



# 14

## Dr. T.J. O’Connell’s Contribution to Irish Education Policy 1922–1957

Antonia McManus

T.J. O’Connell (1882–1969) was uniquely placed to influence Irish education policy when the Irish Free State was founded in 1922, and he was eminently qualified to do so. He had already acquired an extensive knowledge of the policy and practice of Irish education under the British regime, having served as a 13-year-old school monitor (1895);<sup>1</sup> a trainee teacher (1900–1902); and an assistant teacher (1902), before being appointed principal of Streamstown Boys’ National School, in Co. Westmeath (1905–1916). But it was in his role as General Secretary of the country’s largest teaching union, the Irish National Teachers’ Organisation (INTO) (1916–1948), as the Labour Party’s education spokesman in the Dáil (1922–1932), and later as an independent Senator in the 1940s and 1950s that he was to exercise his greatest influence. It should be noted that O’Connell’s role as General Secretary and his role as the Labour Party’s education spokesman overlapped during the decade he served in the Dáil. His role as General Secretary also overlapped with his

---

A. McManus (✉)  
Dublin, Ireland

role as a Senator from 1941 to 1944. He went on to serve two further terms in the Seanad from 1948 to 1951 and from 1954 to 1957.

O'Connell was a strong advocate of children's rights in education, as he highlighted the dangers children were exposed to while sweeping classrooms in sub-standard schools. He called for the medical inspection and treatment of children in national schools, and for an end to the practice of employing children to work on farms. He championed teachers' rights, insisting that their educational experience and research were worthy of respect; that they had a right to a professional course of training; to a just inspection system; and to a salary in-keeping with the dignity of their profession. O'Connell was a progressive educator who gained an international reputation when he was appointed as one of the Vice-Presidents of the World Federation of Education Associations in 1927. He was familiar with educational developments abroad and promoted educational reforms, many of which were introduced decades later. In this chapter it is proposed to set out O'Connell's key educational objectives, and the obstacles he had to overcome in their pursuit. It will also examine his contribution to the development of Irish education policy and will offer an assessment of the importance of his legacy to Irish education.

## The Constitution and Education

O'Connell and the INTO had rejoiced at the demise of the old National Board of education, as they looked forward to a native government, which would advance educational reforms. The first indication that this might not be the case came in September 1922, when the constitution of the new state and its education provisions came under discussion in the Dáil. O'Connell made a significant contribution to the debate having studied the constitutions of seven different countries with regard to education (ISW 1922: 916).

It was unacceptable to O'Connell that the constitution, as submitted to the Dáil, included a mere sentence on education. *Article 10* entitled all school-going children to free elementary education, but this was just a continuation of a provision the Government had inherited from the

British regime. He considered the proposal 'altogether too meagre' (DD, 1922a: 697).

O'Connell moved an amendment which was much more ambitious in scope. It sought 'The right of the children to food, clothing, shelter and education' and for the State to provide 'free education of the young up to an age to be prescribed by law'. Furthermore, his amendment included the radical suggestion that 'secondary and higher education institutions shall be readily accessible in the case of persons of small means' (DD, 1922a: 696–698).

Kevin O'Higgins, the Minister for Justice and Home Affairs rejected O'Connell's proposals, which he considered excessive. Then O'Connell submitted a modified amendment on 18 October, but the Minister bluntly explained why he would not accept it. He said 'it might mean if you fix the age at 14 or 15 you will have some desperately precocious youngster 'sticking' the State ... for nor merely his elementary education but for secondary education and possibly for a certain amount of university education' (DD, 1922b: 1697–1702). O'Higgins remained adamant that his short draft Article would suffice.

The most controversial aspect of O'Connell's amendment was that which suggested that public and private educational establishments should be controlled by the state. O'Connell, who was himself a devout Catholic, was at pains to emphasise during the debate, that advocacy of interference by the state, did not amount to 'godless education' (DD, 1922c: 1709), as he fully accepted the religious basis of education. His reassuring words were hardly likely to find acceptance from the Catholic Church, which found the idea of a state education system abhorrent, as it 'had gone through centuries of unpleasant relations with the Irish Government before Independence. Not only that, but the Catholic Church was well aware of the pressures which the modern state had brought to bear on the church in certain continental countries (Akenson, 1975: 102).

## Educational Apathy

O'Connell had to contend with educational apathy not only among the electorate, but also among Dáil deputies. Speaking in the Dáil in June 1925, he asked 'how many Deputies have ever been heckled on educational matters?' (DD, 1925a: 823–826). He recorded in his *History of the INTO 100 years of progress* how the Minister for Education 'spoke to practically empty Benches' (O'Connell, 1969: 450), during the most important education debate of the year on the Education Estimates. But on this occasion when the Dáil Estimates were up for discussion the Minister for Education, Eoin MacNeill (1922–1925) was conspicuous by his absence, as he fulfilled his role as Southern Ireland's representative on the Boundary Commission.<sup>2</sup>

O'Connell knew how the Minister's absence would be interpreted by the general public as indifference observing that 'the one service about which it does not matter much whether or not a Minister is in charge was education'. It galled O'Connell that MacNeill was not doing his job, which was to stimulate an interest in education by taking 'advantage of every possible occasion that arises by meetings, conferences of teachers and educational bodies' in order to 'bring before the people the necessity for education' (DD, 1925a: 823–825).

MacNeill returned to the Dáil on 11 November 1925 and O'Connell questioned him on a range of issues, which included his educational policy, and the long awaited compulsory school attendance bill. MacNeill's answers were vague. He expressed a dislike of compulsion, especially as it related to the school attendance bill, but a Dáil resolution had been passed for the bill back in November 1922. Finally, he offered reassurance that a school attendance bill 'will very shortly be presented to you' (DD, 1925b: 190).

O'Connell became frustrated with MacNeill's pronouncement of his education policy, in which he claimed that the chief function of Irish education was to conserve and develop Irish nationality (DD, 1925c: 187). O'Connell asked 'how many in the House know what the policy of the Minister for Education is?' (DD, 1925d: 193–194). O'Connell laid claim to being 'thoroughly acquainted not only with the policy, but with

the practice and administration of the Ministry', but even he was 'not in a position to say what the policy of the Minister for Education' was. The debate took place over three days and an account of it filled seventeen columns of the Parliamentary Debates. The root cause of O'Connell's shaming of the Minister, was his deep sense of disappointment that a native government could treat education as indifferently as it had been treated under the British regime. He informed MacNeill that 'We looked forward to the home Government fostering Irish education' but 'now we find that the Ministry responsible for the Government of the country takes the subject so lightly that it can detach the Minister for Education' (DD, 1925d: 193–194).

The absence of the Minister for Education for the most important Dáil debate on the Education Estimates, and the three-year delay for a school attendance bill in a country with one of the worst school attendance records in the British Isles, was a reflection of the extent of educational apathy in the country and in the Dáil.

