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978-1-107-62316-3 - The Teaching of Geography in Secondary Schools: Fifth Edition

Issued by the Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools

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THE TEACHING OF GEOGRAPHY IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

ISSUED BY THE
INCORPORATED ASSOCIATION OF
ASSISTANT MASTERS IN
SECONDARY SCHOOLS

FIFTH EDITION



CAMBRIDGE
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FOREWORD

The Teaching of Geography was first published in 1935 and since then there have been three new editions and five reprints of existing editions.

A new committee has now carried out a complete revision of the whole work, taking into account recent developments in Secondary education and new techniques in teaching the subject. It is hoped that this fifth edition also will achieve a wide circulation and exert an important influence on the theory and practice of the teaching of Geography in Secondary schools of all types.

In the preparation of this book the Association has again had the good fortune to be able to draw on the devotion, knowledge and experience of many members and friends to all of whom it expresses its grateful thanks.

May 1967

A. W. S. HUTCHINGS
*Secretary, Incorporated
Association of Assistant
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PREFACE

Many of the changes in the structure of Secondary education in Britain provided for in the Education Act of 1944 have now become a reality. The freedom which our education authorities enjoy to place their own interpretation on the various clauses of the Act has led to considerable diversity among the Secondary schools in different areas of the country. In whatever ways local schemes differ from one another in detail, however, the accepted and inescapable fact is that Secondary education now means the education of virtually all children between the ages of 11 and 15 years and of smaller though increasing numbers up to the ages of 16, 18 or 19 years.

The present committee was therefore confronted with a situation radically different from that in which the pre-war editions of this book were prepared and also different in many ways from that during the period when work was proceeding on the preparation of the third edition. Up to the time of publication of that edition in 1952 most education authorities had adopted the 'tripartite' system of Secondary education recommended in the Spens Report of 1939. Before 1952 the amount of specialist teaching of Geography in Secondary Modern schools was much more limited than it has since become, while in the few Secondary Technical schools the position of Geography did not differ markedly from that in the Grammar schools. Comprehensive schools had been started by some authorities but were in their infancy, and there was little experience of their problems of teaching organisation or syllabus construction on which to draw. The committee of that time therefore adopted the wise course of bringing the material of the second edition thoroughly up to date and of adding currently relevant matter, including a chapter on the teaching of Geography in the Secondary Modern school.

Circumstances have now changed greatly, and as a result a more drastic revision than any previously carried out has clearly become imperative. The present committee, appointed for this purpose and representative of Comprehensive, Modern, Bilateral, Grammar and Independent Secondary schools scattered about the country, has received much indispensable information and advice from many other members of the Association who volunteered to act as corresponding members. In addition, several non-members of the Associa-

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tion have given most valuable assistance. In accordance with the collective views of both Central Committee and correspondents, modifications have been made in the arrangement of the chapters and, to a greater extent, in their content. The purpose of the book is unchanged; it seeks to put the combined wisdom of many experienced and successful Geography masters at the service of all who have any kind of interest in the teaching of Geography in Secondary schools. The methods and the apparatus described are well tried and it should be readily practicable to make use of them in any properly designed and equipped Secondary school. The committee realises that many Secondary schools do not fall within this category and that in these cases teachers may, in attempting to follow the advice given, be compelled to improvise. While it is not claimed that improvisation is always or necessarily a bad thing, it is to be hoped that sufficient pressure can be brought to bear on the authorities concerned to eliminate the necessity for it so far at least as the essential elements of the subject are involved. In the Preface to the second edition it was stated that: 'In official circles the value of Geography is being increasingly recognised, and the Board of Education has officially sanctioned the construction of rooms specially designed and equipped for the study of Geography.' Unfortunately many education authorities did not at that time take advantage of this sanction, and even today, although officially approved plans for both the design and the equipping of Geography rooms are available, there are many Secondary schools without this provision, and many others in which the provision is inadequate.

