of this type of arrangement". Clearly Clegg was not willing to get Matthew out of the hole. There may have been something personal about this, though he did not have all the answers and he was, in any case, not prepared to interfere with his new concept of middle and high schools. (Letter from Clegg to Matthew 3/2/65)

The external agency (governors) threw the political body (the Divisional Executive) into considerable confusion because of a professional failing. The questions highlighted some problems peculiar to Craven but also the lack of empirical evidence about comprehensive proposals and their effects both on schools and the child population.

The general problem of inadequate information was, therefore exacerbated in this instance because of the poor relationship between Clegg and Matthew and the Divisional Executive. The issue became personalised and associated with the alliance between the Executive and Keighley which was also opposed to Clegg's middle/high school plan.

At this early stage, the governors of Ermysted's School had learned the value of (a) delay; and, (b) the right to challenge and question.

PHASE TWO: THE INFLUENCE OF CIRCULAR 10/65 (SUMMER 1965 to SUMMER 1966)

Circular 10/65 had a considerable influence on all those involved in negotiations about secondary reorganisation. There was an increase in the level of activity, though January had been quite hectic enough for some of the protagonists in Craven. What had been a concern (selection at eleven-plus) within the locality now became an article of political faith promulgated by central government, accepted by County and imposed on the locality for its necessary and urgent consideration.

The Circular contained recommended solutions to the problems of reorganisation, but these were very diverse and reflected the experience of LEAs and the need to change the organisation of secondary education using existing buildings and staffs as economically as possible. In the circumstances, rates of change were bound to vary and negotiations were affected by powerful individuals and powerful institutions. An important factor in making an institution powerful was the ownership of educational property.

Political negotiations were important at this time. This was partly a product of the action of central government but also of the political complexion of the County Council and its desire to respond to the DES in the time allowed. Clegg's own position within the informal national hierarchy of Chief Officers was also important because he had declared himself opposed to the Leicestershire Plan developed by Mason and had become the acknowledged 'author' and principal apologist for the three-tier pattern of reorganisation.

The governing body of Ermysted's School was the main local external agency involved. Early signs of increased pressure by central government and the politicisation of the education

processes were: (a) the direct involvement of Clegg in negotiations within the locality; and, (b) the emergence of national interest groups from which the governors of Ermysted's School could receive advice and support.

The governors received support from the National Association of Governing Bodies of Aided Grammar Schools. A document, outlining the point of view of the Association was received by the Divisional Office and also by Ermysted's School in September 1965 following the issuing of Circular 10/65 (Circular from the National Association of Governing Bodies of Aided Grammar Schools). It is perhaps an indication of difficult relationships between Matthew and the governors of Ermysted's that Matthew did not send copies of the document to the governors until 10th March 1966 and offered neither an apology nor any proper explanation as to why its despatch had been delayed. (Letter from Matthew to Coe, 6/3/66)

The National Association gave support which reinforced the stances taken by the governors. The Association put the governors into touch with other institutions facing similar dilemmas and thereby reduced the possibility of a sense of isolation. The sharing of experiences and possible legal costs were important considerations. The document sent by the Association emphasised that voluntary aided grammar schools should be careful to maintain their standards; should consult with the community; and should insist on their "rights" regarding their special position within a locality. The rights mentioned were control of finances and admissions procedures and their control of the curriculum. The document also announced the setting up of a legal sub-committee to co-ordinate resistance to the imposition of a national system of comprehensive schools.

The remainder of the document consisted of two paragraphs which (a) noted that the government "do not seek to impose destruction or precipitate change on existing schools" and that the insistence on consultation was very welcome; and, (b) looked forward to a continuation of "an important way in which voluntary activity in education may be integrated into the national and local systems" (National Association of Governing Bodies of Aided Grammar Schools, op cit)

Dr. Stroud, the secretary of the Association, was the guest speaker at Ermysted's School Speech Day on July 8th 1966 and, according to the Craven Herald (the local newspaper) he repeated much of what was in the document in his address. In all the speeches, by Eastwood (Headmaster), Coe (Chairman of Governors) and Stroud, there was a strong sense that the voluntary aided grammar school was a valuable asset with an honourable historical role and a necessary future for the welfare of the nation.

Intervention by Clegg

At this stage, Clegg was confident of political backing from the County Council because of its desire to reply to Circular 10/65 by the stated deadline. He became personally very active. In a letter to Matthew, Clegg wrote of a "friendly discussion" with Eastwood, in which they explored their respective positions. Clegg told Eastwood that he was almost certain that he (Eastwood) opposed comprehensive education, but that he (Clegg) had a simple job in that he had to produce a scheme for comprehensive education in Skipton because he was certain that the Education Committee would "want to support, and not oppose, the government on this matter".

The educational arguments were thus to be resolved by reference to the Education Committee and Circular 10/65. The Circular had changed the climate considerably and the dispute between County and the locality was put into a different context.

Clegg then explained to Eastwood that he had felt unable to accept the original proposals for reorganisation in Skipton and that he now felt that the best scheme would involve handing the new buildings (Aireville) to the grammar schools and asking them to run a 13-18 school in them. It would be a mixed school and Ermysted's School could still use its trust fund for extraneous purposes. The two grammar school buildings could then become middle schools and the sixth form in the new building would also be the sixth form for Barnoldswick, Upper Wharfedale and the new school at South Craven. Eastwood is reported as countering this by suggesting that the two grammar school buildings could be "as one for the upper school". Clegg indicated that he was willing to consider this. Clegg's conclusion was that Eastwood's feeling that aided schools generally would oppose government wishes on comprehensive education would not be too strong a factor since direct-grant schools had recently been given a "brusque shot across the bows" at the North of England Conference (Letter from Clegg to Matthew (11/1/66)). The tone of Clegg's letter was confident and he seems to have felt that the professional argument was won and that he had given sufficient support to Matthew and the Executive.

Matthew's reply gives some indication of the distrust felt by the Executive both of the County and the governors. He wrote that having discussed the letter with the chairman and some of the members, their general conclusion was that to do as Clegg suggested (i.e. to consult with governors) would simply involve further delay "since the governors of Ermysted's on the last occasion when we put proposals to them used sorts of devices to put off a decision and would not meet us". There was also an attempt to encourage the County to undertake a higher profile. "Our people here feel that since we have sent you our scheme it's now up to the education committee or yourself to deal with the governors... either on the basis of the scheme we submitted or, if you do not favour it, on an alternative scheme. (Letter from Matthew to Clegg 9/1/66)

Dr. Owens (A.E.O.) produced an analysis of the buildings available. The most significant fact to emerge was that the buildings of Ermysted's School provided deficient accommodation in many respects and that the notion of the two in one upper school using the grammar school premises did not really fit. (Letter from Owens to Matthew 18/2/66)

Clegg, through Owens, was anxious to push the advantage which he thought he had won in his conversation with Eastwood and was apparently not happy with Matthew's attitude. Matthew wrote to Owens at County referring to a telephone conversation on Friday 11th March. "It seems that there are one or two points which need to be cleared up" (Matthew to Owens 22/3/66). He referred firstly to an unspecified problem regarding the reorganisation of the South Craven area and dealt secondly with the fact that the County Council Inspector, Miss Imrie, had not been invited to the meetings which discussed reorganisation. Why this had become an issue is not clear. Matthew defended himself by saying that the instructions regarding CCIs had been contained in a letter from Clegg dated 24th November 1965, whereas the completed proposals for the Craven area had been sent to the Authority on the 22nd April 1965. He also tried to deal with the conduct of the negotiations from 1962 onwards and

illustrated how closely the Executive had worked with the County and tried to establish that the CCI had copies of each memorandum and could have made representations either to County or to the Executive if she had wished.

Finally he wrote "You may not be convinced with what I have said ... But if you are, and I hope you are, I trust that you will correct any misapprehension your colleagues may have and I refer in particular to Sir Alec" (Letter from Matthew to Owens). (22/3/66). Where the original complaint had come from and what was said on the 'phone is not known, but Matthew was clearly lost and relationships with his colleagues at County Hall were very strained. The poor personal relationship was an important factor in a professional performance which allowed the governors time and experience to develop their anti-reorganisation strategies.

Direct Intervention by Clegg

Matthew was asked by Clegg to make arrangements for a meeting between Clegg, Owens, Imrie and the governors of Ermysted's School. He was also given permission to discuss the scheme outlined to Eastwood with the Divisional Executive. (Memo from Clegg to Matthew, April 1966). The direct negotiations undertaken by Clegg with the governors were political negotiations undertaken by a professional with an external agency. In this instance, Clegg acted on behalf of the County Council and in the place of the Divisional Executive. Clegg was trying to exert his will in order to meet the deadline for replying to Circular 10/65.

