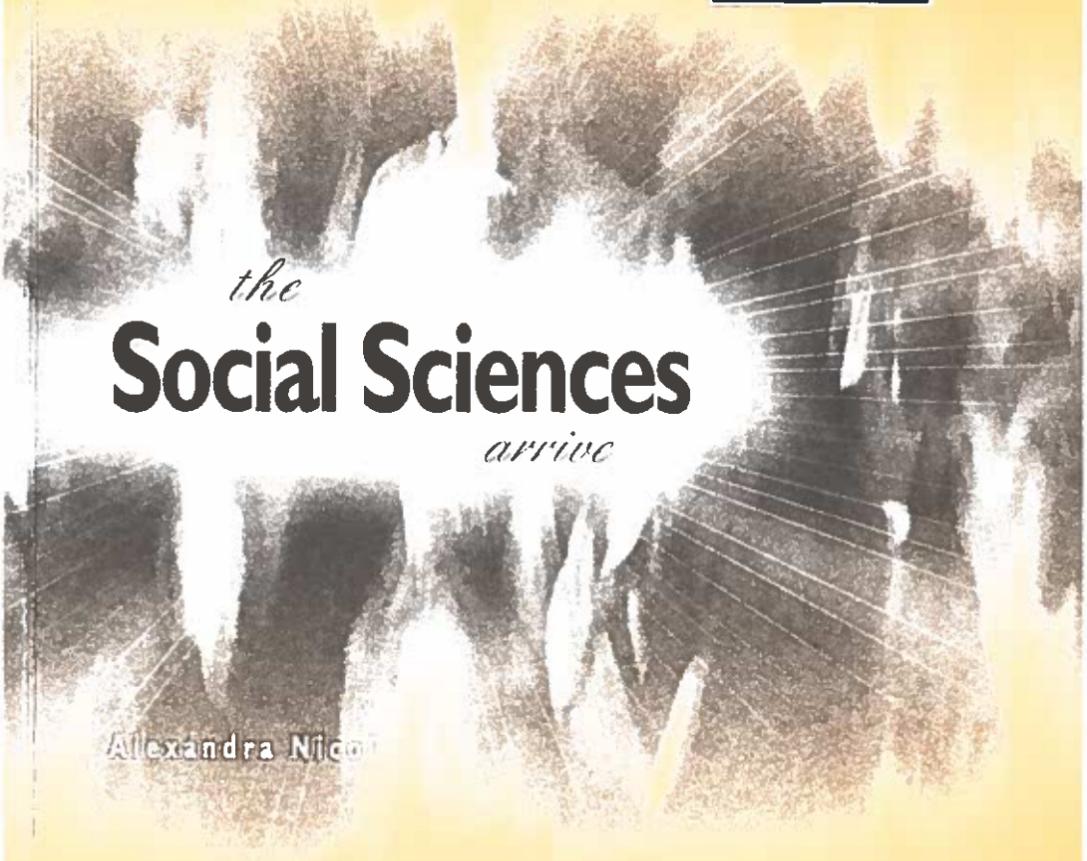


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ECONOMIC
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RESEARCH
COUNCIL



the
Social Sciences
arrive

Alexandra Nicol

The Social Science Research Council is established



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The Economic and Social Research Council is the UK's leading research and training agency addressing economic and social concerns. We aim to provide high quality research on issues of importance to business, the public sector and government. The issues considered include economic competitiveness, the effectiveness of public services and policy, and our quality of life.

The ESRC is an independent organisation, established by Royal Charter in 1965, and funded mainly by the government.

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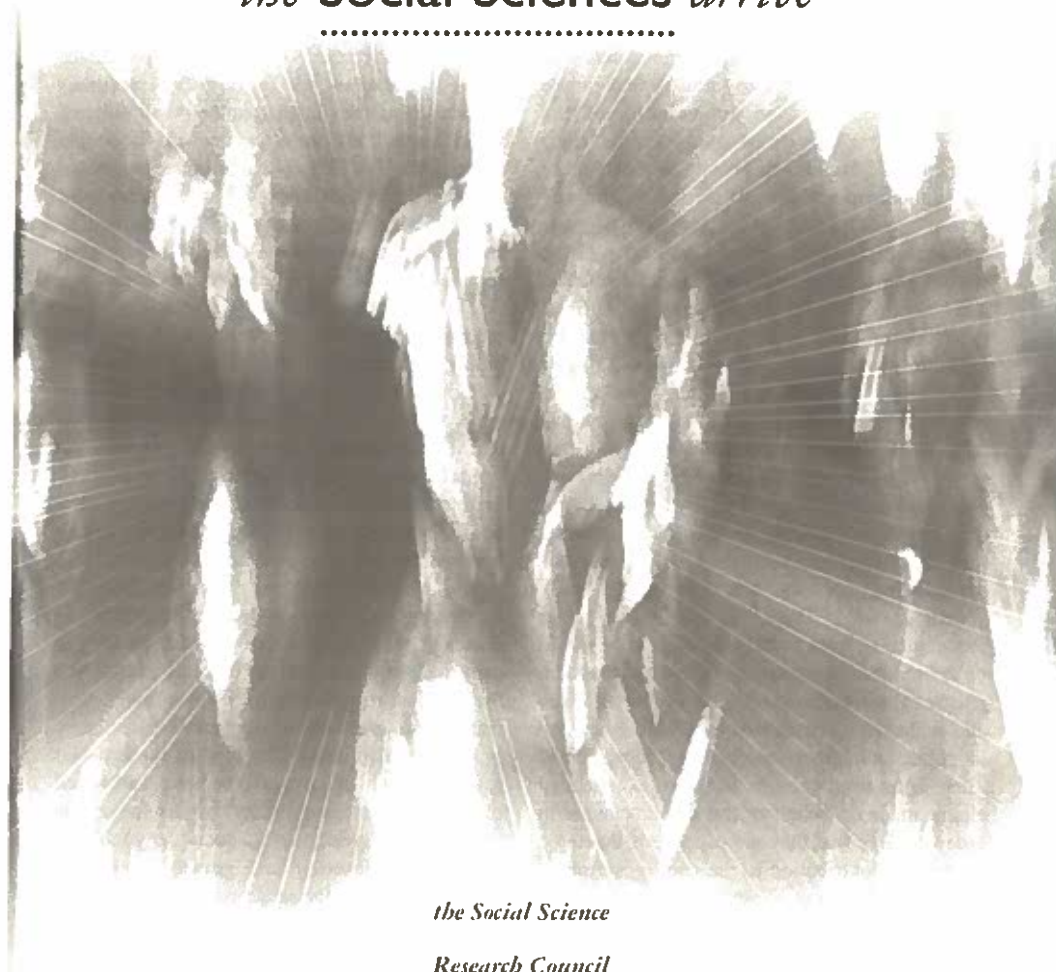
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The views and statements expressed in this publication

do not necessarily reflect those of the ESRC.

the Social Sciences arrive
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*the Social Science
Research Council
is established*



THE TIMES THURSDAY JUNE 3 1965

The Social Sciences Arrive

The Heyworth committee on social studies found "a remarkable amount of sympathy with the aims of the social sciences" among potential users of social research in industry and public administration and "an appreciation of the benefits to be anticipated from their application". In this it reports a much more favourable response than its predecessor twenty years ago. The earlier committee was embarrassingly conscious of the novelty of the studies going under the name of social science, and shrank from recommending official sponsorship for fear of "a premature crystallization of spurious orthodoxies".

Lord Heyworth's committee found and reflects a more confident attitude. It is not just that social research is more mature by twenty years – there are still after all some fairly bizarre ventures sailing under its flag. A general decalcification of thought in official contexts makes people less fearful of "spurious orthodoxies" or for that matter of rank unorthodoxies. There is, too, much wider recognition of what social research can or would do to limit the uncertainties in the midst of which policies must be prepared and decisions taken and evaluated. The area of avoidable ignorance in public administration is more conspicuous. There is no need to allow the more exaggerated claims made on behalf of the social sciences in order to agree that they are capable of making a far greater contribution to the good government and wise ordering of society than the paucity of their present resources permits.

They are already catching on, even without official sponsorship. University teaching and research posts in the social sciences are expanding more rapidly than those of any other faculty, and the number of undergraduates reading them is growing faster than the total number of undergraduates. The number of postgraduate awards in social studies, though still

only a fraction of the number made in the natural sciences, has been increased fourfold in the past three or four years. Government departments, public corporations, and large private companies are converting their interest in the possibilities of social research into an active demand for people trained in it. The Heyworth committee has drawn up its recommendations with the intention of giving this general movement a further impulse, and of co-ordinating more closely the scattered centres of initiative. Its chosen instrument is a Social Sciences Research Council. This recommendation the Government have very properly accepted.

Perhaps wisely, the committee did not enter into controversial questions of the lost frontiers, plural jurisdictions, prospectors' claims, and demarcation disputes that enliven the conduct of these restless disciplines. But to ignore them is not to dispose of them. They remain to exercise whoever are put in to run the new organization. Environmental studies are a case in point. A strong argument was put to the committee in favour of a separate research body for the built or man-made environment, the reasoning being that the physical redevelopment of the country, now gathering momentum, is being carried out almost in the dark, deprived of the kind of fundamental research on which it ought to be based and which must engage a multiplicity of disciplines as different as hydrography, social psychology, structural engineering and growth economics. The committee rejected this idea, preferring a joint board from all the research councils. The Government in turn have rejected that idea, preferring we know not what. So, welcome as the new moves are and gratified as sociologists will be, there remain many difficulties to be settled later, and many working in the field of social studies who will still have cause to complain that the particular row they hoe is neglected or misunderstood by everyone else.

the Social Sciences arrive

FOREWORD by Sir Claus Moseri

INTRODUCTION.....viii

CHAPTER 1
THE CLAPHAM INQUIRY AND REPORT.....1
Footnotes16

CHAPTER 2
THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON
ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH18
Footnotes27

CHAPTER 3
THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMITTEE29
Footnotes38

CHAPTER 4
THE BACKGROUND TO THE HEYWORTH COMMITTEE40
Footnotes70

CHAPTER 5
THE HEYWORTH COMMITTEE AND REPORT73
Footnotes94

CHAPTER 6
THE BEGINNING OF THE SSRC: THE FIRST THREE YEARS.....96
Footnotes120

CONCLUSION126

APPENDIX: ORIGINAL SOURCES129

INDEX132

• ILLUSTRATIONS •

- 1 Sir John Clapham (BBC Hulton Picture Library)
- 2 Michael Young when secretary of the Labour Party Research Department (Camera Press)
- 3 Lord Hailsham and R A Butler in October 1963 (The Hulton-Deutsch Collection)
- 4 Anthony Crosland as Secretary of State for Education (Central Press Photos Ltd)
- 5 Lord Heyworth (Unilever Historical Archives)
- 6 The first meeting of the SSRC (Crown copyright)

Photographs 1 to 4 were supplied by the Hulton Getty Picture Collection.

Photograph 5 was supplied by Unilever Historical Archives.

• FOREWORD •

by Sir Claus Moser

This is the story of a long-delayed birth.

I remember the time in 1965 when I was invited to join the Social Science Research Council on its foundation. I was not only greatly honoured, but also thrilled that a Council was being established. We all knew that much discussion had preceded this step, but not that the pros and cons had been debated over some two decades. It is this story that is the subject of this fascinating and well-researched book, ending with an account of the Council's first years.

The account is interesting for several reasons. For one thing, there is no better case study for showing how effectively government – civil servants as well as politicians – can delay difficult decisions. Of course, this is hardly news, and my own time as head of the Government Statistical Service included many such experiences. But this particular story is remarkable for the number of times in which the possibility of creating a Social Science Research Council was, more or less subtly, “kicked into touch”.

The book is also important as a reminder of the range of prejudices which faced the social sciences in the post-war years. Time and again, rational arguments for establishing a Council encountered a mixture of prejudice coupled with ignorance of what the social sciences were really about.

THE DELAYS

The social sciences have explicit origins in the late 18th century, with much widening and distinction in the 19th and then the early decades of what can now be described as the last century. The essence of this book relates to the years following the Second World War when the case for a Council came to be debated. It was the Clapham Committee – which reported in 1946 – that was responsible for the first major consideration of the pros and cons. After much discussion the Committee decided against, although the view was not unanimous. There followed an Inter-departmental Committee on Economic and Social Research, and in 1946–47 the University Grants Committee set up a number of sub-committees, including one on the social sciences, to decide on university policies and funding. It is significant that this was one of a few sub-committees that the UGC quickly discontinued in 1952, because it had been inactive and judged of relatively little importance.

Various other committees and organisations considered the issue. The National Institute of Economic and Social Research was one of them, the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy another. Neither was very positive. A more helpful line was taken by the Association of Scientific Workers, and the tide turned with the involvement of the Labour Party, through its Research Department and Scientific Policy Committee. Michael Young became involved and this led to the approach to Herbert Morrison (chairman of the Policy and Publicity Committee of the Labour Party) in his capacity as Lord President of the Council. But even a meeting when Morrison saw Michael Young and Harold Laski did not ensure a positive decision, partly because of his all-too-familiar argument that the social sciences were hard to define. Prospects then became more hopeful through the work of the Committee on Industrial Productivity and the Schuster Panel on Human Factors. That Panel's discussion is seen in this book – rightly – as the true antecedent of the SSRC. Further committees were set up, there was a new working group of officials in the mid-1950s and then yet another committee, under the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), appointed in 1957. And so the pressure mounted, including the odd debate in Parliament, notably in the Lords. There were steps backwards and forwards, and many public bodies were involved in the 1950s and early 1960s – the British Academy, the Treasury, the DSIR and the Research Council, the UGC, a whole range of government departments and the Robbins Committee on Higher Education. Harry Campion carried out an independent survey and there were contributions from well-known politicians of the day. Even *The Times* became involved, irritated by the endless delays in making a decision.

Campion had proposed a further inquiry into the pros and cons of a Council and so Whitehall's favourite game of discussing possible chairmen and committee members – for this inquiry – took over, plus endless consideration of its terms of reference. And so – finally – the Heyworth Committee was appointed in 1963 with terms of reference implying, but by no means explicitly specifying, that there could be a case for an SSRC.

The Heyworth Report published in June 1965 was the turning point. The social sciences were effectively defined and a strong case for a Council was made. Anthony Crosland, Secretary of State for Education, had already persuaded the government to set up a Council and he announced this on publication. Anthony Crosland took it upon himself to choose a chairman. His choice, made public in August 1965, was Michael Young, a decision which ensured that the Council would start with commitment, determination and skill. It was undoubtedly that decision which brought the social sciences in this country to a new level of distinction, acceptance and effective public support.

PREJUDICES

I don't doubt that in those years there were genuine issues of timing and political priorities that inhibited progress towards a Council. Even so, it is evident from this book that time and again misunderstandings of the social sciences plus prejudice and suspicion got in the way.

It is worth pondering why this was so and indeed why such attitudes still occasionally surface. One thing is clear. The reasons can't be that the social sciences dealt with unimportant subjects. The contrary is obvious, now as it was then. The problems which interest social scientists, whether economic, social, ethical, political, environmental, etc., relate to the most vital issues of our time. Policy guidance and evidence would need to come, if from anyone, from social scientists. So why these recurrent doubts about their potential contribution, or about bringing them together administratively and financially in a focused Council?

One objection raised repeatedly was that the social sciences cannot readily be defined. Though certain subjects, such as economics, are clearly "in", others are marginal. It was a weak argument, given that there was little doubt about most of the components, only a few being on the margin. Moreover, such demarcation issues apply in all fields and are always resolvable.

There were more substantial doubts, for example the question whether the social sciences could indeed be regarded as "sciences". I think this was always a wilful misunderstanding. What science denotes, after all, is a search for truth and a methodological, rigorous path towards it. It does not mean any particular toolkit of methods. And even in those days, who could have doubted that the social as much as the natural sciences embodied that same quest of discovery and understanding; the same dependence on empirical data; the same attempts to measure and intertwine theory and data; the same search for causal relationships and for a sound basis for predictions. In short, the social sciences, in part at least, have always tried to speak the language of science.

Of course the natural sciences are often on stronger grounds, especially when experiments are possible. But this is a matter of degree, not of kind. After all, some natural sciences are "softer" than others, just as some social sciences are "harder" than others: economics and demography for example, compared with sociology.

But social scientists do face special problems. Their subject matter is often more complex than that facing natural scientists, and therefore calls for more difficult research. Our subject matter is, so to speak, ourselves. Often results are more uncertain and controversial. For the natural scientists there is comfort in the presence of certain constants – like the speed of light – while we in the social sciences face a laboratory containing constantly shifting and complex phenomena. Measurements apply to a particular context of place, time and circumstance. Lasting, let alone universal, laws of theory are largely out of grasp. We have to make do with cautious, step-by-step theory building within limited subject ranges.

The fact that consensus may be harder to reach, that predictions go wrong and that conclusions may be less universal, is meat and drink for the cynics. It was such thoughts that dominated attitudes in those early days. I can just hear the view then expressed by a Treasury official:

"the natural sciences were objective and politically non-contentious. The social sciences, however, were charged with politics, and it was a field where all had opinions."

There were other stumbling blocks. One was impatience with "pure" social science research, evidently with little policy relevance. In the case of the natural and physical sciences, no one questions the importance of pure research; one may not understand it, but one just assumes that it must be of interest in itself, and potentially useful. The trouble with the social sciences is that, just because they relate to public policy concerns, more is expected of them, and what seems like "pure" research, leading nowhere, is frowned upon. This issue was fully explored in Lord Rothschild's crucial 1982 report (*An Enquiry into the SSRC*).

Finally, there is the most irritating cause of questioning and suspicion, the view that the issues social scientists deal with are largely matters of common sense or political judgement. This came out most clearly in the Thatcher years. Here was a government which knew precisely where it wished to go, and how, and in no way felt the need for the insight of social scientists. Indeed, it felt a distrust. Social sciences were seen as typically questioning and oppositional, even perhaps subversive. The Thatcher approach was to depend on "common sense" coupled with a strong political will; that should be enough. Why be disturbed by what is often confusing advice from the social science fraternity?

It was this attitude that led the Thatcher government in 1981 to threaten the very survival of the SSRC and Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary of State for Education and Science, to establish a committee with this clearly in mind. It was only the excellent and very positive report of this committee, chaired by the late Lord Rothschild, that saved it. Even then, in 1983, came the cynical government decision to remove the word "science" from the Council's title.

THE FIRST YEARS

But to go back to the 1960s: sense had prevailed, the Council was established and we started work late in 1965.

It is difficult at this distance to recapture the broad context in which we began. Leaving aside the widespread prejudices, there were obviously problems in the social science world. There had been golden years just after the war. World economies had to be rebuilt and so economics had a renewed importance. Countries were rebuilding their societies, so that sociologists and a new breed of social administrators gained respect. The young flocked to the social sciences, especially the "softer" ones like sociology. Not everything went well. Economics split into

warring factions, sociologists were a bit at sea with failing attempts to build general theories, the rapid growth in empirical work inevitably included some researches easy to caricature as trivial and pointless. Above all, the social sciences, which had promised so much, did not seem to solve the many vast problems of our day, whether at home or in the Third World. So there was a tinge of disillusionment that the social sciences had not lived up to promise.

Happily things were improving in the mid-1960s, and so our new Council faced a promising, even if far-reaching, challenge.

In the early meetings, much time was inevitably spent deciding on our role in relation to research, assessing the supply of trained research workers and postgraduate studies and advising government on the needs of the social sciences. We discussed whether the Council should have its own research units, with the disadvantage that they might be thought too close to political influence, and we agreed that the Council would in fact focus on research in universities and research institutes.

The Council had little difficulty in defining the key components of the social sciences for its purpose. Research and management and education were included as marginal and some areas, such as economic and social history, were ruled out (as was law, including criminology). One fascinating decision, looking back from the 21st century, is the Council's establishment of a strategic committee, "the Committee on 1980", chaired by Michael Young and asked to concern itself with the next 30 years. Other committees dealt with specific subject areas, and luckily my memory is such that I don't now recall how long we spent setting up committees and defining their role. Committees were charged to deal with research grants and to give postgraduate awards priority. The subsequent development of the social sciences must owe much to that early emphasis on postgraduate training.

Gradually the Council did more in encouraging research and helping in research institutes as well as university departments. As the volume of research applications grew, we increasingly concerned ourselves – with Michael Young very much in the lead – in assessing research quality and monitoring progress of the funded projects.

In due course, stimulated by our chairman, the Council published reviews on specific social science areas, such as poverty, cohort studies and other subject areas emanating from the Council's work in particular fields. Also, there was the follow-up work from the "30 Years Committee", which resulted in a few monographs, e.g. on war studies, international relations and race relations. There was also a guide to sources of government data, of special interest to social scientists.

All these innovations have been built upon in subsequent years. But of course the main

contribution of those early years was to encourage research in the social sciences as well as postgraduate study, and to establish the necessary procedures for advancement in both areas. It is also impressive to be reminded in this book that the Council was prepared to face contentious issues, such as educational priority areas – the Council was well ahead of its time – and student unrest.

Looking back, we were proud of the achievements in our early years and conscious of how much they owed to our dynamic chairman.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

In the 35 years since the SSRC was set up, the social sciences in this country have advanced out of all recognition – in range of activity, quality of research, innovative developments, public acceptance and visible influence. It is a remarkable transformation.

One can see this clearly in the educational world. Even in secondary schools, the social sciences are prominent in themselves, and as related to geography, environmental studies, history, civics and other parts of the curriculum. They are covered in most colleges of further education and of course in universities. There is no university that does not now give the social sciences significant attention. And the range of areas covered, though of course with different emphasis in different institutions, is remarkable. One can see it well in the work of the London School of Economics, which of course is a social science university in itself, built up over decades of distinction. Its teaching and research now covers accounting and finance; anthropology; economic history; economics; geography and environment; government; industrial relations; information systems; international history; international relations; law; mathematics; operational research; philosophy, logic and scientific method; social policies; social psychology; sociology; statistics – a truly impressive range of interests. What is particularly encouraging is that in the LSE, indeed in all universities, social science concerns cover theory and the “pure” approach as well as the obviously relevant and applied.

One could list, alongside the universities, the equally impressive range of contributions from research institutes and think-tanks, covering most of the above-named areas of interests. Empirical social research has become increasingly rigorous, supported by advances in survey methodology. The government’s Social Survey division – part of the Office of National Statistics – has set an excellent example, as has, outside the public sector, the non-profit-making Social and Community Planning Research Centre (now called the National Survey Centre). I wish one could say the same about public opinion research that still relies too much on quota sampling, long to be suspected as unreliable as a basis for survey results. Dependence on the “focus group” approach also raises doubts and is perhaps ripe for rigorous assessment.

But overall the picture is most encouraging. The social sciences occupy a respected place in further and higher education, and research activity is visibly impressive. Attitudes by and large are more supportive than in the picture conveyed for earlier years. That is not to say that suspicion and scepticism have disappeared. One only has to recall the remarks of Chris Woodhead, HM Chief Inspector of Schools, who seemed to write off all educational research by quoting a few evidently trivial and useless projects. In fact, I can think of very few of today’s policy issues that cannot or should not be underpinned by rigorous educational research. Much of such work is going on, even though occasionally, just as in the natural sciences, there may be pointless projects.

But generally the importance of social science backing for policy thinking is no longer questioned. For any doubts, one would only need to look at university catalogues, such as that of the LSE, as the evidence for this. Much of this transformation is due to today’s Economic and Social Research Council. Its record and increasing importance today is impressive, as its latest Annual Report (1998–1999) shows in the remarkable range of projects and programmes it supports, many of obvious policy relevance. The statement by the outgoing chief executive, Professor Ronald Amann, makes particularly striking reading, not least in its emphasis on “evidence-based” policy thinking. That term originates from evidence-based medicine, where it relates specifically to controlled trials. Here the meaning is wider. The social sciences may not often be able to experiment, but they can bring into play a range of strong methodological backing, quantitative and qualitative, and no serious policy strategy or decision should be without a search for rigorous evidence.

We who were around in the original SSRC can be proud that it set the path towards today’s ESRC, and thereby helped the social sciences in this country to achieve their present standing and influence, actual and potential.

• INTRODUCTION •

This book has a specific aim. That is to detail the events which led to the Social Science Research Council being set up in December 1965. It also describes the first three years of the Council. It starts in the middle 1940s when there was the first inquiry into how to encourage the social sciences. This inquiry, by a committee chaired by Sir John Clapham, was the first time that the question as to whether there should be a research council for the social sciences was seriously addressed. So this book is a history rather than a book about the social sciences. It came from an idea of Chris Caswill, director of research at the ESRC. He suggested a book that traced the background of the SSRC and also paved the way for other studies on different aspects of the social sciences at that time. It does, therefore, touch on issues which social scientists, or historians, might explore further. Attention is drawn to some of these in the conclusion.

