The Investment in Education Report 1965 – Recollections and Reminiscences

(Paper submitted for a special issue of Irish Educational Studies).

Author's Biographical Details:

Áine Hyland is Emeritus Professor of Education at University College Cork, having been appointed professor in 1993. She was head of the Education Department from 1993 to 1999 and was vice-president of the university from 1999 until her retirement in 2006. She was a research assistant with the Investment in Education Team from summer 1962 until autumn 1964 and this paper is based on her recollections of the work of the team during that period.

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(Abstract of paper submitted for a special issue of Irish Educational Studies).

This paper is based on the recollections of its author of the work of the Investment in Education team from its inauguration in summer 1962 until the completion of its work in early 1965. The author was a research assistant to the team throughout the period of the study and was directly involved in the collection and analysis of the data on which the findings of the report was based. The paper describes the conditions under which the team operated. It adverts to some of the contentious issues which arose out of the data analysis. It explores the evolving roles of the Steering Committee, of senior civil servants in the Department of Education and of the Chairman and of individual members of the team during the two and a half year period. It discusses some of the external influences which impacted on members of the team and explores how the changing economic and cultural life of Ireland in the early 1960s affected their thinking. It touches on the setting up of the Development Branch in the Department of Education in 1966 and its premature disbandment by Minister Richard Burke in 1973.

The Investment in Education Report 1965 – Recollections and Reminiscences

Post-hoc Comments on the Investment in Education Report

Much has been written about the report *Investment in Education* and its subsequent impact on Irish education. A subsequent OECD review of national policy for education in Ireland stated (OECD 1991, 7):

> Ireland was the object of the very first OECD review of national policies for education as long ago as the early 1960s, and that review remains a landmark both in the national and international memory….. That report was remarkable for its comprehensiveness, its studied detachment, its theoretical underpinning, its systematic accumulation of a mass of baseline data, its detailed estimates of quantitative trends, and not least for the originality of the methods that it used to penetrate unexplored territory.

John Coolahan has described the report as "one of the foundation documents of modern Irish education …"(Coolahan 1980, 165). John Walsh has stated that "the work of the survey team paved the way for coherent educational planning based upon accurate statistical information" (Walsh 2009, 69). Seán O'Connor remarked in 1968 that the report "sign-posted the direction of educational reform and by highlighting our deficiencies, has offered a challenge that cannot be ignored"(O'Connor 1968, 233). The National Industrial and Economic Council wrote in May 1966 (NIEC 1966, 31):

> The sober and detailed factual analysis in Investment in Education, by challenging complacency and conventional wisdom and leaving no excuse for ignorance of relevant facts, has given an impetus towards that critical examination of our educational system in all its aspects that alone can lay the basis for permanent improvements.

Personal Background of Author

I was a research assistant to the Survey Team which produced the report, having been transferred from my post as an executive officer (EO) in the Buildings Branch of the Department of Education in September 1962. In this paper, I record some of my recollections and reminiscences of the work of the Investment in Education Survey Team from its inauguration in summer 1962 until the publication of the report in December 1965.

In September 1959, I had entered Carysfort Training College, with a view to becoming a primary school teacher. However, my experience in Carysfort was disappointing and unchallenging, not what I expected when I had enthusiastically accepted the "call to training. When I received a letter from the civil service commissioners in late November informing me that I was among the first candidates to be recruited for the 1959/60 intake of executive officers, I gladly accepted the offer and waved good-bye to a teaching career. Discipline in Carysfort was strict; the uniform was ugly and unflattering; boarding was compulsory, even for students like

myself whose parents lived in Dublin; access to the very limited library facilities was strictly controlled; and the educational atmosphere was anti-intellectual and not what I had expected in a third-level institution with such high-calibre students. When I informed the then President of Carysfort, the formidable Mother Teresita, of my decision to accept the offer of the Executive Officer post, she was not at all pleased. Her response was "Do you realise, my child, that you are leaving an honoured profession for a mere job?" She told me I would also have to re-pay (to the State) the cost of my training for the three months to date – a not insignificant amount which was subsequently deducted from my monthly salary (of less than £40 a month) for a period of over a year.

On 6th December 1959, I presented myself to the Establishment Office of the Department of Education in Marlborough St., Dublin. I had been allocated by the civil service commissioners to the Department of Education – probably because I was a fluent Irish speaker, having been brought up in an Irish speaking family. In those days, civil servants in the Department of Education were expected to be able to conduct the business of the Department through the medium of Irish, which was the lingua franca of many senior civil servants in the Department. The fact that my father was an inspector of national schools, and an employee of the Department of Education, may or may not have been a factor in the decision to allocate me to the Dept. of Education.

Having signed the various documents then required of all newly-appointed civil servants, including a declaration to obey the Official Secrets Act, I took up duty on 6th December 1959 in the Buildings Branch of the Primary Education Section of the Department. This was an open office on the second floor of Tyrone House overlooking the front square. It was home to twelve EOs (ten of whom were men), two HEOs (both men), and two clerical officers. Everybody in the branch seemed very old to me; the average age of the staff was early-fifties. I was not yet 18 years of age and I had spent the previous six years in a convent boarding school. Training in the civil service at that time was a case of "sitting by Nellie", i.e. a quasi-apprenticeship system, for a period of about six weeks – the last recruited EO in the section trained the new recruit. After my training, I was given responsibility for negotiating and allocating grants for building and improving national schools in Counties Kerry and Offaly – a responsibility I was to retain for the next two and a half years. Although the Buildings Branch was not regarded as a particularly scintillating section for young enthusiastic civil servants, I enjoyed my time there and used any spare time I had reading earlier correspondence on files – in some cases the files dated back to the mid nineteenth century when the schools were first recognised as national schools. There was no systematic approach to archiving old building files – the decision was made on practical grounds – if the file was too thick to fit into the designated cubby hole, the old papers (sometimes over 100 years old) were taken out and archived, otherwise the files remained intact. Many of them provided very interesting reading, containing as they did the original correspondence from the early days of the Board of National Education in the 1830s.

