

ABSTRACT

The intention of Trinidad's educational policy makers was to spread the English language and culture via the primary schools and, at the same time, maintain a curriculum which would reinforce the position of the majority of people as agricultural workers.

Denominational control of education, rooted in 1870, expanded and flourished. Indeed, by the 1920's and 1930's, there were proportionally more denominational schools and fewer government schools than there had been in 1900. Much of the organizational thrust and management for expansion of the educational system was provided by various denominational groups, the most prominent of which were the Catholics, the Anglicans and the Presbyterians. However, the cost of the expanded system was met largely from public funds.

The most significant development of the inter-war period was the abolition of payment-by-results in 1921. This change resulted in real improvements in the effectiveness of primary schools. The period under review also witnessed sustained attempts to teach vocational education in schools.

The East Indian population posed a special problem, due to cultural and linguistic differences, and their special needs were met largely by the Canadian Presbyterian missionaries.

Perhaps the medium through which British values were most effectively communicated, was the secondary schools. Despite the limited provision of secondary education, the competition was intense for the small number of free places offered to local secondary schools and to foreign universities. Repeated demands by articulate sections of the population to increase the availability of both secondary and tertiary education were largely ignored.

The operators of the education system, the teachers, increased in number to meet the growing provision of school places and, from the 1920's, enhanced salaries and better training opportunities went a long way to stimulating improvements in the educational system.