The meeting between Clegg and the governors duly took place on 23rd May 1966 and Clegg was the principal contributor. Clegg's opening expressed the concern of the County to meet the deadline set for a reply to 10/65. He dealt with the background to reorganisation by outlining the terms of 10/65 and gave a general picture of the Authority's task in the Riding as a whole. Clegg's conclusion was that this area (Craven) provided significant difficulties and that, in his opinion, "his committee would have to tackle other areas in the West Riding before this one". (MSMG, EGS: 23/5/66)

Clegg then outlined his plan which was basically that which he had outlined to Eastwood earlier. He cited a scheme at Tadcaster, which he claimed had some similarities to the Skipton situation where the Trust Funds of an old established school were put at the disposal of the new school with the governors of the old school being largely responsible for the management of the new school. He also indicated that if this scheme was not agreed, the Education Committee would expect an alternative. He also said that his committee did not like two-year schemes, nor did they approve of the Leicestershire scheme.

The questions asked by the governors followed an inevitable pattern in line with both the questions already asked of the Divisional Executive and the statement by the National Association of Governing Bodies of Aided Grammar Schools. Questions about educational considerations and standards were part of the national agenda. They were difficult to answer because of a lack of knowledge. The comprehensive lobby did not, therefore, address the issues of curriculum and organisation. This left the gap which was to be filled by the Black Papers and the radical conservatism of the 1970s and 1980s.

The first question was apparently very direct. "What would happen if the governors did not

agree with the Education Officer's proposals?" The reply was equally direct. "The governors are at liberty to say so and if the Authority persists with the plan, the governors could refer the matter to the DES". The chairman, Coe, simply said that the governors would need time for consideration of the proposals. Clegg also said that the Aireville premises must remain a County school unless the governors were prepared to buy the property from the County following the sale of their own premises. He said that he was opposed to any action being taken before all the necessary building work was completed and he felt that this might take about five years. The governors made no commitment at the meeting but Clegg apparently felt that the argument was won and that Matthew and the Executive could get on with the job. (Minutes of a Special Meeting of the Governors of EGS, 23/5/66)

Indecision

Clegg tried to get the Divisional Executive and its Officer to firm up the deal which he felt he had impressed on the governors of Ermysted's School. Clegg sent a memorandum to Matthew which included draft proposals for Skipton and Barnoldswick requesting comments and arrangements through Owens for any further necessary meetings (Memo from Clegg to Matthew 1/6/66). Clegg wrote again (three weeks later) urging the arrangement of meetings for consultation and asking that Matthew let Owens and Imrie know ("with as much warning as possible") which meetings they should attend. (Memo from Clegg to Matthew, 23/6/66).

Matthew's frame of mind and some of the other difficulties were shown in a letter to Owens. The letter was friendly and, to that extent, relationships seem to have been improved. He was, however, still trying to shift more responsibility onto the County. Twice in the letter he requested an early meeting so that "misunderstandings can be cleared up". His claim was that Clegg had undertaken to meet Eastwood again and also the Divisional Executive and, through his officers, the teachers. There was some indication of residual resentment on the part of the Secondary Education Committee (a sub-committee of the Executive with the responsibility for recommending schemes for reorganisation to the Executive). In that whilst they had agreed to submit Clegg's three-tier scheme to the Divisional Executive, they were going to submit it as his scheme not their own. They still favoured their own scheme in the form of the variant of the Leicestershire plan. (Letter from Matthew to Owens 21/7/66)

The concern of the County was to get the go-ahead for a scheme which could be included in its reply to Circular 10/65. Matthew received a memo from Clegg reminding him that Tuesday, 12th July was the date by which Authorities were requested to submit schemes to the DES in accordance with the Circular. Most of the County had met the deadline, but "schemes for three Divisions, including Craven, have still to be presented to the Committee, and I should be glad if you would let me know the date by which the scheme(s) for your Executive are likely to be finalised". (Memo from Clegg to Matthew, 15/7/66). Owens wrote in similar vein. (Letter from Owens to Matthew, 19/7/66). The problem of Matthew's position which had been obvious for some eighteen months had not been resolved and no final recommendation was made in the County's response to Circular 10/65.

The South Craven Decision

No overall decision was made, but it was necessary to make some provision for the south of

the Craven area. The establishment of a comprehensive school – South Craven – was to make a significant change to the structure. The proposer, J J Barker, who represented Silsden in the South Craven area on the Executive, was anxious to push for the establishment of a fully comprehensive school in the area. Barker explained the decision to go ahead with South Craven so quickly with reference to the need to dovetail the procedures for that area with those of Keighley. (Conversation with J J Barker in June 1976). The planning and building of the school proceeded very quickly (Conversation with Lionel Watson in the Area Office in October 1986).

In the event, the West Riding's submission to the DES on 19th July 1966 sent to the Rt Hon C A R Crosland the entry for the Craven Division read –

“Craven. South Craven: Initially South Craven and Silsden Secondary Schools to serve the 11-14 age range with pupils going forward to Keighley Grammar Schools at fourteen on a voluntary basis (expected to be about 60%). Ultimately, South Craven School to become an 11-18 comprehensive school for the whole of the South Craven area.

Barnoldswick, Skipton and the Dales: Scheme still to be determined” (West Riding's response to Circular 10/65 19/7/66).

This decision to establish an 11-18 comprehensive school at South Craven, about which there was little discussion recorded, was the most important in terms of structural alterations in the Craven area and its unintended consequence was the creation of a rival establishment to the Skipton schools. This phase ended and the next one began with the adoption by the Divisional Executive of the three-tier scheme advocated by Clegg, but too late to be included in the County's response to Circular 10/65.

PHASE THREE: ACTIVE TEACHERS (SUMMER 1966 to FEBRUARY 1967

Reactions to the Three-tier Scheme

The teachers of the area reacted violently against the middle school plan. The Divisional Executive had finally agreed to go along with the wishes of Clegg (Report in the Craven Herald of a meeting of the Divisional Executive 7/4/66), but the teachers produced a new split between the locality and the County which was to be long lasting and damaging to the cause of reorganisation. In this instance, professional negotiations were delaying and diversifying.

Clegg's scheme was announced on June 24TH 1966 (“Secondary Education Reorganisation. Proposed Plans for Skipton and West Craven”, Craven Herald, 24/6/66 and Telegraph and Argus, 24/6/66). Shortly afterwards the staff of Skipton Girls' High School were reported as “indignant because they allege they were ignored over reorganisation plans for schools in the Craven area”. The staff of the school had decided to send a letter of protest to the Divisional Executive. The criticisms were: (a) teachers were consulted “late and infrequently and then ignored”; (b) a staff committee had submitted a critical but constructive document to the Executive which had later reported that the Girls' High School had expressed no strong views for or against the scheme; and (c) because of the need to use existing buildings children would have two breaks in their educational life at ten or eleven and again at thirteen, and this, they

felt, was educationally unsound.

The staff also suggested that at least three practising teachers, not necessarily heads, should be elected to represent the total professional opinion of the area. The final criticism was that it would be difficult to recruit staff because of the uncertainty about the timing of the proposed changes. The comments received wide circulation within the local press. (Telegraph and Argus, 6/7/66; Craven Herald, 7/7/66; Yorkshire Post, 7/7/66), It seems that the staff of the Girls' High School were put out because all the consultation in the earlier stages had been with the governing body of Ermysted's School. There was no great outcry in the press as a result of the opinions expressed by the staff of the Girls' High School; simply a short letter signed "Hopeful" expressing the view that public opinion ought to be tested.

In the periods of time separated by the school holidays, the teachers' unions met and elected representatives to meet the Executive. The Joint Four elected the Head of Ermysted's School and the Deputy Head of the Girls' High School; The NUT elected two Primary School Heads and the Deputy Head and Senior Mistress of Aireville and the Head Teachers' Forum elected the Head of the Girls' High School, the Head of Aireville and a Primary School Head. The NAS sent no representatives. Aireville was clearly strongly represented as were the grammar schools, but there was no representation from Barnoldswick or Upper Wharfedale... It seems that, at that time, Aireville was the most powerful non-grammar school institution. One development resulting from the negotiations was that Barnoldswick, South Craven and Wharfedale began to be more assertive and were in a position to make strong demands long before the West Riding was dismembered.

The attitude of the teachers' groups towards the three-tier schemes exacerbated the already serious split between the locality and the County. Clegg was very much in favour of the three-tier pattern which had now been adopted by the Executive. This was invariably criticised by the local teachers. The Divisional Executive was placed in a difficult position between the wishes of County and the opinions of the teachers of the locality. At the outset, teachers held ambivalent views and by the end of the episode very serious splits were obvious in the view taken, with some being strongly in favour of reorganisation and some strongly against. Indeed, some very definite and some very idiosyncratic views were held at the end of this time and many positions, particularly in the secondary sector, were reserved and highly critical of anything which was new. The clear tendency within the Skipton secondary teachers was to preserve a meritocratic view of education with a suspicion of reorganisation. Barnoldswick, South Craven and Upper Wharfedale tended to favour reorganisation. Aireville was the point of separation of opinion and its staff was divided.

The Teachers and the Divisional Executive

The second sub-phase involved the teachers in negotiations with County via the Divisional Executive. The teachers took time to organise themselves. The initial concern of the teachers was to be consulted, but they became a considerable delaying agent. In many other Divisions negotiations with the teachers were about the details and the implementation of agreed schemes. In Craven the Executive found itself in an uncomfortable position between County and the teachers and was unable to make a decision about a scheme to which it could stick. Many of the meetings of the Executive and the teachers were attended by either or both

Owens and Imrie and the Divisional Officer became a less important figure in the negotiations. In any case, Matthew took slightly early retirement in 1967. Mr D Riddiough was appointed as the new DEO.