During the summer of 1962, I was called to the office of the Assistant Secretary, Seán MacGearailt. He informed me that a team was about to be appointed to carry out a survey of Irish education, under the aegis of the OECD, and that an EO and a HEO were to be provided by the Department of Education to support the work of the team.

Charlie Smith from the Technical Instruction Branch (TIB) of the Department would be the HEO and I was to be the EO. He explained that there would be a lot of statistical work involved in the survey and that since I had got honours Maths in my Leaving Certificate, he thought I would be eminently qualified for the work. The work of the team was to begin immediately and I took up my new position at the beginning of September 1962.

It was an exciting assignment, and one which I was delighted to accept. Until then, exciting events in the Department of Education had been rare. There had been an occasion in 1961 when an open invitation had been issued to everyone in the Dept to attend an important talk which the Secretary, T. O Raifeartaigh, was to deliver in the ballroom of the Gresham Hotel. Since Ireland had applied for membership of the then EEC at the time and some civil servants, including myself, were attending evening classes in oral French in anticipation of Irish membership, I expected that the talk would be about education in the new Europe. I was mistaken – the talk was about the two St. Patricks – which I afterwards learned was the topic of the Secretary's Ph.D. thesis. There was another exciting occasion, in 1963, when I was asked to act as one three rapporteurs[i] at a weekend meeting of the Council of Design[ii], which was held in the La Touche Hotel in Greystones. I bought a new dress in Arnott's for that assignment.

We had heard rumours about the so-called "pilot project". We knew that Dr. Patrick Lynch, then chairman of Aer Lingus and a lecturer in economics in UCD would be the team leader. The other three members of the team were to be William J. Hyland, seconded from the Statistics section of the United Nations Office in New York; Martin O'Donoghue, an economist in Trinity College and Pádraig Ó Nualláin, an inspector of mathematics in the Secondary Branch of the Department of Education. (I had met Pádraig before, in 1958, when he inspected the Maths teaching in the secondary school I attended[iii]). The office space made available to the team was limited – two rooms on the top floor of No. 27 Marlborough St. under the attic. The team members had desks in the front room and Charlie Smith, myself and a typist worked in a small back room. Not surprisingly, Paddy Lynch and Martin O'Donoghue tended to work from their university bases rather than suffer the cramped and stuffy conditions of No. 27. The floor below us was occupied by the staff of the Commission on Higher Education – they were there before and after the Investment in Education team – they had started their work in 1960 and did not finish until 1967.

The reaction of my Buildings Branch colleagues to my transfer from the Buildings Branch to the Survey Team reflected the general scepticism of the civil servants in the Department about the proposed project. There was much teasing about my appointment to support the new team – who were regarded as outsiders who would know nothing about Irish education. It was inconceivable to my colleagues that two economists and a statistician could have anything to contribute to the Department's knowledge of education. After all, hadn't the reports of the Council of Education which had been published recently[iv] said all that needed to be said about education in Ireland? (I was familiar with the Council of Education – my father had shown me both reports – and the Chairman of the Council, Rev. Monsignor Martin Brenan, was one of "my" managers – he was manager of some Co. Offaly schools, and when I was in the Buildings Branch, I had corresponded with him about a grant for the improvement of a school under his management. When I sought approval from senior

officials in Building Branch for a more generous grant than the norm for the building costs of Monsignor Brenan's school, as requested by him, this was readily granted and a note on the file indicated that given Monsignor Brenan's considerable contribution to the State by chairing the Council of Education, it was fitting that the Department should sanction an enhanced grant). Moreover, my colleagues were in no doubt that Ireland was fortunate in having the best education system in the world, so why did we need to change that? The fact that we had no evidence to prove this assertion was neither here nor there. Like DeValera, a good civil servant at that time needed no evidence – he/she could look into his/her own heart and make an accurate judgment.

Washington Policy Conference on Economic Growth and Investment in Education, 1961.

The decision that Ireland would be a pilot country for an OECD project on investment in education had been taken by the Irish government following Ireland's participation in the Washington Policy Conference in 1961 on *Economic Growth and Investment in Education*. The OECD was a new international organisation at that time – having superseded the Organisation for European Economic Co-Operation (OEEC) which was formed under the Marshall Plan for the reconstruction of Europe after World War II. The organisation was re-named the OECD in December, 1960, to allow for the addition of the U.S. and Canada to its membership. Intellectually, the Washington conference achieved what was described as a "breakthrough" in thinking about education and economic growth (IRE 1961, 484-6). Education would no longer be regarded merely as "current consumption" – expenditure on education would be seen as an investment which would contribute to economic expansion. This thinking was very much in line with the concepts underpinning T.K. Whitaker's First Programme for Economic Expansion (GoI 1958), concepts which would be more explicitly developed in the Second National Programme published in 1964 (GoI 1964). It was echoed in the speech delivered by the Minister for Education, Patrick Hillery, when he launched the project on 31st October 1962 and stated[v]:

> One aspect of education on which perhaps there has been inadequate emphasis in the past is the role of education in connection with economic development. This is a subject to which increasing attention is now being given internationally. It was, therefore, with alacrity that the Government responded to a suggestion from the OECD that a survey should be made in Ireland of long-term educational needs. Such a survey seemed particularly opportune at a time when the Government is preparing its second programme for economic expansion and when the prospects of Ireland's association with the European Economic Community are becoming more immediate. At a recent conference in Rome, at which I was present, the European Ministers for Education, under the aegis of the Council of Europe, adopted a resolution which recognised the importance of education as a key factor in economic growth.