## School Conditions for Pupils and Teachers

To O'Connell the main blot on the educational landscape was the woeful neglect of 'the proper maintenance and equipment of the school-rooms and school buildings,' which was more common in rural parts of the country (DD, 1922d: 2564). In recent memory he had led an INTO campaign supporting the MacPherson Education Bill (1919–1920), which the Catholic hierarchy vigorously and successfully opposed. The bill recommended, among other things, the establishment of new bodies to take control of certain managerial duties in national schools, such as school maintenance, but this was anathema to the Catholic hierarchy.

But by December 1922 the deteriorating condition of school buildings became a matter of grave concern, as O'Connell pointed out in the Dáil, that it was 'generally admitted that the system had broken down, (DD, 1922e: 2551). He was referring to the voluntary contribution system, which required school managers to provide 'the school site and one-third of the building costs, (Coolahan, 2017: 11) when applying for a new school building. Throughout his twenty-year quest for a resolution

to this question, O'Connell never blamed the school managers who were burdened with raising the local contribution, and who were expected to maintain schools on a derisory state grant.

In the absence of proper school maintenance facilities, children were expected to play their part, but O'Connell repeatedly raised objections to 'the practice of having the schoolrooms and classrooms swept out in the evenings by the children' who were 'hungry and tired after school' (DD, 1922e: 2552), and therefore vulnerable to infection (DD, 1925e: 477; 1926: 401–402). He referred the Minister for Education, Eoin MacNeill (1922–1925) to the departmental reports which confirmed that 'children are attending school cold and hungry and there is ... no adequate provision for their relief from cold or hunger' (DD, 1925f: 198–199).

He took the opportunity to alert MacNeill to the existence of an act of parliament dating back to 1919, which had never been activated, but which provided for the medical inspection and treatment of children. It was understood that he would pass on this information to the Minister for Local Government and Public Health, under whose purview it came. This was the Public Health (Medical Treatment of Children) (Ireland) Act 1919. Two years later, County Medical Officers of Health were appointed and they provided medical inspection of children, as well as detailed reports on the appalling condition of school buildings.

More than a decade later, the Fianna Fáil Minister for Education, Thomas Derrig (1932–1939; 1940–1948), made the startling announcement in the Seanad that 600 new national schools were required, of which 300 were 'in the very urgent category' (SD 1942–1851). The Minister was content to wait until the emergency<sup>3</sup> was over, before dealing with this crisis, and in the meantime he promised that urgent repairs to schools would be carried out. O'Connell was prompted to take action, and he moved a motion in the Seanad on the building and upkeep of schools, which led to a fiery two-day debate. O'Connell presented senators with samples of reports of the Medical Officers' of Health, which revealed the shameful condition of very many national schools. He then urged that the managerial obligation in this regard should be transferred by legislation to the public health authorities.

Derrig challenged O'Connell to produce evidence that his plan would find acceptance in ecclesiastical quarters, and with the managers. He

informed the Seanad that it would be a mistake to regard the isolated cases that O'Connell mentioned, as being typical of the general conditions prevailing. But Senator Dr. Rowlette, who was accustomed to reading MOHs' reports, confirmed that conditions generally were 'quite as bad as those described in reports which Senator O'Connell has given us' (SD, 1942a: 374–389). Senator Helena Concannon suggested that a conference should be held as a matter of urgency, between all the parties concerned. Derrig replied, 'I am satisfied from the consultations I have had with responsible ecclesiastical authorities that the matter will be attended to' (SD, 1942b: 432).

Shortly afterwards he was to discover that his confidence was misplaced. He made the discovery when he attempted to get the support of Bishop James Staunton of Ferns, Co. Wexford, the secretary of the Catholic Clerical Managers' Association (CCMA), to change the method of raising the local contributions, but this support was not forthcoming (NAI 1943: S12891). Two years later the CCMA alleged that the INTO's position on school maintenance would lead 'directly to the abolition of the Managerial system' (ISW, 1944a: 247). Neither the Department of Education or the ecclesiastical authorities put forward a solution of their own, yet they persisted in their rejection of O'Connell's proposals.

Undeterred, O'Connell wrote a critical article on the topic for the *Journal of the Medical Association of Éire*, which the INTO published in 1945 under the title *National schools in relation to the public health*. This was his parting shot, as his successor, Dave Kelleher continued with the campaign. It soon became apparent that Kelleher lacked O'Connell's diplomatic skills, but in time, differences were resolved and representatives of the INTO and of the CCMA formed joint deputations to Ministers for Education from the late 1950s, seeking additional funding for school maintenance and repair. While some progress was made over a decade, it was insufficient to ward off an INTO-sanctioned work-stoppage at five national schools in Ardfert, Co. Kerry on 16 January 1968. This had the desired effect. Three weeks later teachers returned to their fully repaired schools, and many schemes of improvement were put in hand in sub-standard schools throughout the country (O'Connell, 1969: 443–448).

Next to their physical working conditions, teachers' greatest source of anxiety was their lack of security of tenure, as declining school attendances often resulted in teachers losing their jobs. O'Connell wrote, 'During the greater part of the lifetime of the INTO "averages" (average pupil attendance) has been the bane of the teacher's life. Frequently a teacher's position and salary depended on the weather' (O'Connell, 1948: 13). The idea of a redeployment panel for surplus teachers, was first mooted by O'Connell in the Dáil in December 1922 (DD, 1922f: 2552) and fifteen years later, he convinced the Central Executive Committee (CEC) of the INTO that this was an avenue worth exploring, as a declining school population posed an immediate threat to teachers' employment. O'Connell acknowledged that redeployment would never have happened 'without the cordial co-operation of the Bishops and Managers of the various denominations' (ISW, 1948a: 420), but the Provincial of the Christian Brothers' schools also agreed to the scheme, as did the Department of Education.

O'Connell was a staunch defender of children's rights, as he demonstrated during the Dáil debate on the 1925 School Attendance Bill. Under the terms of the Bill, a child of 10 years and upwards was allowed to absent himself legitimately from school for up to 10 days in the spring-time and for 10 days in the autumn, to do light agricultural work for his parents. O'Connell claimed that there was no need for special exemptions for these children, and that they were contrary to the spirit and letter of the Geneva Convention. Furthermore, he pointed out that 12 was the lowest age at which exemptions were given in the vast majority of countries (DD, 1925g: 1218–1238). He received little support from educationists in the Dáil, or from members of the Farmers' Party, when he moved his amendment seeking to have exemptions removed allowing children who had reached 10 years to absent themselves from school, to do light agricultural work, from 1 April to 15 May in the spring and from 1 August to 15 October in the autumn (DD, 1926a: 635).

Surprisingly, a national school teacher, Deputy Collins O'Driscoll, sister of Michael Collins, wanted the exemption period extended to suit the agricultural conditions prevailing in Co. Cork. She informed the Dáil, that in Cork 'May and June are the months for the thinning of mangolds and turnips', and to O'Connell's dismay she added, 'if the children miss



a few days at the end of April and a few more days towards the end of June I do not think there would be so much damage done at all' (DD, 1926b: 718–722). During the course of the debate Deputy Baxter of the Farmers' Party accused O'Connell of having a vested interest, as he spoke on behalf of the teachers, a charge the latter categorically denied (DD, 1926c: 737–754).