I am most grateful to the ESRC for commissioning this book, and to Chris Caswill for his many helpful suggestions and comments. My thanks go to Lord Young of Dartington, the first chairman of the SSRC, who was kind enough to talk to me, and to read a draft. His comments were most useful. Jeremy Mitchell, scientific secretary of the SSRC in its early years, was also kind enough to read a draft, and make suggestions. I should like to thank him for his help, and for saving me from some unfortunate errors. Rupert Hughes, the assistant secretary to the Heyworth Committee, also gave time to help with his memories of the committee and it gives me pleasure also to thank him.

Most of the research was done in the Public Record Office. It was fascinating to return as a reader to the office where I had spent my working life. I should like to thank the many erstwhile colleagues who helped. I am most impressed with the service that they provide to the hundreds of readers who visit the office daily. My thanks also go to those who provided assistance in other archives: the British Academy, the House of Lords Record Office, the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, the National Museum of Labour History, and Nuffield College, Oxford, as well as the departmental record officer of the Treasury for allowing me access to records not yet transferred to the Public Record Office.

Finally my grateful thanks go to Sandra Baxter who typed the dictated text. She showed skill, patience and good humour, and saved me a great deal of time.

• THE CLAPHAM INQUIRY AND REPORT •

In December 1944 the Lord President of the Council and Deputy Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Anderson, set up a committee to consider without any formal or public inquiry whether additional provision was necessary for research into social and economic questions. The committee was to be chaired by Sir John Clapham.¹ Attlee was in the lead as Lord President, because in this position he was responsible for general civil scientific policy and for co-ordinating work on scientific questions which was not the specific departmental responsibility of a colleague. He was also responsible for the work of the three research councils, as they were then: agricultural, medical, and scientific and industrial.

The background to this committee lies in the successful role played by scientists who had joined government departments during the war. The results of their research had proved invaluable, with the development of the atomic bomb and radar being prime examples.² Many were anxious that industry should continue to benefit from scientific research after the war. The Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR) was a key department. It had been set up during the First World War as a permanent organisation for the promotion of scientific and industrial research. In particular it was concerned with the application of science to industry and so was responsible for the organisation, development and encouragement of scientific and industrial research, and the dissemination of its results.* Sir Raymond Streat played a prominent role. He was chairman of the Cotton Board, and he was on the Advisory Council for the DSIR, and also on its Industrial Grants Committee. In March 1943 he minuted Lord Riverdale (chairman of the advisory council) urging that an "esprit de research" should be set up after the war in industry and proposing a series of meetings on research and industry.³ He wanted the DSIR to play a greater part in this,⁴ and in October 1943 it was agreed that headquarters staff should be strengthened and industry encouraged to do more research.⁵

* The structure of the DSIR was a three-tier one. There was a Committee of the Privy Council for Scientific and Industrial Research with ministerial membership; this was advised by an Advisory Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, which consisted of eminent scientists; finally, there was the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research. Ministerial responsibility for the DSIR lay with the Lord President of the Council, at this time Clement Attlee.



Other bodies similarly urged that industry must continue to benefit from research after the war.⁶ The Industrial Research Committee of the Federation of British Industry issued an important pamphlet⁷ on industry and research. Nuffield College, Oxford, hosted some well-attended conferences. A particularly relevant one was held on 8–9 January 1944 on the post-war organisation of scientific and industrial research. This was a wide-ranging and positive conference, and G D H Cole, Chichele professor of social and political theory at Oxford and a fellow of Nuffield, in summing up said he was “appalled at the amount of ground that had been covered”. As with most discussion at this time, the main thrust of this conference was on natural sciences with social and economic research neglected, a point made by O W Roskill, later on the council of the British Institute of Management.⁸ The Parliamentary and Scientific Committee of the House of Commons also studied the matter and produced reports. One of these reports was on scientific research and the universities in post-war Britain. This was sent by Edward Salt, Unionist MP for Birmingham Yardley and chairman of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee, to Attlee in October 1943. The report stressed the need for increased research with more financial assistance. It also drew attention to the importance of the supply and training of research personnel. It referred, however, to agricultural, veterinary, medical and industrial research, not the social sciences.⁹

The British Association for the Advancement of Science also looked at post-war university education, and set up a committee. In July 1943 this produced a report on education for the public service. One of its suggestions was that civil servants would benefit from being able to take leave to learn about the effects of their work. A large part of that leave would most profitably be spent on an advanced course in social studies.¹⁰

In July 1943 the Advisory Council of the DSIR made a report to Attlee on the future of the industrial research associations. Attlee, before taking a decision, approached Sir Edward Appleton, an eminent scientist who won the Nobel prize for physics in 1947, but who also won awards for, as examples, both civil and electrical engineering. He was permanent secretary of the DSIR and secretary of the Advisory Council. Attlee asked him to discuss with the Treasury the desirability of bringing forward a complete plan for encouraging scientific research after the war. This was to embrace grants to universities, direct government expenditure on research, and taxation concessions on research expenditure.¹¹ This resulted in discussions led by Sir Alan Barlow from the Treasury and included Sir Edward Appleton; Sir Edward Mellanby, secretary to the Medical Research Council (MRC) and Privy Council for Medical Research; E H E Haverlock, administrative secretary to the

Agricultural Research Council; and Sir Walter Moberley, chairman of the University Grants Committee (UGC).¹² The discussions resulted in a white paper on scientific research and development setting out in general terms the existing government machinery for the promotion of scientific research and development.¹³

There was, therefore, a general acknowledgement that the link between scientific research and industry should continue after the war. At this point, however, the scientific research being discussed was nearly always in the natural sciences and in the areas covered by the existing councils.

Discussions on social science gained momentum and purpose when Salt, chairman of the Parliamentary and Scientific Committee, put down an early day motion on 9 February 1944.* He was an industrialist by background. His motion was “That this House, recognising that if the UK is to maintain its position in the post-war world and carry out effective plans for physical reconstruction and social betterment, research and the application of scientific knowledge in all fields must be promoted on a far bolder scale than in the period 1919–1939”. It urged the government to assure universities of much more support from the state; to direct education and training towards providing many more people highly trained in science and technology; and to start schemes to ensure expansion of research activity by private firms and state establishments. This would be done by tax relief.¹⁴ By 19 April this motion had the support of 207 names.¹⁵

At the same time Sir Granville Gibson, Conservative MP for Pudsey and Otley, was successful in the ballot for an amendment debate. Gibson was also an industrialist, and with the same age, interests and club as Salt. He proposed “To call attention to research and scientific knowledge” and his proposed resolution was going to follow the wording of Salt’s early day motion. Clement Attlee, as Lord President of the Council, picked this up and on 24 February he wrote to Sir John Anderson. He referred to the Barlow discussions

* In February 1945 A N Coleridge, in a minute to his colleague in the Office of the Minister of Reconstruction, J P R Maud, briefing him in advance of a deputation led by Salt to the Lord President (to a meeting later cancelled), described Salt: “I am told that Salt is at the head of a well-known small pressure group of MPs who tend to hammer away at this theme regardless of any practical progress that may in fact have been made”. CAB 124/525. But Salt was undoubtedly influential in this field.

and the proposed white paper. He thought that it would be convenient if the subject of scientific research could be disposed of in the time allotted to Gibson and that a statement on government policy could be made in the reply. Sir John Anderson agreed to this and that Attlee should reply to the debate on behalf of the government.¹⁶

This was certainly seen as of considerable importance in the Ministry of Education, to which the correspondence was copied, and which agreed to help with the white paper.¹⁷

The debate was held on 19 April 1944.¹⁸ The motion now read "This House, recognising the vital part which research and science and their effective application can play in reconstruction, as a means of increasing our national prosperity, raising the standard of living, recovering our export trade and developing the national resources of our empire, urges the declaration of a bold and generous Government policy of financial assistance directed to the expansion of teaching and research facilities in our universities and technical colleges, to the extension of pure and applied research in all fields by the state, by industry through private firms and research associations, and the effective and rapid application of the results of research". In speaking to the motion, Gibson quoted from an article in the *Yorkshire Post* which said that there was little evidence to suggest that the war effort had suffered any neglect of scientific invention or advice, then went on to ask "But has adequate provision been made for continuing this fruitful collaboration into times of peace?" Gibson said that that summed up the question he was putting to the House. Salt seconded the motion, and all who spoke supported it. Great stress was laid on the importance of scientific research to industry. The work of the Agricultural Research Council and the DSIR also received much attention.

From the point of view of social sciences Attlee's reply on behalf of the government is much the most interesting part of the debate. He started by sounding positive in responding to what had been said but without giving anything away. He said that the government was in favour of the spirit of the request for generous support from government for an extension of teaching and research at universities. He rejected the idea of a Ministry of Science, as he wanted science to be spread through all departments. He continued "There is sometimes a tendency in the minds of people to narrow science down to mean the natural sciences. But it is capable of application in other directions." He went on "to draw attention to the considerable improvement that has taken place during the war in the creation of a Central Statistical Office and a Central Economic Section, set up to ensure collection, through different parts of the government machinery, of data necessary

for determining policy and to survey systematically the economic causes, trends and effects". This was a reference to these two sections in the wartime Cabinet Office, whose work was central to the social sciences. It must be remembered that Attlee in his reply was making a statement of government policy.

To further this policy it was decided that a committee should be set up.¹⁹ By 16 August 1944 there was a draft letter prepared for Attlee to send to Sir John Anderson. This suggested that it would be useful to add a fourth research council to the three already in existence. Those for scientific and industrial research, medical research, and agricultural research were all natural sciences and applied to industry. The time had come to do something for the social sciences, which were increasingly important in throwing light on problems of public policy. There was a dangerous dependence on American foundations for financing research in this wide field. A committee should look into this, and should report jointly to the Lord President of the Council and the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Proposed terms of reference were "To consider whether additional provision is necessary for research into economic and social questions, and if so, the methods by which it should be provided".²⁰

In recommending that this committee be set up, the influence of E F M Durbin was strong. He was an academic who had been temporarily appointed as personal assistant to Attlee in 1942. On 27 November 1944 Durbin sent a minute to Attlee. In that minute he reminded Attlee that some time earlier he had suggested that the expenditure on research in the social sciences was very small. Far too much of the inadequate total was provided by American foundations. The development of public policy after the war would be greatly aided by rapidly increasing the knowledge of social processes. He went on to say that he had held discussions with a number of distinguished social scientists. All were agreed that the number of vested interests in this field was very great, and they recognised that the difficulty in providing money was very real. The recommended solution was that a small committee of inquiry should be set up.²¹ We do not know when Durbin made this suggestion to Attlee, but it was obviously before August 1944, and it seems probable that it was before Attlee's reply to the debate on 19 April.

Attlee sent his letter to the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 20 September, who replied on 12 October. He thought it was a good idea. He said that the inquiry should not be made public at this stage. He suggested names: Sir Henry Clay (who had been professor of political economy and social economy at Manchester University, was now economic adviser

to the Bank of England, and had been seconded to the Board of Trade since 1941); Sir Hector Hetherington (academic principal and vice-chancellor of Glasgow University and president of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research since 1932); Sir Walter Moberley (chairman of the UGC); Professor L C Robbins* (who had been professor of economics at the University of London from 1929 to 1944, and was director of the Economic Section of the War Cabinet); Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders (who had been professor of social sciences at Liverpool University and was now director of the London School of Economics (LSE)); and Sir John Clapham (as a leading economist, economic historian and as a wise man). He also wanted someone familiar with the machinery of government.²² The names he suggested provided almost the whole of the Clapham Committee.²³ Attlee was anxious that the chairman should be impartial, and names were also discussed in his office. Sir Maurice Hankey, who had been chairman of the Scientific Advisory Committee for 1942–43, had been suggested, but by 16 August alternative names were being sought. Suggestions were Lord Harlech, a prominent figure in public life, as someone "above the battle"; Lord Eustace Percy, rector of Durham University (Newcastle division) as someone involved with social sciences and university administration; and Sir Hector Hetherington. Professor Robbins suggested Sir John Clapham, as someone who was no longer directly involved in a university. Sir John Anderson's wise man, who had been professor of economic history at Cambridge from 1928 to 1938 and had been president of the British Academy from 1940, emerged as the first choice.²⁴ Attlee minuted Anderson to this effect on 30 October, and the go-ahead was given on 6 November.²⁵

Discussions were also going on within the DSIR. In May 1944 the DSIR appointed a Committee on Post-War Development to review the scope, policy and activities of the department.²⁶ A draft report was prepared by 24 July and the report was considered by the DSIR's Advisory Council at its meeting on 25 October. Amongst other things the report commented on the fact that there were at that time three research councils. It felt the need for provision also for research in sociology. There should be investigations into matters such as housing and diet and in general into the psychological reactions and behaviour of human beings to conditions imposed by modern life. The committee felt that the conduct

* Professor Robbins was later chairman of the Committee on Higher Education. See below pp.53–54.

of such investigations was outside the scope of the present research councils, but the results and implications were essential in planning research programmes and even more essential for departments responsible for national policy. *Ad hoc* investigations would be unfortunate, and therefore it recommended the desirability of exploring the establishment of a fourth research council, under the Lord President of the Council, for sociological research. The DSIR's Advisory Council concurred with the committee's statement about the conduct of investigations into sociological problems, but felt unable to take any active steps to fill what they regarded as a real need. They thought the proposal was one that should be transmitted to the Committee of Council: "that representations be made to the Committee of Council that consideration be given to the establishment of an Advisory Council for Sociological Research" as a sister body to the other research councils.

The report was sent to Attlee, as Lord President, towards the end of November, with a covering letter from Sir Edward Appleton which drew attention to all the recommendations except the one about the fourth research council. Despite this Attlee picked up the recommendation about sociology, and devoted more than half his reply to it. He told Sir Edward about the decision to set up a small committee of inquiry to "look at whether additional provision was necessary for research into economic and social questions. The Committee is not yet set up and it is our intention that the Enquiry should be a confidential one".²⁷

The MRC did not welcome the suggestion that a fourth research council be set up. Sir Edward Mellanby minuted Appleton in October. "We should have some difficulty in accepting the view that sociology had arrived at such a stage of scientific development that an Advisory Council for Sociological Research could be justified as an official government body".²⁷ He then minuted the Lord President at the beginning of December. He said that the MRC was interested in the recommendation of the establishment of an advisory council for sociological research. He said that this recommendation was based on the "need which will increase in post-war years for provision of research also in the fields of applied economics, statistics and industrial psychology, all of which may be generally classified under the heading of sociology". He pointed out that the MRC had an Industrial Research Board which had for many years included a large amount of research on industrial psychology. He said the MRC also had a statistical department dealing with human statistics. He concluded that the MRC thought that the means of promoting a wider programme of sociological research merited discussion but that a social research council was probably inappropriate. In any event the separation of research in vital statistics and industrial psychology from medical research was to be depreciated.²⁸

By the time the Lord President received this letter the decision to set up the committee of inquiry had already been taken.

Sir John Clapham agreed to serve as chairman at a meeting with Attlee on 1 December. By 4 January the members had been appointed.²⁹

It is interesting that industry, which had played an important part in urging the need for continued research after the war, was not represented on the Clapham Committee. It consisted almost entirely of academics with no industrialists at all. In addition to Sir John Clapham as chairman, the other members were Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders, Sir Henry Clay, Sir Hector Hetherington, Sir Walter Moberley, Professor L C Robbins, and Professor R H Tawney, professor of economic history at the University of London. Sir Alan Barlow, from the Treasury, was on it as someone who was familiar with the machinery of government.

The appointment of a secretary caused some difficulty. Mr Rickett was appointed in the middle of November, to take up post after he was transferred back from the Ministry of Production to the War Cabinet Office. At the beginning of January Rickett told Clapham that he would not be free until the beginning of February, to which Clapham replied that before the committee met he wanted a review of the existing provision for research. There was then a further delay when Rickett was sent to Washington on urgent official duty, and it was not until the very end of February that T M Wilson, from the Treasury, was appointed and started work. Rickett had not had time to take any steps to collect information about the existing provision for research, and Clapham agreed that the committee should not meet until the information was available.

The first meeting of the Clapham Committee was at last held on 4 May 1945. It had before it two reports summarising the existing provision for research in England and Wales (paper by Sir Henry Clay) and Scotland (paper by Sir Hector Hetherington). The meeting was rather inconclusive. The chairman referred to the resolutions passed by the DSIR and MRC and agreed that they were relevant to the discussions. In considering the scope of the terms of reference they should look in particular at what should be regarded as falling within the scope of the term "social questions". There was discussion on the role of universities and the question of whether there should be a central body was raised. The main conclusion of the meeting was a consensus that there was a shortage of people working in the field.³⁰

At the second meeting on 25 June Mr Barnard from the DSIR was present for the first part. The arguments he advanced were those which he had been promulgating within the DSIR for about 18 months.³¹ He said that investigation of sociological problems lay outside the scope of the three research councils. Since the object of industrial research was the application of science to economic and social ends, the DSIR should be in a position to appreciate the economic and social implications of the work it was doing. The DSIR was establishing a mathematical division to undertake fundamental research in statistical theory in relation to industrial research but this was as far as they could go. The examples Mr Barnard gave of areas where the DSIR required guidance on social and economic effects were not, perhaps, as telling as they might have been. Dried milk, which cut distribution costs, as opposed to liquid milk? Chilled or frozen beef? Canning, quick freezing or drying to preserve foodstuffs? What price could the bulk of the population afford to pay for housing? What sort of fuel should be used for heating? Finally, roads should provide speed, ease and safety, which was very complex issue with economic and social factors. Mr Barnard was director of food investigation at the DSIR until he was appointed principal assistant secretary in 1943, which seems to have influenced the selection of the examples. Mr Barnard said that the DSIR would like a focal point, but he did not convince the meeting of a need for one.

At the third meeting on 26 July, Sir John Clapham, who had missed the previous meeting, was again in the chair. Mr Campion from the Central Statistical Office (CSO) was present. He said that there was a danger because of a shortage of statistical staff in the universities. The primary purpose of the CSO was the day-to-day co-ordination of government statistics. Sir John Clapham referred to the DSIR evidence of the previous meeting. He said that the desiderata of the DSIR were not extensive enough to form the basis of a new department. He thought that the new mathematical division in the DSIR might involve the risk of duplication with the universities. He thought that the proposed central focal point might also involve duplication. Because of the agreed shortage of trained staff this would be particularly serious. Mr Campion thought that because of the shortage of staff in universities people would turn to the CSO for much statistical data. The department was, however, limited by the nature of government statistics, which did not always meet the requirements of research workers. For example, the census of production provided no data on the concentration of industry, nor did the Ministry of Labour figures show the financial concentration of firms.

By the end of this meeting some conclusions were emerging. Sir John Clapham agreed that shortage of statistical staff should be a central feature of the report. He "hoped to draft

what seemed to be the views of the committee against an Advisory Committee for Economics and Sociology". He went on to say that Mr Campion's evidence on the co-ordinating role of the CSO supported this adverse view.³²

At the fourth meeting, held on 1 October 1945, Professor Sargent Florence and Professor Hogben from the British Association for the Advancement of Science gave evidence. Their main point was the need for a co-ordinated syllabus for teaching and research in the social sciences. Government departments needed advice on how to secure co-ordination of statistics, and postgraduates needed training on how to present the results of their research. There was some discussion on the role of the research councils. Florence suggested that an unofficial body was needed for the social sciences, but one which had money. Clapham argued that to start by spending money was not the right course to take. The first essential was to get interested people in particular universities. He argued that clear-cut social science departments in universities did not yet exist and a supervisory organisation could not be constructed on a non-existent foundation. The usual argument about the non-availability of staff was advanced. The problems caused by the political flavour of the social sciences was raised at this meeting, although it was not seen as a serious problem by Professor Hogben.

Professor Simey, professor of sociology at the University of Liverpool, was the next one to give evidence, at the meeting on 24 October. He had been out of the university world for five years, and he said that on return he had found that the social sciences were not altogether respectable. He was, however, not complaining. He thought it was necessary to work out fundamental principles and show how they related to particular studies. Social scientists must first collect statistics and data, and from those evolve general theories. His two main difficulties were getting data, and getting schemes for admitting students.*

After Professor Simey withdrew there was, as usual, little general discussion. Sir Alan Barlow thought that government departments would give more help if they were persuaded that more research was needed, and that it would help them.

* In his evidence, which reflects its time, Professor Simey said "the whole framework for teaching was very unsatisfactory; the tendency in the past had been to admit girls to certificate courses in departments such as his. These entrants came direct from secondary schools and wished to obtain a general qualification admitting them as trainees to such professional bodies as the Institute of Hospital Almoners."

At the next meeting on 7 November, government officials appeared. A D K Owen, an economist who had been general secretary of Political and Economic Planning (PEP) and was about to become assistant secretary-general in charge of the Economic Affairs Department of the United Nations, spoke about the number of ways in which the government was involved in social and economic research. He mentioned the wartime social survey, the sponsorship of research, and the provision of access to records for research. He reminded the committee that much basic material, such as statistics, was published. He said that he had been attracted to the idea of a research council, but now thought it would just cause a bottle-neck. He preferred some development in the Civil Service, such as an inter-departmental committee. As an adjunct to this there could be a permanent research unit, located centrally. When it came to financial aid, he would prefer university faculties to be built up. He acknowledged that economics was quite well covered, and the principle gaps were in sociology. Mr Feavearyear and Mr Starke, from the Ministry of Food, also attended the meeting. They spoke on their paper about wartime food management, covering such things as the distribution of food. In the course of their work information about expenditure had been collected. They said that there had been few requests to make the information available to researchers: it was firms in the food trade which had wanted publication.

At the next meeting on 26 November Professor Brogan, professor of political science at Cambridge, suggested that something on the lines of the US Social Services Council might break down watertight compartments which hampered work in the United Kingdom. However, he did not want a government-established research council because he did not think that such a council would ask the right and awkward questions. The chairman of PEP thought there was a case for a research council to make grants to institutes and universities for social research, but a member of the PEP council thought that a committee of departments would be a better grant-giving body. At the meeting on 5 December 1945, Professor Steven from the USA spoke at some length about the work done by the Social Science Research Council there. Sir John Clapham did not give much weight to his evidence. He dismissed it by saying that the UK had no problems similar to the negro problem in the USA, and therefore much of the work described was not required in the UK.³³

Work had already started on the report in July 1945, and by August a skeleton report had been written. However, the existence of the committee had not been made public. Anderson and Attlee had agreed, when setting up the committee, that it should be

confidential. This was seen to offer many advantages, although they were not spelt out. It was, however, recognised that the committee might need to consult various institutions and this could lead to a leak, possibly with unfortunate results. If it led to embarrassment, then it had been agreed that Sir John Clapham could ask for the decision to keep it confidential to be reconsidered.³⁴ The House of Commons first learned about it on 20 December 1945 when Major Vernon, Labour MP for the Dulwich division of Camberwell, who was an engineer by background and who had worked in industry, asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer for the terms of reference "of the committee recently set up under Sir John Clapham". He also asked who had given evidence, whether evidence could still be submitted, and if the findings would be made public. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, now Hugh Dalton, replied that a good deal of evidence had been taken, the report was now being prepared, and as yet he could not say whether it would be published.

The draft report was before the committee on 9 January 1946, but evidence continued to be taken. It met on 25 January, when Professor T H Marshall, head of the social science department at the LSE, argued the need for further assistance for social and economic research, and said that there was a *prima-facie* case for a Social Science Research Council (SSRC). He did not think that it would place a strain on available staff. At the same meeting Professor Raymond Firth, professor of anthropology at the University of London, also argued that a council was desirable.* At the next meeting, on 11 February, Professor Hancock, Chichele professor of economic history at Oxford University, who was editor of the civil side of the British official war histories, talked about the considerable lack of knowledge of social matters and thought that an SSRC was desirable, to locate and define problems worth studying. At the same meeting Professor J R N Stone, director of the department of applied economics at Cambridge University, mentioned four different approaches, one of which was an agency which would bring together workers outside government and provide funds. It would also direct university research workers to problems. He did not want an SSRC. He argued in favour of something that arose spontaneously from the desires of workers in the field. Funds, he thought, should come from the UGC. The final meeting at which evidence was taken was held on 8 March 1946. Colonel J G W Davies talked about the research by the Directorate of Selection of

Personnel at the Ministry of Defence into the background and aptitudes of all army recruits during the war. The main point to arise from this meeting was that because of difficulties with finance it was intended to ask the Rockefeller Foundation to provide money for publication of the report. Both Tawney and Robbins thought this inappropriate.³⁵

The report was still at draft stage when Sir John Clapham died at the end of March. He had been heavily involved in the drafts. It was almost ready, and Professor Robbins undertook final amendments. At the same time the provisional conclusions were circulated to selected people for their views.³⁶

The House of Commons, in the meantime, pursued the matter. Stephen Taylor, Labour MP for Barnet, was a doctor and neuro-psychiatric expert. He had been director of the wartime social survey of the Ministry of Information. On 14 February he asked the Lord President if the government would establish a social research council on similar lines to the MRC "in view of difficulties under which social scientists have laboured in this country in the past".* The Lord President, now Herbert Morrison, replied that he was waiting for the observations of the Clapham Committee. On 21 February and on 7 May Major Vernon continued to ask questions as to whether or not the report was completed, and whether it would be published. By May he was becoming impatient, and suggested that the report might be speeded up "perhaps by inviting one or two younger members to sit on the committee".³⁷

The final meeting to approve the report was held on 24 May. The final draft of the report was ready by June, and it was finally published in July.³⁸ The committee had been asked to consider whether additional provision was necessary for research into economic and social questions. The report covered not only the amount of provision for research but also the channels through which it became available. It listed the fields which it thought economic and social questions covered without attempting a definition. The picture it painted was not bright. It thought that the value of knowledge in these fields was not appreciated, and even when it was, resources would not be provided, in contrast with the natural sciences.

