

A B S T R A C T

Education, historically a means of preserving accepted ways of life and of inculcating traditional and social roles and functions, is essentially a conservative instrument.

This thesis examines the composition, the changing functions and the duties and powers of the Jamaica Schools' Commission. This was the official body that governed and controlled the system of secondary education which evolved in Jamaica towards the end of the nineteenth century. The thesis ^{not only} examines ~~not only~~ the specific workings of the Commission as a body, but also identifies the generalised influence of certain of its members and delineates the issues and problems with which it concerned itself. The thesis seeks further to find out how far the provision of education in Jamaica, during the period under review was in fact 'class education,' the extent to which the provision was determined in nature and quality by external and/or local influences, and finally to comment on the degree of effectiveness of the system in preserving a way of life and in preparing young Jamaicans of the period to function effectively in the society.

The evidence collected and analysed would seem to suggest that the system of secondary education established in the Jamaica of the late nineteenth century
/was....

was indeed intended quite consciously by the Commission to preserve and maintain a socio-economic status quo which was based on the existence of great inequalities of wealth, influence and power. Education functioned most effectively as a divisive rather than an integrating force in the society, as the commissioners sought to establish for the higher classes an exclusive system of education which would help to maintain their dignity, security, and social elevation. The system which evolved was intended not to complement the contemporary system of elementary education which catered for the lower classes, but to be quite separate and apart from it.

Submitted in fulfillment of the requirements for

the B.A. (Ed.)

University of the West Indies

October 1972