CHAPTER VI

A NEW OUTLOOK IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOL INSPECTION SYSTEM (CONCLUSIONS)

Almost every civilised country in the world has a school inspection system. It is indispensable for all concerned with the education of children. In the first place, it is important for the Ministry of Education because it must, through inspection, satisfy it self that the school provides the kind of education for which grant is given to it; grant is public money; hence it is the bounden duty of the Ministry of Education to see that the school is not run on a commercial basis for profiteering purposes; that it employs qualified staff in the schools; ~~and that it~~

~~employs qualified staff in the schools~~; and that it provides good education. Secondly, school inspection is necessary for the school authorities for they say can, through inspection - the inspector's report - learn whether the staff employed by them carry out their duties to the satisfaction of the Ministry of Education. It is also useful for the teacher, for it can help him or her to know whether his or her subject-matter and methods of teaching are up to the mark. It is school inspection through which the school authorities assure the public that the school provides the kind of education approved by the Government. Thus, theoretically, it satisfies all concerned.

Although the above statement explicitly says that school inspection is indispensable, the inspection system in practice faces some problems that threaten its very existence: it has sometimes been said that inspection is not compatible with the dignity of a learned profession; such a view

is to be viewed systematically. But it is to be remembered that teachers are dealing primarily with the minds and not the bodies of their pupils; and they are not yet organised under an institution charged with the maintenance of standards, the regulation of professional conduct and the admission of new members into the profession. Undoubtedly, time will come when a self-regulating body of this kind comes into existence and some day formal inspection, as now understood, may become superflous and derogatory.

In India, inspection is one of the agencies through which the Ministry of Education endeavours to attain its objects whether they are regarded as efficiency or value for money: though it is true that the scope and character of inspection of schools have certainly changed today with the fuller conception of the service of education, there is undoubtedly the need both for inspecting and safeguarding the expenditure of public money on the education service and for getting the largest possible return for it.

Broadly speaking, the school inspection has two sides: protective and constructive. On the first side of his work, the inspector ensures the public that the money spent on education is not wasted. It is seen in practice that every State-aided public service is challenged by the question if and to what extent it fulfils the objective for which the public money is spent on it. The second side of the school inspection is that the school inspector is a constructive agent and does all he can on behalf of the Minister of Education by admonition, criticism, advice and encouragement, to build up higher standard of the all-round education of pupils and get better and better value for the public money. In brief, the inspectors are employed to varify the fulfilment of the conditions on which grants are made, to collect information and to report the results to the Department of Education.

But arguments are often put forward that inspection is dominated by an idea of cast-iron

uniformity and tends to supress initiative and discourage experiment, and that the best way to get good value for public money is to get good teachers and leave it to them trusting that if they are not good, they will feel compelled to leave the profession. However, it has to be admitted that among so large a body of men and women of all ages there are bound to be some whose performance of their duties is unsatisfactory in various degrees. It is in the interest of the public, the schools and the teaching profession that those who fail in their duty should be stimulated to do it better or, in the last report, should be eliminated.

During the last quarter of a century, the expansion of secondary education in the country is so terfific as a result of which its problems are so many that the inspection system of the secondary schools has considerably lagged behind. In fact, immediately after a good beginning that was recommended by the author of the Education

Despatch of 1854 for the adequate provision of the supervision and inspection of schools in the country, that fell within the State system of education, there was never, truly speaking, the satisfactory arrangements for school inspection, and in recent years, the rapid expansion of secondary education has left the inspection far behind, and created numerous problems that face secondary education in India to-day.

At present in India, the majority of secondary schools are managed by private bodies. Since 1882, following the Hunter Commission report, it is the Government policy, which in brief, lays down that the Government should keep to the minimum the direct responsibility of administering secondary schools, and that whenever it is convenient, without lowering the standard of education, Government managed secondary schools should be transferred to private management. When 80 years ago, this policy was adopted, it meant that private managements would bear part of the financial

burden, which the Government could save and spend on the expansion of primary education. Now the situation has entirely changed. Strictly speaking, private (grant-aided) secondary schools for their financing, entirely depend on two sources: fees and grants-in-aid. In other words, private bodies do not as a rule add anything from their private funds. In fact, some, if not many, secondary schools are run by private bodies solely on the idea of profit-making though inspectors may remain vigilent to any extent.