* Both Marshall and Firth were appointed to the SSRC in 1965.

* Taylor remained interested in this and as Lord Taylor introduced a debate in the House of Lords in December 1959 in which he again called for an SSRC to be set up. See p.50.

Despite this, it was optimistic about research within the machinery of government. Because of the war there was machinery in place for collecting information and there were organisations to survey it systematically. It said that provision for research in government was more likely to be hampered in the future by lack of availability of properly trained staff than lack of realisation of the importance of the work to be done. There was still room for improvement, and it recommended that an inter-departmental committee should be set up with outside experts to assess the potential value of information gathered for departments and to see how it could be made available to researchers.

The picture painted of research in universities was extremely gloomy. There were insufficient staff, and insufficient resources to enable what staff there were efficiently to pursue their researches. There were 52 professors and readers in social sciences, compared with 296 in pure sciences and 176 in medicine. Those staff that there were did not have enough time for research because they had too heavy a teaching load. There was a particular shortage of posts in statistics. The committee found that there must be increased provision of resources, and that this increase should be on a permanent routine basis.

Paragraphs 29-32 were devoted to the suggestion that there should be an official social and economic research council. It quoted the proposal from the DSIR's Advisory Council that consideration be given to the establishment of an advisory council for sociological research.* However, the recommendation was not to set up a research council at this stage. The chief need at that time was to strengthen the staff and provide for routine research. If there were an official body for social sciences there was a "danger of a premature crystallization of spurious orthodoxies". But the main point was that "the best men" should not be diverted from doing research to co-ordinating research. The report also said that few people who had been consulted were in favour; more were definitely unfavourable. It is interesting, however, that apart from government departments all those who gave or submitted evidence were from universities or other academic organisations. In spite of the statement by the DSIR that industry needed to know the economic and social effects of proposals, no industrialist actually gave evidence.

* Until the final draft this read "The Advisory Council of the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research submitted to us a resolution...". Sir Edward Appleton, secretary to the Council, objected to this because a resolution had not been submitted, and the proposal had been put forward in confidence. The offending words were changed, so that the committee in the published version "encountered the proposal". CAB 124/529.

The committee came up with three positive recommendations.

- a A standing inter-departmental economic and social research committee should be set up to survey and advise upon research work in government departments.
- b Favourable consideration should be given to increases of the university grant with a view to strengthening developments conducive to the spread of research into economic and social questions, both through the provision of more chairs and other teaching posts and through much more liberal provision for libraries, calculating machines, computing assistance and similar facilities.
- c The UGC should be asked to consider the establishment of a sub-committee to advise on matters relating to the social sciences.

The report and its recommendations were accepted by the Lord President, Herbert Morrison, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Hugh Dalton, and it was published. This was only after discussion. There was correspondence between Morrison and Dalton as to whether it should be referred to the Lord President's Committee to advise on whether or not to accept the recommendations. Dalton was ready to accept both publication of the report and its recommendations, but Morrison was much more cautious. Sir Alan Barlow wrote a very positive covering minute to the report, supporting the recommendations, which worried Morrison. He did not like the support given to the recommended increase in university funding, and was worried about the relationship between the inter-departmental committee and the UGC sub-committee. A briefer note had to be provided. However, on 12 July 1946 the Lord President's Committee gave its approval, so that the report and its recommendations were duly accepted.³⁹

The DSIR made public its position in 1949 in its report for 1947-48 with a review of the year 1938-48.⁴⁰ It said that reference by its committee to sociological research arose from the increasing extent to which the department was brought up against the need for such work in its own activities, particularly in fields such as building research and food research. Sociological investigations applied over the whole field of human activity, unlike researches in the physical sciences with which they were accustomed to deal. They thought there might be a point in considering whether a sociological research council should be appointed to exercise the sociological responsibilities corresponding to those exercised by the MRC and DSIR in their respective fields. They were satisfied to learn of the examination by the Clapham Committee.

The committee's decision to advise that a council should not be set up was not greeted with enthusiasm: "we note that the committee reported against the appointment of such a Council". However, ending on a positive note, they looked forward to mutual benefit arising from co-operation between the department and the inter-departmental Committee on Economic and Social Research which had been set up.

NOTES

- 1 CAB 124/529.
- 2 Report of the Privy Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, 1947-48, with a review of 1938-48. Cmd 7761, August 1949.
- 3 DSIR 17/280.
- 4 DSIR 17/10.
- 5 DSIR 17/198.
- 6 House of Commons debate 19 April 1944, Hansard columns 216-312.
- 7 CAB 123/165.
- 8 The proceedings of the Nuffield conferences are held in the Nuffield College archives, under the reference "Private Conferences". Some of the proceedings are also found in CAB 124/440.
- 9 CAB 123/165.
- 10 Ibid.
- 11 DSIR 17/182.
- 12 ED 136/350.
- 13 Cmd 6514, presented to Parliament in April 1944. CAB 124/525.
- 14 ED 136/350.
- 15 House of Commons debate, 19 April 1944, Hansard column 228.
- 16 ED 136/350.
- 17 Ibid. Although this correspondence was between the Lord President and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, I have been unable to find the papers amongst those of the Lord President (amongst the Cabinet Office papers), or in Treasury papers. However, the papers were copied to R A Butler at the Ministry of Education.

- 18 Hansard columns 216-312.
- 19 I have not been able to find the file covering April to August 1944.
- 20 CAB 124/129.
- 21 T 161/1301/1.
- 22 Ibid.
- 23 See p.8.
- 24 CAB 124/129.
- 25 T 161/1301/1.
- 26 DSIR 17/210.
- 27 FD 5/49.
- 28 CAB 124/529.
- 29 T 161/1301/1.
- 30 CAB 124/529. T 161/1301/1.
- 31 DSIR 17/210.
- 32 CAB 124/529. T 161/1301/1.
- 33 T 161/1301/2.
- 34 T 161/1301/1.
- 35 T 161/1301/2.
- 36 T 161/1301/3.
- 37 CAB 124/529.
- 38 Cmd 6868.
- 39 T 161/1301/3.
- 40 Cmd 7761.

• THE INTER-DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RESEARCH •

The recommendation of the Clapham Committee that an inter-departmental Committee on Economic and Social Research should be formed was followed up rapidly. Even before the report was published on 18 July 1946, H Campion, director of the CSO of the Cabinet Office, and J E Meade, director of the Economic Section of the Cabinet Office, on 10 July minuted the Lord President about it. They thought there was a lot to be said for it. The shortage of trained economists and statisticians was again seen as a difficulty, and they suggested that the committee be kept small to safeguard against them being drained off to run it. They thought that the Clapham Committee had not perhaps thought through the role of the new inter-departmental committee: "the Clapham Committee itself, whilst proposing the committee, are a little vague as to the actual form the committee should take and what exactly its function should be". Campion and Meade thought that outside experts should be included only in an individual and not a representational capacity. This was because of the difficulty of deciding which organisations should be represented. They thought it should be consultative and advisory only. They were anxious that the committee should contain some persons not drawn from universities, although this was probably a reference to institutes such as the National Institute of Economic and Social Research rather than to industry.¹

In the event the committee consisted only of university academics, in addition to the representatives of government departments. In July Barlow, at the Treasury, had asked Carr-Saunders, Clay and Robbins, all of whom had served on the Clapham Committee, if they could recommend the names of outsiders for the committee. Those who were asked, and accepted, were Carr-Saunders himself, D N Chester, official fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford, who had been in the Economic Section of the War Cabinet, Professor T S Simey, who had impressed the Clapham Committee when he gave evidence, and J R N Stone, who had also given evidence to the Clapham Committee.² In 1953 Professor R G D Allen, from the LSE, took over from Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders.³

There was also discussion as to which government departments should be represented on the committee. It was agreed that the Registrar General, George North, should chair it. A Treasury circular of 4 October listed the departments that were to be on it. These were the Board of Trade, the Central Economic Section, the CSO, the Ministry of Agriculture, the Ministry of Food, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of National Insurance, and the Registrar General for Scotland. Other departments were to receive papers. Some departments which were not included asked if they could be, or

asked to receive papers. The Institute of Actuaries wrote to complain that the Government Actuary was not on it. Barlow replied to their objections: "far from any slur being intended we had thought that Actuaries were too exalted persons to be troubled with such mundane matters as those within the sphere of the Committee". Despite this, the Government Actuary was added to the committee.⁴ By 1950 the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Town and Country Planning were also represented on it.⁵

The various sub-committees that were set up during the lifetime of the committee comprised this same mix of government departments and academics.

The terms of reference, which had been included in the Treasury circular, were announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 21 January 1947, in reply to a parliamentary question. They were:

- a to survey and advise on research work in government departments and in particular
- b to bring to the notice of departments the potential value for research purposes of the material which they collect and to suggest new methods and areas of collection, and
- c to advise on how there could be made available to research workers information gathered for their own purposes by departments which has potential value as material for research.⁶

These had been discussed at the first meeting of the committee on 14 December 1946. There, the main topic discussed was the need for information to be preserved, with the destruction of colliery records being cited as an example of uniform destruction. To follow this up, Sir Hilary Jenkinson, Deputy Keeper of Public Records, attended the second meeting on 17 January 1947. He explained that schedules of documents to be destroyed were drawn up between the departments and the Public Record Office (PRO). These schedules were discussed at the third meeting on 28 February, and the question of whether the PRO should become an active government agency for the use of those engaged in contemporary research was raised.⁷ Despite the strong feelings which the question of the preservation of documents had raised at the first meeting of the committee, little was achieved. In its first report, published in October 1948, it was recommended that the schedules should be made comprehensible to research workers.⁸

In the following year the PRO sought the view of the committee on the destruction of files of dissolved companies, but the committee determined that it was not appropriate for them to discuss this, and that it should be referred to academics.⁹ In a draft letter of 1959 we learn that the committee was happy to be consulted by the PRO, but did not have the resources to give advice. The committee continued to receive the minutes of the Committee on Particular Instance Papers* in an unofficial capacity.¹⁰

After the first few meetings the academics on the committee had expressed concern that they might be "shot at" as not representing all possible university needs. The secretary at the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, Mrs Stone, was married to J R N Stone on the committee. The Stones consulted North as to the possibility of the Institute organising a conference. This was welcomed, and it was held on 8–9 March 1947. It concentrated on the problems of social and economic research that arose from the relations between government departments and academic bodies. Its report, in paragraph 6, stated that the problems of outside research workers fell into three parts: (1) what material existed, in what form, and in which departments, (2) how to gain access to it, and (3) how to persuade government departments to analyse material so as to throw light on special problems? The recommendations in the report dealt directly with matters concerning the committee and provided a rich source of items for future agendas. The recommendations covered things such as how information could be made available; contacts between research workers and the departments; and confidentiality.¹¹

Much of the committee's work was to be concerned with statistics, and early in February 1947 a memo was sent to the major departments, 30 of them, inviting them to review any statistical tabulations which they were proposing to make. They were asked to consider whether there were any which were likely to be of interest to social and economic researchers and they were told that the committee could give advice.¹² The minutes of the third meeting, later in February, were optimistic. It was felt that departments were being co-operative: statistics had been provided by the statistical department of the Ministry of Labour. At the fourth meeting, in March, a sub-committee was set up following a request for help with agricultural statistical tabulations. At the same meeting the Ministry of Education provided a detailed account of the kind of information it collected, and agreed

* Particular instance papers comprised long runs of records, e.g. on social security, many of which would be of interest to social researchers but which were far too bulky for more than just a very small percentage to be kept.

to draw up a list of statistical returns. However, at the fifth meeting, in May, the chairman said that after five meetings the committee had discussed a variety of topics, both general and particular, and had built up a useful background for its work. He suggested that it should now take up the terms of reference more closely with selected departments by means of a small sub-committee, and at the sixth meeting, in June, it was decided that the first department should be the Ministry of Labour. The committee itself, in the meantime, stood adjourned. It did not meet again until 14 November, apart from a meeting in June to discuss official histories.¹³

This lack of real progress did not pass unnoticed. Dr King, in the Lord President's Office, was chairman of a Committee on Research Productivity, and concern had been expressed about overlap between the work of his committee and that of the Registrar General. Dr King was assured that the terms of reference did not overlap, "moreover its [the inter-departmental committee] work has been carried out at a somewhat leisurely pace which hardly suggests that it has been expected to contribute to the solution of the country's present difficulties".¹⁴ When the first report was published in October 1948 three departments had asked for advice. Advice had been given to the Ministry of Agriculture following the work of the sub-committee, and the Ministry of Education and the Board of Trade had also sought help.¹⁵ Sub-committees were set up to provide this, but the sub-committees' work turned into a survey of what information was collected; what the value of that information was to research; and if changes in the methods of collection could be helpful.¹⁶ By 1954 a paper on the future work of the committee referred to the letter that had been sent to the 30 departments and stated that only the Ministry of Agriculture had taken up the offer of help. Other departments had acknowledged the letter but had done nothing more.¹⁷

In conducting surveys through sub-committees the committee produced probably its most effective work. At its meeting in May 1947 the first sub-committee had been set up to make a close study of the Ministry of Labour in relation to the committee's terms of reference. This led to the first guide to official sources, on labour statistics, which was published in 1948.¹⁸ The committee drew attention to this in its first report, but with the comment that "surveys of this kind take time: they cannot be rushed".¹⁹ By the time of the third report, in 1956, three guides had been published and a fourth was in preparation. *The Economist*, in a review of the report, noticed this and agreed that the appraisal of government statistics was all to the good, but questioned whether it was going far or fast enough.²⁰ However, the *Guide to Labour Statistics* was revised in 1950²¹ and 1958.²² Other sub-committees resulted in further guides on Census reports 1801–1931, local government

statistics, agricultural and food statistics, social security statistics, and census of production reports, published between 1948 and 1961.²³ The sub-committee on education did not recommend that a guide be published.²⁴ This was in contrast with the sub-committee on the Board of Trade, which recommended four, on production, overseas trade, home trade, and a miscellaneous one dealing mainly with financial matters. This recommendation was made in October 1952, but in December 1953 the statistical section of the Board of Trade reported that it could not undertake this additional work, neither then nor in the foreseeable future.²⁵ In the minutes of the meeting of 19 March 1954 the prospect of no early guides to the Board of Trade material led to the chairman saying that the committee would welcome the appearance of even a small "instalment on account". Eventually, in 1961, the *Guide to the Census of Production Reports* was published.

The sub-committee on agricultural tabulations which had been set up in March 1947 reported to the committee in November of that year. The main discussion turned on the question of confidentiality. The suggestion that confidentiality might be a problem had been raised by Campion and Meade in their minute to the Lord President in July 1946.²⁶ They had anticipated objections from the firms supplying confidential information to government if outsiders were afforded uncontrolled access to statistical data in government departments. The discussion of the committee in November 1947 went further than this. Professor Simey was concerned with returns of individuals rather than firms. It was agreed that Simey and Stone should provide papers for the next meeting of the committee.²⁷

Simey's paper stressed the need for information about individuals of a personal kind. He gave as examples crime, which could not be studied without the study of criminals, and unemployment, which could not be studied without the study of the unemployed. He wanted the information to be made available to accredited research workers. He thought that problems of confidentiality would be few where the information was coded and a fairly large number of cards punched, such as with the Ministry of Labour family budget enquiry. If there were a problem, research workers might be appointed as unpaid members of staff of the relevant department.²⁸ Stone's paper suggested that the committee could formulate a general statement of principle governing the confidentiality of government documents.* His proposal was that government departments should make information available unless

there was a good reason to the contrary. He suggested as reasons why information should not be made available (1) security and foreign policy requirements; (2) statutory requirements; (3) the practical administration of departments be rendered unworkable; (4) individual persons, firms, corporations etc. could be publicly identified; (5) the cost be out of proportion.²⁹

At the meeting in December 1947, when Simey's paper was discussed, Mr Fieldhouse, secretary of the Assistance Board, was present. He made the clear distinction between information in statistical form, and case papers by which individuals could be identified. He had no problem with the former. He would consider access to the latter only if (1) nothing was published by which individuals could be identified; (2) no attempt was made to supplement data by approaching individuals directly; (3) facilities should be afforded only to research workers of standing; (4) there should be no extra administrative burden on departments. Simey welcomed this statement, although he would like to relax the second condition. He pointed out that when the public assistance authorities were local they were much more helpful. Mr Fieldhouse's reply to this was that it was easier for local authorities to make available confidential information as they were not liable to parliamentary criticism.

The discussion ended inconclusively. The chairman suggested that the question should be discussed in the context of particular proposals. Simey, to whom this suggestion was particularly addressed, had, however, no proposals at that moment.

Stone's paper was discussed at the following meeting, and at the meeting in March 1948 the committee had before it a paper on confidentiality prepared by the secretary. It said that in the opinion of the committee a prima-facie case existed for publishing, or making otherwise accessible, all information about general social activity unless there was a good reason to the contrary. The reasons were those proposed by Stone. Although it included the statement that individual persons, firms and other entities should not be publicly identifiable, the paper went on to say that there were certain fields of research for which access to information of a personal or individual nature was needed, and hoped that departments would be sympathetic to research needs.³⁰

* This followed a recommendation in the report of the conference organised by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research.

This statement of confidentiality was published in the first report of the committee.³¹ However, in the paper on the future work of the committee, written in March 1954, the impact of the committee's reports on departments not represented on it was discussed. Little was known of this, and as an example it was said that the committee had no means of ascertaining how far departments' policies and practices were in line with the principles relating to confidentiality in government papers, published in that first report.³²

There was no doubt that unpublished material that was not confidential could be made available. A list of libraries was drawn up, with a list of documents they could receive, compiled from information sent in by departments.³³ This was agreed, although in January 1948 it was suggested that the number of libraries receiving this material should be kept to a minimum.³⁴ In its first report the committee was waiting to see how this worked.³⁵ In its second report, the committee considered that it was working well.³⁶ However, once again, by 1954 it was realised that there was no evidence for this optimism. There was no easy means of ascertaining how far the material deposited in the libraries had been used by research workers.³⁷ Nonetheless, this initiative did result in eight lists, containing an aggregate of 260 titles, being compiled and made available to about 60 university and specialist libraries.³⁸

In its second report, published in December 1950, the committee saw as its *raison d'être* collaboration between research workers and government departments.³⁹ This priority followed what was an undoubted success. In September 1948 the committee had before it a paper from the LSE wanting information for two studies. The first was an analysis of occupational mobility, and the second a study of family household expenditure as between different social classes. They were seeking the help of the committee in getting support from departments.⁴⁰ This was the first time that this had happened, and it was agreed that a group of those interested should follow it up.⁴¹ As a result of the committee's work, and to meet the needs of the Ministry of Labour and National Service as well as the LSE, the Central Office of Information (COI) drew up a modified scheme and carried out fieldwork. They then prepared two sets of punch cards. This was carried out with Treasury approval. Another success was seen when the Economic and Social Research Section at Glasgow University was put in touch with the Inland Revenue.⁴² However, these links with the universities were not always successful. At its meeting in December 1955, the committee had before it a draft of its third report. It is minuted that some members thought that the draft should say more about the committee's failures, such as its apparent inability to help the inter-university study group on industrial relations.⁴³

On the whole it cannot be said that the committee had a major impact. When its first report was published as a parliamentary paper in 1948 the covering minute on the copy sent to the Lord President said "the Report deals with matters which interest very few people".⁴⁴ The DSIR, which had looked forward to working with the committee, had by 1949 become unenthusiastic. Mr Barnard (who had given evidence to the Clapham Committee) minuted, in May 1949, that he was getting a little tired of receiving papers of the committee which rarely had anything of real interest to the DSIR in them. It was suggested that Mr Easterfield of the Building Research Station might like to see them (maybe because the committee had been looking at statistics on conurbations). Mr Easterfield replied that he would like to see them, as showing what was going on and where. However, he added in parenthesis, "I sometimes wonder if the Committee really knows what it is trying to do".⁴⁵ The committee met frequently in its first years (except when it adjourned itself in 1947): it held 32 meetings between December 1946 and July 1951. Its second report in 1950 was also published as a parliamentary paper. However, at the meeting in July 1951 it was decided to meet only quarterly in the future, and in fact the next meeting was not held until October 1952. In all, between July 1951 and May 1960 it held only eight meetings. In its third report, in 1956, the committee pointed out that it had met less frequently as a full committee, explaining that its main work was now done through the sub-committees.⁴⁶ Professor Simey drew attention to this fall-off in activity when he gave evidence to the Heyworth Committee on behalf of the British Sociological Association. Speaking "off the record" he said that the inter-departmental committee started off well but was advised to "lie low": it was a committee with a government chairman and so did not criticise government departments.⁴⁷

This third report was published in 1956, but as a Stationery Office paper, not a parliamentary paper. It was suggested that it should be addressed only to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, because the Lord President no longer had functions relating to social and economic research. However, the chairman, North, was unhappy with this and the report was addressed to the two ministers with the Lord President formally relinquishing any responsibility after its publication.⁴⁸ The report painted an optimistic picture in the circumstances. It pointed out that it had made a total of 41 recommendations to eight departments. Of these recommendations 70 per cent had been accepted in principle, 20 per cent were being given further consideration, and 10 per cent had been rejected because of constraints of manpower or money. Of course there were successes, but it seems that departments agreed when it suited them to do so. Also, acceptance in principle does not mean action. Two recommendations to the Board of Trade illustrate this, one on patents,

and the other on bankruptcy and company liquidation. Each of these was counted as "agreed in principle". The third annual report, when reporting on the recommendation on patents, says "to investigate past trends of invention would, however, be likely to involve considerable research impractical to undertake with the present pressure on Patent Office staff". The report on the recommendation on bankruptcy is similar, "although it would be interesting to collate financial resources with production results we reluctantly concluded that this would not be a feasible way of going about it".⁴⁹

The third report included the statement that there were an estimated 50,000,000 pieces of paper in the Ministry of Food. It was this fact (not included in the press release) on which most of the reviews concentrated. *The Economist* was more critical. It commented that the committee was bent on looking after the interests of outside research workers, mainly in the universities. But the wants of industry and the public were not represented. It thought that the committee seemed to have many useful functions, but there were advantages in having one with wider advisory powers. This would keep the statistical service under review and the demands of the various users of it in proper balance.⁵⁰

This did not happen, and the final meeting of the committee was held on 20 May 1960.⁵¹ It was not then anticipated that this would be the last meeting and future work was discussed. But it did not meet again. In 1962 North, at his own request, retired as chairman, but because the question of setting up a social research council was pending it was not thought appropriate to appoint a new chairman at that time.⁵² In 1965 the library at Nuffield College asked if the committee was still in existence, to which the secretary replied that it was not dissolved but that it had been inactive for some years. Its future depended on the Heyworth report.⁵³

The Heyworth Committee did look at the future of the committee. In a list of questions to government departments it asked if they had made use of the inter-departmental committee. Except the departments that were represented on it, the answer was "no". Even those who had been involved were negative. The National Assistance Board said that it had co-operated on a handbook, but had not made use of its services. The Registrar General for Scotland said that the office had been represented on the committee, but was not a "user" department. Perhaps most telling of all was the evidence from the General Register Office. Although the Registrar General was the committee's chairman, it was only able to say that it had found some of the guides to official sources useful.⁵⁴ The secretary to the committee, Mr Freery of the General Register Office, appeared before the Heyworth Committee. He

said that he thought that because departments now had their own links with research workers the committee was unnecessary. He agreed that an SSRC would effectively take it over.⁵⁵ In view of this it is not surprising that the report recommended that the committee should be dissolved. However, instead of suggesting that the SSRC should take over the work, it recommended that the CSO should take the lead in providing better, fuller, more co-ordinated and earlier government statistics.⁵⁶

NOTES

- 1 CAB 124/529.
- 2 T 161/1301/1.
- 3 RG 25/35 1/1/2, 124A.
- 4 T 161/1301/3.
- 5 RG 25/7.
- 6 RG 25/1.
- 7 Ibid.
- 8 RG 25/6. Cmnd 7537.
- 9 RG 25/1, meeting on 25 March 1949. RG 25/3, SER 43.
- 10 RG 25/35 1/5, 20B.
- 11 CAB 139/185.
- 12 RG 25/2, SER 3.
- 13 RG 25/1.
- 14 CAB 124/530.
- 15 RG 25/6. Cmnd 7537.
- 16 RG 25/6. Cmnd 8091.
- 17 RG 25/4, SER 124.
- 18 RG 25/11 and 23.
- 19 RG 25/6. Cmnd 7577.
- 20 RG 25/8, 108A.
- 21 RG 25/23.
- 22 RG 25/24.
- 23 The records of all the sub-committees are in RG 25/9-22 and the files on the guides are in RG 25/23-29.
- 24 RG 25/14.
- 25 RG 25/4.