Following the Washington conference, the Education Investment and Planning Programme (EIP) was initiated, and Ireland was one of a number of northern European countries which agreed to participate in the programme. In parallel with EIP, a similar programme was initiated for Mediterranean countries – the Mediterranean Regional Project (MRP), in which six southern European countries participated. Other non-European countries also embarked on similar studies, most

notably Argentina (OECD 1967) and Peru, with the financial support of the Ford Foundation and the technical support of the OECD. The decision that Ireland would engage with the EIP programme was enthusiastically endorsed by senior officials in the Department of Finance, who were impatient with the laissez-faire attitude of some senior civil servants in the Department of Education, most of whom had shown little or no enthusiasm for challenging the status quo in Irish education (O Buachalla 1996, 12).

The Investment in Education Team – Cultural Strangers?

Some commentators have suggested that the Investment in Education report was the "product of OECD experts" (Tovey and Share 2000). This was not true. Unlike later OECD studies of Irish education (OECD 1991 and 2004), OECD staff played only a very limited role in the Investment in Education study and had no part in drafting the report. As the first country to become involved in the EIP programme, Ireland led the way in developing the methodology used in the national surveys. Papers prepared by members of the Irish team testify to this. For example, a detailed technical working paper entitled "*Educational Forecasting in Ireland"* written by Bill Hyland, was submitted for the EIP meeting in Dublin in May 1963. Methodological papers were prepared by other members of the team, for example a paper on the Manpower/Educational Activities of the Irish IEP team was prepared by Martin O'Donoghue for a joint EIP/MRP meeting in Paris in Dec.1965. The similarity between the methodology used in the Irish Report and that used in other OECD reports[vi] is remarkable. There was of course, regular interaction between the members of the team and their colleagues in the OECD office in Paris, particularly J.R. Gass, Deputy Director for Scientific Affairs and Kjell Eide, economist in the OECD and subsequently deputy under-secretary of state in the Ministry of Education and Church Affairs in Norway. Other experts who had contributed to the Washington conference, e.g. Professor John Vaizey of Oxford (a friend of Paddy Lynch); Professor Tinbergen from the Dutch Economic Institute and Professor Edding also kept in touch with the team.

It has been suggested that the Investment in Education report was a "cultural stranger" on the Irish educational scene (O'Sullivan, 1992). Many people believed that Bill Hyland, in particular, coming to Ireland after ten years in the United Nations Office in New York, would be unfamiliar with Irish education and would have little to contribute to the study. While Bill may have been unconventional and intellectually questioning, his family background was conventional and traditional. He was born in Cork in 1925 – his mother was a national school teacher in Ballindangan in north Co. Cork, and his father was a vocational school teacher (he taught Business Studies) in the vocational/technical schools in Mitchelstown and Fermoy. Bill attended the national school in Ballindangan in the 1930s, and then went to the CBS in Fermoy and to St. Colman's Diocesan College in Fermoy where he sat the Leaving Cert. in 1943. He entered St. Patrick's College Maynooth as a seminarian, with the intention of becoming a priest. He spent three years in Maynooth where he was a contemporary and a friend of Jeremiah Newman, afterwards to become Professor of Sociology in Maynooth and Bishop of Limerick, and a member of the Steering Committee of the Investment in Education Study. Bill was involved in setting up a philosophical society in Maynooth and was initially a very active and engaged student. However, he was reprimanded on more than one occasion by the Junior and Senior Deans for his

"singularity", and he became increasingly disillusioned and frustrated by the insistence of the church authorities on intellectual conformity.

He was strongly influenced by the writings of K.R Popper and often referred to the following sentences in the Preface to the first edition of Popper's *Open Society* (Popper, 1945) to justify his (i.e. Bill's) questioning of authority and his critique of the status quo:

> If our civilisation is to survive, we must break with the habit of deference to great men. Great men may make great mistakes: ….some of the greatest leaders of the past supported the perennial attack on freedom and reason. Their influence, too rarely challenged, continues to mislead those on whose defence civilisation depends, and to divide them. The responsibility for this tragic and possibly fatal division becomes ours if we hesitate to be outspoken in our criticism of what admittedly is a part of our intellectual heritage. By our reluctance to criticise some of it, we may help to destroy it all.

Bill left Maynooth in September 1946 and also left the Catholic Church. In a paper written many years later, he stated: "I chose during my adult life, not to be a member of any organised religious group or church[vii]". He went to UCC where he graduated with a Bachelors degree in Maths and Maths Physics in 1948[viii]. He was a Masters student under the supervision of Professor M.D. McCarthy, when in June 1949, he was appointed a statistician (following a civil service recruitment process) to the newly-set up Central Statistics Office (CSO)[ix], where Roy Geary was founding Director. He was sent by the CSO in October 1949 to Washington under the Marshall Plan where he studied statistical methods in government departments and non-governmental institutions for a period of nine months. On his return to the CSO in Dublin in June 1950, he worked in Trade Statistics for over two years and in 1952, he was appointed statistician in the United Nations Statistical Office in New York.

When the Investment in Education team was being assembled ten years later, both Roy Geary and Donal McCarthy suggested that Bill would be a suitable member of the team and following correspondence with McCarthy, Bill was seconded from the U.N. for a two year period. When he was in the U.N., Bill had kept in touch with developments in Ireland and he looked forward to being involved in an OECD-supported survey of long-term educational needs in Ireland.