However, O'Connell had good reason to feel pleased when he won enough support for his important amendment precluding farmers from hiring out their children to work on neighbours' farms. He was satisfied too, when John Marcus O'Sullivan ensured that under the compulsory School Attendance Act, the Minister was given power to extend the provisions of the Act to children over 14 but who had not reached 16, compelling their attendance at suitable courses of instruction (DD, 1926d: 1090–1091).

## Educational Policy and the Curriculum

Irish education policy in relation to the national school curriculum was affected by the surge in nationalism which was a marked feature of the War of Independence. It also came under the influence of the powerful cultural revival movement, known as the Gaelic League. But the policy owed its genesis to a resolution adopted at the 1920 INTO Congress, which called for a representative committee to be formed 'in order to frame a programme, or a series of programmes in accordance with Irish ideals and conditions'. The INTO resolution was acted on when the First National Programme Conference took place on 6 January 1921, chaired by Máire Ní Chinnéide of the Gaelic League, and with T.J. O'Connell as secretary to the conference.

There was no Minister for Education in the First Dáil, only a Minister for Irish with responsibility for education. This was J.J. O'Kelly who was also the President of the Gaelic League, and he was fully supportive of the conference. He was later appointed Minister for Education in August 1921. The report of the conference led to major changes in the primary curriculum, which saw a considerable reduction in the number of subjects to be taught. Obligatory subjects were reduced to Irish, English,

mathematics, history and geography, needlework for girls (from third standard upwards) singing, and drill.

The status of Irish both as a school subject and as a medium of instruction was to be raised. The proposals that Irish should be used as a medium of instruction, and that 'the work of the infant school is to be entirely in Irish', with no teaching of English, caused concern to INTO representatives. In the senior standards, Irish was to be the teaching medium for history, geography, drill and singing, and all songs in the singing class were to be Irish language songs. History was to consist of the study of Irish history only, and its stated objective was 'to develop the best traits of the national character, and to inculcate national pride and self-respect' (National Programme, 1922: 3–5).

O'Connell and the INTO representatives had grave reservations about the programme which they expressed at the time, but the influential adviser to the conference, Rev. Timothy Corcoran SJ, Professor of Education at University College, Dublin, convinced the majority of members of its merits, although Gaelic League members needed little convincing. It was clear that the education policy was indistinguishable from the government's language revival policy, and that the burden of responsibility for it would rest squarely on the shoulders of national teachers.

These teachers were ill-equipped for the challenge, as most of them lacked qualifications to teach Irish. Of the 12,000 lay teachers in national schools, only about 1100 had bilingual certificates (Department of Education, 1926: 21). They were faced with an impossible task as the vast majority of children came from English speaking homes, textbooks were in short supply, and there was no standardised spelling, grammar or vocabulary for the Irish language at this time. In addition, school attendance stood at 69% compared to 90% in Scotland and 85% in England (*Freeman's Journal* 1922).

It was hardly surprising then that within two years a Second National Programme Conference was required, due to difficulties encountered by teachers with the programme requirements. Eoin MacNeill agreed to the conference in June 1925, provided that it was under Departmental control. The report of the Second Conference was published expeditiously in 1926. It re-affirmed the principle of teaching infants through the medium

of Irish, but it allowed one modest change, namely that English could be used before 10.30 am each morning and after 2 pm.

It recommended a higher and lower course in Irish for senior classes. Those who adopted the alternative lower course in Irish and the higher course in English, were expected to advance gradually towards the higher course in Irish. Requirements in other subjects were reduced, to allow for the demands of teaching through Irish (Department of Education, 1926: 2). The report was accepted as the official departmental policy in May 1926 by John Marcus O'Sullivan. Despite teachers' best efforts, progress was disappointing as they did not receive parental support. Within the space of five years' inspectors' reports confirmed that 'the English-speaking life of the home does much to nullify the work of the schools in creating Irish speakers' (Department of Education, 1932–1933: 22–25).

When Thomas Derrig took over the ministry he intensified efforts to revive the language through the schools, by introducing his Revised Programme of Primary Instruction in 1934. It was a very demanding programme which saw the reversion to an all-Irish day for infants, English became an optional subject for children in first class, and the higher course in Irish was prescribed for senior classes, who would now take the lower course in English. There was a lightening of requirements in mathematics also to allow for the extra demands of the Irish programme. This ill-judged policy decision led inexorably to a lowering of educational standards in the various subjects, and in the case of English there was 'a drop in standard of approximately one year' (Coolahan, 2017: 34).

O'Connell and the INTO made repeated calls to Derrig to set up an inquiry into the language policy, but their pleas fell on deaf ears. In 1937 the INTO initiated its own inquiry, which eventually led to the preparation of, and publication in 1941 of the Report of the Committee of Inquiry into the use of Irish as a Teaching Medium to children whose Home Language is English, generally referred to as the 1941 report. It was a damning report that reflected badly on the Department, as it confirmed that subjects such as mathematics, history and geography were detrimentally affected by teaching through Irish, and in addition it placed a mental strain on children. The report called for a return to the use of English as a teaching medium and for greater emphasis to be placed on oral Irish (INTO, 1941: 186).

The government dismissed the teachers' report as the work of amateurs, with de Valera remarking that 'the reports from the inspectors are very much more to be relied upon' (ISW, 1944b: 186). Derrig went one step further when he maintained that the report gave 'an entirely unjustifiable and wrong account ... of actual conditions in infant schools' (DD, 1943a: 258–259). As far as he was concerned, it amounted to little more than propaganda.

In reality the 1941 report was a professional document that took four years to complete, and it gave an honest appraisal of the language policy, based on factual evidence. This report was vindicated with the passage of time, as doctoral research conducted by Rev. John Macnamara in the mid-1960s confirmed that Irish primary schools devoted 42% of the time available over the first six years of primary education to Irish and a mere 22% to English. Consequently, Irish children were on average 17 months behind their English counterparts in written English and 11 months behind in problem arithmetic (Macnamara, 1966: 136).

In 1929 John Marcus O'Sullivan introduced the primary certificate as an optional examination for sixth class pupils. The examination included Irish, English, mathematics, history and geography and needlework for girls, as well as oral and practical elements. It received a lukewarm reception as only about 25% of eligible pupils ever sat for it, and these came mainly from large city national schools. In 1938 the INTO held a referendum on the primary certificate and teachers generally agreed 'that it was actually injurious to the interests of children' (SD, 1943a: 2179). O'Connell then encouraged teachers to conduct their own research on studies carried out in other countries on the effects of examinations on children, and this research also confirmed that examinations were educationally and psychologically damaging to children. Teachers were despondent when in 1941 Derrig announced his intention to make the examination a compulsory one, and in 1943 he did just that (DD, 1943b: 230).