CHAPTER
3

• THE ROLE OF THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMITTEE •

The Clapham Committee, in its report, had recommended that favourable consideration be given to increasing the university grant and that the UGC be asked to consider establishing a sub-committee to advise on social sciences.¹ Copies of the report were circulated to the members of the UGC, who agreed at their meeting on 7 October 1946 that they would appoint a special sub-committee in due course.² The sub-committee was appointed on 24 April 1947, when names were suggested to represent economics, economic history, political science, anthropology, sociology and social sciences, geography, and Scotland. Miss Marjorie Fry, a member of the UGC, asked if applied psychology could also be represented, and it was agreed that she should attend the initial meetings. The meeting of 24 April also discussed the allocation of money. The UGC would be meeting at the end of June to consider the assessment of the quinquennial grants. The new sub-committee on the social sciences would not be able to make recommendations in time for that, so it was agreed to include a proportion of the estimated expenditure on social sciences as an earmarked grant. This would enable universities to proceed with urgent developments. This would be reported to the first meeting of the sub-committee, and further earmarked grants would be made later.

The first meeting of the sub-committee was held on 1 July 1947.³ Its membership was more or less as discussed at the meeting of the UGC in April and changed little over the next five years. Sir Walter Moberley, chairman of the UGC, chaired this sub-committee, as he chaired all the other sub-committees of the UGC. He retired in 1949, and was succeeded by Sir Arthur Trueman, who, as Dr Trueman, was deputy chairman of the UGC from 1946 to 1949 and of the sub-committee from 1947. There was no deputy chairman from 1949 to 1951, when Sir David Hughes Parry, professor of English law at London University and director of the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies, was appointed vice-chairman. The other members of the sub-committee were Professor D W Brogan (political science), Sir Henry Clay (economics), G M Clarke, appointed in June 1951 (economic history), Professor G D H Cole (political science), Geoffrey Crowther (economics), Professor H C Darby (geography), Professor R Firth (anthropology), Miss Marjorie Fry (applied psychology), who resigned in October 1948, Sir Hector Hetherington (Scotland), Professor J Jewkes (economics), Professor T H Marshall (sociology and social science), Professor L C Robbins (economics), E A G Robinson (economics), Professor T S Simey (sociology and social science), Mrs J L Stocks, appointed in February 1950 (economics), J R N Stone (economics and sociology), Professor R H Tawney (economic history) and Professor Barbara Wootton (social studies). Professors Simey and Stone were also on the inter-departmental Committee on Economic

- 26 CAB 124/529.
- 27 RG 25/1.
- 28 RG 25/2, SER 16.
- 29 RG 25/2, SER 17.
- 30 RG 25/1. RG 25/2, SER 24.
- 31 RG 25/6. Cmnd 7537.
- 32 RG 25/4, SER 104.
- 33 RG 25/2, SER 20.
- 34 RG 25/1.
- 35 RG 25/6, Cmnd 7537.
- 36 RG 25/7, Cmnd 8091.
- 37 RG 25/4, SER 104.
- 38 RG 25/35 1/9/2, 5A paras 14–15.
- 39 RG 25/7. Cmnd 8091.
- 40 RG 25/3, SER 29.
- 41 RG 25/1.
- 42 RG 25/4, SER 104.
- 43 RG 25/4.
- 44 CAB 124/530.
- 45 DSIR 17/483.
- 46 RG 25/8.
- 47 ED 144/3. CSS 26.
- 48 RG 25/35 1/1/1, 11a–15a.
- 49 Recommendations that had been made, and the reactions of departments to them, are detailed in RG 25/35, 1/6/2.
- 50 RG 25/8, 108A.
- 51 RG 25/5.
- 52 RG 25/35, 1/5/1 and 1/5/3.
- 53 RG 25/35 1/1/1, 24A.
- 54 ED 144/22.
- 55 ED 144/7.
- 56 ED 144/45, Recommendation 23, para 137.

and Social Research. George North, the Registrar General, who chaired that committee, attended meetings as an assessor. This would provide liaison between the two committees. The Lord President had expressed doubts as to how they would interact.⁴

The chairman opened this first meeting by reminding the members that the Clapham report had estimated that in 1938-39 £108,000 was spent on salaries for social sciences in universities and university colleges throughout Great Britain. Clapham had suggested that an additional £250,000-£300,000 per annum was desirable. The universities' estimate of additional expenditure corresponded closely to this. The UGC had agreed that for 1947-48 an additional £125,000 would be available, an additional £160,000 for 1948-49, £190,000 for 1949-50, £220,000 for 1950-51, rising to £250,000 for 1951-52.⁵ It was the responsibility of the sub-committee to allocate this money. The sub-committee had also to see if the universities' development plans were doing enough to spread research into economic and social questions, as Clapham had recommended.

There were two main problems facing the sub-committee. The first was the classification of those branches of study falling under social sciences. It was agreed that a sub-committee should be set up to look at this, and Professors Robbins, Cole and Tawney agreed to form it. The second problem was how to get improved statistics from the universities of the division of these branches of study both amongst the universities and within the different faculties within the universities. It was agreed that a letter should be sent to the universities asking for a statement of their plans. The UGC office would then devise an improved statistical arrangement.

The question of what comprised the social sciences was not new. In the second paragraph of the Clapham report the question had, to some extent, been ducked. The report did not give an exact definition, saying that the practitioners were not agreed. There was agreement that economics and economic history, sociology, anthropology, social psychology, political science, demography and economic and social statistics were all involved in the study of social and economic questions. The Clapham report then went on to say that there were also certain parts of medical statistics and law which were commonly considered to come within the field.

When it came to the allocation of money there was a need to be precise. Professors Robbins, Cole and Tawney presented a paper⁶ to the second meeting of the sub-committee on 25 September 1947. The sub-committee agreed that there was a distinction between

those studies which obviously fell within the social sciences and those which were on the borderline. One of the functions of the sub-committee would be to discriminate between them. The sub-committee discussed the list, and came up with an agreed one.

Economic Theory and Organisation

- Accounting
- Commerce
- Economics (pure and applied)
- Industrial relations

Economics and Social History

Politics

- International relations
- Politics and social theory
- Public administration (including local government)

Sociology

- Social anthropology
- Social psychology (social science and social training)
- Sociology (general and applied)
- Criminology

Statistics and Demography

- Demography
- Statistical theory (in its application to the social sciences)
- Economic and social statistics

Other Subjects (if any)

By including "other subjects" the sub-committee was admitting that there were still grey areas. The sub-committee included in this category ancillary subjects which, in special circumstances, could be included. As an illustration it gave certain aspects of law. The sub-committee also added a rider that not all expenditure falling under the agreed heads would be regarded as properly belonging to the social sciences.

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This list was circulated to the universities. However, for the immediate allocation of grants the sub-committee was having to rely on the list drawn up by Clapham. In mid-July, after the first meeting, the universities had been asked for a statement of their plans, and these were before the meeting of the sub-committee on 3 October 1947.⁷ A preliminary consideration of the applications raised doubts if enough money had been allocated. A distinction was drawn between an increase in teaching posts leading to expansion of research, and an increase in teaching posts leading to growth in the number of undergraduates. A frequently expressed concern was reiterated: for some years it might be impossible to find enough competent teachers.

Concern about the money allocated, and the realisation that the universities were not yet in a position to supply total costs for additional provision for teaching, led Professor Robbins to propose a resolution which was carried unanimously:

"That the attention of the UGC be drawn to the concern felt by the Social Sciences Sub-Committee at the inadequacy of the amount of money available for distribution to the universities in respect of teaching in the field of social sciences, in view of the increased expenditure likely to be incurred by the universities in respect of administrative changes, salaries and rise in the cost of living."

This resolution was discussed by the UGC at its meeting on 23 October 1947. It agreed that the sub-committee needed more information about what an earmarked grant should cover; consequently a paper⁸ was before the sub-committee at its next meeting on 6 November. The paper explained that the earmarked grant was for new teaching and research, i.e. new developments. Things such as provision of computers fell to the general grant, not to the earmarked grant. The LSE was an exception to this as it was a school for social sciences only. However, it was thought that the LSE should not have any problem, because of an increase from student fees.

The sub-committee discussed this, and passed another resolution:

"To represent to the UGC that the sub-committee fears that towards the end of the quinquennium rising costs of salaries of existing staffs in 1946/7 and of general maintenance at the LSE might trench upon monies available for other institutions."

The UGC at its meeting on 4 December merely took note of this resolution.

In November 1947 the sub-committee had written to the universities asking for additional information about numbers and grades of staff in post and wanted for new posts, and whether they were new teaching or new research posts. The information was wanted for the four years 1948-49 to 1951-52. At its meeting on 26 February 1948⁹ the sub-committee had the returns of staff and costs before it.¹⁰ These showed that the total requirements of the universities were far in excess of the figures suggested by Clapham. It was too late to increase the grant for 1948-49 but that still left the three following years. The sub-committee made a distinction between larger and relatively tried institutions, and those that were smaller and relatively untried. It thought that one of the problems was that Clapham had foreseen an expansion in expenditure at the end of the quinquennium whereas it had come at the beginning. Further problems arose from the increase in student numbers and the fears that there would not be enough posts for them on graduation, and (again) a shortage of adequate candidates to do the teaching. In summing up the discussion the chairman said that the global programme submitted by the universities was not unreasonable; that in allocating the grant the sub-committee should aim to reserve particular sums for certain purposes; and that the balance should be maintained by the "points" system. At its meeting on 16 March the chairman explained that the points system aimed to ensure the development of teaching in social sciences across the whole country.

The sub-committee at that meeting agreed to ask the UGC to recommend to the Treasury that the earmarked grant be increased to £240,000 for 1949-50, to £330,000 for 1950-51 and to £400,000 for 1951-52. The UGC discussed this at its meeting on 1 April 1948. It took no decision but asked for a statement of the detailed requirements of the estimated expenditure put forward by the universities, with particulars of new posts. A paper¹¹ with these details was provided for the next meeting of the UGC on 6 May 1948. The covering minute explained that the recommendations were not based on an exhaustive review of possible developments in each university. Nor had they reviewed the availability of additional and properly qualified staff. It was pointed out that salary levels were considerably higher than could have been anticipated. Programmes submitted by the universities would mean additional expenditure of nearly £500,000 by 1951-52. The sub-committee agreed that this was reasonable, and in some fields felt that the proposals were inadequate. However, they did not think that £500,000 was attainable by 1951-52 and thought that £400,000 should be anticipated. They added that some research grants, such as those made by the Rockefeller Foundation, would come to an end. The work should continue but should be financed by the universities.

The UGC accepted *nem. con.* that the earmarked grant be increased by the amounts recommended. This was agreed by the Treasury.¹²

Although this revision of the grant was agreed in 1948 it is in the report of the UGC for 1935–47.* The UGC expressed here some concerns that had been raised about the proposed expansion. In particular it questioned whether there would be enough suitably qualified persons to fill the many new posts.¹³

The sub-committee discussed the allocation of the grant, now increased, on 25 October 1948. They agreed to provide a reserve for 1951–52. Part of that reserve would be used to increase grants to institutions which had been allocated considerably less than they had applied for. At this meeting the sub-committee had in front of it a table of the full-time teaching and research posts for each university under the subject heads which had been agreed in September 1947.¹⁴ They proposed creating more senior posts and wanted suggestions on where to fill gaps and which subjects to develop. It was agreed that the UGC office would speak to one or two of the sub-committee members.

The sub-committee did not meet again until June 1950, when it met to discuss the allocation of the reserve.¹⁵ It had before it a paper tabling the teaching and research posts at the universities.¹⁶ Discussion centred on whether grants should be given to a few institutions or spread more widely. It was decided that they should be used to foster research. The money should, therefore, go to those institutions where much of the social science effort was absorbed in teaching. The sub-committee put a paper up to the UGC recommending ten institutions to receive additional grants for the expansion of teaching and research in certain specified subjects. It recommended that the institutions should not be too rigidly restricted in their use of the money. Economic history and economic and social history were particularly well represented in the list.¹⁷ The UGC approved the recommendations of the sub-committee on 10 July 1950.¹⁸

The next meeting of the sub-committee was in October 1951. It met to discuss a paper from the UGC¹⁹ looking forward to the quinquennium 1952–57. This paper was sent to all the sub-committees. The UGC was asking universities to supply estimates for two

different ways forward:

- a there should be no additional expenditure except for salary increases and extra expenditure on maintenance made necessary by bringing into use accommodation on which work had begun or had been authorised, or
- b there would be new academic development and expansion.

These were known as column A and column B. Details were given on the estimated expenditure in each discipline under the two columns. In the social sciences the earmarked grant for 1951–52 was £400,000. Under column A the total estimated expenditure for 1951–52 was £909,770, rising to £1,016,575 in 1952–53, and reaching £1,109,551 in 1956–57. Under column B the total estimated expenditure for 1951–52 was also £909,770, but rising to £1,187,837 in 1952–53, and reaching £1,423,566 in 1956–57. At that time the UGC was looking for the total amount of the grant, and distribution between the universities would be decided later.

With this background all the sub-committees were asked to submit:

- a the assessment of the total needs of the universities, and
- b where there had been earmarking, should it continue?

The paper went on to say that earmarking had been unknown before the war. It had been introduced to give effect to recommendations made by a number of government committees, including the Clapham Committee. It was inconsistent with the principle of each university applying its income as it thought fit. It was not considered to be suitable for permanent adoption. The question had now arisen as to whether it could be absorbed into the general grant.

There was a middle line between earmarking and total absorption into the general grant. Earmarking involved giving a grant with a definite direction from which the university was not at liberty to depart. The UGC could also give an "indication". This was when the UGC gave advice to universities which they were not bound to adopt, although divergence might meet with disfavour.

* There was no report for 1941–46 because of the war, so this one is for an abnormally long period.

Circulated with this paper was a memorandum by the executive committee of the British Sociological Association. In this the developments post-Clapham were welcomed, although concern was expressed that money had been spent on teaching rather than research. The association argued for substantially larger sums for further increases in teaching staffs and expansion of research.

The sub-committee discussed this paper²⁰ and sent a report to the meeting of the UGC held at the end of November 1951.²¹ The sub-committee recommended that earmarking need not be continued, but that appropriate use of "indication" would be satisfactory. When looking at column A and column B the sub-committee said that the UGC should tell universities that departments of social sciences should not fall below column A. If the money available were not enough to meet the needs of column A, then some form of "indication" should be given to recognise their special needs and protect them from drastic cuts. The report continued by commenting on the increase in student numbers which had led to an increase in teaching rather than research. It was felt that grants were distributed over too wide a range of institutions. They would prefer facilities to be improved for research in well-established institutions rather than strengthening the small ones. If there were any additional money an "indication" should be given that higher research in well-established departments should be promoted, and development in subjects such as sociology and social psychology, which were then underdeveloped, should be stimulated. Without visiting universities the sub-committee did not feel able to determine the amount of additional money that would be needed. They hoped that the main committee would find it possible to recommend the provision of an appropriate sum in the light of the sub-committee's comments. As the sub-committee had been asked to provide an assessment of the total needs of the universities,²² this does not seem to be as helpful as it might have been. It was not specifically discussed by the UGC at its meeting, where the estimates were discussed globally and not broken down.²³

The next meeting of the sub-committee was held at the end of September 1952. It met to discuss the paper from the UGC asking for views on the distribution of the recurrent grant for 1952-57. This paper was sent to all the sub-committees, asking if any special institution should receive guidance about the development of any particular fields of study.²⁴

As in its previous report, the sub-committee's report was contemplative rather than specific. It agreed that the social sciences were in a state of rapid development; the question was how to ensure that the many potentialities for further growth were realised as far as possible in the next quinquennium. Looking back to the past quinquennium the report said that it had been impossible to fill all the projected posts, which had meant that money was available for research. There was a danger that research might suffer in the future. The sub-committee would prefer the universities themselves to find the money for research, rather than for it to be administered by a central research fund.

The report went on to mention informally some matters of interest. The sub-committee thought that overexpansion in sociology should be avoided. They noted a proliferation in the number of social science courses, their unnecessary lengthening, and the establishment of new courses where they were not justified. They thought that the development of statistical research institutes was one of the most valuable developments of recent years; they were performing a most useful service in setting standards. Finally, the sub-committee was concerned about libraries, and in particular the tendency to think that the needs of the faculty would be met by the provision of certain standard textbooks. At its meeting on 20 November the UGC did no more than take note of these views of the sub-committee.²⁵

That was the last meeting of the UGC's sub-committee on the social sciences. In June 1952 the UGC had discussed the reappointment of all of its sub-committees. It was pointed out that when they were first appointed their terms of reference had not been defined, nor had dates been fixed for their termination. At that time they were due to come to an end at the end of July, but their terms were extended to 31 December. Sub-committees were discussed again at the UGC meeting on 18 December. At this meeting, "after discussion" the committee agreed to discontinue the sub-committee on the social sciences (and also those on Slavonic and East European studies, and Oriental and African studies). Unfortunately the discussion is not minuted.

However, in its report for 1952-1957²⁶ it was noted that because earmarked grants had been merged with the general recurrent grants allocated to the universities, the task of the sub-committees with regard to these grants had come to end. The UGC had therefore discussed which sub-committees were needed, and the social sciences was one which it was decided not to reappoint. The end of earmarking did, however, affect all the sub-committees. The work of only three was deemed to have finished. This does, perhaps, reflect the level of activity of the social sciences one. It had started off actively

by defining what fell within the remit of the social sciences, and had then got an increase in the additional money allocated for the earmarked grant. After that it did not initiate anything. It is therefore not surprising that it did not meet frequently. It met seven times between 1947 and 1948, but held only three further meetings. When it met in 1951 and 1952 this was specifically to discuss papers from the UGC seeking its views. The reports which followed these meetings tended to be somewhat diffuse. They discussed the issues, but rather than presenting their views they just left it to the UGC to take account of their discussion when taking decisions. Contrast this with, for example, the Medical Advisory Committee. This met 11 times in 1947–48 and then six times in 1949, and four times in both 1950 and 1951, although only once in 1952. The Medical Advisory Committee also discussed a wide range of issues. At its meeting on 23 October 1951, for example, it also discussed the quinquennial estimates. Its report on these estimates was concise and precise. But also at that meeting it discussed six other items, such as the phasing of hospital building in London, and proposed legislation establishing a General Dental Council.²⁷ The sub-committee on social sciences never approached that level of activity, or helpfulness. It is therefore perhaps not surprising that it was not felt necessary for it to continue.

NOTES

- 1 See p.15.
- 2 UGC 1/2. The minutes of the meetings of the UGC are in UGC 1. The agenda and papers are in UGC 2.
- 3 UGC 8/10. The minutes of the meetings of the UGC's sub-committees are in UGC 8. The agenda and papers are in UGC 9.
- 4 See p.15.
- 5 UGC 9/31.
- 6 UGC 9/32.
- 7 The agenda and papers for this meeting (UGC 9/33) are missing. The information comes from UGC 1/2.
- 8 UGC 9/34.
- 9 The minutes of the meetings for 1948 are in UGC 8/17.
- 10 UGC 9/56.
- 11 UGC 2/29.

- 12 UGC 9/58.
- 13 UGC 6/1. HMSO, 1948.
- 14 UGC 9/58.
- 15 UGC 8/33.
- 16 UGC 9/116.
- 17 UGC 2/31 paper 34.
- 18 UGC 1/3.
- 19 UGC 9/143.
- 20 UGC 8/43.
- 21 UGC 2/32 paper 62.
- 22 See p.35.
- 23 UGC 1/3.
- 24 The minutes of the meeting of the sub-committee are missing, but the report it sent to the UGC is in UGC 2/33 paper 91.
- 25 The minutes of the meetings of the UGC for 1950–1953 are in UGC 1/3.
- 26 UGC 6/5 Cmnd. 534.
- 27 UGC 8/39 and UGC 9/136.

CHAPTER
4

• THE BACKGROUND TO THE HEYWORTH COMMITTEE •

The report of the Clapham Committee was accepted by the government but there was unease about it in some quarters. This unease sometimes centred specifically on the recommendation not to set up an SSRC. For example, Campion and Meade in their minute to the Lord President on setting up the inter-departmental committee, written on 10 July 1946,¹ could not see why an SSRC could not be set up. E F M Durbin, who had become Labour MP for Edmonton in 1945 and appointed Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, wrote in October 1946 to the Lord President saying that he could not see why it was premature to set up a fully fledged SSRC. He also expressed concern that the research institutes had been ignored.²

The National Institute of Economic and Social Research was another body that expressed concern. In its report for 1945–46 it welcomed the recommendations of the Clapham Committee. In its report for 1946–47 it commented that the Clapham report was now accepted as authoritative. Its recommendations had been acted upon. However, like Durbin, the Institute pointed out that there was no mention of organised research outside universities and government departments. The Institute did not believe that any service was done to social sciences by the university monopoly, and it did not believe that the Clapham Committee had such an aim.³

Mrs Stone, the secretary of the Institute, sent a copy of these two reports to P D Proctor at the Treasury. In her covering letter she told Proctor about the conference which the Institute had convened in March 1947⁴ and about the register of research drawn up by the Institute.

This was taken seriously by the Treasury, and Proctor minuted a colleague, E Hale, on 17 September 1948. He said that Mrs Stone had visited him. It was thought that the Institute might be seeking money from the government, but it was not clear how they wanted that money to be given. Mrs Stone was horrified that the Labour Party Research Department might possibly resuscitate the demand that a social and economic research council be set up. She wanted help to non-university institutes to be closely co-ordinated with help to the universities. Three members of the Council of Management of the Institute, Sir Henry Clay, Sir Alexander Carr-Saunders and Sir Hector Hetherington, had also served on the Clapham Committee, and it was suggested that Proctor might meet them. Proctor toyed with the idea of using the British Academy to provide funds in an arrangement similar to that provided by the Royal Society in the field of moral and political sciences. However,

Mrs Stone was unenthusiastic about such a role for the British Academy; it was not strong in the social sciences. Proctor pointed out to Mrs Stone that the natural sciences were objective, and politically non-contentious. The social sciences, however, were charged with politics, and it was a field where all had opinions. Because of this, Proctor thought that the Institute would not want government assistance which might involve government direction. Mrs Stone agreed: but the Institute was very short of money. Mrs Stone did not, therefore, want a research council but she did want some co-ordinated body to provide government financial assistance closely co-ordinated with help to the universities.

Hale's reply to Proctor was robust. It had not been established that social and economic research should be carried out other than at universities. Giving money outside the universities would draw away those in them. It was pointed out that those on the Council of Management of the Institute who had served on the Clapham Committee were speaking with two voices.

The Labour Party's Committee on Scientific Policy⁵ asked for Mrs Stone's views on the desirability of setting up an SSRC. She sent her notes on this to Proctor. There were arguments in favour of a council, because of the great and pressing problems in contemporary society: the social sciences were needed to solve them. Also, Clapham had ignored institutions outside the universities. However, Mrs Stone did not want an official body, although she wanted one of standing which would attract official support. She wanted a representative and authoritative body for the social sciences, which would be a focus for attacking problems; would improve research and make it more efficient; would act as a clearing house for information; and would conduct surveys on the state of research. It would also channel funds. Such an unofficial body, if it were to be of sufficient prestige and vitality, must be created by the social scientists themselves.* For this, impetus must be given to them. She suggested two lines of action: first to press for funds for social scientists as a matter of public policy, and secondly to stimulate into activity forces that would bring about the creation of a central council. Proctor's reply, on 26 November, was not encouraging. He liked the idea of an unofficial body, but he pointed out that there was a dearth of qualified researchers, that the social sciences had not yet reached the stage where a formal co-ordinating body was appropriate, and that the Treasury had already exceeded the amount of money recommended by Clapham.⁶

* Compare her husband's evidence to the Clapham Committee, see pp.12–13.

There the matter rested. There is nothing further in the reports of the institute, nor in the government files.