Ermysted's Governors were able to withdraw from the front line. They, and their privileged position as governors of a voluntary aided school, were a constant irritant, however, because it was known that whatever scheme was prepared would have to be taken to them for approval and it was difficult to know how they would react and whether their premises would be made available. Partly because of uncertainty and partly because of institution based professional interests this phase produced a plethora of schemes which consumed a lot of teacher time.

Each scheme had its own particular group of supporters. This increased the tendency to fragmentation.

The first Executive meeting attended by the teachers' representatives was on 17/10/66. The lead in explaining their point of view about the newly adopted three-tier scheme was taken by the primary head elected by the Head Teachers' Forum. He followed a simple statement of grave disquiet by the teachers by a five point explanation which was very conservative and not at all encouraging to County.

They were convinced of the undesirability of a change at ten-plus which would decapitate primary schools. They were concerned about the "bad effect" of separating children at the age of ten into two schools and "would deprecate the disparities that were bound to arise". They questioned whether a break at thirteen-plus was desirable. They were of the opinion that in Skipton there was a good educational situation as parents were happy that their children should go to "Aireville providing that there was the possibility of transfer and now that the school had developed GCE courses". (Minutes of the Meeting of the Secondary Education Committee of the Craven Divisional Executive, 17/10/66). Lastly, they were in favour of the abolition of the present eleven-plus system and would prefer selection to be based on the work done during the last two years of the primary schools and "consultation between the heads concerned". This was similar to the notion advanced by Clegg in 1958, when he advocated that transfer to particular secondary schools should be done on the basis of the length of time which the child was committed to stay at that institution. There was no hint of consultation with parents. The decision of the professional was going to be final. The spokesman also said that although the setting up of comprehensive schools in the area appeared to be inevitable, it was hoped that no change would be made until adequate provision had been made. To the teachers, the major problem seemed to be the method used to select children at eleven-plus.

Owens replied and covered the familiar ground about the Authority's response to 10/65 and asserted that the discussion had been unhelpful because if the teachers were so opposed to the proposed scheme they should suggest an alternative. There was some attempt to find a solution which would be acceptable to the teachers and it emerged that they would probably be in favour of one 11-18 school providing that there was no change in the status quo until all necessary building had been completed.

Owens was scheduled to meet the teachers of the area on October 20th and actually wondered whether to scrap the meeting. He agreed, however, to attend to explain why the three-tier

scheme was a good one for the area. The chairman, Barker, agreed to give the teachers an opportunity of submitting an alternative scheme and the Executive would defer their submission to the Authority until the beginning of December. (Minutes of the Meeting of the Secondary Education Committee of the Craven Divisional Executive, 17/10/66)

Prior to the next meeting of the Executive's Committee, Owens had explained the three tier scheme favoured by Clegg to the teachers, and they, following the meetings, had sent a letter to the Executive stating their preferences. Owens' meeting had not produced a meeting of minds as the teachers' preferences for either a two tier or one 11-18 school in Skipton were the ones which he thought least practicable because they made poorest use of existing accommodation. Owens used Clegg's known arguments but he failed to convert the teachers to a three-tier view and the result of the meeting was that if the teachers did not like the scheme, they should be given more time to suggest an alternative. (Minutes of the Meeting of the Secondary Education Committee of the Craven Divisional Executive, 17/10/66)

The Formulation of Alternative Schemes

Owens was greatly involved in the negotiations at this stage and it was he who invited the teachers to submit something else if they did not like the County's and the Executive's preferred scheme.

At the next meeting (2/12/66), the original teacher's representative was not present, and the task of explaining the views of the teachers was undertaken by the Head of Aireville, Mr B Davies. He reiterated the opposition to middle schools and the preference for one 11-18 comprehensive school. However, the teachers had accepted the point about the use of buildings and had produced two alternatives. Scheme A involving primary schools in Skipton retaining children until the age of twelve (additional accommodation might be required). Ermysted's School could be used as a replacement for Water Street Primary School and that building used for Further Education. Upper Wharfedale would either become a junior school or a 10-13 middle school, and Aireville would become a 12-18 comprehensive school. Scheme B involved two 11-18 comprehensive schools in Skipton (a) Aireville with a sixth form and (b) Ermysted's School and the Girls' High School with a sixth form. There would need to be a certain amount of specialisation in the sixth form and the difficulties of allocation were appreciated. Upper Wharfedale would be a 10-13 middle school. None of the schemes was examined in detail.

After considerable discussion Scheme C emerged in which Aireville was to become a 12-18 comprehensive school (about 700 additional places would be required) and one of the grammar schools would become a primary school with the other becoming a remedial centre or a centre for further education. Upper Wharfedale would be a junior school. After further discussion, Owens asked whether the teachers could be asked to pass an opinion on Scheme C, since the Education Committee would wish to have the opinion of the teachers on any scheme submitted and Eastwood indicated that the Governors of Ermysted's School would be influenced by any proposal which had the unanimous approval of the teachers. It was agreed that the teachers should hold a meeting. (Minutes of the Meeting of the Secondary Education Committee of the Craven Divisional Executive, 2/12/66)

At the next meeting (16/12/66) the discussion was about the merits of the teachers' scheme and Clegg's scheme though the national scene did have its impact in the form of the impending Plowden Report. It was finally resolved that further discussion should take place in January after the publication of the Plowden Report (Ibid 16/12/66).

The next meeting (21/12/66) was held before the publication of Plowden, because the teachers had held a meeting open to all teachers in the area and Scheme C had become their preferred scheme. Davies, speaking for the teachers, stated that there was considerable disquiet among the teachers about the introduction of comprehensive education but, if it was inevitable, they were overwhelmingly in favour of a two-tier system.

The Executive members questioned the teachers thoroughly. Imrie (CCI) anticipated that the Plowden Committee would recommend twelve years as an appropriate age for transfer. Owens seems to have taken charge of the latter part of the meeting speaking very strongly in favour of Clegg's three-tier scheme. He did conclude with a note of compromise. The Executive, he noted, had two schemes to consider but "ideas are continually changing and before a final decision is made a number of years will have passed during which time opinion might harden in favour of one course or another". The teachers agreed that they had been adequately consulted (Ibid 21/12/66). This particular teachers' working party did not meet again.

At the next meeting (24/1/67) of the Secondary Education Committee the teachers were not invited, and whilst Imrie was not present, Owens was. The meeting seems to have been a long one, though the time is not recorded, and the ground was gone over thoroughly and many searching questions were asked. The final recommendation to the Executive which emerged was based on the geography of Craven, with separate provision for Barnoldswick and for Skipton and Upper Wharfedale. With regard to Barnoldswick, it was agreed that the Executive be informed that the committee recommended the setting up of a comprehensive 11-16 school in the hope that a sixth form could be added when the time was ripe. With regard to Skipton and Upper Wharfedale, the committee agreed to recommend the introduction of a three-tier system with transfers at ten and thirteen years of age. Upper Wharfedale was to be a 10-13 school, with two 10-13 schools at Skipton – the Girls' High School and another school (either Ermysted's School or a new school) and a single senior school at Aireville. The committee had agreed to go all the way with County and was prepared to exclude Ermysted's from the system if their buildings were not available. (Ibid 24/1/67)

The result of the meeting circulated quickly amongst the teachers' representatives and the organisations represented wrote and re-affirmed their objections to the three-tier system. (A letter from the Hon. Secretary of the Craven Head Teachers' Forum to the DEO, 3/1/67; and, a letter from the Hon. Secretary of the Craven Branch of the NUT to the DEO, 1/2/67). The committee report to the Divisional Executive was a full and fair summary of all the points of view expressed and ran to about six typed foolscap sides. The conclusion was quite firmly in favour of a three-tier system. (Recommendation of the Secondary Education Committee to the Divisional Executive, 3/2/67)

At the next meeting (3/2/67) of the full Divisional Executive the reorganisation of secondary education was the main item on the agenda. Owens was present. There was a lot of

discussion but the eventual resolution was entirely in accord with the recommendations of its own committee for both Barnoldswick and Upper Wharfedale and Skipton. The resolution was passed by 20 votes to 4 with 1 abstention. (Minutes of the Craven Divisional Executive, 3/2/67). At the same meeting the constitution of the governing body of South Craven was agreed with no acrimony at all. (Ibid) Perceptions about the provision at South Craven were conditioned by the Keighley situation rather than that in Skipton. (Conversation with L Watson at the Area Education Office, Skipton, in October 1986)

At this stage, The Divisional Executive, with the aid of Owens, had stuck to its guns and continued to recommend the three-tier scheme for Skipton much liked by Clegg. At this stage, the professional negotiations undertaken by the local teachers with regard to Skipton seemed to have been unsuccessful.