O'Connell deplored the fact that the curriculum for sixth class pupils was to be dictated by a compulsory examination, limited to three written papers in Irish, English and mathematics, even though it was government policy to revive Irish as a vernacular language. His idea of the true meaning of education bore no relationship to this examination. He believed

that the 'main object of education is not to pack the child's mind with facts' but rather 'to turn out a boy from the national school with the power to think for himself and reason for himself' (DD, 1931: 1798). But de Valera, who supported Derrig, was much more interested in examination results. He stated unashamedly 'I am less interested in the teacher's method of teaching than I am in the results he achieves and the test I would apply would be the test of an examination' (DD, 1941: 1097).

O'Connell reminded Derrig of the ill-effects of an examination which 'encouraged the evil practice of cramming' and 'fostered on the minds of children a false idea of the aim and purpose of education' (SD, 1943a: 2181). O'Connell then put forward an alternative scheme of school-based assessment, one whereby children could be examined in all subjects, and then given certificates, which would later act as record cards when they advanced to a secondary or vocational school. Derrig considered O'Connell's alternative to the primary certificate examination 'impossible' to implement at that time (SD, 1943b: 2202–2205), but in 1968 Donogh O'Malley, the Minister for Education (1966–1968) implemented school based assessment along the lines suggested by O'Connell, as he happily abolished the long-running primary certificate examination (DD, 1968: 463).

## Professional Standards

T.J. O'Connell wished to see professional standards raised in the areas of inspection, teacher training, and with regard to a professional level of remuneration for teachers. In 1922 there was a level of optimism among teachers that their relationship with inspectors would improve under a native government, but this was to be a vain hope. By 1926 the INTO was insisting on a radical overhaul of the inspection system. John Marcus O'Sullivan responded almost immediately by setting up the Committee on Inspection of Primary Schools.

O'Connell was one of the three INTO representatives on this committee, but its brief was very narrow. It was asked to investigate inspection and the award of merit marks, and to consider whether a primary leaving certificate was called for. The contentious rating system of inspection,

whereby a teacher's salary increment and promotion depended on an inspector's rating of each subject taught, was outside the committee's terms of reference, as it could not be altered without changing the framework of the 1920 salary agreement (O'Connell, 1969: 414). Consequently, the committee's 1927 report contained minor recommendations in relation to inspection, but it did call for the setting up of an appeals board against inspectors' ratings, and this was implemented soon afterwards. The report confirmed what teachers knew only too well, that the chief defect in the inspection system was that 'too little importance was attached to the directive and specifically educational aspect of inspection in comparison with its aspect as a controlling agency' (Inspection Report, 1927: 7).

Three years later tensions arose between teachers and inspectors, when undue pressure was exerted by the Department, to force teachers to gain qualifications in Irish. It did so by giving a specific time frame within which teachers in English speaking districts were, firstly, to obtain a certificate of competence to teach Irish, and secondly, to acquire a bilingual certificate certifying competency to teach through the medium of Irish, failing which they would lose their salary increments. The INTO took the Department to court and O'Connell was very pleased when the regulation was adjudged unlawful in the Supreme Court in 1940, and when the Department was forced to refund all illegally withheld increments (O'Connell, 1969: 382–385).

Pressure was brought to bear on teachers yet again in 1931, when the Department issued a controversial circular setting out conditions on which a 'highly efficient', 'efficient', or 'non-efficient' rating would be decided in future, and these included proficiency in Irish and in the use of Irish as a teaching medium. The conditions ran contrary to assurances given to O'Connell by O'Sullivan's predecessors, that no teacher would be penalised 'by reason of not having sufficient time to acquire the necessary knowledge of the Irish language' (O'Connell, 1969: 415).

As far back as 1918, when O'Connell gave evidence before the Killanin Committee set up to inquire into national teachers' salaries, he described what he considered to be a professional system of inspection. It was one in which an inspector would offer 'general encouragement, co-operation and help', and one 'where conferences would take place in a district

between teachers and inspectors', at which 'suggestions would be made by the inspector, the teachers being equally free to make suggestions and discuss them and uphold them if necessary' (Killanin Report, 1918: 13). But as we have seen the relationship between inspectors and teachers bore little resemblance to O'Connell's liberal vision. However, he was fortunate that in 1948, on the eve of his retirement as General Secretary, the new Minister for Education in the Inter Party government, Richard Mulcahy (1948–1951; 1954–1957) granted a number of concessions to the INTO, one of which was to end the rating system of inspection. This did much to improve relations between teachers and inspectors, as in future, teachers' salaries would no longer be affected by the inspector's rating.

In July 1924 O'Connell raised concerns with W.T. Cosgrave, President of the Executive Council about the calibre of students 'coming forward for entrance to the teaching profession' who were, he claimed, 'not all of the type one would wish to see' (DD, 1924: 415). The methods of recruitment to the profession, employed in the 1920s were outmoded, as it was accepted 'that teachers could be recruited from primary school pupils with an aptitude for teaching' (Jones, 2006: 26). This too was a far cry from the high standards O'Connell expected, when giving evidence before the Killanin Committee, when he said 'that you should make entrance to the profession of teaching as difficult as possible and spend a good deal of time in selecting the right candidate' (Killanin Report, 1918: 741).

The abolition of the practice of employing children as monitors or apprentice teachers, was recommended by the 1924 Departmental committee on recruitment. However, their main recommendation was clearly influenced by the government's principal objective, which was to revive the Irish language through the schools, as it proposed the introduction of preparatory colleges. These preparatory colleges or 'feeder' secondary schools for the training colleges, were to provide 'a thoroughly sound secondary education' in an 'atmosphere of Gaelic speech and tradition' to native Irish speakers and fluent Irish speakers, who wished to become teachers (Department of Education 1926: 41).

John Marcus O'Sullivan implemented this recommendation when he opened seven preparatory colleges, five of which were located in the

Gaeltacht, and two in Dublin. They were funded by the state and under the control of religious orders, except in the case of Coláiste Moibhí, which was administered by the Church of Ireland authorities. A discriminatory system operated whereby Gaeltacht children and fluent Irish speakers gained preferential access to these colleges, and in addition they were guaranteed automatic entry to the training colleges on passing the Leaving Certificate examination.

O'Connell's strong opposition to the preparatory colleges was based mainly on educational and social grounds. He remarked 'I do not think they should be segregated at such an early age, and their whole attention directed to teaching. I believe that will tend to narrow the outlook of those people later on, and it is not a good thing that the outlook of a teacher should be narrow' (DD, 1926e: 409). In the years ahead he continued to oppose the preparatory colleges and the INTO made repeated calls for recruitment to the training colleges to be done solely through open competitive examinations. But the sturdy preparatory colleges lasted for 35 years. It was Dr. Patrick Hillery, as Minister for Education (1959–1965), who finally brought the curtain down on them in 1961, but he allowed Coláiste Moibhí to continue, and it closed its doors in 1995. The preparatory colleges were rendered redundant once Hillery's predecessor, Jack Lynch (1957–1959) introduced an oral Irish test for the leaving certificate examination, for all students, and a suitability interview for candidates seeking entry to the training colleges.