One body which might have been expected to take an interest in the social sciences was the Committee on the Future of Scientific Policy. However, at its first meeting in December 1945, it decided that the social sciences were outside the scope of its enquiry.⁷ Sir Reginald Stradling, scientific adviser at the Ministry of Works, giving evidence to the committee on 21 May 1946, said there was an acute need to help the social sciences because of the present chaos in the building industry. He wanted a central research unit, but this was not picked up.

The second report of this committee, published in October 1946, recommended that an Advisory Council on Scientific Policy be set up.⁸ This recommendation was followed, and a new advisory council was set up in 1947. At an early stage it looked as though it might take an interest in the social sciences. This followed a letter in *The Times* in April 1947 from Professor V Gordon Childe, of the University of London Institute of Archaeology.* In his letter he pointed out that expenditure on the natural sciences was £50 million, whereas that on the biological sciences was £4 million, and that on the social sciences was £500,000. Max Nicholson, in the Office of the Lord President, picked this up. He minuted Sir Henry Tizard, chairman of the new council, expressing concern over the biological and social sciences, and suggesting that the advisory council might consider the problem. Tizard replied, saying that he would want the view of the Lord President if they were to discuss the social sciences. By October it looked as though something might come of this. On 9 October Nicholson minuted Tizard saying that he had followed up a request to consider the establishment of a standing committee of the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy to cover the relationship between the natural and the social sciences. This would be called the Committee on Applied Social Science, and names of possible members were suggested. Tizard's response was favourable; he would like something that was not too large, but first would like the views of Sir Stafford Cripps, Minister for Economic Affairs.⁹ This was the last that was heard of it,¹⁰ but the social sciences do not feature in the records of the advisory council.¹¹

* Childe's inaugural lecture to the Institute in 1946 was on 'Archaeology as a Social Science'.

If the National Institute and the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy came up with little or nothing, the Association of Scientific Workers was very positive. In October 1947 it published a report by its Social Science Committee on the furtherance of the social sciences: a plea for their greater use. This covered the need for social sciences; their capabilities, which also discussed certain of the social sciences; manpower, in particular its shortage; the need for a survey and plans; and a commentary on Clapham. In its commentary on Clapham the report urged that provision for social and economic research should be a high priority; research elsewhere than the universities should be acknowledged; and there should be interchange of personnel between the Civil Service, universities, and research institutes. It tackled the problem of how to co-ordinate the limited personnel then available, and wanted a social research council with equal standing with the existing research councils for physical and biological sciences. In pressing for the new social research council it drew attention to the report on scientific research on human institutions in *The Advancement of Science*, No 8, August 1943. The Association of Scientific Workers wanted a council because of the need to co-ordinate the direction of research and the dispersment of funds. It wanted the methods of presenting data to be co-ordinated, to ensure accuracy and completeness. It also wanted training to be initiated and supervised. Finally it drew attention to the need for publishing results. The report welcomed the inter-departmental committee, and the sub-committee of the UGC. However, it thought there was no body to take the initiative in training, or publishing. This was why it was seeking an official social research council: it thought that no unofficial body could review and give direction to a national policy in the social sciences as a whole.

Following this report a conference was held on 22 November 1947. Ian Mikado, Labour MP for Reading, and Mr R Innes, general secretary of the Association of Scientific Workers, opened the discussion, and Professor Childe spoke. Following the conference a few changes were made to the report, and the revised version was published and sent in March 1948 to Herbert Morrison, the Lord President of the Council.¹²

The ideas put forward by the Association of Scientific Workers were given much wider currency in *Science and the Nation*, Pelican A170, November 1947. This was an anonymous publication, but individual members and groups of members of the association were responsible for most of the material. In it the view was expressed that:

"Background research which affects more than one Ministry should be organised under Research Councils. It is suggested that three Research Councils, of the

physical sciences, the biological sciences and the social sciences, would be appropriate to cover the field... An entirely new body would have to be formed for the Social Research Council, though this might contain elements from the economics and statistical branches of the Government. Each of these Councils would need a central administrative and scientific staff and would have responsibility for the various research establishments working under them. They would be Executive Councils receiving an annual grant-in-aid and would have the same constitutional position as the present Medical Research Council."¹³

Morrison's reaction is not recorded, but one body that did pick this up was the Scientific Policy Committee of the Labour Party Research Department. This was set up in 1948, and held its first meeting in May of that year. It had before it its draft terms of reference, which included the need for ensuring an adequate supply of scientists, and of getting the balance between the natural and social sciences, and other disciplines, right.¹⁴ Another paper before it, on science and government, in paragraph 19 covering social sciences said that many thought that some central council for social sciences was required.¹⁵ The Scientific Policy Committee did not pick up on the social sciences at its first meeting, but at its second meeting on 25 June, it had before it a memorandum on the social sciences drawn up by the Labour Party Research Department.¹⁶ This drew attention to the recently published report of the Association of Scientific Workers calling for an SSRC to be set up. The research department drew attention to the report's stress on the importance of research carried out in non-university institutes, as had the National Institute of Economic and Social Research. The research department also picked up the fact that the report wanted an SSRC to carry out a national survey of research projects which were in hand. It had been suggested that a council should be responsible to the Lord President. However, the memorandum from the research department went on to say that scientific enquiry must be objective, which politics were not, and it did not, therefore, want research directed by a member of the government. It also thought that a national survey was impracticable because most social sciences were at their beginning, and it was an immense field with complex problems. For these reasons it did not support a central council.

This view was opposed by C T Wilshaw, a member of the Research Department and on the Scientific Policy Committee, who favoured the setting up of an SSRC.¹⁷ After discussion the Scientific Policy Committee came up with a paper that supported the establishment of an SSRC.¹⁸ This paper also stressed the failure of Clapham to give enough weight to independent research institutes. It drew attention to the MRC having to take

responsibility for some projects initiated on the government's behalf although they were subjects not strictly within its province, because there was no SSRC. It stressed the need for detailed case studies, with which the universities were not really concerned, and thought that an SSRC would help the parlous financial state of the independent institutes. It rejected Clapham's suggestion that there were too few social scientists and that an SSRC would draw valuable experts away from research. It recommended that an SSRC should act as a channel for public funds; it should undertake a periodic survey into the state of research, and take over the register of social and economic research at that time compiled by the national institute; it should act as a clearing house for information; it should promote improvement in the organisation of research and in personnel; and it should sponsor certain research on behalf of the government. This report of the Scientific Policy Committee was discussed by the Policy and Publicity Committee of the Labour Party on 13 December 1948. The minutes reported that it was discussed, and several members supported the proposal for an SSRC. The chairman, Herbert Morrison, agreed to consider this. Morrison was also Lord President, and it was minuted that he might be prepared in that role to receive a deputation from the committee. These minutes were approved by the National Executive Council on 26 January 1949.¹⁹

The paper of the Scientific Policy Committee was sent by Michael Young, the secretary of the Labour Party Research Department and later the first chairman of the SSRC, to Nicholson in the Lord President's Office in December 1948. Morrison had asked for comments on the paper, and at the beginning of January Nicholson sent him a minute. He said that there was little argument about the urgent need for more research in social sciences, but the question was ways and means. He mentioned the staff shortage, and pointed out that the most vocal and organised of the social scientists were economists. Following this Morrison wrote to Stafford Cripps at the Treasury, sending him a copy of the Labour Party paper. Morrison said that although he sympathised with the needs of social science research he did not think that the early establishment of an SSRC was the answer. What was needed was a body of experienced and mature leaders to give sound and objective guidance on the spending of public money. He expressed concern that in the social sciences there were not yet recognised scientific standards. He thought there was a need for a further period of discriminating experiment and training. Despite this, he agreed that Clapham, by concentrating on the universities, had covered only part of the existing requirements. He asked if there were any way of putting independent social and economic research institutions on a par with the universities' social science departments. Cripps, in his reply, agreed that it was not the time to set up an SSRC. He thought that if

money went to non-university institutions then there would be more competition for trained staff. Also, because the universities were now getting more money, additional money from other sources should be available for non-university institutions.

The correspondence between the Lord President and the Treasury continued, with agreement that it was not yet the time to establish an SSRC. The Lord President continued to be worried about the position of non-university institutions. He made the point on 16 February 1949 that the university record on the social sciences was far from creditable. He was "not surprised that members of the Clapham Committee favoured, and still favour, research by universities since, as far as I can see, that Committee (which was selected before my time) consisted almost entirely of university representatives".

Morrison, as chairman of the Policy and Publicity Committee of the Labour Party, had said that he might be prepared, as Lord President, to receive a deputation from it. Professor Harold Laski, professor of political science at the University of London, Michael Young and Mrs W Raphael, from the National Institute of Industrial Psychology, visited him on 31 May 1949. They urged the establishment of an SSRC. The meeting was inconclusive. The Lord President agreed to note what the deputation said, and thought that sooner or later there might be a case for such a council. He thought that the field was difficult to define, and that instead of a council there might be an extension of grants to bodies undertaking research. Michael Young agreed to write a memorandum for the Lord President, and this was sent in late July. In this memorandum he made the point that there was still too little support for and inadequate co-ordination in the social sciences, and therefore an SSRC was needed. Independent research institutes needed such a council to ensure their continued existence. An SSRC would be responsible for planning research for the whole field of the social sciences, and for encouraging individual government departments to employ social scientists. He suggested that such a council would have its own research stations, and should take over the social survey, which was then situated within the COI. He thought that the problem of the shortage of good social scientists could be tackled by an SSRC creating more opportunities.

In a minute of 4 August 1949 Nicholson, in the Lord President's Office, expressed disappointment in this memorandum. He thought that some important points made by the deputation had been missed. For example, Laski had drawn attention to the chronic leakage of the best social research students to America because of the lack of prospects in Britain. Nicholson also pointed out that possible members of an SSRC would be

prospective dependents on its grants of aid, and therefore would not be seen to be genuinely independent. He reiterated the often-repeated concern that, unlike natural sciences, social sciences had no generally accepted standards.²⁰ The Labour Party did not take the matter further. It seems that the real sticking point for Morrison was the definition of social sciences. He made this point when he spoke in a debate at the House of Lords on 9 December 1959.²¹ In this debate he mentioned Harold Laski pressing him to set up an SSRC, but said that he was stuck because of the question, what *is* social science?

Another committee with an interest in the field was the Committee on Industrial Productivity. This had been set up in 1947 by the Lord President and the Chancellor of the Exchequer as part of the post-war drive to increase the efficiency of British industry. It had a Panel on Human Factors (the Schuster Panel, so named after its chairman, Sir George Schuster) which in early 1948 set up a Research Advisory Group. Its terms of reference included looking at the results of past research into human factors affecting productivity, and the availability of fieldworkers and how to increase their numbers. This group looked at the terms of reference of the inter-departmental committee and the UGC's sub-committee on social sciences, but in the context of increasing the number of qualified workers available for research in social sciences. Because of this they found these two committees of little relevance. They also looked at the Clapham report, but again to pick up its stress on the shortage of fieldworkers. It did not look at the possibility of establishing a council for the social sciences.²²

Despite this the Schuster Panel was the direct antecedent of the SSRC. The Committee on Industrial Productivity wound itself up in 1950, but it was anxious that provision should be made for some of its work to continue: in particular that initiated by the Human Factors Panel. It recommended that the DSIR and MRC should take it over. In May 1950 there was a joint meeting of the DSIR and the MRC to discuss this. Sir Ben Lockspeiser, the permanent secretary of the DSIR, was in the chair, and Sir Harry Himsworth, permanent secretary of the MRC, was there. It was agreed that as a first step in deciding how to proceed they should conduct a survey of what was being done, and by whom. This was followed on 13 June 1950 by a letter from the Lord President, Morrison, to Lockspeiser. In this letter he said that he was frequently asked to establish an SSRC, but at that time there were arguments against it. Still, it was vital for the national interest to ensure the rapid development of the social sciences and their fullest possible integration with the natural sciences and medicine, to provide the solution to many problems. He therefore hoped that the DSIR and the MRC would be able to devise some machinery to ensure this.²³

The DSIR and MRC carried out separate and exhaustive surveys.²⁴ Reports on them were written up early in 1951. The question was how to give effect to the Lord President's wishes, expressed in his letter of the previous year. Himsworth had suggested to Lockspeiser in April 1951 that they should move forward on industrial disease and industrial psychology; human engineering (e.g. work measurement); and human relations. Lockspeiser did not like this classification, and at a second meeting between the DSIR and the MRC on 24 October 1951 a joint note by the secretaries suggested that they should move ahead on individual health, individual efficiency, and human relations. It was agreed that individual health was primarily the concern of the MRC, and that to move forward on individual efficiency and human relations two joint committees should be set up. These proposals were approved by the Advisory Council of the DSIR and by the MRC and forwarded to the Lord President, by then Lord Woolton, who gave his approval in February 1952.²⁵

These two joint committees formed the next stage on the route to an SSRC. A press release in March 1953 described the work of the joint Committee on Industrial Efficiency as (i) fitting the job to the man; (ii) selection and training; and (iii) assessing the job. It was to be chaired by Sir Frederick Bartlett, who had been professor of experimental psychology at Cambridge. The joint Committee on Human Relations was described as looking at human behaviour and human relations. It was to be chaired by A P Waring, chairman and managing director of Joseph Lucas Industries Limited.* Its members comprised industrialists, trades unionists, and academics, including Professor Simey.²⁶

Members of the two joint committees were initially appointed for three years from 1 April 1953, but this period was extended by a year to the end of March 1957. Most of the money for their projects was provided by the working group discussing conditional aid for social and economic research.²⁷ This working group consisted of representatives of the Board of Trade, the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Agriculture and the MRC, with the DSIR providing the secretariat. It concentrated particularly on social research in the field of industry. The working group met between 1953 and 1957 and the possibility of establishing an SSRC was not mentioned. However, in addition to

* It had originally been suggested that Sir Hector Hetherington should chair it.

providing money for the joint committees, it was also a direct source of money for social scientists: for example, Professor Simey got money for a project on technological change and social organisations.²⁸

The two joint committees were wound up in 1957, and it was decided that the DSIR and the MRC should form their own individual committees.* In the case of the DSIR a Committee on Human Sciences in Industry was appointed in October 1957 as a committee of the council. Its terms of reference were to keep under review the development of the human sciences in relation to industrial needs and to advise the council, as required from time to time and as the committee members might wish, on the department's arrangements and desirable resources for promoting, by financial assistance or otherwise, researches within the human sciences field. The committee was in particular to publish annually a broad programme of research; to recommend amounts of money to be expended on contracts or grants in support of researches within the general programme approved by the council; and to consider and advise on the progress of investigations undertaken in the field. Its chairman, after the first meeting, was L T Wright, a member of the Research Council and general secretary of the Amalgamated Weavers' Association. Its members came from industry and universities, with assessors from the Ministry of Education, the UGC, the MRC and the Ministry of Labour. The secretary was A B Cherns from the DSIR.²⁹

In April 1958 the committee identified its main areas for programmes of research as (i) human factors bearing on equipment design and working conditions; (ii) study of abilities and skills in relation to selection, training and job allocation; (iii) incentives and motivation together with the norms and customs of behaviour; (iv) factors in design and working of formal and informal organisations; (v) personal and social factors in accepting and adapting to change; (vi) problems of employment of special groups in industry, such as technologists, married women and school leavers; (vii) other human problems of concern to industry or government; and (viii) industrial operations showing a close interweaving of human, organisational, economic and technical factors.³⁰ In its first year the committee started to formulate broad lines of policy for fostering human sciences research and industrial application of the results, but it was hampered because it was faced at once with

* This followed the disbanding of the working group and also reorganisation of the DSIR in 1956. The Advisory Council for Scientific and Industrial Research was then replaced by a Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, referred to as the Research Council (Department of Scientific and Industrial Research Act 1956).

a number of applications for financial support for research projects to be undertaken by universities and other research groups.³¹

While committees were set up, and wound up, the debate continued. Lord Adrian, master of Trinity College, Cambridge, and the president of the Royal Society from 1950 to 1955, was the next to call for an SSRC to be established, although he called it a Human Sciences Research Council. In 1954 he was elected as president of the British Association for the Advancement of Science. In his presidential address he drew attention to the need for much greater emphasis on the social sciences. Their research deserved the support of national and international funds. They should be in full contact with all the conservative and academic people in universities: lawyers and historians as well as economists, biologists and statisticians. More resources were needed, but that was not all. They also needed a Human Sciences Research Council.³²

The next move in support of an SSRC was made by Lord Taylor. On 9 December 1959 he opened a debate in the House of Lords on science in civil life. The debate was to draw attention to the increasing role of science in the service of society. He asked what plans the government had to develop science in relation to industry, agriculture, medicine and social needs.

He began by welcoming the appointment of Lord Hailsham to the new post of Minister for Science.* He went on to talk about the work of the MRC, the Agricultural Research Council, and the DSIR. He thought the DSIR was too big, having such a vast scope. He commented on the importance of the COI social survey. He drew attention to the speech by Lord Adrian and also to Lord Beveridge's views on the importance of the social sciences. He wanted an SSRC to be set up. It could feed ideas to government and politicians. The sorts of problems that might be addressed were those such as the best size of organisations for local efficiency, problems of conurbations, communications and social morality, and the relationship and understanding between great groups of society. Lord Morrison spoke in the debate. He was attracted by the idea of an SSRC, but asked what *is* social science?³³ Lord Adrian also spoke. He wanted serious consideration to be given to a proposal for an SSRC along the lines of the MRC. He was not quite convinced that the time was right, but suggested a preliminary survey to see what fields it might cover.

* Lord Hailsham continued also to be Lord President of the Council.

Lord Hailsham, in winding up, said that a good deal of social science research was going on. He said that the social sciences were not yet very mature. He talked about the need for suitable manpower. He mentioned the various organisations already involved in this kind of research. A proposal had been rejected in 1946, and while he was not now rejecting it, he thought it was still premature.³⁴

Lord Taylor continued his campaign with an article in the *New Scientist* on 11 February 1960. He welcomed the government money that was beginning to flow into social sciences, but argued that the need for expansion of research was urgent. He wanted to see an SSRC within the present decade, working alongside the MRC.

The next step of note was when Mrs Judith Hart, Labour MP for Lanark, spoke in a debate on science in the House of Commons on 10 July 1961.³⁵ She said that the need for an SSRC for social research was immediate, and in the long term there was immense value to government in, for example, planning urban communities. Denzil Freeth, the parliamentary secretary for science, did not reply, as Mrs Hart had put down a question on the order paper. That question was what consideration was given to the need for an SSRC, to which Denzil Freeth replied on 18 July. He said that the Research Council³⁶ was reviewing the support given by the DSIR. One aspect of the review was the desirability or otherwise of having a separate human or social science research council.³⁷

This DSIR review had been entrusted to its Human Sciences Committee. In November 1959 this committee had before it a paper on its organisation and work: "Place of the Human Sciences".³⁸ The chairman, Wright, introduced discussion of this paper by saying that the council believed that there was a pressing need for human sciences to be applied in industry. At their present state of development, the contribution of the human sciences could not be large. Wright went on to say that the human sciences were still young. He thought that the committee might feel that a statement was required of the work in progress, the development of techniques and methods of the human sciences which was needed, problems in the field, how help from the DSIR or elsewhere could most effectively make available resources, and training. The committee was in broad agreement with this, and on 22 March 1960 it discussed another draft. This paper addressed the need for a Human Sciences Research Council. Its aim was to discuss the most effective way in which the country could make financial provision for the research which was needed to increase knowledge and understanding of human affairs and how to apply this to government, industry, education and welfare. It summarised the Clapham report and the House of Lords

debate, and said that two major issues had emerged. One was the definition of the social sciences, and the second was the question of priorities in developing it. The paper went on to look at the position as it was then, and noted that there was no attempt to co-ordinate work or grant-giving activities. It said that although the Clapham report had identified the first priority as the need for more teaching and research, it had not denied that co-ordination and oversight might be needed in time. It said that the inter-departmental committee had put emphasis on economic and not human sciences research, and thought that there was a need for the government to have a source of advice in the broad field of human sciences research. It looked at possible models and what a separate council might do. However, it thought that the final evaluation was beyond the scope of the paper, but suggested two possible courses of action. One was that perhaps two human scientists could be put on to the Research Council, thus ensuring more funds for the social sciences.³⁹ A second draft of this paper was discussed and agreed by the committee on 5 July 1960.⁴⁰

The Research Council discussed this at its meeting on 12 October.⁴¹ In its discussion it decided it could not support at that moment a separate SSRC, but recommended instead that a working party of interested departments should be set up under the chairmanship of the DSIR. This working party should report to the Research Council and the Lord President. The report, including this recommendation, was forwarded to Hailsham, the Lord President, on 8 November 1961, with the report of the Human Sciences Committee included as an appendix. The Research Council had concluded that this needed to be examined at ministerial level.⁴²

Before the Research Council sent its report to the Lord President, there was a further development. On 4 August 1961, Austen Albu introduced an adjournment debate. He rose to draw attention to the need for an SSRC. Albu had been elected as Labour MP for Edmonton in 1948, and in 1959 he had been made a governor of the Imperial College of Science and Technology. In introducing the debate he explained that he was married to a well-known social psychologist.* In his speech he drew attention to the increasing interest in scientific research. He thought that too much was devoted to defence, and too little to

* In 1958 he married Dr Marie Jahoda, who was later on the SSRC.

"the proper study of mankind" (Pope). He admitted to a difficulty with the title social sciences. Human sciences he rejected because it would include fields covered by the MRC. In the USA it was called behavioural sciences. As others had found, the solution to the problem was not to find one term, but to list fields which he thought were covered. He drew attention to the fact that most departments did little or no social scientific research. He said that there was a growing interest by colleges of advanced technology and other new institutions, such as the National Federation of Educational Research, in social sciences. He stressed that social scientists were not claiming to take decisions that should be made by policymakers. However, they increased knowledge of human behaviour so that decisions would be based on understanding the facts of situations, and the likely effects of actions. Denzil Freeth, in his reply, rehearsed what was already happening in the field through the DSIR, research associations, the MRC and the UGC. He rejected the idea of an SSRC. He thought that the work done was too varied, and the end users too different in character. However, he agreed that more study was needed, and therefore suggested that those who wished should give evidence to the Robbins Committee.⁴³

The Robbins Committee had been set up in February 1961, with the remit to review the pattern of full-time higher education in Britain. It had already briefly discussed the social sciences at its third meeting on 8 April 1961.⁴⁴ That meeting had before it a paper prepared by F F Turnbull, the permanent secretary at the Ministry of Science.⁴⁵ Paragraph 6 of that paper spoke of the considerable pressure being put on the Minister for Science to promote more research in the social sciences. The subjects covered were only partly within the minister's responsibility; ergonomics was quoted as an example. Many of the subjects were insufficiently developed to be capable of scientific application through, for example, a research council. However, the paper went on to say that there might well be a valid case for greater emphasis for their research in the universities.

Turnbull, at the meeting,⁴⁶ said that the Lord President was often asked to establish a research council for social studies, and he asked the committee for advice. In the minutes, the chairman, Professor Robbins, doubted that fundamental change had happened to justify departing from the Clapham recommendation.* However, he said that this was his preliminary view, and that the point would be borne in mind.

* Professor Robbins was on the Clapham Committee, see p.8.

Few took up the invitation, given in the House of Commons debate, for those interested to give evidence to the Robbins Committee. At the 31st meeting on 17 November 1961⁴⁷ there was a discussion with Sir Maurice Bowra, warden of Wadham College, Oxford, and Professor E R Dodds, professor of Greek at the University of Oxford, representing the British Academy. They said that places for research in the arts and social sciences were negligible compared with other countries, especially Germany and the USA. They wanted a central fund established. That fund would be administered by a body appointed by the government after consultation with the British Academy. It would not do research itself, but would allocate funds. Archaeology was singled out as an obvious field for support. The only others to give evidence were H M Gluckman, professor of social anthropology at the University of Manchester, Dr David Glass, professor of sociology at the University of London, and Professor Raymond Firth, who had given evidence to the Clapham Committee. They were representing the British Association for the Advancement of Science (Sociological Section) at the 52nd meeting in February 1962.⁴⁸ They said that the social sciences were increasingly becoming of national importance, but were not receiving their share of financial support. Social sciences should now receive an earmarked grant to bring them up to their proper place. More departments of social sciences were needed. They said that too little of the earmarked grant which had followed Clapham had gone into research, and support for research in social anthropology now came mainly from the USA. They stated that, for social scientists, surveys were tools as essential as laboratory equipment was for the physical scientist. Few awards were available for social sciences, so there was lack of opportunity for the promotion and support of research.