The above discovery leads to two conclusions: The State Government should in the first instance warn and if their warnings fail, should take over, as and when the opportunity presents itself, the privately managed but grant-aided secondary schools, which in the opinion of the inspector, do not cater to the real educational needs of the area in which they are situated, and which do not bear part of the total financial requirements of the school. This sort of strict control is necessary particularly in an area where schools provide courses only of

an academic nature whereas the population of the area needs multipurpose or vocational schools. The second one is that the State Governments must realise that it is the tax payers who enable them to pay grants to the schools and it is parents who pay fees. They have, therefore, the right to be assured that the schools which are given grants-in-aid and which charge fees to parents, must provide the best kind of education the country can afford. This assurance can only be given by a most effective secondary school inspection system.

But the historical background of this thesis reveals that no State Government, it has to be admitted, has ever thought of keeping pace with the enormous growth of secondary education by appointing more inspectors and by readjusting the inspection system. Every year more and more secondary schools open; but correspondingly more inspectors or assistant inspecting officers are not appointed. In fact, whenever the financial depression faces

the Governments, the easiest recourse they have had is the retrenchment in the inspectorate. This sort of affairs has to be deplored and calls for revision in Government policy.

The Department of Education in each State has laid down certain rules for newly opened secondary schools to fulfil before a 'recognition' is granted to them. Nevertheless, hundreds of secondary schools have sprung up in the country, whose physical, material, moral and academic conditions are far from satisfactory. To improve the situation and to put a stop to such chaotic conditions, the Government needs a very effective school inspection system. In Chapter three headed " An Appraisal of the Existing Secondary School Inspection System," it is seen how farcically the Head and the teachers take the inspection. Inspection comes and goes, but the school, the Head, the staff and finally the private management, remain the same. It is not uncommon and unimaginative to think that

political pressure is brought to bear upon the inspector if he is a strict officer. This is a vicious position, and the State Governments have never bothered to study the total need for secondary education for ~~my~~ any particular area, district or division in the State. When anyone thinks of opening a school, he can do so by converting, with minimum or no changes, the residential house even in the noisiest street of the town, surrounded by temples and vegetable markets. One can imagine what kind of environment a pupil gets in such a secondary school. To the Investigator it seems that here is the inspector's most religious duty to see that before he grants recognition to such unhealthy and ill-equipped schools, he helps them through the support of the community they serve and the greater financial aid from the Government so that these schools are housed in decent buildings and educative surroundings. It is the inspector's duty to call a series of public meetings to

explain to parents the total need of secondary education for their children and to invite them to shoulder the responsibility of finding ways and means of making an adequate provision for the secondary education of their children. This is, indeed, a very important and serious issue which demands the immediate attention of the District Inspector, who should make the Government aware of the situation and suggest a solution to remedy the situation. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to describe in detail in what a piteous condition the children and parents are in when a new year for admission to secondary schools begins. If we expect the District Educational Officer or the District Educational Inspector to be an educational leader, it is his duty to plan beforehand to meet the foreseeable situation. The heads of the District Inspectorates need to be directed by the State Ministry of Education to plan the programme for the expansion of secondary education for their areas.

In the first place, to make the inspection system most effective, it is necessary to make adequate provision for inspecting officers. This sort of complaint has now become a traditional complaint. Besides a large number of secondary schools being in charge of the inspector, he has other enormous duties which include both academic and administrative work. In a country like India, where the standards of secondary education are in general so low, it is not a luxury when the writer recommends that each educational unit, which must be fairly small, should have a panel of subject specialists who have a very good academic degree in English language, literature, science, mathematics, social studies and now, in technical subjects for our multipurpose secondary schools, plus a good deal of experience of teaching in both lower and upper levels of secondary schools. The chief function of these subject specialists would be not only to help and guide the teachers in their charge, in their teaching lessons, but also

to teach actually for a week or so in each of the schools in their charge per term. They should discuss the subject matters with the teachers concerned, even recommend the books they should read and use in teaching. This kind of academic and professional help to be given by inspecting officers is indispensable in view of the fact that the standard of University education has definitely deteriorated, and many of our new graduates have relied solely on cheap and easy guides and notes for their degrees, and hardly bothered about the original text-books and other reference books. This kind of notorious infection has successfully crept into our so-called training colleges where, for the study of their different subject methods trainees have an easy recourse to ready-made cheap guides and annotations for their consultation and for their successful preparation for passing with credit and distinction the professional degrees, diplomas, etc. Thus the whole academic atmosphere obtaining in our schools, and academic

and professional colleges present a very gloomy picture to a foreigner or to a discerning Indian.

