

Select documents

V. ROBERT PARK'S ACCOUNT OF SCHOOLS IN BALLYMONEY PARISH, 1824

The following document is transcribed from a small notebook of seventy-eight pages entitled 'An account of schools in the parish of Ballymoney in conformity with the wishes of a commission appointed by parliament¹ to enquire into the state of education in Ireland'. This account is the work of the Rev. Robert Park, a presbyterian minister in Ballymoney, 1817–76, and is, apparently, in his handwriting. It was presented to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland by Mr James B. Hamilton, solicitor, Ballymoney, and his kindness in supplying information about the document and its author is here gratefully acknowledged. For permission to reproduce the document, thanks are due to the deputy keeper of the public records of Northern Ireland.

The writer of the account, the Rev. Robert Park, was born in Stewartstown, co. Tyrone, in 1793. He graduated M.A. in Glasgow in 1812, was licensed by Tyrone presbytery in 1814, and ordained minister of First Ballymoney on 18 March 1817. As moderator of the general synod, 1829–30, clerk of the general synod, 1830–40, and of the general assembly, from 1840 till his death in 1876, he was one of the most influential persons in the presbyterian church in Ulster. One of his sons, John Park, was later professor of logic and metaphysics in Queen's College, Belfast.²

It is obvious from the document itself that Park acted as correspondent in Ballymoney parish for the Society for

¹ The commission was appointed by the crown, not by parliament.

² Information supplied by the Presbyterian Historical Society, Belfast.

promoting the education of the poor of Ireland, better known as the Kildare Place Society (founded 2 Dec. 1811). The leading principle of the society was

to afford the same advantages for education to all classes of professing Christians without interfering with the peculiar religious opinions of any. Guided by this principle, the society conceived that the most efficient means for attaining their object would be to promote the establishment of schools wherein the poor might be instructed in reading, writing and arithmetic, upon a cheap and expeditious plan; where the appointment of governors, teachers and scholars should be uninfluenced by sectarian distinctions; and in which the scriptures, *without note or comment*, should be used to the exclusion of all catechisms and books of religious controversy.³

Here there is publicly stated for the first time in the history of Irish education the idea of undenominational religious teaching. Previous to this, the official education system—parish schools, diocesan schools, royal and charter schools—was exclusively protestant and completely controlled by the established church. But about half-way through the eighteenth century, the practical toleration of other religious beliefs, and, later, the formal relaxation of the penal laws against catholic schools and schoolmasters, has led to a period of free enterprise in education. Private schools, free from any form of control or supervision, sprang up all over the country. Here, it was said, the young were infected with the revolutionary ideas on politics and religion which were current at the time.⁴ But with the turn of the century came a reaction. More conservative political ideas displaced republican theories: rationalism was submerged in evangelical fervour. A new liberalism with a belief in the perfectibility of mankind was being born. It was convinced that education was the instrument by which the perfect society could be achieved.⁵ Non-conformist and evangelical

³ *First annual report of K.P.S., 1813*; quoted in Corcoran, *Education systems in Ireland*, p. 125.

⁴ Cf. *Fourteenth report of the board of education*; reprinted in *Belfast Magazine*, x. 104.

⁵ Cf. R. L. Edgeworth to the lord primate, in appendix to *Fourteenth report of the board of education* (in *Belfast Magazine*, x. 181): 'Of the four thousand educated at Lancaster's school not one has ever been brought into a court of justice'.

churchmen were attracted by its argument that if children were only taught to read the Bible, Utopia would be at hand.

The Kildare Place Society mirrors the contemporary attitude. In a description of its own origins, it stated :

In the year 1798 while the rebellion still raged in Ireland some benevolent and judicious persons, deeply feeling for their country and impressed with the wholesome truth that the education of the lower classes could alone correct their turbulence and turn their minds to industry and a respect for the laws, instituted by private subscription a school in School Street for the education of the children of the poor in the Liberty of Dublin, somewhat on the plan of Joseph Lancaster. This school flourishes to this day. The advantages of this institution were so apparent that the directors felt it would be of national benefit if such a system could be extended through Ireland.⁶

It was a daring innovation for a private society to attempt a system of national education. It was not till 1831 that the state was to take the first step in that direction. When the Kildare Place Society was founded in 1811 the state was still unwilling to make that move, and the state church was still jealous of its rights and privileges in the field of education. In the transition period between free enterprise and state control, the Kildare Place Society resembles those public corporations with which we have since become so familiar. Supported by government grants, directed by the governing class, through it government could mould public opinion while disclaiming responsibility for its actions.

Other societies such as the Association for Promoting Christian Knowledge, founded in 1792, the London Hibernian Society, founded in 1806, the Sunday School Society, founded in 1809, the Irish Society, founded in 1811, had attempted and were still attempting to educate the Irish poor. Some of these, writes a historian of the Kildare Place Society, 'carried forward the traditional policy of endeavouring to convert the Roman catholics; others were educational. Of these, some lived in the hope that the education and the conversion of the Roman catholics were more or less synonymous terms.'⁷ Compared

⁶ Report of general meeting, 1820, quoted in Corcoran, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

⁷ H. Kingsmill Moore, *An unwritten chapter in the history of education*, p. 15.

with the schools of the proselytising societies, the Kildare Place schools with their simple bible-reading seemed to promise fairer treatment for catholics, especially as there was no restriction on the translation of the scriptures to be used. Some prominent catholics were associated with the society in its earlier years, notably Lord Fingal, who was a vice-president, and Daniel O'Connell, who was a member.⁸ Some priests placed their schools in connexion with it and received grants in aid of equipment and teachers' salaries. In some of these schools the bible-reading was, with the consent of the society, confined to the epistle and gospel of the Mass which had been read and explained to the people by the priest on the previous Sunday. But there were other schools, attended by catholic children, taught by protestant masters, in which the authorised version of the scriptures was used, and, while no comment was allowed, it proved difficult in practice to draw a line between permissible explanation and prohibited interpretation of difficult words.

