

Some possible questions and answers

Recommendation 1
Paragraph 40

Q. Is an increase from the present 4,000 university students to 12,000/13,000 students by 1980 not excessive? Will it not mean a reduction in standards and quality?

- A. (a) Increasing population: 1980 age-group = 29,000
- (b) More public interest in extended education.
- (c) National need for more education in a more highly sophisticated and industrialized world.
- (d) Increasing output from schools of pupils with "A" levels. (A significant increase in the numbers entering for two or more "A" levels is not anticipated until 1966 because of school reorganisations following the introduction of new G.C.E. syllabuses; for example, in Belfast, Methodist College anticipatēs an increase of about 60 per cent over 1965 in this category and St. Malachy's College an increase of between 200 and 300 per cent).
- (e) Greater thirst for university education in Northern Ireland (anticipated 85 per cent extraction rate).
- (f) Evidence of increased Queen's University full-time enrolments to date:-

1938/39	1,592
1948/49	2,392
1963/64	4,135

Recommendation 3
Paragraph 42

Q. Why as many as 4,000 full-time higher education places in further education by 1980 with as high a university extraction rate as 85 per cent?

A. The university extraction rate is based on school leavers with two "A" level passes and in Northern Ireland has traditionally been higher than in Great Britain for social and economic reasons, e.g. availability of employment. Most of the higher education places required in further education will be taken up by young people with higher education qualifications including less than two "A" level passes. These will become the technicians of the future, a category whose numbers must be increased if Northern Ireland is to function effectively in the new industrial age. The Wilson Plan published just last week has laid the foundations of a better employment situation in Northern Ireland. This Report shows how the provisions of the Wilson Plan can be achieved through better facilities in higher education, particularly higher technical education. Taking all forms of higher education together the Northern Ireland projections are not out of line with the Robbins projections for Great Britain

Recommendation 6
Paragraph 144

Q. Is the proposal to create Government Research Establishments in keeping with the Wilson Plan?

A. Yes. Wilson specifically pointed to the desirability of having an Establishment in the biological sciences such as is here proposed for the new university.

Q. Have you had any consultations with Professor Wilson?

A. Yes. I have met him and he provided us with informative material.

Recommendation 8
Paragraph 149

Q. Why student interchange and in particular, why should 10 per cent of students come from overseas in a period when places are short?

Recommendation 9
Paragraph 159

- A. (a) Institutions of higher education mustn't become inbred.
(b) We must 'sell' ourselves to other countries, e.g., key workers trained in Ulster look to Ulster for Ulster goods, e.g., Texaco Maracaibo.
(c) We must work in parallel with Great Britain as an effective part of the United Kingdom.

Recommendation 10
Paragraphs 161,178

Q. Why limit Queen's to 7,000? Why not one big university?

A. The arguments are contained in Paragraphs 155-158 and include the congestion of Belfast (one of the most congested cities in the Kingdom), the need for cohesion within Queen's University, the maximum speed at which proper development of Queen's is possible and the views expressed within the University itself.

Recommendation 11
Paragraph 167

Q. Why so many students in applied science and technology when existing places cannot be filled?

A. In the country's interest and in the interests of students we must look ahead and, within the compass of a general education, provide for a change in attitude to university courses which should also reflect itself in a changing attitude in schools.

Recommendation 13
Paragraph 174

Q. Is it fair to deprive the Belfast College of Technology of its degree students?

A. This again is a rationalisation necessitated by expansion. It is essential to accommodate degree students in a full university atmosphere.

Recommendation 14
Paragraph 175

Q. Why abolish the Joint Authority when the Ashby Institute has not yet been officially opened?

A. The Joint Authority plans were laid 10 years ago when the numbers coming forward were much less than the places now requested for both degree and H.N.C. courses. With these greater numbers it is more sensible to provide for each type of student separately.

Recommendation 15
Paragraph 182

Q. It has been announced that a further £40,000 is about to be spent on the Belfast College of Art. How does this tally with the Committee's recommendations?

A. There are several aspects of the College of Art which will have to be considered in the light of the Report. The Committee was however firmly of the view that responsibility for studies in architecture should as quickly as possible be transferred fully to Queen's University.

Recommendation 16
Paragraphs 188-192

Q. Will compulsory acquisition of land for Queen's University not lead to housing and other social problems?

A. Not necessarily - if skilfully planned as a long-term operation.

Q. Who should exercise the compulsory powers?

A. This is to be worked out. The Committee expressed no view. Different considerations may apply to acquiring land for existing universities and to acquiring land for new universities.