In the circumstances, the inspector and his above-mentioned panel of specialists, have a tremendous task to perform if they have enthusiasm and zeal to raise the standard of education in our poorly equipped secondary schools. They have not only to teach in the secondary schools to eradicate from the minds of the teachers (who often doubt the academic ability of the inspectors to judge their work) wrongly conceived prejudicial feelings, but also to supervise their work and help them, if necessary, on the spot by winning the confidence of the teacher concerned that they do so, not to satisfy their academic or professional ego, or to exercise their official powers, but solely with an eye to helping the teacher to teach correctly. The entire success of thie new idea suggested by the writer demands unflinching extension of co-operation of both the inspecting officers and the teachers to teach other and one another.

Again, the inspecting officers need the co-operation of teachers colleges. The method masters and other subject specialists should not mind the inspecting officers watching their lessons and asking the questions on the subjects concerned. In fact, the district inspector should have one or more among his specialists, visiting supervisors from the teachers colleges to help him and his specialists to be abreast with and what teaching trends are in the teachers colleges.

Furthermore, the inspector should arrange at times (the programme should be systematic and pre-planned) teachers' conferences - sometimes a general conference to discuss their common problems and sometimes subject conferences (History, English Language etc.) in which the inspector's specialist colleagues would address the teachers and on teaching of particular subjects and discuss the problems related to them. Over and above, the specialist inspecting officers will have to find out good reference books which they should, at such

conferences,display for teachers' knowledge and the district inspectorates should have a circulating teachers' reference books library. If these practical recommendations were carried out, the writer is confident that many of the academic problems of the secondary schools would soon disappear.

The inspecting officers in India can learn considerably and adapt themselves to new situations in a democratic set-up such as ours, if they carefully study the system of inspection in France. Once the French inspector (he is known as 'General Inspector') appeared to be a policeman who visited the school to make sure that the teacher had prepared his lesson. He inspired fear in the teacher just as a policeman frightens children. The french master confesses ' every organ in my body twisted itself into knots. I was a man in mortal danger. But the inspector is intelligent and friendly; the master recovers some of his assurance, and even feels a certain

pleasurable excitement in this unusual presence.. His eyes darted everywhere,from the teacher to the pupils; to the blackboard,to the walls. His remarks had eased the tension. The blood began to flow again in the pupils' veins and in mine too.' By the end of the lesson the atmosphere had changed; it was positively brilliant.' The result was a joyous headlong rush, a seething excitement, in which desire to please bordered on familiarity!' In the course of the conversation which follows the lesson, the inspector reveals himself as a veritable revolutionary: " classes are not cemeteries, but bubbling springs of life... you are one of the most dynamic elements in this school. The University should expect its methods to be renewed by such young teachers as you."[1]

The inspector's duty does not end with praises and blames, supervision and criticism. In fact, his real mission is not only to guide and advise the teacher, but also to enrich him

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[1]M.Louis Francois," The Inspection of Schools in France" / The New Era,Era 36:9,November 1955,p.171.

from the fund of his own experiences which he gains by his visiting schools, coming into contact with other inspectors, by his observing lessons and by his reading and learning as well as by keeping in touch with new developments in his subject. Besides his academic and administrative abilities, he must have certain qualities in him to be a good inspector. They are indeed numerous: good health; for he must travel in all weathers and be able to bear a heavy load of work without weakening; curiosity and youthfulness of character, if he is to remain always as interested and as friendly towards all those teachers who come into contact with him; a very sure judgement, because of the lives of a certain number of human beings(teachers) depend upon it; appreciation in giving encouragement, or at least avoiding discouragement, but also severity in condemning laziness, mere routine and mediocrity; eloquence too, since the inspector must call meetings of teachers, speak to them,convince

them, inspire them with a desire for work and achievement; lastly,and above all, the profound knowledge and irreapproachable conduct which ensure consideration and respect. The inspector is a guide and a leader; in everything he must set an example.

