

British Parliamentary Papers As Sources For Modern Language Teaching Research

by

Susan Bayley

The nineteenth century British Parliamentary Papers are a fruitful and surprisingly lively source for those interested in the history of modern language teaching in England. The Clarendon (1864), Taunton (1868), and Bryce (1895) Reports are examples of the kind of investigations the Victorians did so well: massive, thorough, replete with detail, elegantly written and brightened with an engaging zeal for social betterment. The result is a vast and so far under-used storehouse of material for the educational researcher. This article focuses on the Clarendon Report and particularly on the evidence in the Report on the teaching of modern languages in the nine Public Schools of the upper class. The conclusion is drawn that the recommendation of the Clarendon Commission to make modern languages an integral part of the curriculum marked their point of entry into the regular school curriculum and reinforced their developing character as liberal subjects for the higher social classes.

Les documents parlementaires britanniques du XIX^e siècle revêtent un intérêt étonnant pour ceux qui s'intéressent à l'histoire de l'enseignement des langues modernes en Grande-Bretagne. Les rapports Clarendon (1864), Taunton (1868) et Bryce (1895) exemplifient le type d'études auxquelles excellaient les Victoriens: il s'agit d'études longues, minutieuses, bourrées de détails, écrites dans un style élégant et illuminées par un vif souci d'amélioration des conditions sociales. Ce sont de véritables mines d'information que les chercheurs en éducation n'ont guère utilisées. Cet article est axé sur le rapport Clarendon et notamment sur ce qu'il révèle de l'enseignement des langues modernes alors dispensé dans les neuf écoles privées fréquentées par l'aristocratie britannique. L'auteur en conclut que c'est la recommandation de la Commission Clarendon voulant que les langues modernes fassent partie intégrante du cursus qui a déterminé leur agrégation au cursus scolaire régulier et a renforcé leur prestige culturel pour les classes sociales supérieures.

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The history of second language teaching potentially offers useful insights into current issues in the field of second language instruction. Quebec, and McGill University in particular, are internationally known for developing successful methods of second language instruction. Less well known are the resources which exist at McGill for historical research into modern language teaching. The library system's Government Documents Department houses an important resource for the study of educational history in general and the history of modern language teaching in particular. In 1980 it purchased the 1000 volume Irish University Press Series of nineteenth century British Parliamentary Papers.¹ These primary sources, the raw material of social historiography, have not yet been fully explored by historians and educationists. This paper aims to give some indication of the nature and

extent of this prize holding and to illustrate the way one researcher has used it to investigate the history of modern language teaching in England.

The Series consists of reports of Royal Commissions and Select Committees established by the British government to study problems in all facets of national life: education, agriculture, health, fuel and power, industrial relations, local government, crime and punishment, the electoral system, the diplomatic service, insurance, inventions, legal administration, military and naval matters, marriage and divorce, trade and industry, the press, transport and communications, the poor laws, monetary policy, religion, the stage and theatre, the slave trade, and social ills like drunkenness, gambling, and infringements of Sunday Observance. The range of subject matter ensures a broad appeal; social historians, economists, administrators, business and military historians, as well as educationists, will find in them much material not reproduced elsewhere. The Reports are accompanied by volumes of statistical tables which lend themselves to quantitative as well as the more usual qualitative method of historical research. McGill's Government Documents Department also includes Hansard, a necessary auxiliary tool for the study of the British Parliamentary Papers.

The Irish University Press Series of British Parliamentary Papers has a further advantage to researchers beyond sheer volume and variety of subject: its organization. Unlike microcard editions of the Sessional Papers, which are arranged chronologically, this Series has been grouped by the editors, Percy and Grace Ford, into twenty primary subject areas, thereby making a mass of information on specific subjects readily accessible. This arrangement simplifies the researcher's task of locating material pertinent to his topic. Whereas searching through the chronological Sessional Papers gives a low rate of return for the time and effort involved, and can deter the most diligent researcher, the classified papers make a thorough search of a given subject area a workable proposition.

The extensive section devoted to education comprises 75 volumes, of which 46 document the development of government education policy at a time when the system was in the process of formation. The Education Set is subdivided into six categories: 46 volumes on crucial and controversial issues such as examinations, the modernization of the curriculum, the definition and structure of secondary education, the workings of elementary education, the training of teachers, and the provision and methods of education; nine volumes of Select Committee and Royal Commission Reports on the British Museum; two volumes of similar reports on public libraries; six volumes on the fine arts; and eight volumes of committee reports on scientific and technical education.