A state system of elementary education, non-sectarian, under the control of a board of commissioners appointed by parliament and endowed by the state, was envisaged in the *Fourteenth report from the commissioners of the board of education in Ireland* (1812).⁹ The report proposed that the commissioners should have power to build and endow schools; to appoint and dismiss masters; to prescribe the course and mode of education; and to provide books. While it recommended that all children, irrespective of creed, should be educated 'under one and the same system, and in the same establishments', it recognised that such a system could not hope to succeed unless effective safeguards were provided against 'all interference with the particular religious tenets of those who are to receive that instruction'. The government apparently decided to introduce a bill on the lines of the report, and Peel, who was chief secretary for Ireland at the time, wrote to Saurin, the attorney

⁸ Kingsmill Moore quotes the record of the O'Connell centenary, which says O'Connell was a member of the board (op. cit., p. xvii). I do not know what is meant by 'the board'. O'Connell certainly was a subscriber and a member of the society, but his name does not appear in the committee names published year by year from 1813 onwards in the Dublin *Treble Almanack*.

⁹ Reprinted in *Belfast Magazine*, x. 99–108.

general: 'The preamble of the act should, I think, advert to the benefits which must be derived in a national point of view from the education of the lower classes of society; to the expediency of establishing in Ireland a systematic and uniform plan for their instruction; and it might be added that, under the peculiar circumstances of Ireland, all interference in the religious tenets of any particular class should be excluded'. Saurin replied: 'The establishing an abstract system of Christianity that shall avoid what is peculiar to each sect and yet preserve what is essential looks very like making a new religion for the country, and establishing by law a precedent for a schism by consent from all churches and sects'.¹⁰

At the annual meeting of the Kildare Place Society in 1814, attention was drawn to the report referred to above. The work of the society was described, with emphasis on the non-sectarian character of its schools, and appeal was made for increased financial support to enable it to carry on its work.¹¹ In 1815 it petitioned parliament for financial aid and was voted £6,980. It received a second grant of £6,000 in the following year, and from 1817 to 1831 the grant rose from £9,653 to £30,000. These funds were expended in grants towards the building and fitting-up of schools, towards the supply of school requisites, towards teachers' salaries, the training of teachers, the publication of text-books, the inspection of schools and the setting-up of school libraries.

It was on the rule restricting religious teaching to simple bible-reading that catholic opposition to the society concentrated. It was felt that the Bible should not be used as a school-book. More important, bible-reading without note or comment clashed with the catholic rule of authoritative interpretation of the scriptures by the church. At a general meeting of the society in 1820, O'Connell attacked the rule which demanded that the Bible without note or comment should be read in all the schools. He contended that this rule was contrary to catholic principles and that, therefore, it denied the leading principle of the society, *viz* 'to afford the same facilities for education to all classes of professing Christians without any attempt to interfere with the peculiar religious opinions of any'. His motion asking for a

¹⁰ Kingsmill Moore, *op. cit.*, p. 142.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 58–9.

committee to report on whether the means hitherto adopted were the best suited to the fair carrying out of that principle having been lost, O'Connell and his supporters (among them the duke of Leinster, the earl of Fingal and Lord Cloncurry) withdrew from the society.

The situation was complicated by the fact that other societies, avowedly proselytising in aim, were also assisting schools associated with the Kildare Place Society, and the same persons took 'a prominent and active part in the management of more than one of these societies'.¹² Between 1820 and 1825, the catholic clergy opposed the Kildare Place system with the utmost industry and zeal, though they did not display a uniform hostility to all its schools.¹³ It became obvious that the society had lost whatever measure of support had formerly been given to it by the religious leaders of the majority of the people. In 1820 O'Connell, with the support of the bishops, founded the Irish National Education Society on the principle of united secular instruction and separate religious instruction for children of all creeds. Various efforts were made in parliament to obtain financial aid for this society. In 1824 a petition signed by a number of the bishops was presented to the house of commons which prayed the house 'to adopt such measures as might promote the education of the Roman catholic poor of Ireland in the most effectual manner'. Notice of a motion asking for a parliamentary commission of enquiry was given by Sir John Newport, but, according to Dr Doyle, bishop of Kildare and Leighlin, the education societies used their influence to have the commissioners appointed by the crown.¹⁴ The commissioners, appointed in 1824, were Frankland Lewis (chairman), A. R. Blake, Leslie Forster, James Glassford and William Grant. They were to 'enquire into the nature and extent of the instruction afforded by the several institutions in Ireland established for the purpose of education, and maintained either in whole or in part from the public funds; to enquire also into the state of the diocesan and district schools in Ireland,

¹² *First rep. Ir. educ. inquiry* (1825), p. 90.

¹³ Evidence of secretary of K. P. S., *First rep. Ir. educ. inquiry*, appendix, p. 422. Also Kingsmill Moore, *op. cit.*, ch. v.