Q. It was recently reported that the Commission on Higher Education in the Republic might recommend a Department of Oceanography for University College, Galway, in association with a Government Fisheries Research Centre there. Would this

conflict with the function visualized for the new university at Coleraine?

A. No. Oceanography and its relationship with fisheries and sea harvesting generally would provide only one of the many applications of the biological sciences. In any event there is ample scope in North Atlantic waters for these studies.

Recommendation 18
Paragraph 200

Q. In view of the acute shortage of doctors in Great Britain and overseas would it not be better to start a second medical school now?

A. Planning a medical school involves planning a teaching hospital and outside Belfast there is no hospital - not even Altnagelvin - capable of fulfilling this function. If a new teaching hospital is to be planned it will involve acceptance by the public in the North and North-East of a concentration of hospital facilities in one place rather than dispersal as at present. Under such an arrangement hospitals such as the Roe Valley at Limavady the Dalriada, Robinson and Route hospitals at Ballymoney the Hopefield hospital at Portrush and possibly the Ballymena hospitals might have to be concentrated in a single hospital at Coleraine. There has been recent correspondence in the Belfast Telegraph - letters from eminent specialists - criticising the present scatter of facilities over very many small institutions.

Recommendation 20
Paragraph 209

Q. Why disturb the present Faculty of Agriculture at Queen's University and an arrangement which has, apparently, worked well?

- A.
- (a) Circumstances have changed since the 1920s and agriculture will be closely akin to the main work of the new university.
 - (b) It could not have the same pre-eminence at Queen's University.
 - (c) The Queen's University offer of a site for a new academic building at Newforge is not in its best interest as it would add to the scatter of students and a continuation of the undesirable situation presently obtaining at the Belfast College of Technology.
 - (d) Agriculture is a rural science and should not be concentrated in an urban environment.
 - (e) Agriculture in the environment of a country like Northern Ireland should form the basis of a general education as well as having a professional purpose.
 - (f) With the limitations in numbers proposed for Queen's University and accepted by the Government the continuation of agriculture there, and its necessary expansion, could be achieved only at the expense of other faculties which are appropriate to the development of Queen's University.
 - (g) It is unsatisfactory in a present-day context for one faculty alone to be financed differently from other faculties and with professional and other academic staff who are not direct employees of the University but are civil servants paid by the Ministry of Agriculture.
 - (h) The Lockwood recommendations are fully in line with the Bosanquet recommendations recently accepted by Westminster.

N.B. The Government Statement makes no reference to the recommendations on agriculture.

Recommendation 21
Paragraph 214

Q. Is 300 acres at least not a very large site for a university?

A. Not in the modern context. We must think ahead and guard against the sort of situation arising that has arisen at Queen's. Scatter of buildings is most undesirable.

Recommendation 22
Paragraph 224

Q. Is it fair to expect the sponsoring local authorities to present the site?

A. This is the normal practice in Great Britain. Willingness to present the site is a test of local enthusiasm.

Recommendation 21
Paragraph 215

Q. The Report says that the location chosen must be one in which development can proceed smoothly and successfully unaffected by political considerations either at local or central government level. Is this a tilt at Londonderry?

A. Not at all. We have set out all our criteria and have not attempted a detailed evaluation because that would not be possible. What we have said is that in our concerted view the Coleraine area satisfies our criteria better than any of the other areas considered and that we are of the opinion that its new university will have the best opportunity of a good start and of ultimate success in that area.

Paragraphs 214-219

Q. What validity have your criteria?

A. No absolute validity. But they are substantially the criteria that are being applied in Great Britain. It is not, however, the practice there to argue the case out openly in the light of the criteria as we have done.

Paragraph 218

Q. Has Coleraine an adequate supporting population?

A. Yes, within 20 miles it is about 105,000 and by 1980 will have increased appreciably.

Paragraph 215

Q. Did the Committee have any regard to the economic needs of Londonderry in making its recommendation?

A. Yes, but we also pointed out that it would not be right to locate a university in a particular place chiefly for the good it may do to the location chosen. A university does provide employment but that is only incidental to its main function of educating young people; and in that context the Committee had to have regard to the needs of the whole of the country. The new university will be complementary with Queen's University and its catchment area must therefore not be the North-West only but the whole of Northern Ireland. There must also be a proportion of students from Great Britain and overseas.

Q. But should Londonderry not have had special consideration because Magee College is already there and has been there now for 100 years?