The Royal Commission and other official Reports on education are tools for historical research unmatched in scope and detail. Before the formation of a single educational authority in 1899 in the shape of the Board of Education, responsibility for education was diffused among the various bodies concerned with its provision: the Anglican, Roman Catholic and dissenting churches, the Education Department, the Science and Art Department, the Charity Commission, and so on. Their spheres of influence were limited and uncoordinated and can hardly be said to represent a national view or even a fleeting consensus on educational needs. In the second half of the nineteenth

century, however, a series of Royal Commissions² was appointed to inquire into the state of education throughout the country and to make recommendations for its improvement. The reports issued by these Commissions were monumental, minutely-researched, and authoritative. They represented the first expression of a national view of education, one that transcended the various branches -- sectarian, charitable, state, and privately-sponsored -- into which education had splintered. As such they were the first and certainly the weightiest in the long line of educational documents published by central government which helped to set the course of English educational history. The Reports of the Newcastle (1861), Clarendon (1864), Taunton (1868), and Bryce (1895) Commissions excited in their own day no less interest and controversy than the Newsom, Plowden and Robbins Reports³ of more recent years. Animated by the Victorian eye for detail and clarity of expression, the Reports comprise a remarkably comprehensive description of education in the second half of the nineteenth century. Every aspect of education, including modern language instruction, came under official government scrutiny for the first time.

Far from being dry recitals of facts and statistics, the Reports are lively accounts of the actual conditions of education and considered analyses of the problems entailed in establishing a public education system. The Reports usually took the form of a volume or more of summaries, conclusions, and recommendations; a *verbatim* record of the evidence of persons called before the Commissions; written submissions made by groups and individuals interested in the work of the Commissions; and, in the case of the Taunton Report, eyewitness accounts of the schools visited by Assistant Commissioners recruited for the purpose. Efforts were made to canvass every source of informed opinion, from Oxford dons to representatives of the business community. From these voluminous documents (the Taunton Report ran to 24 volumes) emerged a compelling portrait not only of educational practice, but of the ideals and ideas which formed its matrix.

The Commissioners were indefatigable in seeking out opinions on the questions under review. Leading lights of the day like John Stuart Mill, Matthew Arnold, James Kay-Shuttleworth, and Max Müller appeared before the Commissions as witnesses and their evidence, elicited by probing and tenacious questioning on the part of the Commissioners, makes illuminating reading. The exchanges between witnesses and the Commissioners are recorded in full, and this conversational style gives a freshness and immediacy to the evidence which underlines the complexity and the disparity of views on education. The quality of the evidence is high, as the Commissioners, themselves learned and distinguished figures, took their mandate of educational reform seriously and undertook a dialectic with the witnesses in order to piece together a clear and complete picture of the educational controversies of the day. The Commission's hearings were marked by a determination, tempered by urbanity and courtesy, to arrive at an accurate picture of the subject under investigation.

A surprising feature of the Reports is the inclusion of lengthy descriptions of education outside Great Britain. The thoroughness with which the enquiries were conducted led to studies of overseas educational systems: those of Canada and other parts of the Empire, of the United States and of Europe. The statistical reports of the Cross Commission of

1888 contain first-hand descriptions of education in each of the provinces in the Canadian Confederation, as well as similar surveys of the American states and European nations. The Taunton Report is enhanced by elegant and highly literate contributions by Matthew Arnold on the state of education in Prussia and France.

Having garnered the evidence, the Commissioners made recommendations, some of which were fully or partially acted upon, either by passing legislation or by inciting individual schools to introduce their own measures of reform. Therefore, the Royal Commission Reports were more than simply a body of weighty recommendations on the subject of education; they recorded all the evidence on which the Commissioners based their recommendations. For this reason, they are invaluable sources of not only official, but public, comment on the educational system.

An example of the richness of the material found in the Education Set is the 1864 Report of the Clarendon Commission appointed to investigate the nine "great" Public Schools educating the aristocracy, gentry, and, increasingly, the upper middle classes: Eton, Harrow, Rugby, Winchester, Westminster, Shrewsbury, Charterhouse, St. Paul's, and Merchant Taylor's. The evidence on modern European languages, their teaching, and their place in the curriculum gives some insight into the curricular origins and subsequent development of modern language teaching in England.