¹⁴ Pastoral letter quoted in Brenan, *Schools of Kildare and Leighlin*, p. 6.

and the nature of the instruction there given; to ascertain whether and what regulations may be fit to be established with respect to the parochial schools in Ireland, and to report as to the measures which can be adopted for extending generally to all classes of our people of Ireland the benefits of education'¹⁵

The second report of the commissioners, published in 1826, is a comprehensive summary of all educational establishments in Ireland. It was compiled from data filled in on official forms of return by the clergy of the established church, by the presbyterian ministers, and by the catholic priests, and vouched for by them on oath. The form of return comprised fifteen questions, and the Rev. Robert Park kept a duplicate of the form and of his replies to the questions. It is this duplicate which is now in the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. Duplicate copies of the returns made by the catholic clergy of Kildare and Leighlin have also survived. These were published by the Rev. Professor Martin Brenan in 1935. He states that the parochial returns given in his *Schools of Kildare and Leighlin*¹⁶ are unique; and, certainly, with the exception of this record of the Rev. Robert Park, no others have been discovered. The statistical information received was tabulated and published by the commissioners, but their tables of figures give but a faint idea of the wealth of information contained in the original returns. The published facts and figures relating to Ballymoney differ slightly from those recorded by Park and appear also to be defective in some details.

The following list reproduces Park's numbering of the schools and summarises the statistical information in his report. He enumerates 28 schools in the parish and three (nos 14, 26, 27, in Drumadoon) outside it. Of the 28, one was not in operation when he made his report (though it had 25 children in attendance in 1823), and seven were Sunday schools; leaving 20 full-time schools in the parish. He omits from his detailed returns two schools, one kept by the curate, Rev. C. Oulton, for his own children and two other boys, and one kept by the Rev. R. Loughrace, seceding minister, in which three boys were taught classics. The number of pupils returned in attendance is 1263,

¹⁵ *First rep. Ir. educ. inquiry.*

¹⁶ P. 11, note.

of whom 696 were boys and 567 girls. The great majority of these were presbyterians; only 58 were catholics.

School	Master's		No. of pupils				Type
	religion	income	male	female	R.C.	total	
1. Free School	Est. Ch.	£35	61	0	20	121	English ¹⁷
2. Young Ladies	" "	—	—	30	—	30	Classics
3. J. Fleming	Presb.	£60	36	15	4	51	"
4. McWilliams & Millar	"	£60	30	6	2	36	"
5. R. Hartford	"	£43	23	19	3	42	English
6. Private school ¹⁸							
7. Mrs. McElroy ¹⁹	R.C.	£7	12	10	7	22	Infant
8. Ballygan	Presb.	£16	32	19	—	51	English
" " S.S. ²⁰	"	—	40	56	—	96	Reading
9. Bendooragh	"	£16	26	23	3	49	English
10. Enagh	"	£10	13	8	5	21	"
11. Kirkhills	"	£12	12	8	—	20	Classics
12. Bushview	"	£25	16	18	1	34	"
13. Roseyards S.S.	"	—	46	49	4	95	Reading
14. Drumadoon ²¹	R.C.	£11	6	6	—	12	3 Rs
15. Garry	Presb.	£18	19	13	—	32	"
16. Landhead	"	£13	26	18	1	44	"
" " S.S.	"	—	47	32	4	79	Reading
17. Forttown	"	£17	18	14	—	32	3 Rs
18. Ballygabbin	"	£17	26	17	6	43	English
" " S.S.	"	—	26	28	5	54	Reading
19. Culduff	R.C.	£12	22	8	1	30	English
20. Ballyboyland	Presb.	£25	37	6	1	43	Classics
" " S.S.	"	—	30	15	4	45	Reading
6. Balnamore S.S.	"	—	7	29	not known	36	"
21. Claghry	R.C.	£15	21	9	1	30	Classics
22. Claghryhead	Est. Ch.	£16	14	6	1	20	3 Rs
23. Polandtanny	Presb.	£8	9	6	—	15	Reading
24. Drumkeighle	No teacher at present						
25. Lislaggan S.S.	Presb.	—	41	39	5	80	"
26 & 27. Drumadoon	Not in parish						

¹⁷ An English school was one which gave an 'English' education as opposed to a Latin school. It was attended by pupils destined for commercial pursuits rather than for the professions. Besides English the curriculum might include mathematics, book-keeping, navigation, and a modern language other than English.

¹⁸ These words are struck out and underneath is written: 'This number transferred to Balnamore Sunday school'. Balnamore Sunday School is given as No. 6 following No. 20.

¹⁹ Nos 1-7 all in town of Ballymoney.

²⁰ Sunday school.

²¹ Park here includes a school which, as he later states, is outside the parish. The same is true of Nos 26-7.

The report gives a complete survey of education in the parish. Outside the town of Ballymoney (schools 1-7), the schools are named usually by the townlands in which they were held. The numbers in attendance are given; the sex and religion of the pupils; the teachers' names, ages, religion, qualifications, earnings; the subjects taught; the books used; the fees paid. Some information about the organisation of schools through the action of local committees is unique. Such committees existed elsewhere: there is a passing reference to them in the pages of Carleton's autobiography²² and in Dr Brenan's book,²³ but nowhere is their work so fully depicted as here. These self-appointed local committees of small farmers and hand-loom weavers made themselves responsible for the erection and upkeep of schools, the collection of teachers' fees, the supply of books for the children. It was a democratic form of local action for education which seems to have grown spontaneously in this presbyterian community.