O'Connell called for university education for national teachers from his first day in the Dáil (DD, 1922e: 2552), and Eoin MacNeill approved of plans for this reform, but he never brought them to fruition. INTO requests for university education to form part of teacher training courses dated back to the early twentieth century, and O'Connell's Organization Jottings column in the teachers' journal the *Irish School Weekly*, never failed to keep the issue alive. However, it took until 1973 for Richard Burke, the Minister for Education (1973–1976) to make the historic announcement that the course of training for national teachers was to be extended to one of three years' duration, and that university education was to form part of it. The first cohort of students graduated from the training colleges with a B.Ed. degree in 1974.



Native governments treated national teachers very unsympathetically, and nowhere is this more evident than in their negotiations with teachers regarding their salaries. O'Connell had reached a landmark pay settlement for his members in November 1920, and the arrangement was that the increase in teachers' salaries was to be granted in three annual instalments. The second instalment fell due on 1 April 1921, and payment at the full rate of the new agreement operated 'only as from April 1, 1922'. But the poor performance of the Irish economy at this time meant that Ernest Blythe, the Minister for Finance, was more interested in cutting salaries than in honouring agreements. He argued that national teachers' salaries, which were fixed in 1920, were 'anything from three to three and a half times the salaries obtained before 1914' and consequently he would cut their salaries by 10% as from 1 November 1923 (O'Connell, 1969: 198–199).

This seeming injustice was intolerable to teachers, especially in light of the fact that no significant reductions were made to the salaries of other public servants, although higher paid civil servants were identified in the press as far more deserving of Blythe's axe. Teachers decided to take action. A special INTO Congress was held in Dublin at which two resolutions were passed, one condemning the cut, and the other authorising the CEC 'to take legal action against the government to reverse the cut' (ISW, 1923: 1231). On this occasion the INTO lost its court action but the union had even greater financial challenges ahead, this time relating to the teachers' pension fund. John Marcus O'Sullivan raised concerns with O'Connell in 1926 when he confirmed that 'the Teachers' Pension Fund must be examined by an actuary, so as to determine whether or not it is in an insolvent position' (DD, 1926f: 502–503).

It transpired that the fund was in deficit by more than £4.2 million (Moroney, 2007: 103). The large deficit was due to the government's failure to keep the endowment account solvent. Reluctantly the CEC accepted an 8.5% cut to take home pay for teachers, on condition that teachers should be released from the obligation to contribute to the pension fund. Disgruntled INTO members blamed O'Connell for this unsatisfactory arrangement and placed an objection in the *Irish Press* newspaper, which read 'Mr. O'Connell and the Labour Party had a right to force this matter on the government but they did not, they had not the

courage' (*Irish Press*, 1932). This was one of the main reasons why O'Connell lost his Dáil seat in the 1932 general election.

The new Fianna Fáil government and the Minister for Finance Seán MacEntee, introduced the Economies Bill in 1933, and once again teachers' salaries were cut to an even greater extent than those of other public servants. O'Connell had previously led teachers on a one-day anti-conscription strike in April 1918, now he would lead teachers again on a one-day strike, only this time it was over the cut to their salaries. All national schools, bar those run by religious orders closed for one day in protest at the cuts. Nonetheless, Junior Assistant Mistresses<sup>4</sup> saw their salaries cut by 6% and all other teachers had their salaries cut by 9%, but payment of pensions were discontinued as from 1 April 1934 (O'Connell, 1969: 270) For the next five years O'Connell fought for the restoration of the 1920 salary scales, but by 1939 the cost of living had more than doubled, and teachers remained the only body of public servants not to have received an increase in their salaries, so a different line of attack was now urgently required.

In June 1942 O'Connell submitted a very comprehensive memorandum to Thomas Derrig entitled *National Teachers Claim for Increased Remuneration*, detailing how teachers' salaries had been cut by 19% over 11 years, and drawing attention to the favourable conditions enjoyed by their counterparts in Northern Ireland. The Northern government settled the teachers' pension fund deficit equitably by taking responsibility for the shortfall in the fund. On 4 August he wrote a stern letter to Derrig complaining bitterly about the blatant display of discrimination against national teachers, as civil servants received an increased bonus, which marked 'the second increase awarded to Civil Servants during the emergency'. He drew attention also to the lavish salaries paid to teachers in Northern Ireland, and added 'The Northern teachers expect that these figures will be substantially increased in the near future' (NAI, 1942: S12891A).

Derrig made representations for teachers to the new Minister for Finance Seán T. O'Kelly (1939–1945) on 8 August 1942, pointing out that the INTO had been consistently refused pay increases to match the increased cost of living, due to the Standstill Order of May 1941, which froze wages (NAI, 1942: S12891A). The bishops too pleaded the

teachers' case for increased remuneration in October 1944 (NAI, 1944a: S10236B) but all to no avail, and a month later O'Kelly caused outrage among teachers when he granted them a 'miserable emergency bonus' of 'a shilling a week' (ISW, 1944c: 487).

On 25 November 1944 Derrig made a second attempt to intervene with O'Kelly on behalf of teachers, but this too ended in failure (NAI, 1944b: S10236B). Teachers grew restive, especially the youthful teachers in the Dublin city branch, (usually called the Dublin branch). It was they who applied pressure to the CEC to draw up their own salary scales, which they did in December 1944. O'Connell then forwarded them to Derrig, to the Bishops' Secretary, Dr. Staunton, and to every INTO branch in the Free State. In his letter to the Minister, O'Connell insisted that the salary scales would only be acceptable to the INTO, if all interested bodies were involved in negotiations with the Government (O'Connell, 1969: 210).

His request was ignored. The Government also ignored growing public support for the teachers' pay claim, which came from parents, the churches, public bodies, and the press, with the exception of the Fianna Fáil sponsored *Irish Press*. When T.J. O'Connell put it to the Taoiseach, Éamon de Valera, that teachers had suffered discriminatory treatment compared to other public servants, de Valera replied that a promise had been made to civil servants regarding their pay prior to the enactment of the Standstill Order (NAI, 1945: S10236B). His words rang hollow when on 20 April 1945, an even larger increase in salary was granted to higher civil servants (McCormick, 1996: 16). The arrival of Frank Aiken as Minister for Finance (1945–1948) in June 1945, did not lead to a softening of the government's attitude.

Degrading treatment of teachers by the government, led the INTO in to a protracted Dublin teachers' strike from 20 March 1946 to 31 October 1946. In November 1945, O'Connell accused Derrig of ignoring teachers' rights to 'a professional salary, one in-keeping with the dignity of their work' (NAI, 1945: S10236B). A month later, he complained to the Minister that teachers were not being treated like members of a professional body, who were entitled to be consulted on the terms of their remuneration. Furthermore, he called on Derrig to end the offensive grading system of inspection, which was demoralising teachers.

