

The Butler Education Act

1944

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Secondary Education for All

- Secondary education free for all
- Raising of school leaving age to 15
- Principal of equality of opportunity
 - Meritocratic system

Why?

- Need for greater economic efficiency
- Creation of a fairer society
- Period of social reform
 - Creation of welfare state
 - Post-war reconstruction



Mr. R. Butler: "It may not be very easy at first, but you'll soon settle down."

Tripartite System

- 3 Types of secondary school
 - Grammar
 - Technical
 - Secondary modern
- Ability judged on IQ – 11+ exam

Grammar schools

- 15-20% of children
- Academic curriculum
 - GCE O- & A-Levels
- Preparing children for middle class roles

Technical Schools

- For “less academic” students
- Development of practical skills
- Preparation for skilled manual occupations
- Few developed

Secondary Moderns

- 60-70% of children
- For lower ability students
 - Different subjects
- Preparation for working class occupations

Criticisms

- Maintenance of class divisions
- Limited opportunities for secondary modern pupils
- Discreditation of 11+
- Problem of “self-fulfilling prophecy” in secondary moderns
 - Wasted talent