

How the Education Acts in Wales Affected the Quest for Full Attendance

Jace Grewal

In Canada, the legal age you can drop out of school is 16 but I never wondered or knew why. Now that I've learned about all of the education acts I've seen that they keep on raising the leaving age. Would that mean that someday in the future College would be mandatory? Many of these acts led to the way things are now starting in the 1870s. The Education Act in 1870, the Elementary Education Act in 1880, the Mundella Code in 1882, the 1891 Elementary Education Act, the 1868 Public Schools Act, the 1868 Taunton Report, the 1888 Local Government Act, the 1899 Board of Education Act, the 1902 education act, how the war affected education, the 1918 education act, the 1921 education act, the 1936 education act and the 1944 education act all effect Welsh history. The blue books and the quest for independence in Wales are also an important part of Welsh history. The many Education Acts affected how many children attended school in Wales, these acts failed and succeeded in different ways due to different factors.

The first act was the Education Act in 1870, Before this act, Elementary education was provided by the "Church of England's National Society and the nonconformist British and Foreign School Society." The Education Act itself was pushed due to the Industrial Revolution which took place in the 18th Century. At the time the working class were uneducated which pushed for a need for mandatory education. The act empowered schools to make people attend more but didn't force them to. Unions and miners were in support of mandatory education, but education wasn't free except if you were poor. "Forster and Mundella met several times to discuss proposals for the bill, and Mundella conducted his investigation into the standard of education provided for industrial workers. He found, for example, that of the 154 children employed in Stockport, 'thirty could not write at all, eighteen wrote wretchedly, and ten only moderately' (Armstrong 1951)." Section 7 of the act made it legal for parents to withdraw their children from religious studies. Sections 8 to 13 were about school boards and places to build schools. Sections 23 and 24 were focused more on the legal parts of it all. Church schools were getting grants but were not getting money for new buildings. "Some assumed that the 1870 Act would result in a gradual decline in the number of church schools and their replacement by board schools. The churches, however, were determined to strengthen and consolidate their position, so they took full advantage of the generous offer of government funds for new buildings." (Gillard, 1998) The number of kids attending a church school went up to 2 million within that year. The number of voluntary schools dropped and the number of board schools raised almost one thousand more students. The people in charge of the Churches got mad that they were not getting the same amount of money as board schools. The Voluntary Schools

Association was formed in 1884 and was about trying to get more money. They were included in the act in 1902. This act affected Wales in the sense that more kids were being sent to school.

The second act was the Elementary Act of 1880. Some parents still didn't enjoy that their kids were going to school because then they had one less person who could work. Some families didn't need education to earn money and had enough so they didn't see the value of sending their kids to school either. Mundella made it mandatory for kids to go to school or they would get in trouble with the law. Now kids had to reach a certain level of education before it became optional. Since Wales was a more rural area, more children had to work so this also affected Wales.

1882 Mundella Code. This made school more focused on being enjoyable instead of just giving tests. The merit grant system was introduced. Schools with better-educated students would get more money as a way to make schools care more about educating kids. There was also less physical punishment and allowed girls to study science. Gave teachers more freedom to teach different things while preparing kids to work

1891 Elementary Education Act. The Labour Party wanted free education for everyone while the Church of England wanted to keep the money they made from school fees. Thomas Smyth wanted the school to be free from elementary to university, with fewer tests and no religion. This act made Elementary school free but some still charged money. The labor party focused on raising the age you are allowed to leave school and making sure children had enough to eat. The average person didn't seem to understand how hard it was for poor people and hard forms of punishment were still used. This affected Wales since it was going through a time where things were getting less religious and lots of people were arguing about their beliefs being either non-conformist or religious.

1868 Public Schools Act. Lord Clarendon proposed the act. This act focused on fixing all aspects of school life and making the school system more efficient. They focused on fixing the way they were admitting students, school fees, teachers and what the kids were being taught. The act helped Eton College and was a response to the 1867 Reform Act which was about voting rights. This transformed grammar schools into board schools and focused on making education more accessible. Slowly schools started to focus less on religion and more on sports and other aspects of life. The accessibility aspect affects Wales since Wales is a more rural area.

1868 Taunton Report. Lord Taunton started focusing on secondary education in 1864. He looked at everything in between schools for the rich and poor and wanted to improve

all schools. He found that lots of students weren't getting a good education. Lots of towns didn't have secondary schools, especially secondary schools that girls were allowed to attend. Money wasn't being spread or sent effectively. The rich schools seemed to be more focused on teaching a select few kids Latin. This was due to teachers that didn't go through enough training, or using old methods of teaching. The new private schools were doing the best

1888 Local Government Act. This act created councils for towns in England and Wales. These councils focused on taxes and fixing roads and such. This act didn't focus much on education, the 1902 act was made for that. It did focus on a few things though such as: Reforming industrial schools, giving money to teachers in poorer schools, paying so that poor children could get educated and sorting out administrative tasks regarding the education system.. This affects Wales since places in Wales have their council.

1899 Board of Education Act. The idea was first brought up in 1833 but most people disagreed because they thought that it was too soon. In 1834 the HCE Childers committee wanted a ministry of education in the UK. But instead of this, they ended up making smaller changes. In 1899 they finally had a board of education which looked after education in England. They focused on looking at secondary schools and making sure that things were running smoothly. Places in Wales got their boards.

1902 Education Act. The 3 main focuses of the act were School Boards, Religion and Secondary Education. In terms of the school board, some people were still very against school boards in fear of them clashing with religious leaders of the same area which caused lots of division. For religion, the people in charge were more focused on who got money and control. Religious people wanted you to have to pay to get an education whereas non-conformists wanted the state to support education. Finally in terms of Secondary Education the UK was behind in secondary education compared to other places in the world yet no one knew how to properly implement it.