Kathleen Clarke, President of the INTO in 1945, encapsulated how teachers felt at this time, when she said ‘teachers are minded to go no more on their knees ... It is going to be a fight to a finish. They hope to win. They don’t care if they lose ... they are slaves no more’ (ISW, 1946: 113). But the Archbishop of Dublin, Dr. McQuaid, who was a strong ally of O’Connell’s, understood exactly what was at stake. On the morning of the strike he had a letter published in the press which read ‘Your Organization must have no doubt that the clerical managers of the city and the religious superiors have full sympathy with the ideal of a salary in keeping with the dignity and responsibility of your profession as teachers’ (Irish Independent, 1946).<sup>5</sup> McQuaid offered to mediate in the strike, an offer which was ‘brusquely turned down by the Government’ (O’Connell, 1969: 219).

T.J. O’Connell blamed de Valera for a strike that could easily have been avoided, and which he made no effort to resolve. When it became obvious that stalemate had been reached in the dispute, O’Connell was assisted by Dr. McQuaid to end the strike, without the INTO losing face. Teachers were left humiliated, but worse was yet to come. In 1947 teachers suffered great hardship due to the rising cost of living, and the Executive called for an immediate review of their salaries. Derrig used the excuse of a pending general election to avoid taking action, while at the same time he announced that a special payment was to be made to those teachers, who taught in schools, during the strike period (DD, 1947: 679).

Richard Mulcahy stretched out the hand of friendship to the INTO in the wake of a bitter seven-month strike, and in a magnanimous gesture, he overturned Derrig’s decision to deprive Dublin teachers of their pension entitlements for the duration of the strike (ISW, 1948: 196). He also agreed to set up a representative committee on salaries, and to give teachers access to a conciliation and arbitration board. In 1949 he set up the Roe committee on salaries, which was chaired by Judge P.J. Roe but INTO representatives were very disappointed with the outcome.

The committee’s majority report, which was signed by the INTO representatives, recommended, among other things, a common pay scale for men and women teachers, with an annual marriage allowance for married men, and additional bonuses for those with honours university

qualifications. Months elapsed before Mulcahy announced that he would be prepared to accept the general recommendations of the Roe committee, such as the common scale, but not at the levels recommended, as the country could not afford it. He rejected the majority report in favour of a minority report drawn up by the Departments of Education and Finance (Moroney, 2007: 154).

However, teachers could take some comfort from the fact that for the first time, they would be placed on an equal footing with other public servants regarding superannuation. Few senators in the Seanad were as happy as T.J. O'Connell when Mulcahy introduced the National Teachers' Superannuation (Amendment) Scheme 1950, which gave national teachers, both male and female, equal pensions, as well as a lump sum on retirement. This was something O'Connell had fought for over thirty years, and he said 'I am pleased now to have the privilege of assisting in its implementation here to-night' (SD, 1950: 664–667). No doubt he was gratified to learn, during his retirement, that Mulcahy honoured his promise to set up a conciliation and arbitration board for teachers. The terms for the operation of the scheme were agreed by the Minister on 24 February 1951 (McCormick, 1996: 54).

## **A Council of Education and an Education Inquiry**

T.J. O'Connell and the INTO were still basking in the success of the Fifth Biennial Conference of the World Federation of Education Associations, which was held in Dublin in the summer of 1933, and which had been attended by prominent educationists from all parts of the world. O'Connell was the organising secretary and director of the event. Dr. McQuaid who was chairman of the Catholic Headmasters' Association (CHA) believed that O'Connell was emboldened to set about establishing an advisory council of education for Ireland, due to the success of the conference. The INTO had been calling on Ministers for Education to set up such a council for over a decade, but in October 1933 T.J. O'Connell took the first steps towards establishing one.

In a letter dated 3 October 1933, O'Connell issued an invitation to Catholic and Protestant teaching associations and managerial bodies, to the universities and training colleges, to send representatives to a meeting, to discuss the formation of a council or federation, to advise the Minister for Education (DDA, 1933–1934). On 11 November 1933 40 delegates met at the Teachers' Hall, 36 Parnell Square, Dublin. Dr. McQuaid was invited to speak first, and when he did O'Connell was greatly surprised by the negative tone of his statement.

McQuaid rejected the proposed council on the basis that the Minister for Education was not agreeable to it, and it would therefore be a council set up in opposition to the Minister. Contrary to O'Connell's own experience of dealing with Thomas Derrig, McQuaid claimed that 'The Ministry has always shown itself willing to receive the suggestions of the various associations' (DDA AB8/A/VI). He expressed fears that his association might be drawn into 'controversial questions that could not rightly be considered within the scope of the CHA'. He wished to retain the status quo as he believed that 'Problems of Secondary Education could be more equitably treated by the present machinery than by the majority of such an advisory Council'. Representatives of both the Christian Brothers and the de la Salle Training College supported McQuaid, and Protestant delegates supported O'Connell's proposal. This scheme was doomed from the start as it had no support from the most influential bodies involved in Catholic education.

A second meeting was arranged for 24 March 1934 but no sooner had the first meeting ended than McQuaid visited Thomas Derrig to give a full account of what happened at the meeting. Derrig was understandably very pleased, and he 'expressed complete satisfaction with the statement of the CHA and much dissatisfaction with what he called the "big-stick" methods of the INTO' (DDA AB8/A/VI/63). McQuaid then interviewed representatives of the Catholic managers, the Convent conference, the training colleges, the Christian Brothers and the de la Salle Brothers, in order to achieve unity of purpose. He also kept in constant contact with the Archbishop of Dublin, Archbishop Byrne to keep him fully informed of developments regarding the proposed council. On 15 November 1933, the Archbishop's secretary, Fr. Tom O'Donnell wrote to

McQuaid stating 'He (Archbishop Byrne) hopes that your efforts to frustrate the movement will be successful'.

At the second meeting on 24 March 1934, O'Connell proposed the formation of either a 'loose Federation' or a 'Dáil of Education' as an alternative to the unacceptable council of education. McQuaid sought clarification as to what was being planned, and tabled a motion, which was seconded by a representative of the de la Salle College, Waterford, calling for the INTO to draw up a memorandum for the next meeting, setting out the objectives, function and constitution of the proposed federation (DDA AB8/A/VI/63/44).

In the meantime, correspondence between McQuaid and Byrne continued, in which McQuaid pointed out that neither the INTO or the Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland (ASTI) 'consider it in any way opposed to Catholic principles to constitute a Federation of any and every religious body'. He warned the Archbishop that as the Catholic educational groups did not have a joint body to express their views on questions such as the proposed federation, there was a danger of 'the commanding position being seized by the lay Organisations'.

On 12 May 1934 O'Connell forwarded his *Memorandum on the Proposed Establishment of an Education Federation* to representatives of 11 bodies who attended the preliminary meeting of 11 November 1933. In his covering letter he stated that the INTO intended to issue this *Memorandum* 'entirely on their own responsibility' and he announced the date for their third meeting as 26 May 1934 (DDA AB8/A/VI/63/38). The *Memorandum* was replete with educational plans, the most interesting one being a plan to affiliate parents' bodies such as The Federation of Home and School and The Parents' Educational Union to the proposed federation. They were to be admitted 'on the same basis as any purely Education Organizations'.

