

Minister Of Social Services Broadcasts

On Friday 13th May, 1966, at 7.30 p.m.

Good Evening.

TONIGHT I want to address you on a matter which the Government considers to be of the greatest importance to every single person in the territory.

For many months now the Government has been working quietly and hard on the details of its new Education Policy. The Hon. Chief Minister has referred to it on more than one occasion, and I myself have given hints as to the lines along which we were thinking.

I want to emphasize that the Draft Education Policy which I am announcing tonight is not the final document. The Government is anxious to discuss it with teachers organisations, with other private organisations and with individuals—in short, with any persons or groups of persons who have something constructive to say.

I therefore invite all those who are interested in education to study the Draft Policy and to forward their opinions on it to my Ministry in writing. Arrangements will be made to discuss this Policy with appropriate organisations and individuals.

When enough time has been given for discussion and for people to express their views, the Education Policy proper will be published.

Government's Draft Education Policy

The Government's Education Policy is based on the belief that education is the most important feature in the proper development of the people of the territory. Education gives to each individual not only the opportunity to make the most of his abilities but also the training and the discipline to make the greatest possible contribution to the territory and to humanity.

The Government has therefore decided that its main priorities in education will be (1) the provision of facilities for all pupils between the ages of 5 years and 14 years, (2) the provision of free secondary education for all those pupils who can benefit from it, and (3) the provision of teachers in the numbers required in order to achieve these priorities and other objectives.

The Government will enact a new Education Ordinance and will retain the school leaving age at

14 years.

Education Administration

The Minister responsible for Education will be assisted by a senior staff comprised of a Permanent Secretary, an Administrative Secretary professionally qualified in education and 5 Education Officers.

One Education Officer will supervise all the secondary schools and the junior high wings in St. Kitts; two Education Officers will supervise all the primary schools in St. Kitts, each with responsibility for approximately the same number of schools; one Education Officer will supervise all the schools in Nevis; and one Education Officer will supervise all the schools in Anguilla. The post of Education Officer in Anguilla will be combined with some other post.

The new Education Ordinance will provide for the appointment by the Minister of an Advisory Board to advise him on questions concerning education in the territory. The Minister will also be empowered to appoint annually committees to advise him on various fields of educational activity.

Infant Education

It is proposed that each primary school will have an infant department where children between the ages of 5 years and 7 years will be taught a 2-year course. All teachers in the infant department must have received training in infant education.

To this end intensive courses in infant education will be held each year in the long vacation before the beginning of each school year.

The Government will take any measures neces-

sary to ensure that infant departments are well-organised and well-staffed. It is recognised that proper facilities are essential during these formative years if the child is to develop along satisfactory emotional, social, mental and physical lines.

Junior Education

Children between the ages of 7 years and 12 years will be taught in junior departments in the primary schools. Their course will be a follow-on from the infant course and will extend over 5 years, but it will cover a much wider and very different curriculum, including the subjects civics, elementary science and West Indian history.

Within the next 5 years Government is determined to achieve 100% literacy at the age of 12 years and to raise the standard of junior education.

Primary Schools

The aim is to replace all unsuitable buildings as soon as possible and to provide sufficient places in primary schools for all children between the ages of 5 years and 12 years.

In the first phase of this programme, Government will build new schools at Irish Town, St. Paul's and Tabernacle in St. Kitts, at St. Thomas and St. James in Nevis, and will expand the East End School in Anguilla. At the same time, prefabricated buildings will be set up wherever possible to ease the congestion and improve the conditions of primary schools.

Free Secondary Education

The Government's objective is to provide free secondary education in comprehensive schools for all those pupils between the ages of 12 years and 19 years who can benefit from it. The system will be sufficiently flexible to allow exceptional pupils under the age of 12 years to begin the secondary course.

It is proposed that 4 secondary schools in St. Kitts, 3 in Nevis and 1 in Anguilla will provide courses leading to the G.C.E. O Level, and that 1 secondary school in

Basseterre will provide courses leading to the G.C.E. A Level. The School leading to O level in Kitts will be situated at St. Verchilds, Sandy Point, Dieppe Bay and Cayon; in Nevis at Charlestown, Gingerland and in the Windward area, and in Anguilla at the Valley.

In the remaining areas, where necessary, the first 2 years of the secondary school course will be taught in the primary schools, which will be provided with a junior high wing. Pupils who have attended such schools will transfer to the nearest comprehensive school to complete the G. C. E. O Level.

In all schools pursuing courses leading to the G.C.E. O Level the curriculum will normally be the same and will include science, a foreign language and West Indian history. The curriculum for all pupils in the first 2 years of the course will normally be the same, whether they are attending a comprehensive school or a primary school with a junior high wing.

Basseterre

In Basseterre, secondary education will be provided in 2 mixed schools. The premises now occupied by the Basseterre Senior School will be modified to accommodate pupils in the first 2 years of the secondary school course in a junior high school.

The premises now occupied by the St. Kitts Nevis Grammar School and the Girls' High School will be modified to accommodate in one mixed school pupils from the 3rd year of the secondary school course to the G. C. E. A Level examinations. This school, the senior high school, will also accommodate all those pupils from the other secondary schools who have obtained the required O Level qualification and wish to pursue courses leading to the G.C.E. A Level examinations.

Where necessary, pupils from Nevis and Anguilla attending the Basseterre senior high school to study for the G.C.E. A Level examination will be given financial assistance by the Government to meet the expenses of living away from home.

Private Secondary And Preparatory Schools

Although the new Education Ordinance, like the present one, will require all private secondary schools and preparatory schools to be registered by Government, there is no intention by the Government to prohibit good

schools in this category, provided that they meet the standards and conditions required by Government. It is recognised that properly run private schools can be of great service to the territory.

Trade And Vocational Education

The educational system will provide facilities for the development of interests in practical skills.

All the secondary schools will teach technical drawing, woodwork, metalwork and home economics, and in Basseterre the present facilities at the Technical Centre will be expanded to provide 4 workshops and a drawing office.

New College

It is proposed that a new College will be built in Basseterre to perform the fourfold function of (1) the first part of University level work, (2) teacher training, (3) craft training, and (4) technician training. The proposals relating to (1) and (2) can be found in the sections headed "Higher Education" and "Teacher Training".

2-year courses will be organised at the craft level for students between the ages of 14 years and 16 years, who will attend full-time and will train as electricians, builders, plumbers, motor mechanics, welders, and so on. They will prepare for formal examinations to obtain a certificate of apprenticeship. Students will also receive training in commercial subjects and will prepare for formal examinations, such as the Royal Society of Arts examinations.

The craft level courses will be so organised that day and block release classes will be available to apprentices and to those in Government and private employment who wish to obtain qualifications in commercial subjects.

Engineering

At the technicians level, courses will be available for suitably qualified students to prepare for examinations such as the City and Guilds Ordinary National Certificate in electrical engineering and mechanical engineering, and in other similar fields if required.

It is hoped to make an arrangement whereby students from this territory will attend technician level courses in other territories of the West Indies, while students from other territories will attend technician level courses in this territory.

The Government expects the University of the West Indies to co-operate in the provision of craft and technician training.

Further Education

It is proposed to provide further educational opportunities on a fee-paying basis for students over 15 years of age who are not receiving formal schooling.

The functions of the Government's Evening

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