PHASE FOUR: REACTIONS AND THE INFLUENCE OF CIRCULAR 10/70 (FEBRUARY 1967 to FEBRUARY 1971)

A consequence of the failure to have the Craven scheme included in the County's response to Circular 10/65 was that reorganisation in Craven was pushed a long way down the list of areas to be tackled by the County. There was insufficient money for the whole of the Authority to reorganise at the same time. Towards the end of this phase, the failure of Edward Short's Bill to introduce compulsion with regard to the submission of plans for reorganisation was important in keeping the pressure off the governors of Ermysted's School. It was also important that a Conservative government was elected in 1970 with Margaret Thatcher as the Secretary of State. This coincided with a period of Conservative dominance at County Hall. The issue of reorganisation was kept alive in Craven by the influence of teachers on the Divisional Executive, the problem of accommodation for ROSLA and the concerns of the peripheral areas of Barnoldswick and Upper Wharfedale.

One of the immediate consequences of the Executive's decision to adopt Clegg's three-tier scheme was a great deal of press coverage. The headline in the Yorkshire Post (4/2/67) read "Teachers disapprove, but three-tier education plan is accepted". The chairman, Barker, who abstained at the meeting, was quoted as emphasising the letters received from the teachers' organisations protesting their opposition to the three-tier system. (Yorkshire Post 4/2/67)

Disagreements within the Executive

There was public disagreement within the Divisional Executive. This was centred around the personality and the opinions of Dr. Rowley who expressed many of the reservations of the professionals of the area and also the reservations of many people about the push towards comprehensive education given by Circular 10/65.

Rowley was a governor of Ermysted's School and a much respected local historian. He knew a great deal about the history of both grammar schools. He was a strong representative of a strand of opinion which disliked selection at eleven-plus and which wanted to extend "what was good in the grammar school to more of the population". In that tradition, he had been prepared to back the variant of the Leicestershire plan.

In a leading article in the Craven Herald (the local newspaper) Rowley was quoted as being “very concerned that we should embark on a scheme of educational reorganisation in the teeth of opposition from the teachers who will have to administer it”. He also asserted that the debate had been concluded before he had been given the opportunity to speak and Barker, the chairman, acknowledged that this was true and apologised. Rowley had seconded a motion to abolish selection at eleven-plus in the Executive in 1964 and asserted that he “still regarded the examination as an abomination ...but what was wrong was the age of eleven and not the fact of selection ...It has been put to me that I am closing the stable door after the horse has gone, but I console myself with the thought that this particular horse, Comprehensive Craven by Clegg out of Crosland, hasn't got very far from the starting gate yet”. In conclusion Rowley said “It is clear that many years must elapse before the implementation of any scheme of reorganisation in this area and I hope that public discussion ... can continue. In particular, I hope we can, with the co-operation of the teachers, at least rid ourselves of the eleven-plus examination ...Even if we retain some more painless form of selection”. (Craven Herald, February 1967)

In the same article the chairman replied with the straightforward assertion that “to abolish selection means comprehension”. He agreed that it was sad that the scheme did not have the support of the teachers but that it was the responsibility of the Executive to do its best for the children of the area. He also explained that it had been the view of the Executive that it was impossible for them to give assurances to the governors of Ermysted's School. Only the County could give those assurances (Craven Herald, February 1967). This point was taken up in the next edition by Eastwood, the Head of Ermysted's. He wrote “as the school is a voluntary aided one, this decision (i.e. the future of Ermysted's) will not rest with the County Education Committee, but with the Secretary of State for Education and Science in consultation with the governors, and it is perhaps worth repeating that even he does not, at present, have the legal power to impose any change on the school unless the governors agree. (Letter from Eastwood to the Craven Herald, February 1967)

In the meantime, Rowley was given permission to speak at a reconvened meeting. A notion strongly opposed by some members of the Executive who felt that a decision had been made and that it should not be challenged. Rowley spoke at length about the proceedings which the Executive had undertaken, but reserved his most passionate utterances for a defence of the grammar schools. He said that he was not in favour of either the three or the two-tier scheme and felt that the teachers did not have their hearts in their proposal either. He proceeded “the Executive must not let their passion for egalitarianism blind them to the needs of academically gifted children ...I am seriously concerned that the provision we now can make for the top quarter of the ability range may be impoverished without compensating advantages for the other three quarters, that we may be throwing out the academic baby with the eleven-plus bathwater”. He also argued that the scheme which was a variant of the Leicestershire plan would have enabled the preservation of the traditions of the two grammar schools. Neither the two- nor the three-tier proposal would allow this to happen. “A town which is as steeped in history as Skipton should hesitate long before extinguishing an institution which for some 500 years has adapted itself to the needs of the times, and has, with the Girls' High School, served the district well, and never better than in the last 20 years”. (Craven Herald, February 1967)

Rowley was given his chance to speak but it made no difference to the decision and the

resolution of the Divisional Executive was officially transmitted to County Hall on the 28th February 1967.

For two weeks the letters column of the Craven Herald was full of the debate. Much of what was written was in support of Rowley and the grammar schools. Some letters supported the integrity of the Executive and one letter criticised the teachers who were said not to be experts in education. The writer of this letter drew a distinction between being expert at imparting knowledge and being expert at education, and by implication, questioned the right of the teachers to oppose the wishes of the County. There was some support for the two secondary modern schools at Upper Wharfedale and Aireville. The latter was stated to be an "ideal type of education" since it had been united in one set of premises (Letters to the Craven Herald, February and March 1967). In reality, this support was a preference for no change in the system. The opposition within the locality was, thus, strongly focussed on a particular type of scheme and on the centralising influence which that scheme represented both within the County and the country. The debate between the Executive and the teachers had been responsible for significant delays with little effort expended by the governors of Ermysted's School. Professional negotiations had not brought reorganisation any nearer.

Attempted Intervention by Clegg

Clegg wrote to the chairman of Ermysted's School Governors re-stating the scheme agreed by the Executive and reminded the Chairman that it was similar to that which he had explained to the governors in the previous summer. He concluded "The Education Committee is prepared to accept these recommendations...However, before we send them on to the Secretary of State, I should be grateful if you would let me have the views of the Governors of Ermysted's Grammar School on these proposals". (Letter from Clegg to Coe, 6/4/67). The reply to Clegg was not immediate, but when it was made it indicated that the governors were not interested in participating in any scheme which involved middle schools. (Summary prepared for the Divisional Executive by the DEO 17/9/71)

This was the situation for a number of years. The County had a scheme which it could not afford to process without the Ermysted's premises. County was, in any case, very busy with reorganisation in other Divisions which had decided to change. The governors saw no need to change their minds as the status quo had been preserved. They were getting their quota of pupils annually and the school was perceived to be in good heart.

The influence of ROSLA Places

The issue of re-organisation was re-activated within the locality because of national developments. When it was obvious that ROSLA was to take place in 1972/3 there was a need to look at the places available in the secondary modern schools. This was an issue at Aireville but it was dealt with by negotiations between the Head and an Adviser for Craft and Design, Mr Geoffrey Wilson (Conversation with T Pettit who was the Head of Craft and Design at Aireville). Barnoldswick, on the other hand, was different as the governors of the school asked the Divisional Executive whether, in view of ROSLA, consideration could be given to the initial implementation of the comprehensive proposals for the West Craven area, with the county secondary school developing as a comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-16 from

September 1973 (Summary prepared by the DEO, op cit). Since this was in line with the long-term proposals, the Executive looked more closely at the recommendations in the light of numbers on roll at schools in the Division and the need to maintain the Skipton selective schools as 2FE schools, possibly by selecting children from the neighbouring comprehensive areas (i.e. South and West Craven). (Ibid)

The Executive expressed concern about the possible effect on the three secondary schools in Skipton but recommended to the Authority that it should provide a ROSLA unit for 240 pupils at Barnoldswick with a view to the West Craven area developing on comprehensive lines from September 1973. (Ibid) The Executive consulted about this recommendation and asked the Authority in June 1970 to make any reasonable suggestions to allow progress to be made towards ultimate comprehensive arrangements without the disadvantage of selecting children from developing comprehensive areas to maintain the two selective schools in Skipton (Ibid). Political negotiations were beginning to be polarised around geographical areas with the Executive quite prepared to see a comprehensive unit at Barnoldswick providing that it did not mean a weakening elsewhere in Craven.

On receipt of this request, the County appointed the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee to discuss the matter with the Governors of Ermysted's School. The result of the meeting was that the governors reasserted their opposition to any scheme which had anything to do with middle schools. (Ibid) This assertion coincided with the return of a Conservative government to Westminster and a period of Conservative supremacy at Wakefield, where the County Council was not anxious to impose schemes for comprehensive reorganisation on reluctant localities.

The governors were greatly helped by the issuing of Circular 10/70 which stated that all pupils should have full opportunities for secondary education suitable to their needs and abilities, but that it was wrong to impose a uniform pattern of secondary organisation on LEAs by legislation or other means. Circular 10/65 was accordingly withdrawn.