The *Memorandum* was a document based on progressive educational principles, which covered such wide-ranging topics for discussion as 'The selection, preparation and training of candidates for the Teaching Profession', 'Curricula for the various types of schools', 'The problem of the sub-normal or mentally backward or deficient child', 'Suitable school buildings, equipment and playgrounds', 'Education in other countries and Systems of Education (e.g. the Montessori System, The Dalton Plan)

etc.’ It contained ambitious plans to stimulate an interest in education by holding education conferences, introducing ‘a national or local “Education Week”’, and publishing an educational periodical, in order to give expression to views on educational topics.

On receipt of O’Connell’s *Memorandum*, McQuaid wrote to Byrne informing him of the date for the next meeting, and drawing his attention to the fact that ‘the INTO will eventually issue this Memo entirely on their own responsibility’ (DDA B8/A/VI/63/38). The third meeting took place on 26 May 1934 with just 16 delegates in attendance. Much to O’Connell’s discomfort, McQuaid raised an objection on principle to the inclusion of paragraph 6 of the *Memorandum*, which gave nomination rights to the proposed federation to the Catholic Hierarchy, the General Synod of the Church of Ireland, and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. O’Connell was offended by McQuaid’s objection and ‘earnestly defended his attitude of complete respect for the Catholic Hierarchy’ (DDA AB8/A/VI). A further meeting was arranged for November 1934.

O’Connell and the CEC met on 15 June 1934 to put the finishing touches to draft proposals for a federation of educational associations, to comprise the INTO, the ASTI and the Protestant associations. McQuaid prepared his own plans, which he discussed with Cardinal MacRory, the Archbishop of Armagh, who approved of his suggestion that the Catholic Truth Society (CTS)<sup>6</sup> should organise an Annual Education Day during the CTS week, as a congress of all educational bodies, in order to place Catholic education under the closer guardianship of the hierarchy. He also got the approval of Archbishop Byrne and Archbishop Harty of Cashel for his alternative plan. He then sought Byrne’s permission to approach O’Connell and the General Secretary of the ASTI, T.J. Burke to offer them his alternative scheme (DDA AB8/A/VI/63/3). McQuaid interviewed Burke and O’Connell separately and succeeded in convincing them to abandon their plans for a federation.

It would appear that O’Connell and the CEC were riding on the crest of a wave following the success of the WFEA conference, and believed they could surmount all obstacles to achieve an advisory council of education. They underrated the political skill of their adversaries, and



overrated their own abilities to defeat both church and state, neither of whom was prepared to cede power to the formidable INTO.

Derrig avoided scrutiny of his Department by a council of education, just as Ministers for Education had done since 1922, by refusing O'Connell's requests for an education inquiry. Scrutiny could no longer be avoided when in the late 1930s, the INTO commenced its own inquiry, and conducted research on the Irish education system. This resulted in the publication of *A Plan for Education* in 1947, a report Derrig was quick to dismiss. It was a progressive document, and while critical of the Department of Education, it promoted liberal education views, that might well have been written by T.J. O'Connell himself.

It encouraged greater emphasis to be placed on oral Irish, and it warned of the dangers of introducing children to written Irish prematurely (*A Plan*, 1947: 41). It contained the most up-to-date research, and recommended a child-centred curriculum with a comprehensive subject range. In fact, the recommendations in *A Plan for Education* pre-dated reforms in primary education by two decades in the case of Irish language teaching, and by three decades with regard to a child-centred curriculum. In January 1960, Dr. Patrick Hillery issued *Circular 11/60* announcing a change of policy regarding the teaching of Irish. Infant teachers were now at liberty to change 'the emphasis from teaching through Irish to the teaching of Irish conversation' (C/11/60 1960).

The new primary school curriculum of 1971, adopted many of the child-centred approaches recommended in *A Plan for Education*. Coincidentally, the new curriculum was launched by former primary school teacher Pádraig Faulkner, Minister for Education (1969–1973).

## Conclusion

T.J. O'Connell made a very significant contribution to Irish education policy, not least with regard to the medical welfare of school children, when he ensured that County Medical Officers of Health were appointed to national schools. He can be credited also with protecting children from exploitation, when he introduced an amendment to the School Attendance Bill precluding farmers from hiring out their children to

work on neighbours' farms. He waged a twenty-year campaign to have responsibility for school buildings and upkeep removed from clerical hands and transferred, by legislation, to local health authorities because it distressed O'Connell to see children being forced to spend what he called 'the most critical years of their young lives' (O'Connell, 1948: 2–4) in schools which were 'often centres of disease and even death' (DD, 1926g: 881). O'Connell failed to have this issue resolved, as the clerical managers accused him of threatening the very existence of the managerial system with his plans, and Ministers for Education supported the managers.

T.J. O'Connell rejoiced at the demise of the authoritarian National Board of education and so did national teachers, but little did they know that the Irish Free State governments would be equally authoritarian. O'Connell and the INTO played a leading role in drawing up the National Programme of Primary Instruction, in which the Irish language predominated, but once teachers experienced difficulties with the demands of the programme, Ministers applied coercive tactics to force them to qualify to meet its linguistic demands. It took a Supreme Court judgment in 1941, in a court case brought by O'Connell and the INTO in 1940, to protect teachers from the financial penalties imposed on them for failing to meet these demands.

T.J. O'Connell was left with no choice but to lead his members into a seven-month strike as the professional status of teachers was at stake, and nowhere was this more evident than in the retention of the degrading rating system of inspection, and in the lack of respect shown towards teachers' professional reports. The government's unyielding attitude on teachers' pay meant that the failure of the strike was inevitable, but O'Connell and the INTO struck a blow for the professionalism of teaching, and Derrig's successor acknowledged as much by granting O'Connell and the INTO some vitally important concessions.

O'Connell earned distinction as an educator at home as well as on the international stage. In Ireland, the National University of Ireland conferred an honorary doctorate of laws on him in 1933, for his outstanding service to education, following the success of the Fifth Biennial Conference of the World Federation of Education Associations, which was hosted in Dublin that year. Six years later Scottish educationists awarded him an

honorary Fellowship of the Educational Institute of Scotland, a privilege rarely granted.

His progressive educational ideas set him apart from conservative Ministers and government leaders, who wanted a utilitarian, examination orientated education for children. In stark contrast O'Connell was an educationist who understood the true meaning of education, which was something he expounded on in the Seanad in 1942, when he said that 'Education is of the mind, it has to do with ... the cultivation of the mind, the gradual drawing out and development of the child's God-given faculties' (SD, 1942c: 332). O'Connell had proposed a school-based assessment scheme for children in 1943, but he had to wait another 25 years to witness its introduction.

In 1929 O'Connell suggested to John Marcus O'Sullivan that the Department should set up a special branch for educational research, in line with practice in other countries. He also recommended that the Department should produce a journal, which would be issued to each school, containing articles on modern teaching methods 'as well as pointing to developments in the teaching of various subjects in other countries' (DD, 1929: 431–438). All of these reforms were introduced decades after he had retired from public life. Dr. Patrick Hillery was the first Minister to engage in large-scale educational research when he invited an Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development team to examine the Irish education system in the early 1960s. In 1968 *Oideas*, the Department's first educational journal was published and in 1977, the Department opened its Curriculum and Development Unit.