The report returns five schools in connexion with the Kildare Place Society. Of these, one was not in operation at the time the report was made; one was attended by presbyterian pupils only; there were three catholics at the third, six at the fourth and one at the fifth. Only the authorised version of the scriptures was used in all these schools.

Park was obviously sincere in his belief that there was no proselytism in any of the schools in this parish, that there was even 'a great horror of proselytism'. But when catholic children were attending schools taught by protestant masters, held in one case in the presbyterian meeting house, and using, even if only as a reading book, the authorised version, it is clear that from the point of view of the catholic bishops there was just cause for alarm. One other point made by Park in this regard is worthy of note: it is that the private school masters were more than eager to meet the wishes of the parents concerning the religious education of their children. In schools 4 and 5 we find the masters teaching the protestant, presbyterian and catholic catechisms as required, and in school 21 under a catholic master we find the presbyterian *Shorter catechism* in use. This is what might have been

²² O'Donoghue, *Life of Carleton*, i. 19.

²³ Op. cit., pp. 223, 245, 350.

expected, for the master's income depended on the degree of satisfaction he could give parents. It is possible that where education is dominated by some society or by the state there is not the same ready response to varieties of public opinion.

The following extracts²⁴ from the report are selected to illustrate the general features of all the schools as well as to bring out some points of particular interest. The abbreviations of the original MS have been extended, and the punctuation and paragraphing modernised.

DAVID KENNEDY

No. 1. Ballymoney Free School. In the town of Ballymoney. The master's name, Thomas Mackay.

The school commenced in 1808, is held upon six days of the week and at all periods of the year. The master, of the established church, chosen by the committee of the school, the choice confirmed by the trustees of Erasmus Smith's fund. The choice made in 1818. He is 31 years of age, of good moral character, qualified to teach reading, writing, arithmetic in its various branches, English grammar and composition. Educated in a common school in Ballymoney, subsequently in the English department of the Belfast Academical Institution.

Upon the list of the school: 61 males, 60 females. Average attendance, 40 males, 39 females. 22 established church, 69 presbyterian, 20 Roman catholic. 72 average during the winter, 88 during summer 1823. 10 in 20 children can read and from twelve to fifteen months required to teach a child to read well.

The total income annually is about £35; £30 from the trustees of Erasmus Smith's fund and £5 from a few children whom the master is permitted to teach at from 3s. 4d. to 5s. per quarter.

The school-house is a substantial building, two stories in height, with two schoolrooms and apartments for the teacher; of brick, freestone and mortar; slated roof; built in 1813, cost at that time £464; might now be built for £400. One schoolroom 41 by 20½ feet; fitted up with desks and forms; would accommodate 170 children. The other intended for a female school but not used; not fitted up; 20½ by 15½ feet; might accommodate nearly 50 children. The schoolhouse was constructed by the produce of charitable bequests, private subscriptions and a grant from the trustees of Erasmus Smith's fund of £300.

²⁴ Park's account of the schools numbered 10, 11, 22 and 23 is here wholly omitted, as well as of the Sunday schools numbered 8, 16, 20, and 25.

The school is in connexion with the trustees of Erasmus Smith's bequest; formed in 1813 in consequence of an application for aid in building the schoolhouse. So far as I am acquainted with the regulation laid down by those trustees there is not any deviation from them in the principles and management of the school.

Rev. Charles Oulton, curate, Rev. Robert Park, presbyterian minister, Rev. Robert Loughrace, seceding minister, James Moore, esq., Messrs Wm Orr, James Thomson, Wm Henry and the senior church warden for the time being form a committee whose meetings are monthly to enquire into the state of the school, the attendance of the children, and give such directions to the teacher as may be thought necessary. There is not any particular superintendance exercised by the clergy of any persuasion, nor have they regular days for visiting during school hours.

Since the school has existed the above species of superintendance has been exercised.

There are in the school 24 copies of the *New Testament* of the established church translation, 6 Murray's *Reader*, 3 Scot's *Lessons*, 2 Mrs Trimmer's *Sunday School Manual*, 2 Mrs Trimmer's [?] *Teacher's assistant*, 2 Murray's *English grammar*, 2 Manson's *Dictionary*,²⁵ 3 *Universal spelling book*, 3 Gough's *Arithmetic*,²⁶ 12 *Scripture extracts*, 100 sheets *Reading book*, 60 sheets *Spelling book*, both published by the Education Society, 51 sheets Lancaster's *Arithmetic*, a few very old sheets *Reading and spelling book* published by the British and Foreign School Society, not now used. In teacher's desk but not used in the school, 1 copy established church *Catechism*, 1 *Catechism explained* by Stopford, and a few London Missionary tracts. Never more than 24 copies of New Testament used in school. No bibles.

The greater number of the above provided from the funds of the school formed by bequests, donations, etc. The parents of the children purchase the remainder. I am not aware that any attempts to proselytise have been made in this school. Since the appointment of the present teacher there has been a considerable increase in the number and regularity of attendance of the pupils. Generally the parents are favourable to the attendance of their children at the school. By advice and encouragement, threats of being struck off the list, and by actual expulsion the committee endeavour to enforce regularity of attendance. For a similar purpose premiums for such regularity are given at different periods of the year. Children of all denominations are admitted by exactly the same means and placed on the same footing. If the present and succeeding committees abide faithfully by the measures for some years adopted and pay the same attention, the cause of education, I am convinced, will prosper in this school. The prevalence of measles during

²⁵ For David Manson, a Belfast schoolmaster, compiler of the *Dictionary* and author of many school text-books see *D.N.B.*

²⁶ Gough's *Arithmetic* was a household book in the south as well as in the north of Ireland. Its author, John Gough, was master of the Friends' School, Lisburn, 1774-91.

the present season has operated against the attendance of the children. Had it not been for this circumstance the average number would have been greater than last year.