Others who gave evidence who might have mentioned the social sciences, did not. These included the Association of Scientific Workers,⁴⁹ the directors of the research organisations,⁵⁰ the Joint Committee for Science and Education,⁵¹ the Tavistock Institute⁵² and D N Chester, from Nuffield College, who had been on the inter-departmental Committee for Economic and Social Research.⁵³ Robbins himself was, in April 1961, reported by Turnbull to be strongly against an SSRC.⁵⁴ The Robbins report, published in October 1963, made no specific mention of the social sciences.⁵⁵

The evidence given by Sir Maurice Bowra and Professor Dodds followed the report published by the British Academy in 1961, "Research in the Humanities and the Social Sciences".⁵⁶ This report followed a survey by the British Academy undertaken in 1958–60 by a committee chaired by Sir Maurice, with Professor Dodds as a member. Although the

title of the report gives equal emphasis to the humanities and the social sciences, the report itself was weighted much more to the humanities. The first sentence of the introduction reads, "Research is in every way as necessary to the proper study of the Humanities (including the Social Sciences) as it is to that of Natural Science." A minute to Turnbull in February 1962 drew attention to this imbalance, and pointed out that the committee responsible for the report included no economists or sociologists, or indeed anybody from the field of social sciences.⁵⁷ The section on social anthropology⁵⁸ repeats almost verbatim a memorandum submitted by Professor Firth,⁵⁹ although he was not on the committee.

The background to the report was that the natural sciences were receiving enormously increased attention, and it was important that the humanities should be fostered and encouraged. It was pointed out that the Treasury gave the British Academy £60,000 a year for the humanities, of which £51,000 went to the British schools and institutes of archaeology. This was contrasted with the budget of the DSIR for the natural sciences, which was £12 million. The contention was made in the report that research in the humanities and the social sciences had relatively declined during recent decades, although that could not be proved statistically, as the value of research could not be measured in quantitative terms.⁶⁰ Professor Robbins, in giving evidence, disputed this contention. He referred to the Clapham report and the consequent increase in funds. The main recommendation of the report was that there should be established a council for research in the humanities and the social sciences. Its minister should be the Lord President of the Council. Its members should be appointed after consultation with the president of the British Academy. Its main function should be the encouragement of research in the humanities and the social sciences and the dissemination of the results. It was estimated that the cost would be a very small fraction of the £12 million or so provided for the DSIR.

The proposal for a research council for the humanities and social sciences was turned down by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury. Some extra funding was allocated, but the social sciences did not benefit. When the grant was announced in July 1962 Hailsham, as the Minister for Science, said that the social sciences were excluded from the scheme. They presented a different problem, involving wider government interests.⁶¹

Lord Taylor had kicked off the renewed public debate about an SSRC in 1959. It started to be taken seriously by Lord Hailsham in 1961. The Albu debate took place in August 1961. In October of that year Sir Harry Melville, permanent secretary of the DSIR, visited

Hailsham to discuss the agenda for the Research Council's next meeting. The report of the Human Sciences Committee would be on that agenda, and Hailsham took the opportunity to state his then views. These were (i) the Minister for Science was not responsible for the whole of the human sciences; (ii) more ought to be done in the field; (iii) a government organisation was not the best means for dispensing money; (iv) to get proper discipline this must be developed in universities; (v) there was a place for applied human sciences in government departments; (vi) there might be a case for a research council or other body which had no research stations, but was able to give grants. However, to do anything would need another Clapham. It was noted that the Lord President was very opposed to the DSIR becoming a council for social sciences.

The debate within the department really took off when the report from the Research Council, with that of its Human Sciences Committee, was received by the Lord President in November. Five days later, on 13 November, Hailsham minuted his parliamentary secretary, Denzil Freeth, and his permanent secretary, Turnbull. Following the report and the Albu debate the question of the human sciences could no longer be ignored. In the then economic climate any action would have to be justified. He went on to say that for four years action had been resisted. This was justified because the primary business of the department was to foster the natural sciences. Human sciences would divert resources. Human sciences, moreover, were a "happy hunting ground for the bogus and the meretricious".⁶² Their tendencies should be kept in check by placing the work in the universities "rather than being given their heads under a council of enthusiasts". Finally, the work was too diffuse to come under a single head. But, Lord Hailsham went on, there was a serious problem. The Treasury was gravitating to an advisory committee, with no budget. But even for this an inquiry would be necessary.

Freeth responded to this minute two days later. He agreed that the question could not be ignored. He expressed doubts about a separate research council, but admitted to a substantial problem. He agreed with an advisory committee, and did not like the idea of a DSIR working party. He thought that an inquiry was a good idea. It should be appointed by the Minister for Science under a neutral and respected chairman.

The DSIR and the MRC each had an interest in this. On 26 October, Sir Harold Himsworth had minuted the Lord President. He said that he and Sir Harry Melville had discussed research in the social sciences and would like to meet the Lord President to put before him their coverage of the social sciences. Following this, Himsworth forwarded a

minute to the Lord President on 9 November 1961 on work undertaken by the MRC on research in the human and social sciences. This included a list of the main units directly engaged in sociological problems. There were nine of them, and they included obstetric medicine at Aberdeen University, where a major sub-division was under the charge of a sociologist; the social medicine research unit at the London Hospital Medical College; and the epidemiological research unit at the Welsh National School of Medicine at Cardiff.

It was obvious that the DSIR and MRC were not being totally open with one another. Hailsham suggested that it might be as well if Himsworth were to be shown, in confidence, the DSIR papers advocating a human sciences research council and Melville shown the MRC one. Each should be asked to comment. Freeth noted that "Himsworth asked me point blank if DSIR had recommended a Social Sciences Research Council and whether we were going to have one. I dithered diplomatically – I hope. It shows the need for an inquiry." Turnbull, however, said that Himsworth had seen the DSIR paper.

The UGC was another key player, in that it and the existing research councils were all responsible for administering grants. The UGC's report for 1951–57 looked at the respective functions of the UGC and the research councils,⁶³ and supported the role of the latter. This same report asked if there was a need for more bodies.⁶⁴ It drew attention to the lack of an official body in the field of the humanities and the social sciences with functions like those of the DSIR, MRC and Agricultural Research Council. This meant that the Ministry of Education had to take responsibility for the humanities and, with some exceptions, the social sciences. The report went on to say that the Clapham Committee had recommended earmarked grants. These had been discontinued, and since 1946 the position of social sciences studies had altered both financially and in other respects. "It may well be that a review of it would suggest the need for some changes in the administrative arrangements."

Sir Keith Murray, chairman of the UGC, met Turnbull on 12 December 1961 to discuss the social sciences. There is a note of that meeting. Murray was not in favour of development within the DSIR, whose parish was already big enough. Nor was he enthusiastic about a research council as proposed by the British Academy. He was sympathetic to a research council for social sciences, but wanted it to be developed slowly, and not beginning for a year or two. Social sciences could not be separated from economics and, for example, law, and there was a danger of distortion if the MRC and DSIR were the only two sources of funds. He agreed that a committee should be

set up, and suggested how to proceed. Firstly he thought that the DSIR should be dissuaded from pursuing their idea of a working party; secondly he suggested that a proposal should be defined to be put to other departments, possibly at ministerial level. The ministers to look to for support would be those for Housing and Education, the Home Secretary, and the Minister of Pensions. Thirdly, having got ministerial support, the proposal should be put to Henry Brooke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

An important meeting took place on 29 January 1962 between Hailsham (the Lord President), Sir Harry Melville (DSIR), Sir Harold Himsworth (MRC) and Sir Keith Murray (UGC). Turnbull briefed the Lord President for this meeting. The papers for the meeting were the DSIR submission, and the MRC memorandum of 9 November. The views of the parties to attend the meeting differed. The DSIR favoured a working party of interested departments, chaired by the DSIR; Hailsham (at that time) favoured an advisory committee, for which an outside inquiry would be needed; the UGC wanted a research council; Himsworth thought it was too soon for a research council, and that they should wait for ten years. In his briefing Turnbull doubted if an advisory committee would be administratively workable. He suggested that a draft paper should be prepared for ministers, recommending more action in the social sciences. The alternative ideas should be rehearsed. To discuss this, officials should meet, with the Lord President's Office taking the lead.

At the meeting Hailsham expressed the view that some sort of investigation was necessary, particularly because of increasing pressure from Parliament. Murray was in favour of an inquiry, whilst Himsworth was anxious that psychology should remain part of the medical field. It was suggested that an investigation should be carried out by a committee mainly of distinguished outsiders, which was not welcomed by the DSIR. Possible chairmen were mentioned. The meeting ended with an agreement that Turnbull should hold a meeting with interested departments, research councils and others.⁶⁵

Turnbull lost no time in writing to senior officials in the UGC, MRC, Ministry of Labour, Ministry of Health, the Treasury, Home Office, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Pensions and National Insurance, the Scottish Office, and the DSIR. He said that there was increasing parliamentary pressure to act on the social sciences. The question was frequently asked, should an SSRC be set up? Hailsham wanted an outside committee to examine and report with recommendations in the field of social studies. This committee would consist mainly of distinguished outsiders

and a number of academics. The departments and research councils concerned, and the UGC, should be associated with the committee. As a start, Turnbull went on, he would convene a meeting of the representatives of departments and research councils which appeared likely to take an interest in the field of social studies. He asked for a nomination of someone of not less than under-secretary rank.

All departments invited sent representatives to the meeting, which took place on 16 February 1962. Turnbull opened the proceedings by asking if government should take further action to promote research in the social studies. Should there be an independent inquiry? In the 15 years since Clapham there had been an expansion in the universities, and the quality of research and of the people involved had improved. At the meeting there was some support for an independent inquiry, with the main opposition coming from the Treasury. If there were a case for more support, they would want it to be provided by an increased grant to the British Academy. They disliked the idea of a general inquiry, which they thought would add little to what was already known. Such an inquiry might recommend more financial support. They would back an advisory body. There was some agreement with the Treasury view, and Turnbull agreed to report back to the Hailsham.

There were now two possible ways forward. One was to set up an independent inquiry to advise on how best to promote the social sciences. The other was to establish some internal body. This was sometimes described as an advisory body, and sometimes as a co-ordinating body. Hailsham had come down on the side of an independent inquiry, for which he would seek the approval of the Home Affairs Committee. A draft paper was drawn up by 5 March, and by 21 March it was ready to go. But the chief protagonist of the advisory or co-ordinating body was the Treasury, so a discussion with Henry Brooke, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, would be necessary.

By 9 April, the Lord President was looking at names for both the chairman and the membership of the proposed independent inquiry, which it was thought should be about six. By 18 April Turnbull had written to Murray, Melville and Himsworth with two lists, one for membership composed of laymen, and the other of experts. Both the UGC (Murray) and the MRC (Himsworth) preferred the laymen. However, the Treasury was not going to co-operate. On 30 April a memorandum was sent to Turnbull. The Chief Secretary to the Treasury had reacted strongly and unfavourably to the Lord President's proposed paper to the Home Affairs Committee. A constitutional point was made about procedures for Cabinet papers. Because the Treasury was a spending department through

grants to the British Academy, and expenditure was involved, it should have been consulted earlier. Also, the Chief Secretary was about to propose severe restrictions on independent public inquiries.⁶⁶

By May the Lord President's Office was minuting relevant departments telling them that the proposal for an inquiry might not have an easy passage. There was scepticism about the practical value of research in the social studies field. A request had been made for examples of research that had been used to advantage. The examples that were provided were not as helpful as might have been hoped: it was difficult to assess their economic value.

The discussion continued. The Treasury preferred a co-ordinating body, but Hailsham thought that such an internal body would not carry conviction in university and expert circles. In a brief to Turnbull it was pointed out that a co-ordinating committee would provide no new source of funds. It might help co-operation between departments, but it would not be concerned with reviewing work done in universities or elsewhere outside government. By the end of June, Hailsham was not giving way, but had delayed circulation of the paper to the Home Affairs Committee.

Meanwhile, questions in Parliament continued. Mrs Judith Hart had an oral question down for 27 February asking what plans there were for the immediate establishment of an SSRC. This question had been known in advance of the inter-departmental meeting, and Denzil Freeth was able to answer that arrangements had been made to consult interested parties. On 21 May 1962, Mr Albu asked if the Parliamentary Secretary for Science would make a statement about the proposed SSRC. Freeth had nothing to add to the answer he gave to Mrs Hart on 27 February. Albu then reminded him that earlier he had said that discussion about the matter was going on. He asked if he could be given any idea about when the discussions were likely to come to fruition. Freeth hoped to be able to make a statement soon. This was followed on 28 May by a question from Mrs Hart asking for a statement on the creation of the SSRC, and one from E G M Fletcher, Labour MP for East Islington, to the Prime Minister asking if he would appoint a council for research in the humanities and social sciences as recommended in the British Academy report of 1961.⁶⁷ The holding reply continued.⁶⁸

The Home Affairs Committee eventually discussed the paper on 13 July. However, it had before it not one paper but two. The Lord President's proposal⁶⁹ gave the background of increasing pressure in Parliament and elsewhere for the government to take action on the

social sciences. It talked about what had happened since the Clapham report, and the present position. Discussions by officials of interested departments and the research councils had revealed that opinion was divided. The majority wanted an independent inquiry. However, a small minority thought that such an inquiry would be likely to stimulate proposals for a new organisation to finance that research, which was not possible. They would prefer an advisory body of departmental representatives and outside experts. The proposed course was for an independent and objective study to recommend what form future development should take. An advisory body of officials and experts would not command public confidence. The Home Affairs Committee was asked to agree that a committee of inquiry be set up. The paper from the Treasury put up a counter-argument. It said that it agreed with much that was in the Lord President's paper. However, it thought that an inquiry would almost certainly urge the creation of a new channel of finance for the social sciences, almost entirely outside government control, to conduct major social science research projects. It thought that research ought to remain with the responsible minister and department. An independent research council would cause considerable embarrassment to ministers responsible for government social policies. Extra expenditure should be decided by government itself. It argued, therefore, in favour of a co-ordinating committee to act as a channel through which outside advice could be at the disposal of government departments. It did not want an outside inquiry.⁷⁰ This Treasury paper was described by the Lord President's Office in an internal memo as very obscurantist, narrow-minded and unconstructive. It was thought that the Chief Secretary was arguing partly against the principle of an outside inquiry, but more against the probability that an inquiry would recommend an SSRC.⁷¹

Not surprisingly the Home Affairs Committee came down on neither side. They agreed that there was a need for a review of what research work was going on, and of how to establish co-ordination and direction. This review should be conducted with the least risk of embarrassment. They were undecided how this should be done, and officials were asked to make a further examination of how to proceed.⁷²

J H Waddell, from the Cabinet Office, suggested that the matter might be dealt with by the Trend Committee,* but this idea was rejected by the Lord President. Turnbull then

* The Trend Committee on the Organisation of Science in Civil Life sat between 1962 and 1963. Its report paid little attention to the social sciences, see p.80.

suggested that a small pilot inquiry might be set up with Sir Harry Campion, from the CSO, in the chair. This would be an internal government inquiry. This suggestion was then modified. Campion might be commissioned as an independent individual to consult the departments concerned. He would then make recommendations to the Home Affairs Committee. It was thought that Campion had a sufficiently independent position to make this acceptable.

Hailsham agreed to this. He commented that it was vital that they got on with it. He apologised for having mismanaged the Home Affairs Committee meeting, and he now felt obliged to do what he could to help. The minutes of the Home Affairs Committee do not give details of the discussion, but Hailsham said that Lord Kilmuir (the Lord Chancellor, who was succeeded by Lord Dilhorne the following week) was normally so sensible, which gives us some idea of what went on.

In the middle of August the Lord President's Office sent the files to Campion. He had not produced anything by the middle of October, and on 16 October there was an article in *The Times*, critical of government delay. "The government continues to nibble at the idea of an SSRC without bringing themselves to a decision one way or the other." Turnbull went to see Campion, and noted on 23 October that Campion had virtually completed his enquiries. This was followed on 25 October by an unwelcome article in *New Society*. This was written by Noel McLachan, a correspondent on *The Times*. It asked why there was no social research council, and contained accurate and detailed information about the discussion within the Home Affairs Committee.* This article did not mention Lord Kilmuir but said that R A Butler, in the chair, had supported Hailsham but that Brooke, on his last day at the Treasury, had said that not a penny could be spared. The article, incorrectly, said that Hailsham was arguing for a council rather than an independent inquiry.

Outside pressure continued, as did work on Campion's draft. Judith Hart put down another question asking the Parliamentary Secretary if he was now able to make a statement on the establishment of an SSRC. A draft reply of 16 November could only

* An editorial in the first edition of *New Society*, on 4 October 1962, said that it was launched because of the belief that human sciences must come into their own. There was an inquiry within the DSIR as to the source of the leak. CAB 124/1934.

repeat the reply given to Mr Albu on 21 May. On 24 November J H Robertson had an article published in *Nature* urging support for the humanities and social sciences in Britain. This article supported the arguments put forward in the British Academy report. On 4 December, Hector Hughes, Labour MP for Aberdeen North, questioned the Parliamentary Secretary for Science: could he make a statement about the scope, purpose, and personnel of the SSRC "which he has set up". Freeth could only reply that it had not been set up, so he could add nothing to what he had said to Mr Albu on 21 May.

Some unexpected support for the Lord President came, on 12 November, from the Treasury. W F Deedes, the Minister without Portfolio,* had sent the Treasury a copy of a report, *Social Change in Britain*. Brian Dudley, in the Treasury, thought that the report identified a deficiency, but he doubted if the suggested solution, a small department in Whitehall, would work. Hailsham met Deedes at the beginning of December, and secured his support.

By 13 November, Turnbull had the first draft of Campion's report. It supported the idea of an inquiry, and on 19 November they met to discuss both the draft and a possible chairman. By 3 December the final draft of the report was with the Cabinet Office.

From Hailsham's point of view the report was helpful. It noted that there was widely held dissatisfaction with the present state of research into social studies. While there was an increasing volume of research in the field undertaken in departments, it thought that most of the research work of interest to departments would have to be done by universities and research institutes. It supported a committee of inquiry, which should neither be departmental nor be a body of experts. Such a committee of six or seven "wise men" would be most generally acceptable to both departments and academic opinion. To refer issues to, for example, the British Academy would not be acceptable either to departments or to academics. The six or seven wise men would be under an independent chairman. The proposed terms of reference would be "to review the research at present being done in the field of social studies in government departments, universities and other institutions, and to advise whether changes are needed in the arrangements for supporting and co-ordinating this research".

* Later editor of *The Daily Telegraph*.

The terms of reference should exclude the "application" of research.* Economic research should be included within the terms of reference. The committee should be set up early, and not await the Robbins report.

In a brief to Hailsham on 5 December the main points of the Campion report were summarised. The brief drew attention to that part of the report which dealt with the Treasury counter-proposal: the establishment of a co-ordinating inter-departmental committee. Campion had said that this would be feasible if departments were agreed on the amount to be allocated to support social sciences research, but Campion thought that this would be unacceptable to academic opinion.

Hailsham was briefed that since the matter had last been discussed in July there were growing signs of disquiet among informed public and scientific communities. It was becoming increasingly clear that nothing other than a high-powered independent inquiry would allay well-founded anxiety about the state of research in social studies. Campion had recommended that an inquiry should include economic research, although the Treasury earlier in the year had opposed this. It was suggested that economic research could be left out as the price for an inquiry should that prove necessary.⁷³

The next meeting of the Home Affairs Committee was on 7 December 1962. It had before it Campion's report, but things still did not go Hailsham's way. The points raised in discussion were minuted.

- It would be unnecessary and might be embarrassing to appoint an independent chairman. The report, which would be published, would contain financial and other proposals which would be unwelcome to government. The chairman, therefore, should be appointed from within the government service. The counter-argument to this was that much research work was done not in departments, but in universities and other institutes. Account must be taken of the views of qualified people in the academic world. Action was required urgently, and the question of the chairmanship could be considered later.

* The "application" of research was discussed by Turnbull, permanent secretary to Hailsham in his dual capacity as Minister for Science and Lord President, and Campion at their meeting on 19 November. Turnbull wanted it in, but Campion thought it would rally departmental opposition. Research produced results, but results had to be judged in a political context. This could be embarrassing if explanations had to be given as to why results were rejected.

- If economic research were included there was some danger that it would be at the expense of research in social studies.

The Home Affairs Committee did not address the main question. It took note that the First Secretary of State (R A Butler) would consult the Financial Secretary to the Treasury (Anthony Barber) about the chairmanship of the proposed committee and would consult the Lord President and the Financial Secretary about economic research. He would report the outcome of these consultations to the next meeting of the committee.⁷⁴

This inconclusive outcome was the result of Treasury opposition. After the meeting of the committee Hailsham immediately wrote to Reginald Maudling, who had taken over from Henry Brooke as Chancellor of the Exchequer. The draft was by Hailsham himself.

"I wonder if you could convey as delicately as possible to your officials what a very poor view I am taking of the way in which they have treated papers closely affecting my office when these come up for discussion in various committees.

On not one but two or three occasions in the past few months after ample time for consideration the Financial Secretary has been sent (through no fault of his own) unbriefed to a meeting to which senior ministers sometimes at great personal inconvenience have come, to render the whole proceedings abortive by saying that neither he nor the Chancellor has studied the matter and then to re-iterate points to resolve which the whole proceedings were initiated."

Hailsham went on to say what had happened that morning at the meeting of the Home Affairs Committee to discuss the proposal for an inquiry into the social sciences. This had been discussed at great length. It had been known that the Campion report was imminent and it had been circulated by the First Secretary of State, as chairman of the committee, more than 48 hours before the meeting.

He continued by saying that broadly speaking the report entirely supported the view that Hailsham was urging on the committee in July. It defined issues more clearly and it was silly for the Treasury to say that there was insufficient time to acquaint themselves with Campion's proposals and former views. At the meeting the Financial Secretary had said

that he had felt obliged to reserve the Chancellor's position, and this meant that proper discussion was rendered futile. This had happened repeatedly, and this case was not an isolated incident.

"In the meantime the government in general, and I in particular, have to bear the burden of unpopularity and the general reputation for dilatoriness which this kind of thing rightly engenders among our critics both in parliament and outside."

This letter bore fruit. On 13 December Anthony Barber wrote to Butler. He said that the Chief Secretary was not happy but he was prepared to agree to the proposal, albeit without enthusiasm. He would also agree to an independent chairman, and the inclusion of economic research.⁷⁵ The next day, 14 December, there was a further meeting of the Home Affairs Committee. Butler recalled the conclusions of the previous meeting, and went on to say that on further consideration Treasury ministers had come to the conclusion that the broad outline of the proposals in Sir Harry Campion's report should be accepted. The Home Affairs Committee, therefore, approved the appointment of a Committee on Social Studies, and took note that the First Secretary of State, in consultation with the Financial Secretary to the Treasury and other ministers concerned, would arrange the appointment of the committee.⁷⁶

Discussion immediately turned to who might chair the committee, and what form it might take. Sir Frank Leigh, Lord Heyworth or Lord Franks were suggested as the chairman. However, Turnbull thought that Sir Frank Leigh did not want work at that time and Lord Franks had recently been given an assignment by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, so it could be that only Lord Heyworth remained. "He is on the old side, but is very lively, and has the confidence of the universities as a leading member of the UGC."⁷⁷ Lord Heyworth was an eminent industrialist with relevant interests. He had worked for Lever Brothers and risen to become chairman of Unilever from 1942 to 1960. As well as being a member of the UGC he was president of the National Council of Social Science and an honorary fellow of Nuffield College, Oxford.

On 15 January 1963 G R Bell, from the Office of the First Secretary of State, asked Turnbull to take on the job of agreeing inter-departmentally a list of nominations for the committee. On 21 January Turnbull wrote to the Treasury, the Home Office, the Ministries of Health, Housing and Local Government, Labour, Pensions and National

Insurance, the Scottish Office, the Board of Trade, and the DSIR, MRC, UGC, COI, the National Assistance Board, and Campion of the CSO. This large number of departments illustrates just how widespread was the interest in the social sciences. Replies were asked for by 29 January, and all departments were represented at a meeting on 1 February, although Campion was not there.

The meeting recommended as chairman, in order of preference, Lord Heyworth, Mr Paul Chambers, chairman of ICI and president of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, and Sir Frank Leigh. The meeting also recommended members, following the profile of the committee as recommended by Campion. Names were suggested of those with appropriate interests and experience as the representatives of the universities. Names were also put forward to cover university administration and experience in departments. The Home Office and the Treasury each nominated a member. The meeting discussed if somebody should be included who had experience of staff management in industry, which had not been recommended by Campion. It was decided that this would not be appropriate, as other "user" interests would want representation. Also, Lord Heyworth had, of course, industrial experience. The meeting also discussed a secretary. The Treasury might provide one but might find it difficult. The DSIR had suitable people, and it was agreed that the Treasury should arrange the appointment, taking discussion at the meeting into account.

Turnbull, in a covering letter with a draft of the minutes to Bell on 4 February, summarised the main points. He said that although Heyworth at 69 was rather old, he was fully recovered from an illness he had had a few years before. He added that he was in excellent form, and Turnbull thought that he was progressive-minded and alert.