Before his retirement T.J. O'Connell revealed that the introduction of the redeployment panel for unemployed teachers in 1937, and the abolition of the rating system of inspection in 1948, were the two reforms which meant most to him, as they relieved teachers of great worry and anxiety. His legacy, as he himself saw it, may be summarised in his own words 'I am indeed more than glad that the final decision to abolish the (Rating) system was made during my period in office' (ISW, 1948b: 419–420).

O'Connell died on 22 June 1969, six years before the 144-year-old managerial system was brought to a quiet end, with the introduction of boards of management to national schools. He would have welcomed

this reform, which he himself had eagerly sought in the early twentieth century. This was strongly opposed by the ecclesiastical authorities in 1919–1920 and in subsequent years. But it was possible in 1975, due to the Second Vatican Council (1962) which saw a role for lay participation in education. O’Connell’s foresight is striking and he sowed the seeds for a diverse range of educational reforms, which would come to fruition decades later, and this is surely his great legacy to Irish education.

## Notes

1. Monitors were apprentice teachers, selected from primary pupils aged 12–13 years. They were appointed following an examination by the district inspector. A five-year apprenticeship ensued. The monitor then sat for the National Board examination in order to continue for another two years. The next examination was in effect an entrance examination to the training college. In 1900 O’Connell won a scholarship to St. Patrick’s Training College, Drumcondra, Dublin, having taken the National Board examination.
2. The Boundary Commission was set up in the spring of 1925, in accordance with a provision made under *Article 12* of the Treaty of 6 December 1921, to make changes to the border between the north and south of Ireland.
3. The Emergency is the name given to the period covering the Second World War and its aftermath.
4. The Junior Assistant Mistresses were a new class of teacher introduced in 1906, to act as second teachers in boys’ and girls’ national schools with an average attendance between 35 to 50 pupils.
5. A rift occurred between de Valera and McQuaid because of this letter.
6. The CTS was founded in Ireland in 1899 under the patronage of the archbishops and bishops of Ireland, to publish a range of religious materials which originally came from England, where the society originated in 1868.

## References

- Akenson, D.H. (1975), *A Mirror to Kathleen's Face: Education in Independent Ireland*. London, 102.
- Coolahan, J. (2017). *Towards an era of lifelong learning in Irish education 1800–2016* (p. 11).
- DD (1922a). Cols.696–698, 25(9).
- DD (1922b). Cols.1697–1702, 18(10).
- DD (1922c). Col.1709, 18(10).
- DD (1922d). Col.2564, 1(12).
- DD (1922e). Cols.2551–2552, 1(12).
- DD (1922f). Col.2552, 1(12).
- DD (1924). Col.415, 3(7).
- DD (1925a). Cols.823–826, 11(6).
- DD (1925b). Col.190, 11(11).
- DD (1925c). Col.187, 11(11).
- DD (1925d). Cols.193–194, 11(11).
- DD (1925e). Col.477, 11(11); DD. (1926). Cols.401–402, 4(6).
- DD (1925f). Cols.198–199, 11(11).
- DD (1925g). Cols.1218–1238, 3(12).
- DD (1926a). Col.635, 10(2).
- DD (1926b). Cols.718–722, 11(2).
- DD (1926c). Cols.737–754, 11(2).
- DD (1926d). Cols.1090–1091, 25(2).
- DD (1926e). Col.409, 4(6).
- DD (1926f). Cols.502–503, 7(6).
- DD (1926g). Col.881, 21/25(10).
- DD (1929). Cols.431–438, 17(4).
- DD (1931). Col.1798, 27(5).
- DD (1941). Col.1097, 27(5).
- DD (1943a). Cols.258–259, 13(5).
- DD (1943b). Col.230, 13(5).
- DD (1947). Col.679, 11(2).
- DD (1968). Col.463, 6(2).
- DDA. (1933–1934). *Folder "CHA 1933" "CHA 1934"*.
- Department of Education. (1926). *Report of the Department of Education for the school year 1924–25 and for the financial and administrative years 1924–26*. Dublin, 21.

- Department of Education. (1926). *Report of the Department of Education for the school year 1924–25 and for the financial and administrative years 1924–26*. Education Report, Dublin, 41.
- Department of Education. (1926). *Report of the Second National Programme Conference 1925–26*. Dublin, 2.
- Department of Education. (1927). *Report of the committee on inspection of primary schools*. Inspection Report, Dublin, 7.
- Department of Education. (1932). *Report of the Department of Education for the school year 1931–32*. Dublin, 23.
- Department of Education. (1933). *Report of the Department of Education for the school year 1932–33*. Dublin, 22–25.
- INTO. (1941). *Report of the committee into the use of Irish as a teaching medium to children whose home language is English*. 1941 Report, Dublin, 12–61.
- INTO. (1947). *A plan for education (A Plan)*, Dublin, 3.
- Irish Independent*. (1946). 20(3).
- Irish Press*. (1932). 26(1).
- ISW. (1923). 3(12), 1231.
- ISW. (1944a). 17/27(6), 247.
- ISW. (1944b). 5/13(5), 186.
- ISW. (1944c). 2/9(12), 487.
- ISW. (1946). 26/1(1/2), 113.
- ISW. (1948a). 21/28(8), 420.
- ISW. (1948b). 21/28(8), 419–420.
- Jones, V. (2006). *A Gaelic experiment: the preparatory system 1926–1961 and Coláiste Moibhí*. Dublin, 26.
- Macnamara, J. (1966). *Bilingualism and Irish primary education: A study of Irish experience*. Edinburgh, 136.
- McCormick, E. (1996). *The INTO & the 1946 teachers' strike*. Dublin, 16–54.
- Moroney, M. (2007). *Irish national teachers' salaries and pensions: A review of the role of the INTO*. Dublin, 103–154.
- NAI. (1942). *SI2891A*. The case for the restoration of cuts in the salaries of national teachers stated.
- NAI. (1943). *SI2891A*. Correspondence between the Minister for Education Thomas Derrig and Bishop Staunton in May and October 1943.
- NAI. (1944a). *SI0236B*. Bishop Staunton's letter to Thomas O'Deirg, Minister for Education. 17(10).
- NAI. (1944b). *SI0236B*. INTO deputation, 18(4).
- NAI. (1945). *SI0236B*. Letter from T.J. O'Connell to Thomas Derrig, 3(12).

O'Connell, T. J. (1948). *Eighty Years of Progress*. Dublin. 13.

O'Connell, T.J. (1969). *A history of the INTO: 100 years of progress*.  
Dublin, 210–470.

*Report of the vice-regal committee of inquiry into primary education Ireland.*

Killanin Report (1918). (cmd 60), xxi, 15–741.

SD. (1942a). Cols.374–389, 10(12).

SD. (1942b). Col.432, 10(12).

SD. (1942c). Col.332, 9(12).

SD. (1943a). Cols.2179–2181, 27(5).

SD. (1943b). Cols.2202–2205, 27(5).

SD. (1950). Cols.664–667, 19(7).