Launch of the Investment in Education Study, October 1962, and meetings of the Steering Committee

On 31st October 1962, the Minister for Education, Dr. Patrick Hillary, formally launched the Investment in Education study at the first meeting of the Steering Committee. The terms of reference of the study were specific and limited – a fact often forgotten by subsequent commentators – and were set out under eight headings. Basically the study was to prepare an inventory of the existing position in relation to the existing and projected need for skilled manpower – to frame educational targets – to estimate future enrolments at different levels – to assess future demand for educational facilities and consider arrangements for ongoing updating of projections. It was to be an evidence-based study, and as I had been told by Seán Mac Gearailt when he informed me that I was to be seconded to work with the team, statistical analysis and mathematical projections would be a major part of the work. The survey team was not asked to make recommendations - a paper prepared for the OECD on

completion of the study in 1965 re-iterated that "Our task was to collect and analyse data on the educational system, and also to assess its adequacy in meeting various economic and other objectives. It was not our function to make any recommendations, or to suggest policies, for remedying defects in the system".[x]

The work of the Survey Team was guided by a Steering Committee, chaired by Seán MacGearailt, Assistant Secretary of the Department of Education. Among the fourteen members of the steering committee were Mr. J.R. Whitty, Principal Officer in the Department of Finance; Dr. M.D. McCarthy, Director of the Central Statistics Committee; Dr. R.C. Geary, Director of the Economic Research Institute; Barry Desmond, Education Officer of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions; Michael O Flannagáin, Chief Inspector, TIB; and Dr. Jeremiah Newman, Professor of Sociology, St. Patrick's College. Maynooth. The functions of the Steering Committee were to advise the national team and for that purpose (a) to consider and approve the broad general lines of approach to the assignment and (b) to consult at regular intervals with the team Director.

The steering committee met regularly during the early months of the project, but its meetings seem to have been less frequent in the later period. It is not clear whether minutes of these meetings were taken and kept – if they were, I have never seen them, nor are there references to them in any subsequent discussions of the report. None of the surviving members of the Steering Committee have any recollection of minutes.

Martin O'Donoghue recently confirmed that the meetings of the steering committee became increasingly contentious as the work of the team progressed. Initially, the steering committee considered and approved the broad general lines of approach being taken by the Survey Team, as was required in the terms of reference. During the second year of the study, when the basic data had been collected and inequalities in social, gender and geographical enrolment patterns at second and third level became evident, some members of the Steering Committee reacted negatively to some of the hypotheses suggested for the projections of future enrolments[xi]. For example, when hypotheses were proposed which suggested the provision of publicly-funded school transport to second level schools, Dr. Newman objected on the basis that the Catholic Church would never agree to teenage boys and girls travelling together on school buses. Bill Hyland saw his role as coming up with solutions to identified problems and at the next meeting he suggested that the buses would have a door on each side with a vertical partition down the middle of the bus – one side of the bus would be for girls and the other side would be for boys. Bill carefully explained that it was essential that the partition should be vertical not horizontal. At that time the school bus apartheid in the southern states of the U.S. was a source of international debate – where black pupils were required to sit at the back of the bus and white pupils at the front. Apparently this suggestion caused an uproar – most likely the objectors thought that Bill was making fun of them, but as I came to realise in later years, his approach was not deliberatively provocative. What was seen by his critics as Bill's argumentative and even mischievous approach, was justified (as Bill saw it) by Popper's then recently published *Conjectures and Refutations* – where Popper argued "that knowledge progresses by *conjectures;* that these conjectures are controlled by criticism, that is by attempted *refutations*, which include severely critical tests" (Popper 1963).

External Influences
Suspicion of Bill by some members of the Steering Committee and of the Department of Education, was not helped by the fact that he had sought out and met regularly with individuals who were known to be critics of the education system. One of the first people Bill arranged to meet after coming back to Ireland was Patrick Cannon, Head of Sandymount High School, a lay Catholic secondary school which had been set up in spite of Church opposition in the 1950s. Cannon was Secretary to the Federation of Irish Secondary Schools, and in that capacity had authored a report entitled *Investment in Education in the Republic of Ireland, with some comparative statistics* which was published in May 1962, just weeks before Bill had arrived in Ireland. The study was sub-titled "*A Study of Policy Considerations in Post-Primary Education Related to Economic Growth and Possible Integration in the European Community".* A second volume of the report, referred to as a supplement, was published in June 1963.

Pat Cannon, and a number of other critics of the system, were seen as thorns in the side of the Department of Education, and files documenting the "activities" of these people including their public statements or papers or articles, were kept in a special filing-cabinet in the Department Headquarters (Ceann Oifig). When I was in the Buildings Branch I was aware of these files, as one had to be cautious when dealing with enquiries from or about the schools in which they were involved. The files were generally referred to as "Comhad Cannon[xii]" or "Comhad Sheehy-Skeffington" or whatever the name of the "offending" person was.