Before the 1860s, modern languages were considered "accomplishments" rather than serious subjects of study. Because the classics dominated the school curriculum modern languages were relegated to the status of extra-curricular subjects tacked on to the timetable as parental demand and teacher availability allowed. They ranked with fencing and dancing as desirable skills, but not the stuff of sound mental training. As Walter Landor wrote to Robert Southey in 1825, "My children shall be carefully warned against literature. To fence, to swim, to speak French, are the most they shall learn."⁴

By the 1860s, however, the need to introduce modern subjects into the exclusively classical curriculum of the Public Schools had become acute on account of pressure for reform from the rising middle class and realization of the importance of an education relevant to new industrial and economic circumstances. The inclusion of modern subjects in the Public School curriculum was a contentious issue, and the hearings of the Clarendon Commission provided the main arena for debate. Modern subjects had their detractors and supporters. Gladstone, for instance, maligned them as "importunate creditors that take a shilling in the pound to-day because they hope to get another shilling to-morrow." These "competing branches of instruction" posed so great a threat to the classics that they "should be limited and restrained without scruple."⁵ On the other hand, supporters of curriculum modernization criticized the Public Schools for the narrowness of their teaching. One of Eton's harsher critics likened it to "a bear-garden where Latin and Greek and nothing else was tossed down into the pit to be gobbled up by those who had an appetite for it."⁶

The Clarendon Commissioners, entrusted with the investigation of the nine Public Schools, contended with the problem of reconciling the demands

of the modernists with the resistance of the classicists. The members of the Commission were selected not for political or religious affiliations, but for other qualities: Lord Clarendon was described in the Report as "a man of the world;" Lord Devon as "a man of business;" Lord Lyttelton as "a scholar;" Professor Hepworth Thompson as Professor of Greek at Cambridge; Henry Halford Vaughan as Professor of Modern History at Oxford from 1848-58; and Mr. Twistleton as a man "whose learning and high culture are known to all."⁷ Lord Lyttelton's assessment of his colleagues on the Commission was less charitable. He characterized Vaughan and Twistleton as "crotchety on the religious question," Stafford Northcote as "devoured by ambition," and Twistleton as "a queer man who had long fits of silence and torpor alternating with great vivacity."⁸ Professor Thompson was "polished, intellectual, fastidious, but too satirical and indolent."⁹ Lord Clarendon passed an equally severe judgment on his fellow Commissioners. "Devon is weak, Northcote pedantic, Thompson idle, Twistleton quirky, Vaughan mad: yet they all had merits and worked usefully together, except Vaughan, who, though a man of genius, is unmanageable."¹⁰ All were men of high repute as statesmen or scholars. All but two were products of the Public Schools they were investigating.

They spared no pains to conduct a scrupulous inquiry. Printed questionnaires were sent to the schools, private letters were exchanged, 130 witnesses were heard, and 127 sessions were held.¹¹ Opinions were canvassed from those directly involved in the Public Schools, such as head and assistant masters, old boys, and trustees, and from those whose connection was less direct -- from Oxbridge professors, from the Council of Military Education and, for purposes of comparison, from the proprietary schools of Marlborough, Cheltenham, Wellington, and the City of London. The Commissioners were denied their request to observe the teaching in the Public Schools by all but two of the Headmasters.¹² Since they were not invited into the schools, they relied on the evidence, frank and outspoken, of expert witnesses.

The Commissioners recorded meticulously the position of modern languages in each of the Public Schools. French was by far the most common choice, with German a distant second. French and German were normally taught as "extra" subjects, as at Eton, where the French lessons were given during the time assigned to "games," i.e. sports and other forms of recreation. On average, only one-tenth or 75-80 of the Eton boys took French, and even this modest number fell off sharply during the summer months. The Prince Consort had tried to stimulate foreign language study by offering a £50 book prize, but as a rule the prizewinner had not acquired his knowledge of French at Eton, but at home or on the Continent. The charge of an additional fee for foreign language instruction; the omission of modern language results in considering boys for promotion; the lack of support among many Headmasters, all of whom were classically-trained; and the scarcity of efficient teachers had all prevented modern languages from achieving full curricular status.