Another Teachers' Working Party

The Executive attempted to resolve the issue by the creation of another teachers' working party. Firstly, representatives of the Executive met the Craven Head Teachers' Forum in November 1970 and it was decided to elect a working party to consider possible means of reorganisation on comprehensive lines. It also received observations from the governing body of Ermysted's School following a visit by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Education Committee. These were that they could not consider any proposal which necessitated a significant change in the character of the school, such as if they agreed to their buildings being used either as a small 10-13 middle school in a comprehensive system, or as an equally small selective school for boys of a catchment area greatly reduced in size and much less varied in character. (Ibid) In the last point, the governors were expressing their traditional concern whenever it was felt that the Barnoldswick section of their catchment area was threatened.

The governors felt that if the school continued in its present form until 1980 and convincing evidence was by that time available of the success of comprehensive schools in other areas, the governors would be willing to consider transferring their interest to Aireville or

“amalgamating” with the Girls’ High School, providing that such a change could be made legally and without the school losing its aided status. The governors strongly recommended that the status quo should be maintained for ten years and that well before the end of that period a careful examination should be made of any legal and other practical difficulties which might accompany either of the changes. (Ibid) The Conservative Chairman of the Education Committee with a Conservative government in power had not wished to push the governors too hard and they felt very secure. They recognised a threat in the possible loss of the Barnoldswick children from their catchment area as a result of political pressure from within Barnoldswick and the negotiations about ROSLA places. The governors had a traditional worry whenever the Barnoldswick section of the catchment area was attacked.

The Executive met the Chairman of the Education Committee in “February 1971 and she stressed that the County Education Committee did not wish to impose any scheme for secondary education in any area. The executive decided to go ahead with consultations with the teachers” (Ibid).

The teachers’ working party was formed as the result of a meeting at Aireville School in January 1971. The meeting was attended by 100 staff from all types of schools. The first motion voted on was “This meeting re-affirms its opposition to eleven-plus selection and favours in principle a form of comprehensive education”. 47 voted for the motion; 5 against; and 41 abstained. It was pointed out that many of those who abstained did not necessarily favour the continuation of selection at eleven-plus, but they were not willing to vote for its abolition without knowing what would take its place. Another motion that “this meeting does not approve of 10-13 middle schools was put forward and there were 72 for and 5 against”. There is, thus, evidence for both, some confusion and a lot of suspicion, and a definite feeling against middle schools among the teachers of the area. The meeting also completed voting to elect a working party of teachers with a total of seventeen with two from each of the secondary schools and the Head of South Craven (with a watching brief) and representatives from the junior schools. At its first meeting, Mr Taggart (Head of Modern Languages at the Girls’ High School) was elected as secretary and Mr Cross (Head of Earby Junior School and later of Greatwood School, Skipton) was elected as chairman.

The main conclusion of this first meeting was that it would be a good idea to ballot the teachers on the question “Are you in favour of the abolition of selection at eleven-plus if it means a 10-13 middle school system?” The form of the question indicated the determination of the working party to oppose the three-tier system and its clear preference for the status quo in Skipton to an alteration of the teachers’ traditional stance on Clegg’s scheme. By the ballot the working party wanted a mandate. In a total of 274 (some 75% of the possible) unspoiled voting papers returned it was shown by a majority of a little of over 2 to 1 that teachers were directly opposed to middle schools. (Report by the Chairman of the Working Party to the Divisional Executive, June 1971) In its first action, the teachers’ working party was fighting an old battle.

The End of the Attempts to Reorganise by the WRCC (1971 – 1974)

At this time (early 1970s) reorganisation on comprehensive lines made steady progress nationally and those areas not being reorganised were the exception rather than the rule. Paradoxically, this took place during the time of a Conservative government and a Secretary of

State with increasingly strong feelings against the development of comprehensive education. The growing emphasis within the ruling party was that of the value of parental choice and the ability of the grammar schools to co-exist with comprehensive schools. The Black Papers (Cox C B and Dyson A E, Black Papers 1,2, and 3, Critical Quarterly Society 1969) expressed the view that progressive education had led to a decline in standards and that the system had to be made more accountable. Local government reorganisation became increasingly important as 1974 approached because of potential changes in personnel and possible functions both within the local polity and administrative and advisory services. This tended to produce an effective hiatus.

PHASE FIVE: ASSERTIVE TEACHERS and THE EFFECTS of LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION (FEBRUARY 1971 to JUNE 1972)

A Divided Profession (Locally)

At the outset of this phase the teachers were still formulating schemes for reorganisation, but County was anxious to go ahead with a three-tier scheme. Skipton was now substantially different from many parts of the Riding where schemes for reorganisation were being planned and actively pursued. The development of South Craven as an 11-18 comprehensive school had not caused significant problems at the beginning of this phase. The grammar schools, especially Ermysted's School, were the market leaders and Aireville with the development of O Level and CSE courses was perceived as plugging the gap produced by difficulties arising from selection at eleven-plus. The "volunteer" fifth form which the school had developed was its pride and joy.

Some teachers submitted additional ideas when they returned their ballot papers to elect the new working party. It seemed that there was clear interest in the idea of 11-16 comprehensive schools in Skipton and Barnoldswick in conjunction with a sixth form centre in Skipton. A sub-committee was formed to produce detailed schemes which found itself faced by two imponderables. The first was the continuing uncertainty as to whether the buildings of Ermysted's School would be available. The second was that the initial report on local government reorganisation suggested a division of North and West Craven into three of the new local authorities.

The sub-committee produced three schemes for further consideration. Scheme 1 was based on the notion of 11-16 schools at Barnoldswick, Aireville and Ermysted's with the Girls' High School acting as the sixth form centre. Because of the need to maximise available buildings this was modified in respect of Skipton with the Girls' High School and Aireville buildings being used for one large 11-16 school with the Ermysted's buildings being used as the sixth form centre. This was later modified to be one school in three sets of buildings until the money was available to build one 11-18 school on the Aireville site. This became known as the 1 in 3 scheme.

Scheme 2 suggested using the Aireville and the Girls' High School buildings for one 11-18 school with another 11-18 school at Barnoldswick. The working party eventually felt that this was the best solution educationally and put it forward because of the uncertainty about the availability of the Ermysted's buildings.

Scheme 3 involved the retention of selection, but at the age of twelve and it was felt that this would not be acceptable either to the County or the Divisional Executive (Report June 1971, op cit). It was considered, however, because the scheme had been advanced by a recently formed Action Committee headed by Eastwood. The working party felt that this proposal involved a lot of building particularly in primary school. The Action Committee was an offshoot of the governors of Ermysted's School and its intention was to mobilise public and teacher opinion in defence of the school. (Conversation with Eastwood, November 1983)

The schemes were considered by the staffs of all the schools and results were interesting. Overall, it was clear that most primary school teachers, Barnoldswick Secondary School teachers, all Upper Wharfedale teachers and about half the staff of Aireville found the 1 in 3 scheme to be the most acceptable yet put forward. The staffs of the two grammar schools and about half the Aireville staff plus a few primary school teachers found it completely unacceptable. (Report by the chairman of the working party, op cit). Aireville was the only secondary school with a badly divided staff.

Skipton suffered from traditional impediments to reorganisation. There was considerable and powerful local opposition. There were several sets of buildings to be incorporated in any scheme. This problem was exacerbated because it was never clear whether the Ermysted's School premises (owned by the governors) were available or not. It is not surprising that a large number of possible schemes were produced.

The Divisional Executive met with the working party and resolved subsequently that County be informed that rather than a 10-13 middle school system they would prefer an 11-18 system temporarily in three buildings in Skipton. At the same meeting a letter was submitted from Eastwood enclosing a copy of a resolution passed by the staffs of the secondary schools in Skipton, stating that they believed that this scheme was contrary to the interests of the children and would almost certainly prove unworkable and they wishes to place on record their very strong opposition to it. There was also a submission from the Chairman of the working party who clearly knew of Eastwood's letter to the effect that whilst the feelings of the secondary staffs should be taken into account they should not outweigh the feelings of the teachers of the whole area as expressed by the working party. (Report by the Chairman of the Working Party, op cit)

The teachers were badly divided and instead of forming a strong group around a majority point of view, as they seem to have done in the earlier phase when they opposed the three-tier notion, they were now expressing sectional and geographical interests. The great division between the teachers was noted by Cross, the chairman of the working party, with considerable concern.

There was also some concern within the staff of Ermysted's School about the developing splits. This is clearly expressed in a letter from Jim Foster (an Ermysted's staff member) to Cross written on 10th. April 1971. Foster was very anxious that Cross was reassured that a copy of Eastwood's letter had been sent to him as chairman of the working party. He was also anxious to clear the air on other matters. "First of all the last minute despatching the resolution was not a Machiavellian ruse to catch anyone unawares. When I reported back to the staff on Friday they immediately wished to dissociate themselves from the majority recommendation

and decided to discuss it more fully at a staff meeting on the following Tuesday". This and the need to consult with the Girls' High School and Aireville was Foster's explanation for the late arrival of Eastwood's letter to the Executive. The second point was that although Eastwood appeared as the big bad wolf in the Divisional Meeting the development was not the product of his "political cunning". Foster continued: "It was the result of a spontaneous outburst of anger in our staff room against the three in one scheme and the point of contact between Ermysted's School and the other secondary schools was myself. It is unfortunate that the secondary school teachers ...should have to part company with the rest of the working party but we are the ones who will have to operate the scheme..." (Letter from Jim Foster to Cross, 10th April 1971).