A. This is a point to which we gave much thought. Magee, however, is a very small place. Its enrolment did not exceed 100 students until 1958 and even now is a mere 300 of whom a very high proportion live in residences because of the very difficult housing situation in Londonderry. We are proposing an institution which will ultimately be about 20 times as big. Queen's University has taken the view that it could not expand by more than 75 per cent of its present

Paragraph 212

enrolment between now and 1980. How possibly could Magee expand to 20 times its size?

Paragraph 226

Q. What does the Committee mean when it says that Magee College "does not provide a suitable basis for expansion"?

A. The answer is partly its very small size but partly also its lack of experience in full university work. We gave very great weight moreover to the views of the staff of Magee that the present situation was very unsatisfactory because the College has never had senior undergraduate or postgraduate students nor the power to award degrees. It does not therefore provide a basis on which a university could be built and in consequence we examined Londonderry as a location apart from the question of the possible development of the College as well as in the light of the development proposals of the College.

Q. Had its Presbyterian background anything to do with the recommendation?

A. If it had been possible on academic grounds to recommend that Magee College should form the nucleus of a new university the form of government would, of course, have had to be changed to bring it into line with general university conventions. But Presbyterian Church representatives did indicate to us that a helpful attitude on the part of the Church could be assumed.

Recommendation 26
Paragraphs 226-228

Q. What is your view of the Government reservation about the recommendations affecting Magee College?

A. We have given the best advice we could from an academic and general standpoint and the Government has no doubt taken additional factors into account. We found difficulty in associating a continuing Magee College with the new university. I am however greatly impressed by the Government's determination to provide a really effective centre of non-university higher education in Londonderry. This could answer the City's economic problems in a more direct and effective manner than the prolonged continuation of Magee College. [? Point for Sir Willis Jackson to take up].

Q. Have you visited any of the possible sites in Londonderry?

A. Yes, and as sites I thought well of some of them, for example the Gransha site which I saw both from the Waterside and from Talbot Park. Indeed looking over Derry from the Strabane Old Road I thought it a delightful place; but that is not a sufficient criterion.

Q. In rejecting Londonderry did the Committee have any regard to the proximity of the Border?

A. One cannot visit Londonderry without being aware of the Border. Londonderry itself is sizeable but its hinterland up the Foyle valley has a very thin population.

Q. Has the Lemass/O'Neill meeting not put a different complexion on the situation?

A. I don't know. The Committee's task was to examine the situation in Northern Ireland in the light of the Robbins Report. There is of course the anticipated Report of the

Commission on Higher Education in the Republic but it has not yet been issued. There are only about a dozen university students from Donegal in Northern Ireland.

Q. What about Armagh? Wasn't an excellent site offered there?

A. We visited Armagh and saw the site but, when we applied our criteria, Armagh did not provide the answer. We similarly considered the proposed New City but a university there would have to be orientated towards technology if it was to serve as an attraction to industry and that would, in our view, have conflicted with the best interests of Belfast and of Queen's University. There were, of course, also other considerations deriving from our criteria.

Recommendation 28
Paragraph 237

Q. Is the Committee's conception of an Education Centre within the new university realistic? Is there not a danger that it will reduce the standing of the university?

A. Our main concern is to minimise the isolation of intending non-graduate teachers from other fields of academic activity. We are looking ahead to a completely new concept of teacher production and Northern Ireland has an excellent opportunity to take the lead.

Recommendation 33
Paragraph 246

Q. Do you really think that Protestants and Roman Catholics will both attend the Education Centre.

A. The proposals here will involve negotiation but I have great hopes for the future. I think our unique proposal for teacher education has a better chance of general acceptance now than would have been possible at any other time.

Recommendation 36
Paragraph 248

Q. Why should the governing bodies of training colleges contain staff representation?

A. Academic government is a feature of our university system and we are seeking as far as is possible to bring colleges of education into the same esteem as universities.

Recommendation 49
Paragraphs 275-276

Q. Is the "Ulster College" concept realistic?

A. Certainly the idea of having the constituent elements on a common campus is not likely to be achieved for many years but it would be a pity if Northern Ireland lost this unrepeatable opportunity to be in the van of progress. The Ulster College, as conceived, could provide a powerful economic incentive within Northern Ireland and would at the same time provide local centres for cultural activities.

Recommendation 69
Paragraph 321

Q. Are the rates not bearing a sufficient burden without expecting them to make significant annual contributions to institutions of higher education?

A. Rate contributions are an effective way of demonstrating local support. It would be inadvisable to require the rates to assist with the running costs of these institutions but reasonable voluntary contributions from rates establish local interest and enthusiasm and give institutions a more secure feeling of independence than would be the case if they had to rely entirely on government funds.

5th February, 1965.