One of the chief functions of an inspector of secondary schools should be to guide the efforts of teachers in their teaching in the schools; in other words, that of helping school staffs and individual teachers to do a better professional job. This is a function inspectors can exercise in many different ways: by assisting individual teachers with their personal and professional problems; by consulting them in respect of policies and programmes; by fostering good team work; by organising study groups, encouraging professional reading, and actively supporting other forms of in-service training; by judicious stimulation and guidance of experimental work in the schools; by working with teachers on such specific projects as a district plan for school library development; by spreading among teachers fresh and useful ideas from sources available

to him. To do this work effectively, an inspecting officer must first win the goodwill and confidence of teachers and prove himself worthy of their respect. Having gained their confidence, his best work will be done by getting to know them well as professional colleagues, thrashing out their problem with them, and offering them the sort of advice that is really helpful and relevant in the particular case.

This calls for a subtle balance of the positive contribution that is necessary for any sort of leadership, and of tolerance and humility. As every discerning inspecting officer knows many teachers have gifts he cannot claim, and there are many educational questions on which no one has the right to be dogmatic. Above all, the inspector ought to encourage every stirring of originality, of independence of thought, and of genuine searching for educational truth. But today the relationship between the inspector and the teacher is far from satisfactory. The teacher wishes to keep the inspector

at arm's length and the inspector wishes to see that the teacher is a most obedient servant to him. This means they both believe in an 'either-or policy'. They must have, therefore, a clear understanding of their importance in any system of education of the country. The inspector should realise that " the purpose of inspection in an age of democracy is the improvement of instruction. This is a co-operative enterprise in which all teachers participate, and where the inspector, the educational leader, acts as a stimulator, guide and consultant to teachers in their effort to improve instruction. Thus, the inspector can no longer be a craping critic, but he should be ' a friend,philosopher and guide of teachers."[2]

It is very unhealthy and most unfortunate that to the teacher the presence of the inspector in the class appears unwelcoming and unwanted. This is due mainly to the official and bureaucratic attitude of the inspector. It is obvious that the teacher will not like his self-esteem to be injured and to be interferred with in his teaching plan which he has already formulated. The inspector needs to adopt

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[2]S.N.Mukerji,Secondary School Administration , (Baroda;Acharya Book Depot,1963),pp.56-58.

with advantage certain qualities we find in H.M. Inspectors in England. "The inspector is there primarily to help and defend the teacher and not primarily as a reporting agent or accountant for the Central Government or a peripatetic salesman of educational ideas.. We are there, with our teaching experience, our academic knowledge, our professional skills, our hard-earned judgement of men, women and children, our stock of territorial experience in very different parts of the country and often in other countries too - to be at the service of the school staff, including the heads of the schools. At times we serve also the purposes of the governors, or managers, the local education authorities, the professional organisations, the various units of the teacher training system, the learned societies, the industrial and commercial organisations, the youth clubs, the museums and libraries, the armed forces... The main object of our effort is the individual teacher and his proper responsibility to the pupils. If we need at times to concern ourselves with the

external forms and substances and costs of education... with parental opinion, with final assessments and reports, with educational theory - these are means and not ends, or, if ends, they are intermediate and not final."[3]

Of course, even in England, teachers often complain that the inspector is airborne; " and so, no doubt, from time to time we all are." Mr. Percy Wilson, H.M. Inspector of Schools, however, points out to teachers how they should behave toward inspectors; " But the teacher cannot have it both ways. If he wants me to keep my feet on the ground, he must not mind my listening to his lessons; if it is a series of poor lessons, I must write my views down in the form of a critical report. Equally, if he is a good teacher, he ought, carefully to offer me (even if he is a tutor in a University Department of Education), the pleasure and privilege of hearing his lessons or

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[3]Percy Wilson, CBE, H.M. Senior Inspector of Schools 1962, Views and Prospects from Curzon Street, pp.70-72.

lectures so that I can go away and be a better inspector."[4]

From the foregoing criticism made by Mr.Percy Wilson,H.M. Senior Inspector, it can be generalised that it is impossible to separate the advisory role from the judicial role of the inspectorate. If the inspector must make criticism, it should be closely related to the particular situation. If advice is given to the teacher, it must also be related to the facts, limitations,needs, difficulties of the special case, and his criticism should always be tempered by a modest sense of the relativity of all wisdon and fallibility of all great men and advisers. Even so, the ideal relationship between the teacher and the inspector will not be achieved without tolerance, confidence, equality and a sense of humour on both sides.