The results of the meeting were widely discussed before the Executive met again and a press campaign was started against the proposal. This was led by Eastwood on behalf of the newly formed Action Group and the feeling generated was so strong that on receipt of press cuttings at County Hall, the Chairman of the Education Committee – Alderman Mrs Fitzpatrick- suggested that she should meet with the teachers to assess all shades of opinion before the matter was put to the Education Committee. This meeting did not place because no suitable date was found. The similar problem in Ripon was addressed by a similar mechanism and, having failed to find a solution, Mrs Fitzpatrick declared it to be a particularly difficult issue. (Ibid)

The Executive was under great pressure from the interest group in Barnoldswick to resolve the situation so far as they were concerned. The governing body of Barnoldswick Secondary School at a meeting in August resolved: "having received representations from the staff that they are overwhelmingly in favour of comprehensive reorganisation and in view of the proposals for local government reorganisation in West Craven, this Body of Governors request the authority to implement, at the earliest date, their previous recommendation, supported by the Divisional Executive, concerning comprehensive reorganisation in West Craven. (Craven Divisional Executive, 17/9/71, op cit)

County referred the 1 in 3 scheme back to the Executive. This was not surprising as the scheme infringed many of the policies which Clegg had been insisting on over a number of years whenever schemes of reorganisation were considered in the Riding. There is, indeed, no evidence to suggest that he ever changed his mind that the three-tier scheme was the only scheme which would meet the needs of Skipton adequately. The instruction of the Executive to its Reorganisation Committee was that it should continue its detailed study of all the relevant factors affecting secondary education in the area and to prepare a full memorandum with recommendations. (Ibid)

More Schemes

The third sub-phase consisted of the teachers again trying to produce a scheme which would win support from all the interest groups now involved. When the teachers' working party met again in September, it was like starting all over again. It might have been easier if that had been possible, but it is not possible to wipe out the history and the legacy of previous negotiations.

It was resolved to gather as much information as possible. This was done in an increasingly pressured atmosphere because of the expressions of interest groups and the impending local government reorganisation. The working party had prepared a detailed schedule of accommodation available and possible numbers of pupils by the end of October. (Summary of accommodation and numbers. Teachers' Working Party, 29/10/71). At the same time the Barnoldswick primary teachers passed a motion re-affirming their belief in the principle of comprehensive education for the West Craven area (A copy of a resolution passed at a meeting of the West Craven Primary Teachers. 19/10/71). This group noted that impending changes of boundaries under local government reorganisation made it imperative that plans be drawn up at once "to ensure that a system of comprehensive education is introduced in West Craven by the time this area is taken over by the new Lancashire Education Authority (Ibid). Primary teachers in the Upper Wharfedale area also met in October and voted overwhelmingly in favour of the abolition of selection at eleven-plus and the establishment of comprehensive education. (Letter from Cross to Riddiough, 2/2/72)

Teacher Opinion

Having produced a summary of accommodation and pupil numbers the difficulty of the working party was to know where to go next. It was decided that they should produce a more detailed account of the identified schemes and to collect as much background information as possible. They also sought to establish more precisely the opinions of the teachers in the area. When Cross wrote to the Divisional Officer, Mr D Riddiough, he was able to assert that the primary teachers in West Craven, Upper Wharfedale and Skipton overwhelmingly wished to see the abolition of selection at eleven-plus. (Ibid)

The Problems Faced by the Working Party

In the same letter, Cross raised a number of problems which had clearly exercised the minds of the working party. Of great importance was the problem of local government reorganisation and its effect on the catchment area of the two grammar schools. "Until it is known whether some West Craven children will continue to be educated in Skipton selective schools after local government reorganisation, it is impossible to suggest a pattern of education in the Skipton area".

He was concerned about the problem caused in Skipton if the Barnoldswick children ceased to be available to the grammar schools. It had been estimated that in that event to keep the grammar schools viable it would be necessary to increase the selection rate in Skipton to 54 per cent. His assertion was that this would completely alter the characters of both the grammar schools and Aireville. (Ibid) The working party had concluded that nothing could be decided until these questions were resolved though in the letter Cross expressed the anxiety that they be kept informed of the progress of the fact finding committee established by the Executive.

The secretary, Taggart, made enquiries direct from the DES about the catchment areas of the grammar schools. He received a reply from J Y Alexander (Schools' Branch) who stated that it was not possible to say "at this stage how individual schools will be affected when reorganisation of local government takes place". She stated quite clearly that the precise situation would depend of discussions between the Governors of the Voluntary Schools and

the new LEAs i.e. the Lancashire Authority and the new North Yorkshire Authority. She also explained the provision for the posting of Section 13 Notices and the provision for objections (Letter to Taggart from Alexander, February 1972). The reply did not help the teachers' working party, but they pressed on.

The fact finding committee of the Executive and the teachers' working party met in April 1972 and began by confirming that all primary teachers and a large majority of secondary school teachers wanted to see the abolition of selection at eleven-plus. The primary teachers felt that the 1 in 3 solution was possible in Skipton, but this was opposed by the secondary teachers and the notion of a sixth form college emerged. The conclusion was that there should be further investigations of two suggestions. Firstly, two 11-16 schools (a) with sixth form including West Craven; and (b) with sixth form excluding West Craven; and secondly, two 11-18 schools. There was no mention of the position of Upper Wharfedale. (Notes prepared by the DEO for the Divisional Executive, 20, 4, 72)

Cross wrote to the DEO in May giving an account of the preliminary discussions with the teachers in Skipton and reported that the position of the primary school teachers remained unchanged regarding the abolition of selection at eleven-plus. His feeling was that the notion of two 11-16 schools with a sixth form centre was the one most likely to receive support. He requested more information (letter from Cross to the DEO, 1/6/72) and, having received it, wrote to all secondary schools suggesting the calling of staff meetings. The omission of Upper Wharfedale was repeated. (Ibid)

Upper Wharfedale – A New Point of Pressure

This immediately produced another pressure group in Upper Wharfedale. The staff and governors were particularly sensitive that their case had not been adequately considered or represented. In a document prepared following a meeting in May they suggested that there were three alternatives. (a) Establish a middle school at Upper Wharfedale. This, they felt, was not practical because of the rejection of the middle school concept by Skipton. (b) Close down the Upper Wharfedale building and send all secondary children at 11 to Skipton with boarding for some. (c) Establish an 11-16 school at Upper Wharfedale with pupils transferring to a sixth form in Skipton at the age of 16.

The governors felt that (c) was preferable and estimated that the school would contain about 280 children. There was planning permission for more houses in Grassington and Threshfield and this would lead to an increase in numbers at the school. The governors stated that providing the Authority gave a better staffing ratio, the school curriculum could provide as much as in the larger schools in Skipton. They made much of the benefits of the atmosphere of a country school and its consequent ability to provide a wide range of experiences for its pupils. They urged that a decision be made quickly to ensure that the staff remained settled and that vacancies could be properly filled ("Comprehensive Secondary Education for Upper Wharfedale Children", Report prepared by the Governors of Upper Wharfedale School, May 1972). The Upper Wharfedale group added their voice to that of Barnoldswick in wishing to see a rapid resolution of the problem.

PHASE SIX: THE LAST RITES of THE WEST RIDING (JUNE 1972 - APRIL 1974)

During the final phase of the negotiations undertaken by the West Riding it became increasingly obvious that the capacity of the Authority to produce a long term plan for Craven was diminished. The loss of political will by the County was matched by the increasing concern within the ranks of its officers for their own futures in the face of local government reorganisation. There was also no push for reorganisation from Heath's Conservative government with Margaret Thatcher as Secretary of State.

Within Craven, the stance of the governors of Ermysted's School did not alter; the teachers continued to work on schemes; and the greatest pressure for a resolution to the problem of reorganisation came from Barnoldswick which was scheduled to join the "comprehensive" County of Lancashire in 1974. Upper Wharfedale also emerged as a problem. How was a small school in Wharfedale to be integrated into a truncated (i.e. without Barnoldswick) comprehensive scheme in Craven?

Addressing and Refining Schemes

By the beginning of June 1972, the teachers seemed to have come down firmly on the side of two 11-16 schools and a sixth form centre. At the same time the objection to the three-tier scheme was re-stated. The Divisional Executive therefore agreed that there should be no further consideration of the three-tier scheme until the 11-16 and sixth form centre scheme had been more fully investigated (Letter from the DEO to the Fact Finding Committee of the Divisional Executive, 15/6/72). The resistance of the teachers to three-tier reorganisation was beginning to have an effect and they never missed an opportunity to emphasise their dislike of the scheme. The only dissenter to this marginalising of the three tier scheme was R A D Warren (Labour, Steeton Councillor). The Reorganisation Committee along with the teachers' working party was asked to consider the practicability and merits of the 11-16 and sixth form centre scheme. (Extracts from the Minutes of the Craven Divisional Executive. Prepared by the DEO, August 1972)

The Attitudes of County

As part of the consultation, J Hogan, Clegg's deputy, came down from County Hall to discuss schemes with the teachers' working party. According to Cross, Hogan was intent on pressing the three-tier scheme but had to concede when Cross pointed out that, whilst much of the accommodation would fit the scheme very well, there were significant difficulties in converting the Girls' High School into a middle school. Hogan's visit was followed by a letter to the DEO, Riddiough, from Clegg giving his observations on the schemes. Clegg clearly felt that the three-tier scheme was the best one, but conceded "one must accept, however, that it is unpopular with the teachers".