A number of other factors militated against the extension and improvement of modern language teaching. Despite the prestige of French as a world language, it did not have an untarnished public image and modern languages were sometimes treated contemptuously in the schools by masters

and boys. A passage in Dickens' *Nicholas Nickleby* brings out the association in the public mind between the French language and the French nation as a long standing adversary of England. Nicholas, engaged as tutor to a family, is quizzed by Mr. Lillyvick as to what sort of language French is. Nicholas defends it as a "pretty, sensible and cheerful" language, but Mr. Lillyvick, who has only ever heard it spoken by French prisoners taken in the last war, dismisses it as a dismal language. "I don't think anything of that language -- nothing at all," is his final comment.¹³ Dickens' fiction has the ring of truth in this case. Indeed, France and England had entered into hostilities so often that Lord Raglan, when fighting the Russians in the Crimean War, kept referring to the enemy as the French!

It was also widely believed that contact with French culture and ideas could have dangerous consequences for the moral and political well-being of English youth. Importing continental ideals and practices was courting trouble. Authors warned of dire mischief resulting from close association with the French people. Hannah More spelled out the perils for female education lurking in the pages of foreign literature. She wrote with regret of "the risks that have been run and the sacrifices which have been made, in order to furnish our young ladies with the means of acquiring the French language in the greatest possible purity."¹⁴ Publishers were moved by such admonitions to issue expurgated versions of foreign literature for school use. Goethe's *Hermann und Dorothea* was one classic which suffered treatment at their hands.

Third, teaching methods did not inspire Public School boys to take up modern language study. French and German were taught with the same method but without the same reverence shown to the classics. Since grammar was believed to be "the foundation, gate and source of all the other liberal arts,"¹⁵ modern languages were treated accordingly. The methodology consisted almost wholly of construing, translating, and parsing. In the more advanced classes, literary works were carefully chosen to avoid exposing boys to seditious or immoral views. Classical texts like Fénelon's *Télémaque*, La Fontaine's *Fables*, the plays of Corneille, Racine and Molière, and extracts from the works of Goethe, Schiller and Lessing were frequent choices, as were Voltaire's *Charles XII* and Bossuet's *Oraisons Funèbres*.

Such methods did not yield impressive results. Both the Head of Winchester, the Reverend George Moberly, and the French teacher, M. Angoville, agreed that little progress was made in French.¹⁶ At Rugby, despite the efforts of successive Heads, boys rarely mastered the art of speaking or reading French or German "with facility."¹⁷ Oxford and Cambridge, for which many of the boys were destined, required a knowledge of the classical, not the modern, languages for admission. Hence, to many boys, modern language study appeared to be a waste of time.

Finding suitable teachers was a further obstacle to good modern language teaching. Foreign born masters proved too often to be ineffective disciplinarians. Mr. Carter, Lower Master of Eton, commented on the impossibility of finding foreign masters "who were devoid of peculiarities which would excite the ridicule of the boys."¹⁸ The Commissioners were told of the "not unknown practice" at Winchester of fishing for M. Angoville's wig through the open schoolroom window.¹⁹ At Eton, boys were not even

required to touch their hats to the French master!²⁰ Foreign masters were subjected to more serious slights, too. Their salaries were well below those of the classical masters. At Eton, they were not permitted to wear academic dress or to send complaints directly to the Head. Nor were they entrusted with the teaching of religion or expected to maintain discipline outside the school grounds. The Italian teacher at Eton, signor Girolamo Volpe, laid before the Commissioners a list of complaints which seem well justified. His entire emolument depended on his three pupils. When he came from London twice weekly, a trip he made at his own expense, the school did not even provide him with a classroom or shelter "in bad weather and cold season."²¹

There is ample evidence in the Clarendon Report of the strength of feeling both for and against modern language study. The arguments ranged over a number of issues, with advocates of modern languages meeting the objections of the detractors. The central issue was the educational value of modern languages. Were they equal to the classics in their capacity to cultivate the powers of the mind? Those who argued that modern languages were too easy and too light-weight to offer a severe mental training were answered by those who pointed to the undeniable weight of German scholarship. Faculty psychology, the belief that disciplines of study exercised the cognitive powers and that mastery of one branch of knowledge prepared the mind to acquire another, led modern language advocates to justify their subject in terms of its ability to provide a rigorous training for the mind. Accordingly, supporters of modern languages stressed the complexities of German grammar and the richness of French literature as instruments of mental training. However, a strong argument could be made on the other side that knowledge of classics facilitated the learning of modern languages, which were supposedly less complex and therefore need not be formally taught in schools but could be picked up at the knee of a governess or on a foreign tour.