Furthermore, the inspector can hardly help the schools unless he has a good understanding with the headmasters who, in turn, are themselves giving

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[4] Ibid.,p.72

enlightened leadership both in their schools and in their local committees. Since the number of secondary schools in his district, in general, is so large that it is rather difficult for him to inspect annually all secondary schools in his area; and it is equally difficult to make thorough inspection of the school. In a short time that he has at his disposal for inspection of a secondary school, he could hardly gather even a general picture of the school, so he largely depends upon the headmaster for supplying him with the information of the school, pertaining to its academic progress and problems, its traditions; in a word, its distinct role in providing educational facilities to the area in which it is situated. This shows that the headmaster of the school acts as an intermediary between the school and the Department of Education at the district level. The relationship between the inspector and the headmaster should, therefore, be friendly, and the inspector should advise the head of the school freely and frankly. It is mainly

the headmaster who can help the inspector to implement the Government policy concerning the education of the children in his area. The inspector ought, therefore, to hold meetings or conferences from time to time in order not only to keep the heads of the schools in touch with the educational policy of the Government, but also to know and gather first hand information regarding the difficulties that face the heads of the schools in the implementing the policy set by the Government. It is headmasters who know the problems and who know what help they need to find a solution for their educational problems. If the educational climate between the inspector and the headmasters is harmonious, smooth and free from fear, the headmasters would not find it difficult to point out the defects inherent in their policy. In other words, the inspector must cultivate the condition in which the heads would like to work for the community. It is this kind of relationship which is today necessary in India, particularly because the

State Governments and also the Union Government are determined to raise the standard of secondary education which is the most important state of the education that is available in the country. In a democratic country like India, the masses of people must have at least secondary education. To provide this for a country like India is no child's play; it is, no doubt a herculean task and to do that task, the inspector needs the help of the headmaster. So the relationship between the two should be harmonious, friendly and frank. The inspector must abondon the idea of dictation and autocracy, and adopt one of guidance, direction, assistance and helpfulness.

The inspector should have harmonious and friendly relationships not only with the headmaster and teachers, but also with the community at large. Education is an activity in which everyone should be interested and directly or indirectly, intelligently or ignorantly, almost all people are interested in educational matters. It is,therefore,

necessary that all inspectors concerned with educational administration should generally keep in touch with the community. The inspector should at time, attend the parents' associations. His close contact with such associations will enable him to explain to them the educational policy of the State Government.

In a new set-up which is democratic, the support of the people in carrying out the educational policies of the State is very essential, for it is not uncommon to misunderstand or apprehend the Government policy on education. The inspector has to be the educational leader of his area - district or division. He should hold and organise local conferences of people, which would include educationists, other professional people, industrialists (proprietorial,managerial and Trade Union), businessmen, merchants, representatives of voluntary organisations, and so on, for exchange and pooling of ideas on matters of common educational interest.[5]

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[5] Teachers and Curricula in Secondary Schools, Report of a Study by an International Team (New Delhi: The Ford Foundation,1954),p.117,

Another way of coming into closer contact with the community is that the inspector should ask schools to hold education weeks, during which all the schools in the area are at home, having proved very effective in England, Denmark and the United States. In the United States, great advantage has resulted from organising these weeks simultaneously on a national basis, and calling them American Education Weeks. During these weeks, exhibitions of pupils' work are displayed, pupils and teachers demonstrate school activities, headmasters and inspectors give talks and answer questions about school life, and the local school system, and educationists of national repute speak on the broader aspects of school education.

On the inspector's initiative, it is possible to set up Child Care Councils which may co-ordinate the activities of teachers, medical officers and social workers on behalf of maladjusted pupils. In brief, the inspector who is the educational leader of his district or division, can carry out successfully the Government Policy on education, with

the co-operation of the community of his area. Only with their support he can think of effecting reforms into the system of education in his district.

