

The Concordat of 1960

Assurances for the Preservation and Character of Denominational Schools

As approved by Cabinet

The Minister of Education and Culture wishes to clarify for general information some of the proposals on Education with reference to the re-organization of Education so far as those proposals affect the Denominational Boards of Management, the Governing Bodies and Principals of Assisted Secondary Schools.

1. In relation to property, the ownership and right of direct control and management of all denominational primary and secondary schools will be assured to the denominations in whatever modifications of the existing system that may subsequently be introduced in the New Education Ordinance, and all existing rights, so far as property is concerned, will be respected.
2. In denominational schools, no books or apparatus to which the denominational authority formally objects, will be introduced or imposed.
3. In denominational schools (unless the Denomination concerned otherwise gives its consent) the religion of the particular denomination which owns the school will be taught exclusively and by teachers professing to belong to that Denomination. In Government Schools all recognized religious denominations will have access through their accredited representatives during the times specified in the time-table for the teaching of Religion to the pupils belonging to their faith. Pupils attending the schools of a denomination not of their own faith will not be compelled to take part in the religious exercises or lessons of that denomination.
4. The right of appointment, retention, promotion, transfer and dismissal of teachers in Primary Schools will rest with the Public Service Commission. A teacher shall not be appointed to a school if the denominational board objects to such an appointment on moral or religious grounds. Similarly, if a teacher be found unsatisfactory on these very grounds, moral or religious, the denominational authority shall have the right to request his removal to another school after due investigation. For these reasons it is proposed (provided the legal and constitutional arrangements allow) "that vacancies as they occur in all schools should be advertised and applications submitted in the first instance to the respective Board of management which will examine them and forward them all, with their recommendations, to the Public Service Commission for final action."

Secondary Schools

5. The existing relationship between Government and the Governing Bodies and teachers in Assisted Secondary Schools will remain subject however, to negotiated changes inevitable with the introduction of Free Secondary Education and to a system of inspection of these schools by persons authorized to do so by the Ministry of Education and Culture. The Governing Bodies of these schools will continue to be responsible for the administration of these schools and for their maintenance, repair and furnishing. Those schools will continue to qualify for Government Aid. The Principals of Assisted Secondary Schools will make available a minimum of 80 per centum of the First Form entry places to those who, by passing the test, qualify on the results of the Common Entrance Examination for free secondary education. The Principals will be represented on the panel of examiners to be set up to administer the test. The Principals will be free to allocate up to 20 per centum, the remaining places as they see fit provided normally that the pass list of the Common Entrance Examination serves to provide the pupils. Entry above the First Form will be under the control of the Ministry of Education and Culture and will require the approval of the Minister.
6. Where the need arises for disciplinary reasons or unsatisfactory progress to remove a pupil from the school, the right to request such removal will remain with the Principal who may for the same reasons suspend a pupil pending investigation. Authority to expel a pupil is vested solely in the Cabinet. For disciplinary reasons the same principle will apply to Primary Schools.
7. All new Central Schools may be established only by Government for the simple reason that these schools are to be fed from the Primary Schools of all Denominations, as well as Government Schools, which may be in the area served by the Central School. Where, however, the need arises for converting an existing denominational school into a secondary school, the denominational character of that school will be allowed to remain.
8. The selection of teachers for training at the teachers' college is to remain solely with the Ministry of Education and Culture. Selection of teachers for training in the existing denominational training colleges may be made by the Denominational Boards, but such selection must be approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture.
9. It is the desire of the Government that all teachers be trained at the teachers' college under Government supervision and administration. Government will however respect the rights of the existing training colleges conducted by the denominations; but no expansion of those facilities will be allowed without the expressed permission of Government.

Signed by Hon. J.S. Donaldson,
Minister of Education & Culture,
on behalf of Cabinet on 22 December 1960,
and published on 25 December, 1960