Clegg seems to have been particularly worried by the notion of 11-16 schools with a sixth form centre since he highlighted that the two 11-16 schools would only be about 4 FE and would, in his view, be limited in the courses they could offer. He also thought that the sixth form centre was too small to function independently and saw little future in linking the sixth form centre to the two 11-16 schools. (Minutes of the Craven Divisional Executive, 31/8/72)

After the three-tier scheme he seems to have preferred the 1 in 3 scheme. He felt that if the Authority was starting from scratch it would go for one 11-18 school, since it would not be over large, but genuinely comprehensive. The only reason that this was not accepted in Skipton was that there were three sets of buildings. However, on the evidence of experiments in the North Riding at Wensleydale and Richmond, recently investigated by the Authority, he saw no reason why the 1 in 3 scheme should not run satisfactorily. (Ibid) This was in line with the thinking which had taken place in the case of Normanton and Mexborough in the south of the Riding. (Gosden and Sharp, 1978 op cit)

He had finally considered the possibility of retaining selection but felt that this had one overriding disadvantage. The development of South Craven and the loss of Barnoldswick children into the new Lancashire Authority "will in a few years time have transformed the pattern and I am seriously concerned as to how far selection could continue to have any meaning in Skipton. The effects on Aireville would have to be considered very carefully". He made no definite conclusions about Upper Wharfedale but was still considering the possibilities and felt that his officers ought to consult further with local bodies in the autumn. (Minutes of the Craven Divisional Executive, 31/8/72)

Thus, Clegg attempted to persuade the Divisional Executive to persist with the three-tier system, but was unsuccessful. It was resolved that the Reorganisation Committee and the Authority's officers meet the teachers' working party (or such representatives as the teachers think appropriate) as soon as possible. (Ibid)

Delay by County

Hogan met the teachers' working party towards the end of November 1972 and the result of the meeting was that the teachers formed two sub-committees to prepare detailed statements regarding the two suggested schemes for Skipton i.e. two 11-16 schools plus sixth form and a single 11-18 unit in three buildings. Riddiough was again asked by Cross for additional information including Clegg's statement regarding a three-tier system scheme. (Letter from Cross to the DEO, 22/12/72)

The teachers' working party formed the two sub-committees suggested by Hogan to look into the two schemes. They were relying on the details of a three-tier alternative being provided. Cross caused some panic when he asked Riddiough for the statement on the three-tier scheme as Riddiough could not find one. When asked, the teachers, the Headmistress of the Girls' School and some members of the Executive claimed that Hogan had promised to provide a detailed statement of the three-tier scheme including costing. The teachers claimed that they wished to use the three-tier document as a model for their statements of the two alternative schemes (Letter from the DEO to Hogan 5/12/72). County responded slowly to Riddiough's (DEO) request. He wrote in a letter to Hogan "I am sorry to write at such length, but I am concerned that a possible misunderstanding may grow out of all proportion and I wonder whether you have anything on the Central Office files to supplement this information". (Ibid)

There was no immediate response from Hogan. Local government reorganisation produced a desire for quick responses at local level, but County Hall had many other concerns on its

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agenda. The Barnoldswick Urban District Council wrote to the Authority in November urging that it make decisions relevant to reorganisation of secondary education because of the imminence of local government reorganisation. (Letter from the Clerk to the Barnoldswick UDC to the Clerk to the County Council. 10/11/72)

Following a weekend course at Woolley Hall in January 1973, Riddiough again wrote to Hogan and referred to a conversation when the urgency of the information regarding the three-tier system had been stressed. Riddiough also wrote that the teachers' working party planned to meet some eleven days later. He requested the presence of both Hogan and Mr. Crawford (the new Assistant Education Officer for Secondary Education). (Letter from the DEO to Hogan, 8/1/73)

County finally replied, but not at great length. The letter was written by Clegg himself and he referred to his document of 25th October 1971, which so far as numbers of children and available accommodation were concerned, was still valid. Staff was to be allocated according to the procedure laid down in Appendix 22 of the County Handbook. Allocation of pupils would present no problem except at 10-13 level when because of the closeness of the schools; admission would be according to parental choice (Letter from Clegg to the DEO, 11/1/73). In an earlier letter Clegg mentioned briefly the possibility of a visit to Hemsworth to see a three-tier scheme in operation and briefly summarised the pros and cons of three-tier organisation. (Letter from Clegg to DEO, 18/10/72)

Changes in the Working Party

Hogan and Crawford met the reorganisation committee and the teachers' working party again at the end of January. The teachers' working party had changed significantly as Eastwood had retired from Ermysted's School and Miss Harries had retired from the Girls' High School. Their posts had been filled by Mr J Woolmore and Miss Kent and they were present. At this meeting, after a long discussion of the three schemes thought possible, the teachers withdrew with the exception of Cross and it was resolved that the committee should recommend to the Executive that it should adopt the scheme of one 11-18 school under one head teacher using the buildings. One member voted against the resolution and one abstained. (Minutes of a Meeting of the Reorganisation Committee of the Divisional Executive, 22/1/73)

Upper Wharfedale

The Executive and the teachers' working group had again had insufficient regard for Upper Wharfedale, and this was picked up by one parent in the dale who wrote to the Craven Herald. One of the real advantages of both the three-tier arrangement and the 11-16 and sixth form centre arrangement was that Upper Wharfedale could be integrated as a small school into either system. It was less easy to see how the school could be sensibly included into the 1 in 3 system. The possibility of the school being closed was mentioned. (Letter to the Craven Herald, January 1973). The letter caused so much alarm that the Chairman of the Executive called an emergency meeting of the governors of Upper Wharfedale on 30th January 1972. At this meeting the governors came to no firm conclusion though it seems that the DEO favoured a middle school at Upper Wharfedale and gave an example of a similar school scheme in the Sedbergh area. The governors, on the other hand, seemed to favour the notion of an 11-16

school in the Dale. It was finally agreed that a public meeting should be held at the school on 15th February to assess local feeling and that a sub-group should prepare a letter replying to the parent in the Craven Herald. (Minutes of an Emergency Meeting of the Governors of Upper Wharfedale School, 30/1/73)

The problem of Upper Wharfedale was reported in the TES by Ronald Franx. A public meeting was attended by some 250 people and was lengthy. In his report the DEO wrote that, at this stage, local opinion favoured a small 11-16 comprehensive school based on the present secondary school. The recommendation from the chairman of governors was, therefore, that there should be a small 11-16 school at Upper Wharfedale. (Letter from the DEO to County Hall, 27/2/73)

Completion

The teachers' working party seemed to think that it had completed its task and letters of appreciation passed between the DEO and Cross (Letter from DEO to Cross 7/2/73). The Executive was, therefore, able to instruct the DEO to send to county a complete recommendation for the Craven area. It is recorded that on the 2nd February 1973, after a lengthy discussion and debate following an amendment submitted by County Councillor K B Robinson, it was decided by 23 votes to 8, with two members abstaining, to recommend one 11-18 school under one head teacher be formed (in Skipton) using the buildings available.

The Final Delay

The final action focuses on the decision of the County not to proceed with comprehensive reorganisation but to leave the matter to the new Authorities.

Robinson's amendment was interesting in that he attempted to re-open the whole debate. He was a Conservative Councillor, a prominent member of the local Methodist chapel and reckoned to be a very astute man. His reasoned conclusion was "it will be in the best interests of all concerned if the consideration of any need for the reorganisation of secondary education in this area be left to the new LEAs". (A copy of the draft of Robinson's amendment, 2/2/73) How far Robinson was able to influence events ultimately is not certain, but his recommendation was the one which was adopted.

There was still some fencing to be done about the Barnoldswick situation. The Urban District Council wrote letters to the Authority to push it into a definite decision about reorganisation in West Craven, but the lack of resolution of the problem of Skipton made the DEO and County reluctant to grasp the nettle. After letters had passed between Riddiough and Clegg, Riddiough wrote to the Clerk of the Barnoldswick UDC stating that the Executive had supported a resolution of the governors of Barnoldswick School that reorganisation of West Craven should take place as soon as possible. He went on to say "You will, I am sure, appreciate that it has been necessary to look carefully at the overall position in the division, since pupils from the West Craven area attend the Skipton selective schools". (Letter from the DEO to the Clerk to Barnoldswick UDC, 1/3/73)

The negotiations with the West Riding were almost complete. The DEO sent a complete

statement of the resolutions of the Executive, but on 9th April 1973 Clegg wrote a memorandum to Riddiough which stated quite simply: "Thank you for your minute of 27th February 1973. The Policy and Finance Committee resolved to defer consideration of the Executive's recommendations until the new North Yorkshire Authority is in being". (Memorandum to DEO from Clegg, 9/4/73)

Conclusions arising from the attempts by the WRCC to reorganise secondary education in Craven

The West Riding's attempts to reorganise secondary education in Craven illustrate how, within the decentralised system, legislation operated differently for different types of institution. The partnerships within LEAs were unequal, if only, because of the dual system of governing bodies. The stances taken by the governors of the voluntary aided Ermysted's School made it very difficult for the LEA to exert its authority as it might have wished. The crucial "right" possessed by the voluntary aided governors was the ownership of the premises of the school.