No. 2. Private school for young ladies, town of Ballymoney.

Misses Balfour and Miss Macky opened this school 10 June 1823 : teach upon six days of the week and at all periods of the year. They are of the established church; were induced to commence their school by the hope of many pupils : of course not appointed by any authority. The age of the Misses Balfour varies from 25 to 40; that of Miss Macky, about 45. Of excellent character and qualified to teach English, French, History and geography, plain and fancy work . . .

The terms of the school are 11s. 4½d. per qtr for reading and English grammar; 22s. 9d. for do. and history and geography, etc. . . .²⁷

No. 3. Private school, town of Ballymoney.

Teacher, James Fleming. Opened in 1817. Held upon six days of the week and at all periods of the year. He is a presbyterian, not appointed by any authority; the hope of pupils induced him to commence teaching; twenty-six years of age, good character, qualified to teach classics, mathematics, English, writing; educated in Coleraine . . .

The annual income about £60, paid by the pupils at the following rates: reading, 5s. 5d.; writing and arithmetic, 7s. 6d.; mathematics and classics, 20s. per quarter.

Mr Fleming rents a house for £12 per annum in which his family resides. In one part is the schoolroom, 29 feet by 18, fitted up with writing desks and forms, seats, etc. : would accommodate 120 children. The school not in connexion with any association; not subject to the exercise of any superintendance.

The books used are 10 bibles, 15 *New Testaments* of the authorised version, 20 Scot's *Lessons*, a few copies of Murray's *Reader*, 5 Murray's *Introduction*, 8 Murray's *Spelling Book*, 1 McCrie's *Spelling Book*, Manson's *Spelling Book*, 20 Manson's *Dictionary*, 2 Manson's *Primer*, 1 no. 2 *Sunday School spelling book*, Simson's *Euclid*, 1 *Arithmetic* by

²⁷ The Irish shilling had thirteen pennies, hence the Irish guinea was value for 22s. 9d. Even after the union of the exchequers the practice of charging fees according to the old coinage seems to have persisted. Fees of 2s. 2d. and 5s. 5d. per quarter are also common in this report : these represent the values in English money of the Irish florin and crown. It was perhaps an additional advantage that these worked out at an integral number of pence per week, reckoning thirteen weeks in the quarter.

Thomson,²⁸ 20 by Gough, Morrison & Jackson's *Book-keeping*, Bonycastle's *Algebra & mensuration*, Gregory's *Trigonometry*, Goldsmith's *Geography*, 20 *Assembly's shorter catechism*, 4 established church, 1 *Christian doctrine*,²⁹ Vergil, Eutropius, Phaedrus, Ruddiman's *Grammar*, Young & Ainsworth's *Latin dictionary*, arithmetical tables: on teacher's desk but not used in school hours, Byron's *Beppo* and *Don Juan*, some periodical papers, *Almanac* and works of taste. The books altogether provided by the parents of the children.

No attempts in this school to interfere with religious principle. Had the teacher an idea of this kind a regard to his own interest would prevent his acting upon it. I am convinced however that he has none. The parents of the children in attendance are much pleased with Mr Fleming's attention to his pupils and his manner of instruction. There is every prospect of the school doing well. Mrs Fleming, wife to the master of this school, instructs in plain and fancy work eight young ladies. Her terms are 11s. 4½d. per quarter.

No. 4. Private school, town of Ballymoney.

Teachers, Wm McWilliams and Wm Miller . . . both presbyterians . . . In attendance 30 males, 6 females: 6 established church, 28 presbyterian, 2 R. catholic . . . The books used are . . . The Assembly's shorter catechism, that of the established church, and R. catholic church in proportion to the number of pupils of the different denominations . . .

No. 5. Private school, town of Ballymoney.

Robert Hartford commenced his school May 1822 . . . Is a presbyterian . . . Not in connexion with any association; not subject to any superintendance . . .

The books used are . . . 18 Assembly's shorter catechism, 6 established church, 1 R. catholic . . .

No. 7. Private school, town of Ballymoney.

Mrs McElroy opened her school six years since. Holds it all days of the week, Sundays excepted, and at all seasons of the year. She is a Roman catholic and not appointed by any authority; 67 years of age;

²⁸ James Thomson, head of the mathematical school at Belfast Academical Institution (1815–32), father of Lord Kelvin, was the author of many mathematical school texts. He was subsequently professor of mathematics, Glasgow Univ. (1832–40).

²⁹ Possibly *An abridgement of Christian doctrine* taken from Most Rev. Dr James Butler's catechism first published 1775. See also school no. 7.

a quiet, inoffensive female, qualified to teach spelling and reading; educated in a small school in Killymorris . . . About £7 annual income arising from the payments of the children at 2s. 8½d. per quarter.

The school is kept in part of the mistress's dwelling-house. She pays for it two guineas annual rent: not in any way fitted up: a few boards used as seats by the children; not connected with any society nor subject to any superintendance.