Bill was also a regular attendee at soirées in Hazelbrook House, Terenure, the home of Owen Sheehy-Skeffington and his wife Andrée, a French woman who had graduated from the Sorbonne. These open soirées were held fortnightly, and they were attended by various individuals – some of whom had issues with Church or State authorities or who felt their concerns were being ignored or not taken seriously. Members of a small organisation called STOP (an anti-corporal punishment in schools group) among whom was Constance O'Connell, a mother who was vehemently opposed to corporal punishment, were among the regular attendees. It was at these soirées that Bill became aware of the correspondence between Peter Tyrell, a former inmate of Letterfrack Industrial school, and Skeff. Bill was deeply upset about the conditions of industrial schools as described in this correspondence and he felt morally bound to find some way to advert to these in the Investment in Education report. Tyrrell had been a pupil in Letterfrack Industrial School and corresponded with Skeff between 1958 and 1965 about the brutal conditions he (Tyrrell) had endured there. Skeff encouraged Tyrrell to write his autobiography but before the book was completed, Tyrrell committed suicide (in 1967). The drafts of his book were later edited by Diarmuid Whelan and published by Irish Academic Press in 2006 under the title *Founded on Fear.*

Bill was thwarted in his desire to include some reference to industrial schools in the Investment in Education report. All he could manage to insert in the report was the sentence: "Reformatory and Industrial Schools come within the purview of this report only insofar as they are centres for the provision of education". However, the Appendix to the report contains a nine-page section with some damning statistical tables and thinly-veiled criticism of some practices in this sector, especially in boys' industrial schools. Two years after the Investment in Education report was published,

the government set up a committee, chaired by District Justice Eileen Kennedy to carry out a survey of Reformatory and Industrial Schools.

Other individuals whom Bill met on occasion included Roy Johnston, who at that time was involved in setting up the Wolfe Tone Society[xiii]. The Wolfe Tone Society was closely aligned with Sinn Féin – and people like Cathal Goulding, then Chief of Staff of the IRA, were invited to speak at meetings of the society. Bill also visited the Connolly Bookshop, run by the Irish Workers' Party (formerly the Communist Party of Ireland - CPI) where he discussed and bought some of their publications. On a few occasions he met Michael O'Riordan, a fellow Corkman and the founder of the CPI, whom he admired greatly for his courage in fighting with the XVth International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War. On at least one occasion, Bill told me that he believed he was being watched when he entered the Connolly Bookshop. I was sceptical about this, but recently, at a talk which he gave in UCC, Barry Desmond mentioned that during the Investment in Education days, members of the Steering Committee were warned by Jeremiah Newman that Bill Hyland was a Communist. Bill was never a Communist – he was a supporter of the Labour party all his life. He was passionately committed to issues of social justice and he hoped that the Investment in Education study by highlighting some of the social injustices in Irish education would, in time, contribute to an amelioration of these injustices.

In March 1963, the Labour Party issued its policy document on education - *Challenge and Change in Education.* This document which was wide-ranging in its coverage of educational issues had been prepared by a Working Committee on Education consisting of Barry Desmond, Chairman, Catherine McGuinness, Secretary and a number of other members of the Labour Party. The document stated:

> The reform of our present system of education is one of our Party's great social objectives. Governments in the past have lacked the courage and vision to tackle this problem. The deficiencies within the system are so blatant and the remedies so urgent that all those who are truly concerned should support our policy.

Among its many recommendations, the document proposed "the setting up of a National Planning Branch in the Department of Education ….. the first task of this planning branch would be to continue the survey of our educational system ….. educational planning is not a task which can be completed once and for all … plans need constant revision…". This was one of many similarities between issues raised in the Labour Party policy document and issues subsequently raised in the Investment in Education report.

Another publication which highlighted the social inequalities of the Irish education system at the time was the Tuairim-London pamphlet on Irish Education which was issued in 1962. The Tuairim group who wrote that report comprised graduates of Irish universities who had emigrated and were working in London[xiv] (Finn 2013). The pamphlet was critical of the Irish attitude to education which they maintained "is still Victorian and is based on a conception of class which is no longer valid but which the systems themselves perpetuate". It maintained that "Education has remained static for so long in Ireland because it suits powerful sections of society, the middle classes, the churches and the politicians to keep it so". It argued that "if

Ireland is to play a part in a world becoming increasingly competitive and ruthless, its education must be geared to its economic and social as well as its spiritual needs". Shortly after the publication of this pamphlet, Bill Hyland met Joy Rudd, a sociologist and one of the authors of the pamphlet. He kept in regular contact with her and they often discussed the progress of the Investment in Education survey.

Logistic Challenges for the Survey Team

In hindsight, it is remarkable that with the limited resources (human and otherwise) at its disposal, the Survey Team managed to achieve so much in such a relatively short period. (The Investment in Education report is over 400 pages long and the Annexes and Appendices contain almost 700 pages). Population, labour force and educational statistics were sparse by any standards and unlike (OECD) EIP and MRP teams in other countries, the Irish Investment in Education team itself had to prepare labour force, population and education enrolment projections. An analysis of the CSO census of population data for 1961 was not yet available when the survey team began its work and at that time the CSO did not prepare population or labour force projections. Statistics in the Department of Education were very limited. The Statistics section was staffed by one HEO[xv] and two writing/clerical assistants. There had never been a professional statistician employed in the Department of Education. While schools were required to submit "October returns" every year for administrative purposes, and these were pursued diligently by the two clerical assistants in the statistics section, there was a significant backlog in the compilation and analysis of these statistics. When the survey team started its work in September 1962, the most recent available educational statistics were for the school year 1959-60. Moreover the range of data available was very limited so it was clear from the start that the first task of the team would be to identify and collect data that would enable them to address their terms of reference. By the end of 1962, it was agreed that the Survey Team would carry out a census of school enrolments and school facilities on 1st February 1963. This "February Census" as it came to be known was repeated the following year and thus the Survey Team had complete control over the data which was sought and was enabled to collect a wide range of data.