Some procedures were clearly built into the system of consultation, but many rights had to be established and insisted upon by the governors and the County. In this regard, the governors were greatly helped by their cohesion and the strength of their chairman, as well as their links with the community.

The geographical proximity to Keighley and its status as an excepted district was also important initially. This had two major effects. Firstly, it encouraged the Craven Divisional Executive to adhere for some time to its original scheme of Junior/Senior High Schools which delayed the impact of Clegg's three-tier scheme. Secondly, it produced a problem in the south of Craven when Keighley produced a scheme for becoming comprehensive which did not necessarily include any children from Craven. The particular solution arrived at – South Craven School – was pursued in the spirit of "grammar schools for all" and was "allowed" by the governors of Ermysted's school because the area was not traditionally part of their catchment area. The concern of the governors was much more the maintenance of Barnoldswick as part of the grammar schools' catchment area.

Other governing bodies

It was only towards the end of the West Riding that other governing bodies began to be important external agents. The influence of Upper Wharfedale governors became more important as did that of the governors of Barnoldswick, who wished to see the position of their school changed to bring it into line with the status of schools in their new receiving Authority, Lancashire, in 1974.

The professionals

In contrast to the governors of Ermysted's School, the various elements of the education establishment lacked cohesion. This was partly because it was made up of widely differing interest groups: teachers, Divisional Officers, the Divisional Executive, and officers in the form of Clegg, Hogan, Owens, Imrie and Crawford, as well as some politicians from County.

The teachers were united about their opposition to the three-tier scheme advocated by Clegg. Opposition to this scheme was probably so widespread because it affected all the schools by removing the top classes from the primary schools; changed the secondary modern schools which had just been rationalised and started to develop GCE courses. The grammar schools were also affected. When the teachers became directly involved through the working parties set up by the Divisional Executive, they worked hard and produced a large number of schemes. They were never in a position to make decisions, however, since that right belonged to the politicians and governors. The teachers always had to cope with the uncertainty as to the availability of the Ermysted's School premises.

The overall effect was, however, to produce diversity of opinion and splits within the profession. The modus operandi of ballots and votes, allied to the free flow of information, made the teachers feel that their right to be consulted had been established. The tendency was for teachers to represent their own establishment. This feeling continued to be important in the early years of North Yorkshire and was, in any case, a feature of the development of the profession nationally.

The polarisation of views within the profession in Craven reflected the growing differences of view about comprehensive reorganisation. The movement towards centralisation within the WRCC was associated with Clegg's developing philosophy; the need to decide how reorganisation was to be achieved; and, the influence of Circular 10/65. The three-tier idea was the preferred answer to all three questions and it provoked a particularly strong reaction in Craven.

The Influence of Circular 10/65

Until the Circular was issued, the push for the abolition of the eleven-plus had come from within the Division with the Divisional Executive making the first move. First the County and then the governors of Ermysted's School were placed in the position of having to respond. Following the Circular and given the political complexion of the County Council, there was a period of intense activity by officers of the LEA, not least by Clegg himself. The aim was to produce an agreed scheme which could be sent on behalf of each Division to the DES by the deadline.

Once the 12th July date had been passed, the push from County was diminished. Most of the Divisions had complied and the officers had a great deal to do to satisfy their requirements. There were other reasons for the slow progress in Craven. The LEA had developed a stock answer to the problems of reorganisation and this was not acceptable to either the professionals or the most powerful external agent in the locality. The LEA was acting in accord with the intention of the Secretary of State who had stated that what the Circular had to achieve was an unstoppable movement towards comprehensive reorganisation, not the complete process. In any case, early on, Clegg had indicated to the governors of Ermysted's School that there other areas in the Riding which would have to be dealt with before Craven, because the status quo worked so well.

From that time the negotiations were conducted mainly by the teachers and the Divisional Executive. They produced a great deal of activity but with little prospect of a successful

completion. This was not always apparent at the time.

Towards the end of the Riding, some teachers and some governing bodies (Barnoldswick and Upper Wharfedale) tried to exert pressure to produce reorganisation, but County had become increasingly debilitated because of impending local government reorganisation.

The best chance of reorganisation

By far the best chance of a scheme being accepted and implemented was the early scheme suggested by Clegg and adopted by the Divisional Executive. There were three basic reasons why this initiative failed. Firstly, Clegg changed his mind and adopted the philosophy and practice of three-tier reorganisation. He was so wedded to the notion that he was prepared to try to force such a scheme on Craven, and it was the only basis on which he conducted personal negotiations in the Craven episode. The Executive was slow to adopt the three-tier scheme at least partly because of its connection with the Keighley excepted district. By the time that the Executive did adopt the three-tier scheme, the argument had moved and an opportunity was lost.

Secondly, the list of questions asked by the governors of Ermysted's School which Matthew was not able to answer was an important factor in moving the debate into a different mode. Matthew's plight was partly a result of poor relationships, but it was also a reflection of the inadequate research on which educational change generally was based. The questions were quite astute and were properly the concern of governors of an aided school. In the absence of arguments based on custom and practice, the educational establishment of the West Riding was unable to produce convincing evidence that what was produced was significantly better than what was in existence as the status quo. This deficiency was to be even more crucial as time progressed because of the polarisation of attitudes about comprehensive schools. In fact, a discernible weakness was the way in which the professionals tackled the problem of reorganisation. The emphasis was very much on buildings and the roles of institutions. There was no attempt at any time to address the problem of education for all and the organisation of the curriculum. Greater centralisation of knowledge and skills might well have provided a context in which delivery systems were more clearly and logically derived. In the absence of such clarity, highly personal arguments, idiosyncratic views and personalised agendas developed more easily.

The third reason was the methods by which the Riding carried out its professional functions. There was a great dependence on relationships rather than formal structures and on an interventionist approach to the solving of problems which was followed by Clegg. Poor personal relationships were particularly crippling with this kind of management philosophy and, when Matthew was "out" with County, the overall influence of the Authority within the Division was diminished.

The Structural Effects of Negotiations

The major post 1960 changes left by the West Riding were the intention to establish comprehensive units at Barnoldswick, at Settle and, most significantly, to have built the new comprehensive school at South Craven. The peripheral areas had, thus, been altered

significantly. The impact on the grammar schools, particularly of the potential loss of Barnoldswick pupils, was one of the unintended consequences of both the desire of the grammar schools to maintain the status quo, and the negotiations which attended changes in the structure of education in the Craven area generally.

A structural effect of partial reorganisation in localities like Craven was to produce greater diversity of systems which encouraged competition between schools. This made it necessary for North Yorkshire to make an early decision about parental choice, which was an increasingly important plank in the policy of the Conservative Party nationally. The interpretation of parental choice was such that, in Craven, parents not only had the choice between tripartite and comprehensive systems, but also had choices within the systems.

CONCLUSION: Increased Diversity

Retention of grammar schools in Skipton, Selby and Ripon set these areas apart from almost all of the West Riding and much of the rest of the county. This presented particular problems to the new LEAs, particularly North Yorkshire in which they were all located, following local government reorganisation with particular regard to negotiations about secondary reorganisation and competition between schools. The latter was particularly important in those LEAs, like North Yorkshire, which operated a policy of parental choice even before the passing of the 1980 Act.

The breakdown in the national consensus about education towards the end of the West Riding was an inevitable result of the adoption of comprehensive reorganisation by the Labour Party and the issuing of Circular 10/65. The negotiations associated with reorganisation ensured that the disputes were not merely between the Parties but also within them. There was, for instance, within the Labour Party considerable criticism of the lack of compulsion in the Circular. Edward Short attempted to meet these criticisms in a brief Bill in February 1970. The Bill fell in committee probably because some Labour MPs felt that it lacked force to make selective sixth forms illegal. (Weeks, 1986 op cit)

Equally, there were different opinions within the Conservative Party. The Party was united in its aversion to compulsory reorganisation. Some Conservatives favoured comprehensive schools when requested by LEAs and localities, whilst others began to oppose them more generally.

Thatcher, as Secretary of State after 1970, voiced strong reservations about the claim that comprehensive schools could offer equality of opportunity to pupils. Within the Conservative Party generally, there was increasing emphasis on improving the performance of schools and pupils and the importance of parental choice as a mechanism to achieve these aims. In the locality of Craven, and perhaps more widely, educational provision, and its underlying philosophies, were less unified in 1974 than they had been in 1962. This diversity, allied to parental choice and made effective by falling rolls, was an important factor in enabling competition between schools and establishing a market in educational provision.

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