A story recounted to the Commissioners by J. Walter, an Old Etonian and Member of Parliament, illustrated the prevalence of the belief that French was not sufficiently difficult to warrant status as a school subject. Returning to his old school for a speech day, Mr. Walter heard a boy declaim a passage from Racine with so good an accent that he went to ask the Head, Dr. Hawtrey, how he had taught such flawless French to the boy. Dr. Hawtrey replied that the boy had been brought up in Paris and so had not learned his French at Eton, to which Mr. Walter answered that he was much relieved, because he feared the school had taught him too well. It was no merit to the boy or to the school that he had mastered French, since he had simply acquired it as part of his mother tongue and could have carried off the French prize with no more trouble than a boy brought up by Pericles could win the prize for Greek!²²

When drawing up their recommendations, the ingenuity of the Commissioners was sorely tested by the felt need to tread the fine line between the preservation of the traditional curriculum and the admission of modern subjects. An endorsement of a totally classical curriculum would mean that boys of the aristocracy would continue to receive an increasingly outmoded type of education, thus jeopardizing their future roles as leaders of the country. To permit modern subjects to share the billing equally with the classical would undermine the long association between Public School, classical

education, Oxbridge, and upper class exclusivity. Classics had for so long been a mark of social and intellectual superiority that for social class reasons alone it was difficult to dislodge them from their privileged position. The Commissioners did not even attempt to do so. They roundly endorsed the pre-eminent position of the classics, but acknowledged the importance of modern studies as subsidiary subjects.

The Commissioners argued in their recommendations for a liberal curriculum in which both classical and modern subjects played their part.

If a youth, after four or five years spent at school, quits it at nineteen, unable to construe an easy bit of Latin or Greek without the help of a dictionary, or to write Latin grammatically, almost ignorant of geography and of the history of his own country, unacquainted with any modern language but his own, and hardly competent to write English correctly, to do a simple sum or stumble through an easy proposition of Euclid, a total stranger to the laws which govern the physical world, and to its structure, with an eye and hand unpracticed in drawing and without knowing a note of music, with an uncultivated mind and no taste for reading or observation, his intellectual education must certainly be accounted a failure...²³

Although they singled out French as an important study, "So long as French is...a common channel of communication among educated persons in Europe, a man can hardly be called well educated who is ignorant of French," they agreed that the study of foreign languages should not be allowed to endanger the classics, which should "continue to hold, as they do now, the principal place in public school education...but they ought not to be studied solely and exclusively."²⁴

The Commissioners expatiated on the beauty and value of the classical languages, but were less glowing in their praise of the modern. French and German were less perfect in construction than Latin or Greek and their literatures less noble.²⁵ It was feasible to impart a good grammatical knowledge of French, and for those who entered the school with some knowledge of French, of German too. But conversational fluency could not be taught in a school setting. On the question of employing foreign teachers, the Commissioners showed some inclination to favour English masters, but declined to make any specific recommendations on that point.²⁶

The Commission's general recommendations focussed on the need to recognize and strengthen the position of modern languages in the Public School curriculum. They acknowledged the pre-eminence of French, but advanced the claims of German to a greater share of curricular time, and, to a lesser degree, of Italian. In preferring German to Italian the Commissioners cited its intrinsic character, philological importance, usefulness, influence of its people and literature, and demand.²⁷ They recommended that any boy learning French should also be allowed to take German and vice versa. Italian should be an additional subject and should count for promotion.²⁸ Time for modern languages should be found at the

expense of repetition and composition exercises in classics or another modern subject.²⁹

There seems no doubt that tradition played some role in establishing and maintaining the position of French as first foreign language in schools. Historically, England's linguistic and cultural connection with France dated from the Norman Conquest. After 1066 French became the language of the court, the clerisy, the church, and the professions. England's final loss of Normandy in the fifteenth century loosened the French connection, but French survived as the language of refinement, diplomacy, and culture. As the foremost military power in Europe until the 1870s, France had world wide influence and prestige. The brilliance of the French court, and of her cultural, literary, and philosophical life, added status to her language. From the eighteenth century France figured in the Grand Tour, an obligatory sojourn on the Continent for any young man of good family. Young ladies were usually expected to remain at home, but were entrusted at an early age to the care of governesses, often a French mademoiselle, sometimes a German Fraülein. Geographically, of course, France was most convenient both as a destination and a source of foreign language teachers. The first pressure on the curriculum to introduce modern languages came from schools in the industrial midlands and north of England where commercial and trading ties with Europe were strong. Frequent political disruptions on the Continent, the 1685 Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, the 1789 Revolution in France, and revolutions in France and Germany in 1848 drove many to England to seek refuge, and a considerable number turned to teaching to help restore their depleted resources.