The logistic challenges involved in preparing, distributing and collecting the questionnaires, not to mention analysing them, was considerable. The "technology" available to the Survey Team consisted of one old-fashioned type-writer; a Gestetner machine for reproducing more than ten copies of documents (there were no photocopiers in those days); a carbon-based copier on which one could produce up to ten copies; a calculating machine – large, unwieldy and operated by cranking a wheel - a slide rule and a set of log tables. When the February census questionnaires were returned, the challenge of collating and analysing them had to be faced. I was the only research assistant. There were almost 5,000 questionnaires from national schools; over 800 from second-level schools and up to a hundred from other educational institutions, private and publicly-funded[xvi]. There was no question of asking the two staff in the statistics section to help with this work, as they were already considerably in arrears in collating the October returns. I was friendly with one of the staff of the section[xvii] and I knew that she had access to and was trained to operate a large comptometer machine which was located on the top of the stone stairs in what was referred to at the time as the Training College Building (the second large building facing Marlborough St.). She agreed to show me how to operate the comptometer and when all the February returns were received, I spent evening after

evening, when the day staff had gone home, often working until midnight, entering the data onto the machine and carrying out some preliminary analyses. This was done illicitly, as comptometer machines at that time were regarded as specialised technology, to be used only by specially trained staff. However, since the work of the Survey Team could not progress without reliable and up-to-date educational data, I felt justified in taking a direct initiative. The collated information was thus available to the team by summer 1963.

I was personally fascinated by the evidence that was emerging from the ongoing analyses of data. As various findings emerged, they led to further questions. Every member of the team as well as those of us 'on the executive' (i.e. in the back room) were encouraged by Paddy Lynch to engage with the findings. As a still-young civil servant (I was not yet 21 years of age), I really appreciated the respect with which my views and opinions were sought and listened to. Paddy Lynch was a consummate gentleman, unfailingly polite, a man of extraordinary integrity and an ideal chairman for the study. He did not engage directly in drafting the report but he intervened regularly, especially between Bill Hyland and Martin O'Donoghue, to ensure that the wording of various sections was balanced and that it took account of the views of all members of the team. He also maintained contact with Sean MacGearailt and other senior staff of the Department of Education, who were kept fully appraised of the ongoing work and the findings of the team.

Methodologies Used by the Team

The methodological documents prepared during the first year of the study[xviii] indicate a highly technical and statistical approach to educational planning – as was the norm internationally at that time. Bill Hyland spent endless hours attempting to develop a mathematical formula to project educational demand and needs in Ireland for the following five to ten years, identifying and articulating the many variables which needed to be taken into account. There were numerous discussions about how to balance manpower needs and social demand. While the economic imperative was never lost sight of, social and cultural aspects of educational planning were also on the agenda. For example, the Educational Forecasting Paper of May 1963 stated that

> The divergences between 'economic' and 'social' demand reflect freedom of choice to the extent that it may be expressed in demands for education based on non-economic grounds. These demands, even if they are not guided primarily by job opportunities in Ireland, are no less real in that they are among the factors to which political decisions are most sensitive. It is not suggested, of course, that economic and social demands are independent of each other.

It was eventually conceded that no mathematical formula, however complex, could adequately incorporate all relevant variables. However, this did not take away from the need to be open and transparent about the assumptions which underpinned the various projections. Inevitably, even the articulation of assumptions and hypotheses resulted in controversy, and some members of the Steering Committee expressed their concern that projecting and publishing future patterns of social or manpower behaviour would become a self-fulfilling prophecy.

By spring of 1964, an outline of the report began to emerge. Early drafts of the report were made available to senior civil servants in the relevant sections of the Department of Education, both as a matter of courtesy and to ensure that there would be no factual errors or major surprises in the final report. To my surprise, suggested changes were few and far between. For example, while I was shocked by some of the findings emerging from the analysis of the February Census, these findings did not evoke the dramatic response I had anticipated from the Department officials. Among the findings which I did not anticipate (even after almost three years in the Buildings Branch) was the finding that less than half of the national schools had flush toilets – more than 50% only had dry latrines. Similarly, only 50% of the schools had electric power plugs[xix], and this was at a time when the Department was discussing the provision of (electrically powered) audio-visual aids in schools. I had expected that there would be an outcry from the senior officials of the Buildings Branch when this data was sent to them for their comments – but their only comment was to correct some typographical and syntax errors in the paper which the team had prepared. Similarly, data showing that participation in second level schooling was determined more by geographical and social factors than by its availability "for all able and willing to profit by it" did not evoke the kind of response that I anticipated from the Department civil servants, who had not previously felt it necessary to address the haphazard availability of second level education.

As work on drafting the report continued, further hypotheses were proposed to underpin the pupil projections. At second level this necessitated work on a major and detailed study of enrolment patterns in the catchment areas of existing second level schools, on a county by county basis. This study, which became known as the "Location Analysis" required that every primary and second level school in the country would be marked on an Ordnance Survey sheet, and pupils in primary schools were "allocated" to the nearest second level school[xx]. I still have the large-scale Ordnance Survey map for an area of the West of Ireland where a pilot study was carried out to develop an appropriate methodology for this exercise. The study laid the basis of one of the first major pieces of work undertaken in the Development Branch when free education was announced in 1966 – the County Reports.

Use of New Computer Technologies

Bill Hyland was very interested in developments taking place in the world of computer technology at this time. ICT (International Computers and Tabulators) had opened a facility in Dublin's Harcourt St. around 1963 where they installed an ICT 1300 series computer which processed data encoded on punch cards. It was agreed that the Survey Team could buy time on this ICT computer and Bill wrote programmes which would analyse data on the use of resources in National Schools. I used to deliver the punch-cards to ICT in Harcourt St. on the way home from the office in the evening and the following morning I would pick up the results of the card-crunching which had taken place during the night. Some of the results of this analysis are contained in Chapter 9 of the Investment in Education report and further explained in Appendix XII.C. *Note on Strategy Evaluation Using a Computer.* In the appendix Bill wrote:

> One of the most important technical aspects of educational planning is the development of techniques for accurate and detailed evaluation of the consequences of alternative strategies. This has always proved very difficult

> in the past. The advent of the computer has meant a significant transformation of the conditions under which such evaluations are made. It is now possible to programme a computer to analyse in great detail the consequences of a large number of different strategies.