There are used in the school 4 bibles, 3 *New Testaments* of the authorised version, 2 McCrie's, 2 Universal, 4 Manson's & 1 Murray's *Spelling books*, 6 Manson's *Primer*, Hannah More's *Moral tracts*, *Gil Blas*, *Youth Instructor*, *Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*, *Belfast commercial chronicle*, *Jack and the nanny goat*, 2 Assembly's *catechism*, 1 established church, 1 *Christian doctrine*.³⁰

No attempt here to proselytise. During the summer of 1823 and the greater part of last winter measles and whooping cough operated against the attendance of children at the school. These complaints are now less prevalent. The school is more full. This is one of the earliest schools to which little ones are sent. Their parents are anxious to keep them from 'harm's way'.

No. 8. Ballygan school, townland of Ballygan.

James Mosnan, teacher. A school held here for nearly fifty years during the week days. In addition in 1820 a Sabbath school established. Open at all seasons of the year. A presbyterian appointed by a committee of persons contributing to build the school house and sending their children . . . The teacher receives annually £16 in money and his food in the families of the children attending. The rates of payment are 2s. 1d. and 2s. 6d. per quarter. The schoolhouse is tolerably substantially built of stones, brick and mortar; straw roof. Cost about £25. The interior forms the school room, 24 by 11 feet, fitted up with four desks and forms. The house was built about fifty years since, repaired and enlarged seven years ago at the sole expense of the parents sending their children for instruction. A new house has been built this summer, partly by private subscription and sixty pounds from the Lord Lieutenant's Fund:³¹ containing two schoolrooms each 20 by 18 feet. They are not yet fitted up.

Not in connexion with any association so far. An application has been made to the Education Society, Kildare Street, for aid in fitting

³⁰ The variety of reading matter was due to the fact that each child brought to school what was perhaps the only book in his parents' house. Sometimes the books used were most unsuitable for children. Cf. *First rep. Ir. educ. inquiry*, pp. 43-44.

³¹ A parliamentary grant made in 1819 empowering the lord lieutenant to issue sums of money from the consolidated fund in aid of schools established by voluntary subscriptions. Cf. *First rep. Ir. educ. inquiry*, pp. 58-60.

up the new school rooms. Should that application be attended to the school will come under the regulations of that Society. The committee of the school are men rather below the middle rank in life, small farmers and linen manufacturers,³² but shrewd and attentive. They only interfere in repairs of the house and collecting the master's salary . . .

No. 9. Bendooragh school, townland of Bendooragh.

Robert Steen, teacher. School commenced in 1818; held upon every day of the week, Sunday excepted, and open throughout the year. He is a presbyterian . . . The school is attended by 36 males and 23 females: 2 of established church, 54 presbyterian and 3 R. catholic . . . As the school is now in connexion with the Education Society it is hoped that the master's conduct will entitle him to a gratuity from the committee . . . A new schoolhouse is in way of being built to which the Education Society have granted most kindly £20. The school is now in connexion with the *Education Society,* Kildare Place, since Novr last. That connexion formed in consequence of an application by the Rev. Robert Park for aid in building a schoolhouse. *So far as the present circumstances of the school will permit the rules of that Society are strictly adhered to . . .*³³

There are 7 bibles, 18 *New Testaments* of the authorised version . . . On teacher's desk, *Telemachus*, *Apollo's lyre*, and *Introduction to practical music . . .*³⁴

No. 12. Bushview school, townland of Bushview.

Wm McCormick, teacher. School commenced June 1823: to be held all days of the week and at all periods of the year. He is a presbyterian appointed by a committee of whom the influential person is Rev. Wm Minniss, antiburgher minister. About 25 years old, of excellent character, qualified to teach classics, English, arithmetic: educated in the neighbouring school . . . Mr Minniss exercises superintendance, visits the school and examines the children once in the month. This has been his practice since the commencement of the school.

There are used in the school . . . 2 Latin grammars, 9 Latin dictionaries, 2 Swan's *Sentences*, 2 Eutropius . . .

We hope the establishment will flourish. Mr Minniss's own family attending will keep alive his zeal to see it do well.

³² 'Linen manufacturers' here means hand-loom weavers.

³³ This sentence is underlined in pencil in the ms. A pencil note at the foot of the page 'See Report, p. 134' appears to refer to ** above. There is no reference to Bendooragh school on p. 134, but on p. 137 of the *Second Report* it is listed among the schools in connexion with the K.P.S.

³⁴ This is the only reference to music in Park's account.

No. 13. Roseyards Sunday School.

John Simson, George Smith, John McFee, Thomas Dunlop, James Lyle, Thomas Rennie, Samuel Peacock, Joseph Neill, Samuel Wallace, John Knox, Robert Knox, Lyle Minniss, Alex. Leich and Wm McCormick are the teachers and conductors, all presbyterian; by conscientious feeling were induced to form a Sabbath school in the Roseyards meeting house in 1823. They are of different ages, all of good character, teach spelling and reading the Scriptures; were educated in the neighbouring school. 46 males, 49 females attend: 2 of the established church, 85 presbyterian, 4 of other denominations of protestants and 4 R.c. . . Some books at one time got from the Sunday School Society for Ireland. No connexion with any other association. No superintendance. Teachers labour gratuitously; no sum charged the children. School held in the presbyterian meeting house of Roseyards, distinguished by the name of antiburgher seceder.