The State Department of Education and the Union Ministry of Education should study a Canadian experiment in Education for supervision and administration. Only 30 years ago the inspection system in Canada was far from satisfactory. Much of the work of a Canadian inspector of schools was indeed inspection in a narrow sense. He was required to pay a brief annual visit to each school in his inspectorate. Frequently, in this limited time, all he could do was to satisfy himself that the school was actually in session, make a quick inspection of buildings and grounds, examine the school registers, and listen to part of a lesson or ask the pupils a few questions to determine whether the school was being satisfactorily kept.

Now this has entirely disappeared. The inspector now realises that his predominant

concern is the service that he can render to the teacher and the school rather than the mere auditing or review of school functioning. The inspector in Canada now tends to go about his work by helping principals, teachers and others, uncover weaknesses, which he then assists them to find ways of overcoming. This new kind of leadership implies that the inspector serves the teacher best to the extent that he can help him or her to become increasingly self-critical, self-dependent, and self-directive. It implies fostering widespread public interest and concern, as well as co-ordinating effort, so that the individual teacher or the school may function most effectively and creatively in the education of boys and girls. This is indeed a challenging concept that makes great demands upon the inspector. We must call this kind of inspection a dynamic art. This is in Canada today. We must adopt it in India, with advantage.

The secondary school inspection system in Canada has undergone a radical change because of

its five-year project in educational leadership. This kind of project, the Ministry of Education, Government of India should organise for the inspectors of schools of different States of the Indian Union. Such a project in fact is badly needed in India to improve the inspection system and to prepare the inspectors to be educational leaders of their areas.

The project in question should be: (1) stimulate the intercommunication of educational ideas and practices between different Indian States; (2) clarify the leadership role of inspectors in schools; (3) bring together a fund of knowledge and materials based on their experiences in inspection and to develop principles and procedures designed to improve the effectiveness of our Schools Administration in general; (4) work out practical remedies for the problems that face our schools today; and (5) encourage the further development of in-service and pre-service education programmes in school inspection and administration.

The chief activity of the project should consist of a series of inter-state seminars or short courses, mainly for inspectors of schools; Seminars in their turn would include various courses for the improvement of teaching as well as of inspection of schools.

To sum up, the critical examination of the secondary school inspection system in India has led the researcher to the following convictions about the inspection system that India needs to-day:

1. The school inspection is necessary as it serves the useful purpose in the prevailing conditions of secondary education in the country.
2. The Inspector should be gradually relieved of his administrative functions so as to enable him to become a true educational leader.
3. The inspector should be a person who possesses a good academic education, professional education and a special training for the effective performance of his role as an educational leader. He should have a new outlook and democratic

attitude towards school inspection.

4. The inspector should have a firm faith in the new methods and techniques of school inspection. He should be expert in evaluation procedures.

5. The Union Ministry of Education and State Ministries of Education should give serious thought to the establishment of the All-India Education Service and the two cadres of Education Officers - the Regional Education Officers and the Inspectors - having well-defined functions and powers.

6. There should be as far as possible full inspections of secondary schools which may be held at an interval of three or five years, in addition to frequent visits to schools to study the normal life of schools, and to guide and advise them.

7. Some satisfactory solution or formula must be found out so as to strengthen the inspectorate in view of the expansion of secondary education in States.

8. There should be a healthy relationship and team-spirit between the Inspector and the headmasters, teachers and the local community.

9. There should be a regular provision for his in-service growth. For this, co-operation of teachers colleges should be secured, and the All-India or Statewise professional associations of inspectors should be established.

10. To secure the services of the trained and talented persons as inspectors, the State Governments must revise substantially the emoluments and conditions of service.

11. Finally, the researcher feels that in order to have a good system of school inspection, which is truly modern and democratic, and which is most suitable for a developing country like India, further researches and investigations on the following problem areas seem necessary:

    (i) Desirable workload of the inspectors of secondary schools and their effective performance.

    (ii) Identification of the role of an inspector of secondary schools in changing India.

    (iii) Type of Academic and professional education necessary for the job of an inspector of secondary schools.

(iv) Methods and techniques of school inspection in relation to the modern educational philosophy and scientific measurement in education.