On 19 February the DSIR forwarded to the Treasury the CV of A B Cherns. Albert Cherns's working life had been spent in the DSIR. Significantly, he was secretary of the Human Sciences Committee. He had published quite widely on social science topics. He was later appointed secretary. No one else seems to have been considered.

The question of how far the new committee should cover economic research came to the front again in March 1963. The Royal Economics Society had produced a report on the finance of economic research. Then, on 21 March, Albu asked in Parliament if there could be an increase in funds for economic research. This was followed on 27 March by a letter

from the Treasury. The Treasury had previously been lukewarm about the committee covering economic research at all widely, and had wanted it to be very carefully circumscribed by social sciences. It now suggested that the new committee might cover the whole field of economic research. Turnbull "welcomed the withdrawal of the Treasury reservation". On 7 April, Butler wrote to Hailsham to tell him that he had been to see Lord Heyworth, who was prepared to take on the chairmanship. He was about to have an operation, but this would fit in with the setting up of the committee. He had views on the membership. Of the names put forward by the inter-departmental meeting he wanted Noel Annan, provost of King's College, Cambridge, Charles Wilson, principal of Glasgow University, and Professor C F Carter, vice-chancellor of the University of Lancaster. He would accept Dame Mary Smieton, the then permanent secretary at the Ministry of Education who was about to retire, and the Home Office nominee. He did not want a Treasury representative.

Hailsham was sure that the Chief Secretary would comment on the proposal to omit the Treasury representative. He did. John Boyd-Carpenter told Butler that he did want the Treasury to be represented, to which Butler replied that Heyworth felt strongly about it, and please would he reconsider. On 6 May Boyd-Carpenter returned to the fray. He thought that Heyworth wanted independent persons, but the Treasury had always maintained that social policy questions were a major preoccupation of the government. Also, Campion had said that one departmental representative should be from the Treasury. He went on to say that if the Treasury were not to be on the committee, then there should be no departmental representatives. As Dame Mary Smieton was retiring in the summer she need not count as one. Hailsham's only concern was to "get the thing off the ground", and departmental representatives were excluded. This did, in effect, make the membership of the committee as Hailsham had initially wanted it.

As there were no departmental representatives, it was agreed that there should be a small inter-departmental group to keep all those giving evidence in step. This had been suggested by the Treasury on 19 April, but Turnbull had been doubtful of its appropriateness because government representatives were on the committee. With the representatives no longer on it, this inter-departmental clearance of evidence was agreed. The Treasury wrote to a wide variety of departments on 16 May, while Lord Heyworth was in hospital. The purpose was to discover which departments would give evidence, and how the evidence should be co-ordinated. They needed factual evidence on the research going on in government departments, and how evidence would be given on policy issues. The

secretariat would collect the factual evidence; departments themselves would consider whether to give oral or written evidence.⁷⁸

On 30 May 1963, R P Hornby, Conservative MP for Tonbridge, had down an oral question. He asked what plans there were for an SSRC. Butler answered that the government had no immediate plans to establish an SSRC, but it had been decided to set up an independent committee of inquiry, appointed by the First Secretary of State. Lord Heyworth had agreed to chair it, and a full statement with terms of reference would be made soon. Hornby pointed out that the subject had been under discussion for a long time, but that the decision to appoint a committee of inquiry was welcomed. Mrs Hart, who had asked questions about this in the past, asked about the cost of an SSRC and what discussions with university social scientists would take place. Butler replied that the Heyworth Committee would give advice on this. Mrs Hart returned, asking why a committee of enquiry had been set up when the Minister for Science could decide what to do. She pointed out that the debate had been going on for three years. Butler replied that the social sciences were broader than the remit of the Minister for Science. James Callaghan, Labour MP for South East Cardiff, expressed profound disappointment at the announcement. After all the years of agitation and research into the social sciences, the government had taken refuge in yet another committee of inquiry.⁷⁹

There was a slight delay before the membership and terms of reference could be announced. On 5 June Butler told Hailsham that Annan, Wilson, Carter and Dame Mary Smieton had agreed to serve on the committee. Sir Robert Platt, professor of medicine at Manchester, had also been asked, but had refused, saying that he had not time. Butler wanted to get on with it, but if it was thought that another name was needed, then he wanted suggestions. Hailsham was also anxious to get on with it, but was worried that there was no one who understood the medical side. He had talked to Himsworth of the MRC, who had suggested reconsidering Sir Aubrey Lewis. He was a psychiatrist, but had made a wide study of relevant topics. Heyworth was worried about Lewis. He wanted somebody with a wide range of expertise rather than a leader in a specialist field. Amongst others he put forward the name of Sir Austen Bradford Hill, emeritus professor of medical statistics at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. Hailsham again consulted Himsworth, and Bradford Hill's name was agreed. On 26 June, in reply to a question from Hector Hughes, the composition of the committee was announced, with the terms of reference.⁸⁰

So, the Heyworth Committee was at last given the go-ahead. Probably the most important milestone was when pressure from MPs and elsewhere finally convinced Hailsham that he must do something. This was a political judgement, rather than an inherent conviction that an inquiry, or a council, was needed for the social sciences. Setting up a committee of inquiry was, as MPs pointed out on 30 May, only a tentative step. But at least something had been achieved.

NOTES

- 1 CAB 124/529, see p.18.
- 2 Ibid.
- 3 The reports of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research are held in its library.
- 4 See p.20.
- 5 See p.44.
- 6 RG 25/35, 1/9/1.
- 7 CAB 132/51.
- 8 CAB 132/52.
- 9 CAB 124/1931.
- 10 But for Cripps's views see pp.45-46.
- 11 Papers of the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy are in CAB 132.
- 12 CAB 124/1931.
- 13 P177. I am grateful to Jeremy Mitchell for drawing my attention to this.
- 14 Labour Party Archives, RD 77. The Labour Party Archives are held by the National Museum of Labour History in Manchester.
- 15 RD 108.
- 16 RD 118.
- 17 RD 117.
- 18 RD 172.
- 19 Labour Party Archives, National Executive Council Minutes.
- 20 CAB 124/1931.
- 21 See p.50.
- 22 CAB 132/36.
- 23 DSIR 17/423.

- 24 The papers are in DSIR 17/424 and 425.
- 25 DSIR 17/426.
- 26 DSIR 17/563.
- 27 This arose from the Mutual Security Act of 1952. Arrangements for the USA and UK are in Cmnd 8776, 1953.
- 28 The records of the working group are in CAB 124/1171-3.
- 29 DSIR 17/678.
- 30 DSIR 17/678, HSC 30, Appendix I.
- 31 DSIR 17/679, HSC 44, draft annual report 1957-58.
- 32 CAB 124/1933.
- 33 See p.47.
- 34 Hansard, column 176.
- 35 Hansard, columns 130-132.
- 36 See p.49, footnote.
- 37 RG 25/35.
- 38 DSIR 17/690, HSC 122.
- 39 DSIR 17/691, paper HSC 133.
- 40 DSIR 17/766, paper HSC 144.
- 41 DSIR 46/48, paper RC (61-2)5.
- 42 CAB 124/1932.
- 43 Hansard, columns 1853-1871.
- 44 ED 116/1.
- 45 ED 117/2, HE (61)14.
- 46 ED 116/1 Appendix B.
- 47 ED 116/4.
- 48 ED 116/6.
- 49 ED 118/98.
- 50 ED 118/101.
- 51 ED 118/103, they spoke in general about the shortage of science teachers.
- 52 ED 118/105.
- 53 ED 118/110.
- 54 CAB 124/1932.
- 55 ED 118/123.
- 56 Published for the British Academy by Oxford University Press, London, 1961.

- 57 CAB 124/1933.
- 58 Pages 54–57 of the report.
- 59 Evidence given to the committee is held by the British Academy.
- 60 Page 65 of the report.
- 61 ED 144/1.
- 62 CAB 124/1932.
- 63 UGC 6/5. Cmd 534, paras 88–93.
- 64 Paras 103–104.
- 65 CAB 124/1932.
- 66 CAB 124/1933.
- 67 See p.54–55.
- 68 CAB 124/1934.
- 69 CAB 134/1990. HA (62) 49.
- 70 CAB 134/1991. HA (62) 80.
- 71 CAB 124/1934.
- 72 CAB 134/1989.
- 73 CAB 124/1934.
- 74 CAB 134/1989.
- 75 CAB 124/1934.
- 76 CAB 134/1989.
- 77 CAB 124/1934.
- 78 CAB 124/1935.
- 79 Hansard columns 1513–1515
- 80 CAB 124/1936.



Sir John Clapham



Michael Young when secretary of the Labour Party Research Department



Lord Hailsbam and R A Butler in October 1963



Anthony Crosland as Secretary of State for Education



Lord Heyworth



The first meeting of the SSRC.

From right to left: Professor R M Titmuss, Mr L Morrey, Professor C A Moser, Professor T H Marshall, Professor W J A Mackenzie, Professor R G Lipsey, Lord James of Rochdale, Professor Marie Jahoda, Sir William Hart, Mr G D N Worswick, Professor R W Firth, Professor J Dwyer, Mr A L C Bullock, Mr W O C Adamson, Mr A B Cherns (Scientific Secretary to the Council), Dr M Young (Chairman of the Council), Mr H C Rackham (Secretary to the Council), Miss H M T Clay, Mr G J Sheppard.

• THE HEYWORTH COMMITTEE AND REPORT •

The Heyworth Committee held its first meeting on 10 July 1963. The membership, as finally agreed, was distinguished, with the majority from the university world. Lord Heyworth was the chairman, with Noel Annan, C F Carter, Sir Austin Bradford Hill, Dame Mary Smieton, and Charles Wilson as the members. A B Cherns, from the DSIR, was there as secretary, and R P S Hughes, a young assistant principal from the Department of Health, had been drafted in as assistant secretary.

The terms of reference were:

"To review the research at present being done in the field of social studies in Government, Universities, and other institutions and to advise whether changes are needed in the arrangements for supporting and co-ordinating this research."

The committee was to report to the First Secretary of State, which at that time was still R A Butler.

The first meeting accepted the terms of reference and membership.¹ At that meeting they discussed what should be the range of their deliberations, and, amongst other things, agreed that employment should be considered under education. An appendix to the minutes elaborated the terms of reference. It said that the committee in general was concerned with research employing the methods used by social sciences "as this term is understood in universities" and also research in that range of subjects often described as "social studies". It was not possible to provide an exhaustive list of the fields of interest with which the committee would be concerned, but it gave a rough guide: economics, economic statistics, social statistics, demography, sociology, social psychology, social anthropology, social administration, political science including government, social geography, and social medicine.

There were also fields to which the committee would look for evidence concerning the application of the subject: administration (public, industrial and social, including military), education, employment and industry, government and law (particularly criminology and penology), medicine (public health, social medicine, and social psychiatry), and the social services. Historical studies would be included if they were of contemporary social and economic relevance.

The committee also had before it a paper setting out the events which led to its formation.² This was noted, and particular interest was expressed in the allocation of

earmarked grants, and the situation with the inter-departmental committee.

Information required by the committee was also on the agenda.³ This was seen as the nature, the sources, and the means of seeking new information. The committee was already concerned at the large number of bodies who would have to be approached. It was agreed that those who wished to submit evidence should tell the committee; they would then be sent a form.

Finally, at this meeting, there was a paper suggesting the method of working and a timetable.⁴ However, the meeting agreed that it was too soon to agree a timetable.

The question of what constituted the social sciences was not one that the committee was able really to resolve. For its second meeting in November 1963 a tentative outline of its report had been prepared, to give it something to focus on.⁵ In the minutes it was noted that the committee would have in some way to define social sciences. It was agreed that a seminar with selected people, especially from the universities, should be held to discuss this.

The seminar, on the state of knowledge in the social sciences and priorities in research, was held in January 1964.⁶ Not surprisingly, no definition emerged. The proceedings were summed up by C H Wilson, chairing the meeting which followed, in February 1964, as providing "exactly the kind of exchange and wealth of ideas we had hoped for".

The question of what were the social sciences continued to exercise the committee. In a paper outlining the report which was prepared for the meeting of the committee in November 1964,⁷ the question was again raised as to what were the social sciences. In the minutes it was recorded that the committee did not think that there should be detailed discussion of what the social sciences were. Instead, there should be some paragraphs on special factors which led to problems with which they were setting out to deal in the report. In the report itself⁸ it was pointed out that the terms of reference referred to social studies. The term had given the committee some difficulty. They were inevitably concerned with research in those disciplines which were customarily described as the social sciences: economics, political science, social anthropology, social psychology and sociology. At the same time, many other disciplines entered into the study of social problems, such as law, medicine, mathematics, architecture, history and geography. Statistics and statistical methods were of fundamental importance in nearly all disciplines. In the end, the fields in

which those studies were applied included administration (industrial, public, social and military), learning, education, health, welfare, housing, transport, communication, industry and commerce, international relations, justice and the direction of the national economy. In this large range of studies and fields of application there was no clearly defined boundary between what were called "social sciences" and what were called "social studies". The term "social studies" was given in universities sometimes to faculties which included history and law as well as the social sciences, and sometimes to departments devoted to the training of social workers. The committee had, therefore, used "social sciences" throughout their report, although they had to consider a wider field than was usually described by this term.⁹ The committee had difficulties with the boundaries between social sciences and other studies.¹⁰ The report went on with a brief description of the disciplines, illustrated by a few topics. The topics were economics, politics, sociology, social anthropology, social administration, and social psychology.

At its first meeting the committee agreed to tell relevant organisations about the committee and to send a form to those who wished to submit evidence. They had a list of bodies, under areas of interest (no names were given), which should be informed.¹¹ Government departments were asked if they could tell the committee of any bodies which they thought should be consulted.¹² Forms were sent out: different forms for different sorts of organisations. November 1963 was the date given for their return.

At its second meeting, on 28 November 1963, the committee had before it a progress report. This consisted of four lists. List A was of organisations intending to give evidence. There was a very wide range of organisations, from government departments and universities and learned societies to organisations concerned with, amongst other things, child care and law. It included the technical press and religious bodies, and despite the wide range of organisations covered, ended with "other organisations". List A covered six pages. List B was of those who had given some information but were not submitting evidence. List C was of those who were still uncertain whether they would submit evidence or not, and list D covered individuals and firms who had approached the committee. The minutes tell us that the committee members wanted copies of all evidence to be sent to them, with a covering note drawing attention to important or interesting features.

At its third meeting, on 14 January 1964, the committee had before it another progress report.¹³ This consisted of lists A to D, as before. However, the members

were now concerned at the quantity of the evidence arriving and requiring to be read. To make it more manageable, subjects and fields of application were divided amongst the committee members.

In Appendix I of the report there is a list of the organisations and individuals from whom evidence was received. These were government; universities; colleges of advanced technology; foundations; research institutes outside universities etc. learned societies etc. organisations connected with education, health, welfare etc. local authority associations etc. organisations connected with town and country planning etc. employment and industry etc. political groups; religious bodies; individuals and firms; and the USA.¹⁴

The committee's terms of reference were to review the research being done, and to ask whether changes were needed for supporting and co-ordinating it. At this stage the committee was concentrating on the first part: the review of the research. The vast majority of the evidence coming in concentrated, therefore, on describing what was happening: the research that was being done, or was planned, and the money involved.

Government departments were no exception to this. The inter-departmental working group organised by the Treasury¹⁵ met on 12 July 1963. Liverman, from the Ministry of Science, General Science Division, attended, and minuted his thoughts on the meeting. Cherns had made a good impression, but the thrust of Liverman's minute was the huge change in the attitude of departments since Turnbull's meeting with them in February 1962.¹⁶ Departments were now anxious to inform the Heyworth Committee about gaps in research, and make suggestions for organisational improvements. The working group agreed that departments should exchange information about the evidence they were giving in response to the questionnaires through the secretary (provided by the Treasury) to the working group.¹⁷ It was stressed that this was just for information. The responses sent in by government departments to the questionnaire were full and informative,¹⁸ even if several were sent in late.¹⁹ A second questionnaire was sent out to departments on 4 April 1964. With this questionnaire the committee was moving on to the second part of the terms of reference, finding out whether changes were needed in the arrangements for supporting and co-ordinating research. The draft was discussed at the meeting of the committee on 10 February.²⁰ Lord Heyworth was ill, and the draft questions were to be sent to him and to the Treasury. Question 10 in the draft asked about the need for some new organisation, such as a research council. This was watered down in the questionnaire that went out.²¹ There was then no direct question about an

SSRC. Instead question 5 asked about arrangements needed to co-ordinate research, both between government departments and with government departments and universities or other independent institutes. It also asked about the role of the social survey.

This change in the questions reflects the attitude of the Treasury. Liverman sent a minute on 2 March 1964 about the inter-departmental group. He said that so far the papers had been factual, with statements of research etc. The Treasury had now circulated a paper²² which examined the case for something new to be done to help co-ordination and support. This paper concluded that there was some scope for improved co-ordination and moving the social survey from the COI, but it was against an SSRC. Instead it was proposed that money should be provided for universities via Robbins. Liverman's view was that the Treasury was opposed to the Heyworth Committee because it was thought that Heyworth would be in favour of an SSRC, and that would lead to increased public expenditure. The Treasury argument would be that social sciences were too wide a field, and that it would try to fix the next meeting of the inter-departmental group. That meeting took place on 20 March. The departments were divided. Liverman minuted, on 23 March, that the Treasury had not got to grips with the research council issue. The result of that meeting was that Petch, the Treasury chairman, had agreed that there was no prospect of an approved view on an SSRC, and departments must put in their own evidence.²³

The possibility of establishing an SSRC was most specifically raised in the sessions of oral evidence. By the second meeting, on 28 November 1963, a list of persons who might be invited to give oral evidence, listed under topics, was before the committee.²⁴ No decision was taken at that meeting, as Lord Heyworth was ill. However, at the third meeting on 14 January 1964, a list of bodies and persons who would be invited to give oral evidence was agreed.²⁵

There were 60 sessions of formal oral evidence, from individuals and representatives of organisations.²⁶ The committee was carefully prepared for these sessions, with a chairman from amongst the members agreed, and a list of possible questions prepared. The first session was held at the fourth meeting in February 1964. At the next meeting in March the committee members had before them a verbatim note of the oral evidence. There is a note on the file that a copy was in Lord Heyworth's room, and that it was very bulky. It is not, therefore, surprising that the committee decided that they wanted a summary of the main points made.

At the sessions of oral evidence there was no direct question "should there be an SSRC?". Instead, the questions concentrated on the effects of an SSRC should one be set up. In these circumstances, the British Academy, whose representatives included Lord Robbins, stressed the need for a combination of regular recurrent grants for research, with opportunities to ask the SSRC (or the British Academy) for *ad hoc* project funds. Lord Robbins's own view was that the British Academy should be the source of grants, which had the advantage of using the existing secretarial set-up. The British Association for the Advancement of Science would like the SSRC, if it were set up, to have professional panels, like the MRC. The British Sociological Association (one of whose representatives was Professor Simey) supported the idea of an SSRC, as, implicitly, did the Institute of Race Relations and PEP. The National Institute of Economic and Social Research thought that the UGC should not be the only source of grants, but was anxious that an SSRC would take a firm line about the allocation of resources with a fair share-out for all the different interests concerned.²⁷ Sir Keith Murray, chairman of the UGC, supported an SSRC, and discussed with the committee details of how it would work.²⁸

By October 1964 a paper was prepared for the committee (for information) which listed over 100 organisations and individuals supporting the establishment of an SSRC or similar body.²⁹ This list included a large number of universities, individuals such as Mrs Hart, Mr Albu and Sir Keith Murray, organisations such as the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, PEP, the British Association for the Advancement of Science, the Royal Society, the Royal Institute of Public Administration, and government bodies which were not departments, such as the DSIR, MRC, and the UGC. The list included no government departments, probably because none had yet given oral evidence. This was given at that same October meeting.

The evidence given by the government departments, whilst not always enthusiastic about an SSRC, was generally supportive. The Home Office wanted to keep its own research organisation for its own departmental purposes (not disputed by the committee), but thought that an SSRC would help with keeping staff, because career opportunities would be improved. The Ministry of Health was in favour of an SSRC if it would not stand in the way of its own research activities. The General Register Office was not entirely convinced that an SSRC was necessary, but if it were set up it would work with it usefully and closely. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government would like to see an SSRC, although it anticipated problems with planners and architects, who would not think of themselves as social scientists. The Ministry of Transport was less positive. It saw its

problems as practical ones, for which help should be sought from economists. However, it agreed that if a research council would give a broader base to things such as road safety research, it would welcome it. Those representing local authorities were worried that an SSRC would either be so vast that it would be out of touch, or so small that it would concentrate on too small a field. If it were set up it would want it to co-ordinate and suggest, rather than control or direct. However, if it would improve local statistics, they were in favour. The MRC, which had expressed reservations at the time of Clapham, came out very strongly in favour. The session on oral evidence concentrated on how the MRC worked. The DSIR was generally in favour. The Ministry of Labour was neither for nor against. The COI concentrated on the social survey, and thought that it might use the same facilities as an SSRC. Sir Keith Murray, from the UGC, had already given his views in favour of an SSRC, and the discussion centred on how the SSRC would fit in.

The Department of Education and Science (DES) was not enthusiastic. Although they did not think it would be an embarrassment or difficulty, they did not think it would be particularly helpful. Noel Annan, as a committee member, pointed out that those such as the heads of educational institutes were in favour. The DES had been created in March 1964 by the merger of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Science. The latter, under Quintin Hogg, formerly Lord Hailsham,* had taken the lead in pressing for the Heyworth inquiry. Unlike the old Ministry of Education it was in favour of an SSRC. There was discussion in the new department as to how the opposing views on the two sides of the now one department could be given. In the event, each gave evidence. Sir Maurice Dean, of the Department of Education and Science (Universities and Civil Science), gave evidence and spoke strongly in favour of an SSRC. He wanted it to initiate and co-ordinate research, although without a veto.³⁰

Predictably, the Treasury was against. There had been much discussion as to their oral evidence. Various arguments for and against a research council were rehearsed. By October 1964 a consensus had emerged. It acknowledged that there was scope for more social and economic research and that the government was a willing buyer of additional research. It agreed that some forms of research were not adequately catered for, but questioned if an SSRC were the way forward. The political content of the social sciences was again mentioned, and the importance of departments pursuing their own research.³¹ In evidence

* Quintin Hogg disclaimed his peerage in November 1963.

to the committee the Treasury officials said that they thought that research in any particular area should be the responsibility of the department responsible for that area. It thought also that earmarked grants through the UGC might be possible, and pointed out that the government had done more for research recently.³²

In addition to the written and oral evidence the committee also arranged five seminars. The first of these was held in Kingston-upon-Thames, and others were held in Manchester, Cardiff, Glasgow and London. Topics discussed were ones to which social scientists could make a positive contribution. For example, the seminar in Manchester discussed research into problems of regional and urban development,³³ and the second day of the meeting at Cardiff discussed the research functions of social science departments in Wales with particular reference to the problems of small departments.³⁴ Those attending the seminars were mostly social scientists, but there were also some from central and local government, and representatives from industry attended the last seminar in London. The purpose of these seminars was not to discuss the possibility of establishing an SSRC. It was to get the views of interested parties, in particular social scientists, on the state of research in the social sciences and how this was or would be applied.

The committee did find time to look at the Trend report on science in civil life and the Robbins report on higher education, both published in 1963.³⁵ The Trend Committee paid little attention to the social sciences.³⁶ The Human Sciences Committee in a memo to the Research Council³⁷ drew attention to this and reported that it made room explicitly for support of the social sciences at only two points. It was therefore assumed that the committee had intended that the MRC would continue to be responsible for them. The Robbins report paid the social sciences a little more attention.³⁸ It did not estimate specifically the future number of undergraduate and postgraduate students in social studies, but the figures it gave enabled the secretaries to the Heyworth Committee to make projections. These estimated that there would be approximately a fourfold increase in the number of undergraduates, postgraduates (excluding overseas students) and teachers between 1961–62 and 1980–81. This was from the base of 10,550 undergraduates, 925 home postgraduates, and 1,200 teachers.

Nearly all the work of the committee was directed towards the evidence, both written and oral, and via seminars. The files of the committee are complete, with all the evidence assembled. The minutes are, however, extremely brief and give no picture of how the

committee worked. Much the most informative papers are those giving possible questions for the oral sessions and the transcripts of those sessions. The committee, however, worked well together. There were no major disagreements. It seems that it was taken for granted that it would recommend the establishment of an SSRC from quite an early stage. This may have owed much to the secretary, Cherns, the secretary of the Human Sciences Committee of the DSIR. The report itself gives the conclusions of the discussions. It is far more informative than the papers. It was drafted by the secretariat, and although committee members commented on the text it seems to have been readily accepted by all.*

The report was full. It chronicled the way the committee had worked to collect evidence. It went over the history of what had happened since Clapham had reported in 1945. Industry and commerce had been a powerful force in setting up the Clapham Committee in 1944. As they were major employers of social scientists, the Heyworth Committee looked at how the social scientists were used. A questionnaire was sent to 26 companies. It was revealed that few social scientists were employed in the fields in which they had studied. For example, economists were used for market research and economic forecasting. They were increasingly used in banking, insurance, the stock exchange and financial journalism. However, if market research were excluded, few were actually employed in research.³⁹

The report went on to look at expenditure on research. Much of the information that had been received did not readily permit statistical tabulation. One obvious trend was the high figure for research and industry, because of the DSIR policy of providing funds for industrial research.