This short appendix is an indication of the extent to which Bill was always a step ahead of his time – the section was written 50 years ago! It was to be another twenty years before desktop computers became generally available for this kind of work.

Personal Relationships

By summer 1964, the basic work of the Survey Team was close to completion. A first draft of the report was almost finalised and virtually all the data required for the report had been compiled. By this stage, I had fallen in love with Bill and we had begun to go out together socially – given that our shared interest was education, it was not surprising that these social outings included attending the Sheehy-Skeffington soirées, or visiting Pat Cannon's house in Ballsbridge or Joy Rudd's house in Dublin 8. Bill also brought me out to dinner on occasions – a favourite was the Trocadero on Andrew St. which was a very sophisticated venue for a young civil servant! My parents were not very happy about this development – Bill was seventeen years older than I was – he was closer to my parents' age than he was to mine! Moreover, my father was not impressed by Bill's unconventional ideas – he knew him from meeting him in the Department and was aware of Bill's tendency to challenge the status quo, and authority. At one stage, Paddy Lynch suggested that Bill was a modern-day Vercingetorix – except that he (Bill) not only challenged the state, he also challenged the church.[xxi]

Some senior civil servants in the Department were also concerned about my romantic involvement with Bill. In those days, a female civil servant who was known to be "going out" with a male in her office was invariably moved from that office as soon as the liaison became known to her superiors. In spring 1964, I was called into the Establishment Office where Bill Purcell (Establishment Officer) and Micheal Ó Flannagáin (a member of the Steering Committee) informed me that they had been made aware that I was going out with Bill and that there was now an issue as to whether I could remain working with the Survey Team. They also indicated their own personal concerns about the situation – they pointed out the considerable gap in age between Bill and myself and they reminded me that Bill was "a man of the world" whereas I was not long out of a convent boarding school. Micheál O Flannagáin, who was a quiet and gentle man, added that he felt that he had a duty as an inspector and a colleague of my father, to advise me to discontinue the relationship.

Fortunately, Paddy Lynch seems to have intervened to ensure that I was not moved out of the section before the end of the summer, when Bill left Dublin and returned to the U.N. – to the statistical office of the Economic Commission for Europe in Geneva. Paddy had always appreciated my commitment to and my hard work for the project and he asked Charlie Smith to make a case to the Department of Finance for a special ex-gratia payment in recognition of my work, which he (Paddy) recognised was beyond the call of duty[xxii]. He also indicated that my name should be mentioned in the report, in view of my considerable engagement throughout the period of the survey. I heard afterwards that the Department of Finance approved payment of an ex-gratia sum of £100 but I never received it. My decision at the end of October 1964

to pack my belongings into my red weekend suitcase and to follow Bill to Geneva was regarded as unorthodox in the extreme, and it was decided not to include my name in the report nor to pay me the ex-gratia award!

Within days of arriving in Geneva, I got a job in the Statistical Office of the International Labour Office, and Bill and I got married early in 1965. Since the marriage ban on married women working in the civil service was still in operation in Ireland, I could not have remained working in the Irish Civil Service once I had got married. I had now got a good job in the ILO – a job I would not have to leave after marriage as there was no marriage ban in the ILO.

Final Drafting of the Report

During the following months, drafts of the report wended their way by post between Geneva and Dublin. According to Pádraig O Nualláin, the first drafts of the report were written mostly by Bill Hyland. (Pádraig recently suggested that Bill wrote almost 90% of the report). Significant re-drafting was required to simplify many of these drafts and to make them accessible to the general reader. I still have some pages of the initial drafts to which other members of the team suggested amendments. For example, in a draft of the Location Analysis appendix, Bill had suggested that population projections could be made for each Registrars' District using Census of Population data. In the margins of that page, Pádraig O Nualláin challenged this proposal with the statement "*For 655 areas? If you can do that, I shall eat this report, appendices and all."* In that same section, Bill suggested that in centres where there were currently three separate second level schools - a boys' school, a girls' school and a vocational school - an alternative pattern "*might be the comprehensive or community school".* This was the first time the term *community school* had been suggested (this was late 1964) – and Padraig's comment was "*Surely the plain people of Ireland are sufficiently confused as it is, without introducing more undefined terms".*

The final draft of the report itself was with the printer by early 1965, but in those days printing and publishing was a slow and tedious process. It was December 1965 before the Investment in Education report was published and it was some months later before the Annexes and Appendices were available.

Sequel

Following the publication of the Investment in Education report, the Department of Education was galvanised into action. In the Introduction to the report, Paddy Lynch had written:

> We see in the Report only a beginning, a foundation on which others may build. There is no finality about it, nor could there be, for change is perennial and will not stop this year or next. The process which the report initiates, should be regarded as a continuing one if the intention of the report is to be realised.

The report recommended the setting up of an educational development unit within the Department of Education "to continue the kind of work that this survey has begun". This recommendation was immediately accepted by government and Bill was invited to come back to Ireland to take up the position of statistician in the new Development

Branch. The NIEC Comments on Investment in Education, issued in May 1966, stated:

> The team believed that the head of the new unit (who we understand is in process of being appointed) should be a first-class statistician with administrative experience, who should be given sufficient standing "to command adequate consideration for his views and those of his unit in the criticism and development of policy.