The basic plan used in previous editions of the book is largely retained, but the greater part of the text has been entirely rewritten. Among the changes to which attention may be drawn are the inclusion of a number of syllabuses actually in successful use, illustrating several ways in which the requirements of Secondary school courses may be met; an extended section on the use of radio and television broadcasts; an introduction to the methods of programmed learning; and an entire chapter on field-work. Now that the General Certificate of Education has achieved a position of relative stability, in contrast to the speculation and controversy which surrounded its introduction in 1951, the whole subject of examinations has been restored to the main part of the book with a chapter to itself. There are still many uncertainties, of course, in the external examination field; the high hopes held out of beneficial effects from the Certificate of Secondary Education have not been unmingled with misgivings. Two other former appendix sections have been included as chapters in the new

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edition. That on the Training of Teachers has been enlarged and re-entitled 'The Geography Teacher', whilst that on 'Geography in After-School Life' has been completely recast as 'Geography and Careers'. Lastly it has been found possible to include once again a chapter on Geography Teaching in Overseas Schools.

Today the rapid and accelerating change so often spoken and written about is having and will continue to have a profound bearing on our subject. Many facets of this change are discussed in the book, but two perhaps call for mention here.

Almost every aspect of education has been the subject of recent enquiry and report. Perhaps the most noteworthy fact which emerges is that the two reports of the Central Advisory Council for Education (Crowther, 1959, and Newsom, 1963) both recommend strongly that the clause in the 1944 Act providing for the raising of the school-leaving age to 16 should be implemented not later than 1969 or 1970. Now that this recommendation has been accepted by the government, and assuming the age of commencement of the Secondary stage to remain as at present, all Secondary schools other than some Independent schools must devise five-year courses for the bulk of their pupils, starting in 1966. On the one hand, the uncertainties which at present bedevil the work of Geography teachers in Secondary Modern schools will very much reduced, and they will be able to plan their courses on a much sounder basis than at present. On the other hand, the fact must be faced that new problems and a new challenge have arisen. The universal five-year course cannot be successful if the fifth year is thought of by the pupils concerned as just an extra year's schooling to be endured. The building up of the curriculum as a whole, and the detailed planning and co-ordination of the various subjects within it, must be carried out with the world outside the school constantly in mind. Pupils must be helped to become citizens not merely of the world as it is but of an improved world which they themselves can make, if enough of them possess the knowledge, the desire and the will to bring this about. Properly presented, Geography has a big part to play in the achievement of such an outcome.

The other, and very different, facet of change on which comment is appropriate is the virtual disappearance of colonial empires and the concomitant rise of independent states, particularly in Africa and South-east Asia. From the geographical point of view it is clear that political and social factors are going to come more and more into the foreground as influences on the ways of life of these people. Geographical determinism, in so far as the controlling factor is

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physical environment, will, even in the less developed parts of the world, come to have less and less validity. We can still paint a broad and simple picture of the major natural regions of Africa; but within each region the contrasts are growing with variations in the development of political institutions and alignments, and with differences in the technical achievements of the inhabitants of the independent states which make up the region. The patterns and commodities of trade may also be caused to deviate from what may seem to be their natural forms in the same way as is already the case in Europe. These changes have begun inevitably to affect the approach to the teaching of the Geography of many parts of the world.

The committee is deeply indebted to Mr J. A. Morris, who read through the manuscript and offered much valuable advice. Whilst this has resulted in many improvements, the committee of course, bears full responsibility for any defects the book may still possess.

The grateful thanks of the Committee are also accorded to Mr T. W. Randle, who has carried out the arduous and exacting duties of honorary secretary with unfailing enthusiasm and judgement; and to Mr W. C. Middlebrook, who, as editor, has given ungrudgingly a great deal of his time to this responsible task, made no easier by the verbal idiosyncracies of the other nine co-authors.

J. C. PARRACK
Chairman

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Among many individuals and organisations whose help has been invaluable, particular reference must be made to Dr T. W. Freeman of Manchester University and officials of the Durham and Birmingham University Appointment Boards for information in connection with the chapter on careers; to the B.B.C. and Associated Rediffusion for help with television and sound broadcasting topics; to the Secondary Schools Section Committee of the Geographical Association for access to its portfolio of Geographical Room plans, and also to the Principal of Nottingham College of Education for allowing the Central Committee to hold some of its meetings there.

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