At first glance, German would seem to have had a good claim to fuller recognition as a worthwhile subject. Eminent scholars like Thomas Arnold, Coleridge, and Carlyle had shown an academic and literary interest in the language. From around 1850, German was increasingly studied at English universities, both by reason of its vast literature on all conceivable subjects and its theological importance to both ecclesiastical sides in religious disputes at Oxford. German science, scholarship, and philology gained an enormous international reputation in the late nineteenth century. Her literature gave access to a wealth of knowledge both directly and through translations of foreign writings. In education, Germany set the pace. Its universities, *Technische Hochschulen*, *Gymnasien*, and *Realschulen* were visited by English educationists wishing to reform their own system. Froebel, Pestalozzi, and Herbart were leading educational innovators whose ideas spread to the rest of Europe and to North America.

At the date of the Clarendon Report, however, the full impact of German influence was yet to be felt. German was still mainly seen as a means of gaining access to the classical authors: Goethe, Schiller, and Lessing. The alleged difficulty of learning German may well have contributed to its unpopularity. Cardinal Newman, a mind of no mean quality, laboured to learn German for a dozen years, but was eventually defeated by its complexities. The Gothic script also added to the learner's trials.

Italian and Spanish were never serious contenders for a large share of the modern language curriculum. Italian was too similar to Latin to merit

its inclusion as a separate language. Spanish did not offer a rich literature, and the incentive offered by the considerable trade between the two countries was not sufficient to create much demand for it as a school subject.

In response to the Commission's findings, the government presented the Public Schools Bill to Parliament in 1865. Lengthy debates greeted its reading in both Houses, and the Bill was eventually submitted to a Select Committee for further discussion. Finally, in 1868, the Public Schools Act dealing with the seven Clarendon boarding schools was passed and put into effect the Commission's recommendations regarding school management, specifically the reconstitution of governing bodies and changes in the powers of the Head and governors.³⁰ Under the Act the governors were given extensive control over fees, curriculum and the appointment of the Head.³¹ Owing to an unwillingness to interfere too strongly in the Public Schools in the face of resistance to state intervention by many Heads and supporters of the Nine, the government did not pass stern legislation. In fact, once the Act had assured the diversification of governing bodies to include a wider representation of the community, curricular reform was left to the schools to effect. Stirred into action by the Report and the ensuing legislation, the Public Schools had, for the most part, completed their programs of reform by the early 1870s.³²

Although in the case of many schools the Clarendon Commission's recommendations fell on willing ears, not all the Heads acceded to reform with good grace. Some formed modern departments merely as a means of placating parental demands and as a convenient dumping ground for the dullards.³³ Other Heads obstinately opposed to modern subjects had to be removed from their posts by governing bodies, which replaced them with more progressive thinkers. But despite foot-dragging by some Heads, the Public Schools began to adjust their curricula in accordance with the recommendations. At Eton, a new Head, Dr. Hornby, was appointed on the understanding that he arrange that French, mathematics, and science be taught to every boy. In 1872, French was made compulsory for the entrance examination to Eton.³⁴ In 1906, the Head, Dr. Lyttelton, abolished Greek for entry to Eton and allowed boys who had obtained a school certificate to abandon classics and take up a modern language or other modern subject.³⁵ Harrow replaced its outmoded statutes in 1868 and by 1874 had a well established modern department which taught some Latin, but mostly modern languages, history, mathematics, and natural science. Winchester appointed a modern language master, an Englishman, to its staff in 1869.³⁶

These instances of reform, although significant, cannot be taken as evidence of full compliance by all the schools with the Clarendon recommendations. The Public Schools continued to produce classically-trained graduates unskilled in modern languages. A 1917 article in the *New Statesman* on British Cabinet Ministers took them to task for their poor knowledge of French:

Mr. Balfour speaks no French. Lord Grey speaks a French disgraceful on the lips of a Foreign Secretary. Mr. Asquith's French is excessively bad. Mr. Runciman speaks fair French. Mr. McKenna speaks excellent, fluent, conversational (though not colloquial) French.