However, Bill was not appointed as head of the Development Branch – it is likely that internal forces within the Department objected to his appointment at this level. After some negotiation, he accepted the position of senior statistician (at Principal Officer level) and came back to Ireland on 1st September 1966. It was an appointment that he looked forward to as he hoped it would provide him with the opportunity to contribute to educational policy and to help build a more equitable education system. The level of his appointment in the Irish civil service hierarchy was well below the level he held in the U.N. and the salary was much lower. Moreover, although Bill was only 41 years of age, he reckoned (correctly as it happened) that he would never be promoted from that position, given the promotion structures of the Department of Education. And given the marriage ban in Ireland, I would not be allowed to work in the civil service, although if we stayed in Geneva there would be no problem with my continuing to work there. However, we both willingly accepted the opportunity to be part of a new and reforming Ireland.

The decision by Richard Burke in 1973 to close the Development Branch and to disband its staff was a bitter disappointment for Bill. While he still had his position as senior statistician in the department, he no longer had a formal role in policy development. His input to educational policy was sought by senior management in the department on some subsequent occasions but the extent to which he was consulted depended on his relationship with those in top management. There were long periods during which he felt marginalised and when his views were not sought.

In retrospect, I can see that the closure of the Development Branch meant that Bill needed to find an alternative outlet for his talents in hypothesising and planning educational innovation. Therefore, when the opportunity arose, in 1974, for Bill and myself to become involved in the setting up of a new type of primary school, the multi-denominational Dalkey School Project, we readily embraced the challenge. But that is another story, for another day!

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[i] With Tony Ó Dálaigh and Máire Ní Chionnaith.
[ii] In Sep 1963 in response to the growing criticism of the teaching of design, the Minister for Education, Dr. Patrick Hillery, appointed a Council of Design to survey, evaluate and advise him on all design activity. Its members included Sybil Connolly, Louis le Brocquy, Maurice McGonigal, Micheal O'Flanagan and Sam Stephenson and it was chaired by Dr. Michael ffrench-O'Carroll. (see John Turpin *A School of Art in Dublin since the Eighteenth Century,* Gill and Macmillan 1995 pp. 426-433).
[iii] I spent six years - from 1953 to 1959 - as a boarder in the Convent of Mercy Secondary School, Ballymahon, Co. Longford.
[iv] The *Report of the Council of Education on The Function and Curriculum of the Primary School* had been published in 1954 and the *Report on the Curriculum of the Secondary School* had been published in 1962, some months before the Survey Team was appointed.
[v] Speech delivered by Minister for Education, Patrick Hillery at the launch of the Steering Committee 31st Oct. 1962.
[vi] OECD *Education, Human Resources and Development in Argentina,* initiated in 1965 and published in 1967; and OECD *The Mediterranean Regional Project: Greece,* Paris 1965.
[vii] Bill Hyland "*Reflections On Funerals"* written before his death in 1996. In this paper, Bill set down his funeral wishes, in which he stated "I wish to make it unmistakably clear that I do not wish to have a religious funeral".
[viii] As he had completed three years of undergraduate studies in Maynooth, he was granted an exemption from First Year in UCC.
[ix] A letter dated 11 June 1949 from the Department of the Taoiseach, addressed to William Hyland, Mathematics Dept., UCC read: "I am directed by the Taoiseach to inform you that you have been recommended by the Civil Service Commissioners, as a result of an open competition held by them, for appointment to the post of Statistician in the Central Statistics Office".
[x] A paper entitled "*The Irish Plan"* prepared for the OECD following the publication of the report in 1965.
[xi] As the statistician on the team, these hypotheses were proposed by Bill Hyland.
[xii] Irish for "The Cannon File" or "The Sheehy-Skeffington File".
[xiii] The Wolfe Tone Society was set up in 1963 to celebrate the bi-centenary of the birth of Theobald Wolfe Tone. Its purpose was to influence cultural and political trends in the country and to use democratic means to weaken the Unionist government of Northern Ireland.
[xiv] For further information about the Tuairim group, see Tomás Finn, *Tuairim: Intellectual Debate and Policy Formulation: Rethinking Ireland 1954-1975. Manchester* University Press, 2013.
[xv] The HEO was more interested in script-writing (mostly in Irish) for Radio Eireann, than he was in overseeing the collection and analysis of educational statistics:
[xvi] Copies of the blank questionnaires are reproduced in the Appendix to the report, pp. 117-137.
[xvii] Helen Moriarty was one of the staff of the Statistics Section. She remained a friend of mine after we both got married (she married Hugh Fahy) and she became the first Secretary of the Dalkey School Project in 1974.
[xviii] See in particular *Educational Forecasting in Ireland: a Working Paper,* submitted by the Irish Study Group for the IEP meeting in Dublin 27-28 May 1963, drafted by Bill Hyland.
[xix] Appendix IX.D and IX.E in *Annexes and Appendices, Investment in Education,* "Facilities in National Schools and Delays Associated with the Provision of National Schools" pp. 579-596.
[xx] The extent of this exercise can be gauged from *Appendix XII.B The School Location Analysis* – in the Annexes and Appendices to the report pp. 610 – 626.
[xxi] Vercingetorix united the Gauls in leading a revolt against Roman forces in 52 BC. A few months later, the Romans besieged and defeated his forces and captured him. He was held prisoner for five years. In 46 BC, as part of Caesar's triumph, Vercingetorix was paraded through the streets of Rome and then executed.
[xxii]As an EO, I was not entitled to be paid overtime for hours worked over and above the normal working day and I had regularly worked 12 hour days during the period of the survey.