This act included a few more key points such as Local Education and Authority: Counties became responsible for the education they provide for their respective area. Secondary Education: focusing on how to educate children after elementary school. Religious Clauses: Religious classes were optional. Elementary Education: Maintain how well elementary schools were doing. General: Wanting to include women more. This includes Wales since secondary education was finally being introduced which the UK was behind on.

1914-1918 World War 1. Europe as a whole changed during the First World War politically and economically. With the war, diseases were spread and a whole generation of people were lost in battle. In Britain alone 6 million men were sent off to

war, 750,000 of these men died and 1.7 million were injured. In 1916 a coalition government was formed with Prime Minister David Lloyd George at the head, trying to lead during these trying times. He wanted a better future for soldiers to return home to. Education during the war was strange. With all the social unrest and focus on German education people wanted more change. After the war people wanted education to be a priority. Specifically free secondary education. During the war, more acts of child labour started to appear, and lots of budgets were cut.

1918 Education Act. Herbert Fisher proposed the Education Act in 1917. He thought that educating everyone would be good for society after the war. He wanted to raise the leaving age to 14, drop the half-time system and add nursery schools. Some people were mad at the act because it didn't focus on religious issues, and some businessmen were scared of how this would affect their jobs and various industries. The act was most successful at ending the half-time system, a lot of these goals weren't met due to the failing economy. By 1920 most of the goals were abandoned or remodelled into smaller goals. They did manage to raise the school leaving age to 14 but had a hard time making school mandatory for children over the age of 14 except if they were interested in rugby or something. Some key points of this act were that you had to go to school from age 5-14 which could be raised to 16, you had to keep on going to school even if you worked part-time, nursery schools, the Local authority had more power to enforce and maintain all of this, no more fees for elementary school, no more child labour, medical inspections, scholarships

1921 Education Act. This act didn't focus on adding new stuff but focused on fixing the things that they already had. Some main points of this act were about the Central and Local Education Authorities: The Board of Education still had a lot of power and focused on main duties but LEAs (local education administrations) would try to focus on more local matters regarding education. The LEAs had to focus on developing education plans and curriculums that the main board of education would have to approve. Elementary schools: They had to provide more advanced courses, and make nurseries, boarding schools and vacation schools. Attendance: ages 5-14 must attend school with no exceptions. Blind, Deaf and Epileptic children: Supporting these kids so that they will want to show up. Secondary education: Addresses religion, attendance and enforcement. Health of Scholars: Medical inspections needed to be provided, adding meals, and school camps. Children employment: limitations to how much kids can work and making sure that they weren't being abused. This affected the people in secondary education in Wales.

1936 Education Act. Increased the leaving age from 14 to 15. They gave the church more money for schools and built more non-religious schools because people were

pushing for that. Some people thought that changing the age from 14 to 15 wasn't that big of a change while others thought that a kid being stuck in school for another year would be one more year where they could have spent that time working. The act allowed some exceptions where kids were to get certifications stating that their family would suffer if they weren't able to work. This act focused on raising the age because there were still concerns about child labour. Church schools would follow the LEA's curriculum under special agreements. World War two took place soon after the act was set. This affected the churches in Wales. After the war Wales suffered greatly and the UK didn't seem to care. All of their coal no longer mattered and a lot of people suffered greatly.

1944 Education Act. Religious and non-conformists were happy with this act. This organized the age groups of the school. Wanted to make education more accessible and modern for everyone. Responsibility for education was shared between the main government, local authorities and each school. Central government: Responsible for gathering resources for education and making sure that rules were being followed as well as certain policies. Local education: Implemented national policies locally, managed buildings, staff and school equipment, and was responsible for developing local policies for each school. Schools: Managing resources for each school, controlling how the curriculum and resources were used for that specific school. Free mandatory education for ages 5-14 and plans to raise the leaving age to 16 in the future. Allowed homeschooling under certain circumstances. Wanted to help out kids with special needs but were sometimes singled out into their schools for only kids with special needs which also wasn't good. Addressed the wages of teachers. Some criticism of the act was that it focused too much on everyone else rather than the kids themselves. It was just the 1902 act all over again with some minor improvements and fixes. Churchill didn't focus on the act which was why it failed in some ways. Specifically involving the church and public schools. Didn't help poor people

Some specific issues were about public school education: The act didn't integrate or eliminate public schools but kept them which kept the divide in class. Secondary education: This could help make more schools with combined grade levels but things were still divided by class and how much money you made. School leaving age: everyone knew 16 was the ideal leaving age but the age was stuck at 15. Dual system: Wanting to add church schools in state education but that didn't happen. These issues happened because they just went to war but the act was still a good development. This helped people in Wales.

The Quest for full attendance has been happening arguably since 1870, it's always been the government's goal to get more people educated and populated. I think in terms

of Wales itself the quest was only taken seriously after the blue books came out. The blue books Made it seem like the Welsh could only progress if they learnt English. The reporters didn't speak Welsh or understand the culture. It said that the Welsh needed to be educated better. This happened in 1846 with William Williams as Welsh MP. The comments on Welsh schools were exaggerated and thought that the language held them back. This was an attack on Welsh culture. The teachers weren't trained and the amount of kids attending was low due to poverty rates. Most schools were taught in English which made it hard for the kids to understand.

In conclusion, each education act had a significant impact on Wales which then ultimately affected the way Wales has turned out. I wonder if Wales was given more attention if we had more Welsh leaders and would be more well known. In conclusion, learning about each act showed how Wales conquered their quest for education and shows how things got to the way they are now.

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