But then Mr. McKenna never went to one of our great public schools.³⁷

Nevertheless, the Clarendon Report provoked action by the Public Schools to take modern languages more seriously and acted in the long term as the point of entry of modern languages into the regular Public School curriculum.

Notes

I should like to acknowledge the assistance received in the preparation of this paper from Miss Catherine Kollar, the Government Documents Librarian at McGill University.

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2. Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, *Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the Revenues and Management of Certain Colleges and Schools, and the Studies Pursued and Instruction Given Therein*. 4 vols. 1864. Education General, vols. 9-12 (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1969) [Clarendon Report]; Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, *Report of the Commissioners on the Education in Schools not Comprised Within Her Majesty's Two Recent Commissions on Popular Education and Public Schools*. 24 vols. 1868. Education General, vols. 17-33 (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1969) [Taunton Report]; Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, *Report of the Commissioners Appointed to Inquire into the State of Popular Education in England*. 19 vols. 1861. Education General, vols. 3-8 (Shannon, Ireland: Irish University Press, 1969) (Newcastle Report); Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Papers, Royal Commission on Secondary Education, *Report of the Commissioners*, 8 vols. 1985. Education General, vols. 40-46 [Bryce Report].
3. Central Advisory Council for Education (England). *Half our Future* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1963) [Newsom Report]; Central Advisory Council for Education (England), *Children and their Primary Schools* (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1967) [Plowden Report]; Great Britain, Committee on Higher Education, *Higher Education. Report of the Committee Appointed by the Prime Minister under the Chairmanship of Lord Robbins, 1961-63*. cmnd. 2154 (London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1963) [Robbins Report].
4. Frank Muir, *An Irreverent and Thoroughly Incomplete Social History of Almost Everything* (New York: Stein and Day, 1976) 86.
5. W. E. Gladstone, "On the Scope of the Inquiry, and on the Classics as the Basis of a Liberal Education," Clarendon Report, vol. II, Appendix F: 43.
6. "Old Eton and Public Schools," *Edinburgh Review* 185 (1897): 358.

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7. Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), 3rd series, 174 (1864): 105-06.
8. E. G. W. Bill, *University Reform in Nineteenth Century Oxford, A Study of Henry Halford Vaughan, 1811-1885* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973) 226ff.
9. Edmond Fitzmaurice, *The Life of Granville George Leveson Gower, Second Earl Granville. D. G. 1815-97*. 2 vols. (London: Longmans, Green, 1905) 434.
10. Sir Herbert Maxwell, *The Life and Letters of William Frederick, Fourth Earl of Clarendon*. 2 vols. (London: Arnold, 1913) 2: 295.
11. Great Britain, Parliament, Parliamentary Debates (Lords), 3rd series, 178 (1865): 633.
12. Clarendon Report I: 2.
13. Charles Dickens, *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby*, vol. I. (London: Chapman & Hall, 1910) 246-47.
14. Gerald Newman, "Anti-French Propaganda and British Liberal Nationalism in the Early Nineteenth Century," *Victorian Studies* 18 (1974-75): 402-03.
15. Harry Radford, "Modern Languages and the Curriculum in English Secondary Schools," *Social Histories of the Secondary Curriculum: Subjects for Study*, ed. Ivor F. Goodson (Lewes, Sussex: Falmer Press, 1985) 206.
16. Clarendon Report I: 145; III: 362-63.
17. Clarendon I: 251.
18. Clarendon., appendix: 121. Emigré French teachers often suffered at the hands of the scholars. One unfortunate master had been daily attached to his chair by cobbler's wax! 'Paterfamilias,' "On Some Points of the Eton Report," *Cornhill Magazine* X (1864): 121.
19. Brenda Stancer, "Resistance to Change: A Study of Influences affecting the Curriculum in Selected Clarendon Schools in the Mid-Victorian Period," (diss., University of Keele, 1978) 51.
20. "Paterfamilias: To the Editor of the Cornhill Magazine," *Cornhill Magazine* 1 (1860): 608-15.
21. Clarendon Report II: 71.
22. Clarendon III: 299.
23. Clarendon I: 31.
24. Clarendon I: 30.

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25. Clarendon I: 15.
26. Clarendon I: 17.
27. Clarendon I: 31-32.
28. Clarendon I: 131.
29. Clarendon I: 39.
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