There are used 24 bibles, 25 *New Testaments* of the authorised version, a considerable number of the *No. 1* and *No. 2 Spelling book* published by the Sunday School Society for Ireland . . .³⁵

No. 14. Drumadoon school, townland of Haighs. [The word 'Haighs' is crossed out in the ms.] Not in the parish of B'money. [added].

John McLaghlin has taught for nine years on all days of the week and at all periods of the year. He is a R.c.; not appointed by any authority; 45 years of age; only of middling character. Teaches reading and writing; was educated in Coleraine. 6 males and 6 females attend his school, all presbyterians. Last winter there were 30 . . .

There are used 1 bible, 6 Testaments of the authorised version, 1 Scot's *Lessons*, 3 Manson's *Spelling book*, 1 Manson's *Primer*, 2 *No. 1*, 5 *No. 2 Sunday School Society Spelling books*, parts of a much used bible and testament.

I believe there has not been any attempt at proselytism in this school. The teacher's character has not been such as to please the families around him. The children have almost all left the school. The situation is extremely bad; particularly during winter the house can scarcely be approached; this has operated the same way. I am getting a large commodious house built about half-a-mile from Drumadoon which will obviate its necessity altogether.

No. 15. Garry or Drumart.

This schoolhouse is built one-half in the townland of Garry, the other in that of Drumart. Master's name, Wm George McKinley . . . He is a presbyterian; was selected by the parents of the children in attendance

³⁵ For the publications of the Sunday School Society. see *First rep. Ir. educ. inquiry*, p. 62.

at the school . . . Has been trained in Kildare Place. Attended the Model School there the Spring quarter of this year . . .

The school is now in connexion with the Education Society, Kildare Place. That connexion formed the beginning of this year. The only deviation from the rules of that Society of which I am aware, and that arising from a misconception on the part of the master and to be immediately remedied, is the substitution of scripture lessons for the scriptures.

Alexr Creighton, Wm Cormack, James Moore, Alexr Erskine, Robert Tomb and Charles Neill form a committee to attend to the state of the school-house and collect the teacher's stipend. The school is under the immediate superintendance of the Rev. Robert Park, presbyterian minister, who is its correspondent with Kildare Street . . .

There is also a complete set of the books published by the Education Society to form 'lending libraries' for the use of schools . . . The parents generally are favourable to the education of their children and meet the wishes of the superintendent who by carrying into effect the plan of the Education Society by 'Merit Tickets' is anxious to encourage regularity of attendance as well as general proficiency.

No. 16. Landhead, townland of Landhead.

Randal Howard present teacher. School reopened 5 July last. Open all days of the week and at all periods of the year from this time. He is a presbyterian appointed by the committee of the school . . .

The school-house is built of stones and mortar; straw roof; contains a school-room 13 feet square; fitted up with one writing desk and form; a few seats; would accommodate 40 children if comfortably fitted up. Built by private subscription and cost £14. Not in connexion with any society. Thomas Stewart, Wm Borland, John Jackson, John Stevenson, John Neill, Wm Warnock and James McFadden, men in rather below the middle rank in life (small farmers) form a committee to attend to the school-house and provide support for the master. No superintendance by any clergyman . . .

No. 17. Forttown, townland of Forttown.

Thomas Quigge, master. About twenty years since his present school-house was built: a school held much earlier . . . The teacher is a presbyterian; requested to take charge of the school upon trial; confirmed by the committee about $2\frac{1}{2}$ years since . . .

The school-house built of stone and mortar; roof thatched; contains the school-room, 14 feet square; one large writing desk and forms, tables seats; might accommodate 50 children; built by private subscription; might cost £12. Not connected with any association.

Wm McFee, Robt McFee, Robt Pinkerton, James Adams, John Elder, John Taggart and Wm Thomson, in rather below the middle rank in life but zealous in the cause of education, form a committee to attend to the

schoolhouse and the teacher's conduct. No superintendance on the part of any clergyman. The committee has existed since the building of the school-house . . .

Proselytism is altogether unknown in this neighbourhood. The teacher appears attentive, the children attached to him, and the parents well satisfied . . .

No. 18. Ballygabbin, townland of Ballywattick.

James Riddles, teacher. More than twenty years since the school was established . . . Twenty years of age, of excellent moral character, qualified to teach reading, writing, arithmetic and English grammar; educated in Ballymoney and trained in Kildare Place. 26 males, 17 females attend the weekly school; 1 established church, 36 presbyterian, and 6 R.c. . . . 26 males, 28 females attend the Sabbath school; 7 established church, 42 presbyterian, and 4 R.c. . . .

The house originally built by private subscription, lately repaired and fitted up by private contributions and a grant from the Education Society. It has been in connexion with the Education Society since November; connexion formed in consequence of an application to fit up by the Rev. Robert Park. *The rules are adhered to as strictly as possible* . . .³⁶

No. 19. Culduff, townland of Culduff.

Master, Francis McCambridge. A school held in this place for many years. Open all days of the week and at all seasons of the year when a convenient place for teaching can be procured.

He is a R.c.; not appointed by any authority; commenced a short time since with the hope of gaining support by teaching: 17 years of age, of fair moral character; teaches reading, writing, arithmetic and English grammar; was educated by his father who taught in the same school and in Ballymoney.³⁷ 22 males, 8 females attend the school; 29 presbyterians and 1 R.c. . . . Permission is given by the owner of a farm house to hold the school in his barn . . .

6 bibles, 4 testaments of the authorised version . . . 6 *Shorter catechism*, all provided by the parents of the children.

No proselytising attempted in this school. The teacher is very young but appears extremely attentive to his duty. Is much esteemed by those whose children are under his care . . .

No. 20. Ballyboyland, townland of Ballyboyland.

James Smith, master. School opened 2 Nov 1823. Held all days of the week and at every period of the year. A Sabbath school

³⁶ This sentence underlined in the ms.

³⁷ Possibly Philip McCambridge, master of the Claghry school, no. 21.

commenced the month of March. Wm Moore, Robt Henry, John Ramsey, Wm Stirling, Hugh Stirling, Mary Brown and Mary Stavely assist the master on the Sabbath. He is a presbyterian, appointed 1 Nov 1823 by the committee of the school . . .

The School is in connexion with the Education Society: formed when aid was given to building the school-house. The rules are tolerably strictly adhered to. The Rev. Wm Stavely, covenanting minister, Thos Matthews, John Stirling, James Moore, Simon Hill and George McGonigle, all in comfortable circumstances, form a committee to attend the school. They meet monthly and examine the children . . .

No. 6.³⁸ Balnamore Sunday school, townland of Balnacruskane.

Samuel Smith, esq., Mrs Smith and their children have instructed a number of pupils upon the Sabbath since 1819. They are presbyterians, self-appointed, of different ages, of most excellent character; teach the children to spell and read the scriptures. 7 males, 29 females attend the school. Never have permitted a question as to the religious persuasion of the children taught . . . All gratuitous instruction. The school held in the office houses of Mr Smith. No connexion with any society except the having received books gratuitously from the Sunday School Society for Ireland . . .

Mr Smith has in his employment a great many families. For the advantage of the rising generation Mr and Mrs Smith have devoted a portion of the Sabbath to the instruction, principally religious, of the children. They are assiduously aided by their family. There is here a great horror of proselytism.

No. 21. Claghry, townland of Claghry.

Philip McCambridge, master. School opened 17 Nov 1823. Held upon six days of the week and at all periods of the year. Is a R.c. Not appointed by any authority; 48 years of age; of good character; qualified to teach classics, mathematics, reading, writing, English grammar. Educated in Arboe, co. Tyrone, and in the parish of Finvoy. Not trained in Kildare Place. 21 males, 9 females attend the school: 29 presbyterian and 1 R.c. . . .

The school is held in an office house, 13 by 15 feet. A table and a few seats the only furniture. Rented by the teacher at 20s. per annum. Might cost in building £8 . . .

There are used in the school 4 bibles and 12 testaments of the authorised version, 2 Universal, 2 Sunday School Society and 12 Manson's *Spelling books*, 3 Manson's *Primer*, 1 Gough's *Arithmetic*, 13 *Shorter catechism*, *Voyage to Italy*, *Cauth of Arragon*, Vergil, Latin dictionary, *Belfast Newsletter* and *Irishman*.

³⁸ See above, p. 30.

To the credit of Mr McCambridge I must say that though a steady R.c. he never, so far as I am aware, endeavours to change the religious sentiments of the children under his care. He is attentive to his duty as a teacher. The parents support him so far as they can conveniently in spending their children to school. This is one of the poorest districts in the parish. The number of the scholars varies with the season of the year when the children are called to assist their parents in labouring their little farms or securing their produce.

General observations.

I have endeavoured with the most assiduous care to meet the wishes of the Commissioners of Enquiry into the state of education in this parish by giving the most minute answers to the queries transmitted. I have further to remark that this return includes all schools in what is now called the parish of Ballymoney. Though about 150 years since there was a division of this district into the parishes of Ballymoney and Tulloghgorr. In the internal arrangements of the schools I am clear that the query relative to attempts to proselytise has not the slightest foundation.

It will be seen that the great majority of the population of this parish are presbyterian. The teachers are generally of the same persuasion. In those instances where they are different there is equal, I might say, superior willingness to catechise the children in the principles of their own church.

One school, by mistake, I return though in a different parish, 'Drumadoon'. It is on the very boundary.

During the eight years I have been minister of the presbyterian congregation here, a body of people including rather more than nine hundred families, there has been a decided improvement in the nature and manner of education. A taste for something superior for their children than they themselves enjoyed has been generally prevailing amongst parents, and teachers better qualified are receiving encouragement.

Two causes have operated most powerfully in giving a tone to the educational feeling: the facilities for instruction for masters presented by both the classical and English departments of the Belfast Academical Institution³⁹—an institution which has been, in my view, one of the greatest blessings to the province of Ulster, and as such deserves the support of all who are well disposed to the moral improvement of the people—and the very excellent regulations adopted by the Kildare Street Association. The principles of the Education Society are most accordant with the liberal views of the population of this parish respecting their brethren of other denominations. The improved system of education taught in their Model School and which has been carried into full effect

³⁹ 189 pupils who had been instructed by James Thomson in the mathematical school of the Belfast Academical Institution became teachers (*Fourth rep. Ir. educ. enquiry*, p. 14).

in two instances in this district has been attended with the happiest effects. Above all their system of inspection and gratuity to the masters keeps alive the attention of both teachers and pupils. Most conscientiously can I bear testimony to these facts from personal observation.

With the best wishes that your exertions may be attended with many advantages to this country and lead to a further amelioration of the state of the people generally

I have the honor to be

Gentlemen,

Your obedient humble servant

Robert Park.

Signed and returned to his majesty's commissioners appointed to enquire into the state of education in Ireland

this 16th day of Sept. 1824

Robert Park
Presbyterian minister