Part two of the report concentrated on discussion and recommendations. The introduction, in chapter 4, set the scene for the recommendation that an SSRC should be established. This chapter stressed the need for more research. After wide discussion there was a remarkable amount of sympathy with the aims of social scientists and appreciation of the benefits to be gained. Things had moved a long way since Clapham. "All" felt that the setting up of the committee had been timely. Much larger resources could profitably be absorbed in social science research. "All" agreed on the need for more research in the social sciences, and much more utilisation of the results was required. The aim of the research

* Information given by the assistant secretary to the committee, Rupert Hughes.

could be seen as to increase knowledge of how society worked. It would advance by researchers pursuing topics of interest to themselves, and by researching problems which demanded explanation. The report went on to discuss the problem of how to produce research workers, in chapter 5. It looked at the organisation of research in universities, colleges and institutes, and how it was used. Chapter 7 examined the use of research. It was thought that administrators and managers were familiar with the scope and value of the social sciences in helping them take decisions, but thought that the social sciences should be taken into account at the point when problems first emerged. In government it stressed the need to approach problems from the angle of more than one discipline. It also said that research needed to be done when policies were being formulated. It made recommendations about central and inter-departmental organisation and also on the functions of the Treasury. Here it stressed the need for the social sciences to be used, for example, in training programmes, and made the point that an SSRC should be consulted by the Treasury. On the other hand it thought that the Treasury must have central scrutiny of research budgets. A recommendation that an SSRC be established is the first point in the summary, but is not discussed until chapter 8 of the report. In this chapter the report dwells on the great increase in the social sciences in the universities, and the corresponding developments elsewhere. There was a need to move to a new level of performance which meant a need for funds for research on a larger scale. The demand from users was increasing, and was more explicit. Funds were increasing, but not by enough to make adequate provision. Problems of allocation meant that an SSRC was needed.

The report went on to discuss the arguments which had been employed by Clapham. It also contrasted the evidence taken by Clapham with that taken by the Heyworth Committee. The report was, justifiably, able to point out that the evidence, written and oral, covered virtually all the active social scientists in Britain at that time. The overwhelming majority, both senior and younger, had expressed themselves most strongly in favour of a council.

The report then looked at some of the arguments against a council which had been suggested. Was the field of social sciences too wide for a single council? The report suggested that the social sciences were no more diverse than the physical and life sciences, which were to be placed under the Science Research Council (SRC).*

* The Science Research Council was set up under the Science and Technology Act of 1965 when the DSIR was dissolved and its activities taken over by the other research councils.

Another argument had been that a council was not necessary because there was no lack of funds from contracted work. The report rejected this, arguing that a council would not just provide funds for research that was otherwise unsupported, but would also keep under review the development of sciences in the field. The possibility of the British Academy taking over the allocation of funds was also rejected: the British Academy's main interest was in the humanities, and the social sciences needed more. The possibility of earmarked grants from the UGC providing the answer was also rejected. The UGC itself recognised the functions of research councils, and earmarked grants did not apply to research institutes outside universities. The ignoring of these research institutes had, of course, been one of the arguments against the Clapham report.

The report set out what it saw as the functions, scope and organisation of an SSRC. Its responsibilities were to provide support for research in the social sciences; to keep under review the state of research in the social sciences; to advise the government on their needs; to keep under review the supply of trained research workers and to contribute resources towards this training; to give special consideration to the application of research in the social sciences and to the dissemination of information about research, both projected and completed; and to give advice to the users of research (in government, local government and in industry etc.)

The Science and Technology Bill had been drafted in such a way as to allow an SSRC to be included were this recommended.⁴⁰ The committee duly recommended that an SSRC be set up under its provisions. Other research councils had charters, on which the new research council could draw. It acknowledged that some of the disciplines covered by the social sciences bordered on those served by other councils, and recommended that joint committees be set up in certain areas. It also acknowledged the doubts of some of those who had given evidence. The Ministry of Education part of the new DES had not been convinced of the need for a council, and the report recommended a board be set up within the machinery of the council with necessary autonomy to give expression to the special needs of research in the educational fields. The Ministry of Housing and Local Government had expressed the doubts of those connected with the built environment. The report suggested that the research councils concerned should set up a joint board to support research, but that the SSRC should be responsible for getting it started.

Having set out what the new council should do, the report went on to discuss the chairman and members. It would be the responsibility of the chairman to establish the

independence and integrity of the council. The chairman must, therefore, be independent, and be sufficiently eminent. It was recommended that the appointment be full-time, or that the appointee had a minimum of other commitments. The council should have ten or 12 members, who could be part-time. They should be appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Science. There should be social scientists who had experience in commerce and industry, representatives of management and the trades unions, and others. They should be drawn from all parts of the country.

The council should operate by means of committees and sub-committees, which would enable a wide selection of people to serve on the council. The council must be independent of central government, although departmental advice should be available. The other research councils would provide examples. The new council could have assessors as appropriate.

The report did not duck the question of finance. It acknowledged that more would be needed, but argued that some of the increase would be met by the SSRC taking over payment of existing studentships. It estimated that the total expenditure of an SSRC in year one would be £600,000 and in year two £1,100,000, rising to £2,250,000 in year four. These were at current costs, and separate provision would be needed for capital expenditure. However, not all this expenditure would be new. In year one it was estimated that additional expenditure would be only £150,000, rising to £500,000 in year two.

The report was exhaustive. Its main recommendation was that an SSRC should be set up, but it went on to recommend exactly how it should be organised, to suggest who should be on it, and, a crucial point, how it could be fitted into a legislative timetable.

By early 1965 government reaction to the report began to be co-ordinated. It had been decided that the report should be submitted to the Secretary of State for Education and Science. On 4 February Turnbull minuted Sir Herbert Andrew, the permanent secretary at the department, saying that he knew the main recommendations of the report and asking if the DES should be responsible for the subject. He was anxious to avoid it falling into the hands of the Department of Economic Affairs. The reason for the latter's interest was that although the post of First Secretary of State had been abolished in October 1963, it had been re-established after the general election held in October 1964 and combined with the post of the Minister for Economic Affairs. This was discussed at a meeting on 10 March attended by very senior officials. Sir Laurence Helsby, from the Treasury, was in the chair, with Sir William Armstrong (Treasury), Sir Burke Trend (Secretary of the Cabinet), Sir Eric Roll

(Department of Economic Affairs), Sir Herbert Andrew and Sir Frank Turnbull (DES). It was decided at that meeting that the DES should be responsible. This was because subjects within the social sciences had a political content. It was, therefore, better to allocate the council to a department concerned with the provision of knowledge rather than one concerned with political actions in economic and social affairs.

By late February the DES had seen a copy of the report. A minute was prepared setting out the main issues of interest to the department, with comments on them. On the case for the SSRC the point was made that the report made the case largely in terms of increasing effort at universities, and the interests of user bodies. Although this case was reasonably strong, it was thought that it would have been better if it had been argued that the disciplines involved were closely related, but they lacked systematic integrated encouragement. Their effectiveness would be increased if they were under the eye of a unified sponsoring body. Despite this, the conclusion was that a good case had been made for setting up an SSRC.

Other points commented on in the DES note included the relationship between the council and departments. The report did not expand on the distinction between general research as opposed to research required by departments in the course of their day-to-day work. This distinction was a classic one promulgated by the Haldane Committee in 1919. There was some discussion of the organisation of the council. Should it be a separate body, or part of a department? The latter was not considered appropriate. The best solution seemed to be for the staff to be nominally the council's own, but to be seconded civil servants. Common services could be shared with another council, possibly the Natural Environment Research Council. The role of the Council on Scientific Policy remained unclear. This had been set up in 1965, taking over from the Advisory Council on Scientific Policy. It was to advise the secretary of state on all aspects of his responsibility with reference to science. Its main area of interest was research, and it was specifically to advise on resources. If it were to have a role with regard to an SSRC, then it would be sensible to add two social scientists to it. The DES was cautious about the suggestion that the Treasury should have a co-ordinating role, by means of an annual scrutiny. It was thought that this would inevitably lead to a ceiling being imposed. Finally, the DES note also looked at the chairmanship. Although it thought that it was too early for this, Lord Butler, master of Trinity, was suggested.

The meeting of permanent secretaries on 10 March discussed more than where departmental responsibility should lie. The meeting also discussed the role of the Council on Scientific Policy and agreed that the new council should not come under it, at least not for an initial period of seven years. The meeting also discussed the possibility of political embarrassment if the SSRC gave money for research which would support policies with which the government was in disagreement. This was a matter for ministers, but it was thought that political embarrassment could be avoided if the council's role were to supplement the financial resources devoted to social studies in universities. The council's method of working should be to consider specific proposals put forward by universities. Heyworth had suggested the establishment of research stations, but this was thought inappropriate, and to risk political controversy over expenditure of public funds in stations controlled directly by the council.

Finally, the meeting thought that a single council was right, and that the Heyworth report should be published. Ministers should see it first, but they would need advice from officials. It was, therefore, proposed that a working party of officials under Treasury chairmanship should be set up.⁴¹

The meeting with ministers took place on 25 May. Following the general election in October 1963 a Labour government was in power, and Anthony Crosland, Secretary of State for Education and Science, was in the chair.⁴² It had before it a note on the Heyworth Committee report written by the secretaries.⁴³ The meeting discussed the Heyworth recommendations for the establishment of an SSRC, for more expenditure for social sciences, and other particular recommendations. It accepted that there should be an SSRC. It was agreed that there was political interest, especially if research stations were set up. On the other hand, if they were not, the new council would be more limited than other councils. In discussion it was decided that if a particular field were neglected the SSRC should report to the Secretary of State for Education and Science. It could then obtain agreement for arrangements to be made for research to be done under its supervision. The uncertainty about links between departments and the SSRC was also discussed. Given the frequency with which this topic had come up when government departments gave oral evidence to the committee, it is surprising they had not been clearer about it. It was agreed that it was essential that research within government departments should continue. It was also agreed that there should be more co-ordination within government: the council should be consulted about this. It was not thought to be a problem. The meeting discussed the difficulty with the built environment. The recommendation for a joint board was considered weak, and it was agreed that the position should be reserved.

When it came to government expenditure, it was agreed that the new council itself should be asked to advise. At this point an increase would be accepted, but without any figures.

This meeting was followed by a parliamentary statement by Crosland on 2 June 1965, when the report was published, which was also issued as a press release.⁴⁴ It said that the government accepted in principle the main recommendation of the committee that there should be an SSRC. It said that there was considerable scope for strong support for better co-ordination of research in the field of social studies, and this could best be done with the help of the SSRC, while maintaining support through the UGC and, where appropriate, government departments. It went on to say that the proposal raised a number of detailed issues, including the terms of reference, the scope, the membership, and arrangements for budgetary control. It was accepted that an increase in finance for social science research was desirable. Further discussions would take place on the details. *The Times* commented on the statement the next day, under the heading "The Social Sciences Arrive". In the middle of quite a detailed article it commented that the recommendation of an SSRC was "very properly accepted".

A lot of detail remained to be worked out. A working party on the Heyworth report, with Sir Philip Allen of the Treasury in the chair, met on 8 July⁴⁵ and again on 22 July.⁴⁶ These two meetings of officials resulted in a paper⁴⁷ which was discussed by a ministerial meeting held on 3 August, with Crosland in the chair.⁴⁸ This paper identified four main areas for decision: the functions and scope of an SSRC; the composition of the council; arrangements for research in the built environment; and the relations between departments and the council.

In discussing the functions, the meeting on 8 July had before it a paper by the DES. This said that the functions of research councils were normally defined in the charters by which they were set up, and the detail varied. It was suggested that for the SSRC there should be a general phrase, "the Council is established to encourage, support, or carry out research in the social sciences, to provide and operate services for common use and carrying on such research, to make grants for postgraduate instruction in the social sciences, and to disseminate knowledge concerning these sciences". Any limitations could be incorporated in a directive from the secretary of state to the council. Such a directive could cover what the social sciences involved. It was suggested that the council should interpret the phrase "social sciences" as covering the subjects referred to in paragraph 7 of the Heyworth Committee report.⁴⁹ A directive should also limit the council's use of resources to support

for research in universities and other appropriate institutions and not directly employing research staff in their own establishments. The minutes report that paragraph 7 of the Heyworth report was slightly vague but it was undesirable to make it more explicit. The meeting on 22 July agreed that the government's financial support for the SSRC should be confined to those activities defined in paragraph 7 of the Heyworth report. For its immediate purposes the council should concentrate on the broad disciplines of economics, political science, and sociology.

The paper before the meeting on 3 August went into some detail in discussing the functions and scope of an SSRC. It again explained that for other research councils these were normally defined by the charters by which they were set up and practice had varied as to the degree of detail included. The MRC had a broad remit for holding and dealing with money provided by Parliament for medical research. The Agricultural Research Council had a similar remit. The objectives of the SRC were to be more detailed, as were those of the Natural Environment Research Council. The paper went on to say that in the case of an SSRC there was a difficulty in defining precisely its field of activity. There was also the question of whether the new council should employ research staff in establishments of its own, as it was not recommended that the council should be debarred by charter from carrying out research. The paper recommended that because of the political interests in the fields of research the council should seek government approval to employ such research staff in its own establishments before doing so.

It was recommended that the SSRC should have a charter like that of the SRC. It was suggested that the council should be established and incorporated to encourage and support by any means research and development in the social sciences; to provide and operate services for common use; to carry out research and development in the social sciences; to make grants to students for postgraduate instruction; and to provide advice and disseminate information. This was approved at the meeting on 3 August with one important change. It was agreed that the council should not carry out research and development, but only research. This was to avoid giving the idea that the council would be endowed with considerable sums for development.

The charter was to be supplemented by a directive of the secretary of state. This should include a statement that the council should interpret social sciences as in paragraph 7 of the Heyworth report.⁵⁰ It should also include a statement that the government considered that the council should, at any rate to start with, use its resources for supporting research

carried out in universities and other appropriate institutions. If the council considered it desirable to employ its own research staff, then it should seek the approval of government. This second point was changed by the meeting on 3 August. This made it clear that the council should seek approval if it wished to set up its own research staff, but it would not be necessary to seek approval for filling individual posts.

The working party of officials, and the ministerial meeting on 3 August, also discussed the composition of the council. Departments, research councils and the UGC had been asked for nominations for consideration, and over 90 names had been received by the meeting on 22 July.⁵¹ These covered the fields spelt out in paragraph 7 of the Heyworth report and the meeting wanted broader disciplines. It also wanted due weight to be given to economics, which was of more direct importance to government. This contrasts with some earlier reluctance to include economics in the original terms of reference for the Heyworth Committee.⁵² The paper before the ministerial meeting on 3 August suggested 12 or so members, roughly two-thirds academic and one-third persons of practical experience. It proposed three members from economics, statistics, and political science; three members from sociology, and from the fields of the application of the methods of sociology; one "other academic" to rotate between history, law, geography, industrial relations, crime etc; and four others with practical experience in government, industry and commerce, etc.⁵³ The meeting agreed that the exact composition would have to be discussed by the Secretary of State for Education and Science with the first chairman of the council, but it could well be on the lines suggested.

No decision was taken on the recommendation in the Heyworth report that there should be a joint board set up by the research councils concerned to support research in the built environment. On 22 July the Ministry of Housing and Local Government spoke about the arrangements in place and reported that it would hold a conference in August on the establishment of an Urban Planning Research Institute. This was discussed at the meeting on 3 August, when it was agreed that the outcome of this conference should be awaited.

Finally, the question of the relationship between departments and the SSRC was discussed at all three meetings. There was a paper by the Treasury before the working party on 8 July.⁵⁴ This recommended that there should be an inter-departmental committee to co-ordinate social studies undertaken or sponsored by departments on their own account. It also recommended that the DES should be represented on the council of the SSRC as an assessor, but there should be no formal arrangements for departments to be represented by

assessors. This facility should be available if the departments wanted it. A further paper on this was before the meeting on 22 July.⁵⁵ This repeated the need for an inter-departmental committee which should also advise on policy issues. It should be chaired by a senior Treasury official. There should be sub-committees of the SSRC for separate subject areas, and government representation on the SSRC should be achieved by an assessor from the DES sitting on it. To ensure that the views of individual departments were represented to the SSRC, assessors should be on the boards and committees for the relevant fields of interest. This was not, however, an absolute commitment.

In the discussion it was suggested that departments should supply lists of research direct to the SSRC, and draw on the council for information about other research, rather than having an inter-departmental committee.

The paper (MISC 68/4) was described by Turnbull, head of the science branch of the DES, as regrettably suspicious and hostile. He thought that it implied that departments were interested solely in keeping the council at arm's length, and there was no mention of co-operation or the benefits departments could derive from a council's activities. However, the recommendations in the paper were accepted at the ministerial meeting on 3 August.⁵⁶ This meeting welcomed the representation of individual departments on boards and committees established by the council in relevant fields of interest; it supported the recommendation that there should be an inter-departmental committee which was senior and compact, to collate information, and which should be chaired by the Treasury; it thought that an assessor from the DES should be on the council.

The main decisions had now been taken. The question of who should be chairman of the new council was decided by Crosland. Tommy Balogh, advisor on economic affairs in the Cabinet Office, had minuted Crosland on 25 February 1965, disliking the Heyworth report but conceding that an SSRC would be established. He thought that appointments to the research council "would follow the well ordained cause of the establishment". Crosland replied, repudiating this slur on him. "Just you wait and see!"⁵⁷ A memorandum by the DES on 5 July⁵⁸ said that the Secretary of State had his own view as to who should be chairman. At the ministerial meeting on 3 August⁵⁹ Crosland reported that he had minuted the Prime Minister about the chairman, and that an announcement was expected before the summer recess. This announcement followed on 5 August when Walter Harrison, Labour MP for Wakefield, asked what action was being taken to set up an SSRC. Crosland was pleased to announce that Dr Michael Young had agreed to become chairman.⁶⁰

Young had been secretary of the Labour Party Research Department.⁶¹ He had recently written a book, *Innovation and Research in Education*. The DES said its main theme was that research should be harnessed to innovation and educational research must be supported by and involved in social science. The chapter on organisation anticipated the Heyworth recommendation on establishing an SSRC.⁶²

The day after Crosland's announcement *The Guardian* commented on the appointment, saying that it was probably the most controversial one that Crosland could have made. It described Young as one of the stormiest petrels of educational and sociological research, with many influential friends and also some influential detractors. There would be objectors to his appointment, with doubts about his academic "eminence" and political affiliations. He was not an establishment figure, and the DES would not be overjoyed. But, the article went on, he was a man of action as well as of ideas. He had wide experience in setting up and battling for research organisations, so many would consider him the perfect choice.⁶³

The SSRC was to be set up under the terms of the Science and Technology Act 1965. This gave effect to the recommendations of the report of the Trend Committee. Under it, the DSIR was to be dissolved, with its activities taken over by other research councils and government departments. This obviously raised questions about the work of the Human Sciences Committee. The DSIR itself had recommended that in the event of an SSRC being set up, it should take over the work of the Human Sciences Committee.⁶⁴ This it indeed did.

When he announced Young's appointment, Crosland also said that a draft of an Order in Council was being prepared specifying the objects of the new body and declaring it a research council for the purposes of the Science and Technology Act 1965. Section 1(c) of the Act would allow for any other body.* However, the first stage in the legislative process had to be the establishment of the SSRC by royal charter. This was granted on 29 October 1965. The charter covered the administrative arrangements of the new council. There would be a chairman, and not more than 16 nor less than ten members (paragraph 4). Paragraph 4 also covered the terms of appointment and arrangements for reappointment

* Any other body (i.e. not the other research councils) which is established for purposes connected with scientific research and consists of persons appointed by a Minister of the Crown and is declared by Order in Council to be established as a Research Council for purposes of this Act.

and pay. The council would be able to appoint committees, and the persons on them need not be members of the council (paragraph 7). The application of the seal was covered (paragraph 9), and arrangements for how the charter could be amended or added to. The next stage was the Order in Council. Section 1(4) of the Science and Technology Act stated that no recommendation should be made by Her Majesty to make an Order in Council declaring a research council under section 1(c) of the Act unless a draft of that Order, specifying the principle objects of that body, had been laid before Parliament and approved by resolution of each House.

The charter itself had included the principal objects, and they were repeated in the schedule of the draft Order. They were:

- a to encourage and support by any means research in social sciences by any other person or body;
- b without prejudice to the foregoing paragraph, to provide and operate services for common use in carrying out such research;
- c to carry out research in social sciences;
- d to make grants to students for postgraduate instruction in the social sciences;
- e to provide advice and disseminate knowledge concerning the social sciences.⁶⁵

On 18 November Lord Snow*, in the House of Lords, moved that the draft Order laid before the House be approved. He said that the new council would be a co-ordinating body, with the same responsibilities for research as other councils; it would not, however, direct research itself. It would first decide its own programme of activities and methods of working, and define its sphere of operations. Lord Taylor was present, and spoke forcefully. He was more than disappointed, he was "hopping mad". The cause of his dissatisfaction was that the new council had been introduced as only a co-ordinating body.⁶⁶

* C P Snow, the author.

The debate on the motion to approve the Order was held in the House of Commons on 22 November 1965. Crosland opened the debate. He said that it was only the second time in 16 years that such an Order had been made, and the speed showed the importance attached to the subject. He referred to the increase in the social sciences following the Clapham report. In 1959–60 there had been an 11 per cent increase in the number of undergraduates studying them, and in 1964–65 a further 14 per cent increase. There was also development outside the universities, in the research institutes. Industry and commerce were financing and employing social scientists. He referred to the composition of the new council, and the subjects it would cover. He also stressed the importance of liaison between the SSRC and government departments.

There were no dissenting voices in the House of Commons. They welcomed it. David Price, Conservative MP for Eastleigh, an economist who had been Parliamentary Secretary at the Board of Trade, talked about the importance of human skills, and of the supply of trained research workers. Arthur Blenkinsop, Labour MP for South Shields, who was on the MRC, welcomed the appointment of Dr Young. Richard Hornby, Conservative MP for Tonbridge, was worried about the shortage of money and manpower, but hoped the SSRC would feed ideas and subjects to universities and other bodies. Graham Page, Conservative MP for Crosby, a lawyer, whilst welcoming it, questioned the procedure: he pointed out that the royal warrant was not available. Geoffrey Howe, Conservative MP for Bebington, a lawyer, later in the Cabinet, wanted the council to look at research in the working of the law.

With such unanimous support, Reg Prentice, Labour MP for East Ham and Minister of State at the DES, winding up, had little difficulty. He was able to assure Mr Page that the procedures had been properly followed, but that a copy of the royal charter would be placed in the library.⁶⁷

The Order was made on 29 November, and the Science and Technology Act 1965 came into operation on 1 December. The SSRC had arrived.

NOTES

- 1 The minutes of the meetings are in ED 144/2. The papers, which have a CSS prefix, are in ED 144/3.
- 2 CSS 3.
- 3 CSS 4.
- 4 CSS 5.
- 5 CSS 7.
- 6 The transcript is in CSS 16.
- 7 CSS 56.
- 8 ED 144/45. Cmnd 2660, published June 1965.
- 9 Para 7.
- 10 Para 8. The committee also had difficulties with the distinction between research and fact finding, para 9.
- 11 CSS 4.
- 12 CAB 124/1936.
- 13 CSS 12.
- 14 The files containing the written evidence are in ED 144/4, 9-43.
- 15 See pp.68-69. The minutes of this working group (ref 2MS 24/201/01) seem not to have survived.
- 16 See p.59.
- 17 CAB 124/1936.
- 18 ED 144/19-21.
- 19 CSS 18. On 5 February 1964 several major submissions were still outstanding.
- 20 CSS 18.
- 21 CSS 31.
- 22 A copy of the paper is in RG 25/35, SER 1/9/2.
- 23 CAB 124/1937.
- 24 CSS 8.
- 25 CSS 13.
- 26 ED 144/45 para 2.
- 27 CSS 26.
- 28 CSS 46.
- 29 CSS 51.
- 30 ED 144/7.
- 31 T 227/number not yet assigned. Treasury reference 2SS/1268/01.
- 32 ED 144/7.
- 33 ED 144/5. CSS 37.

- 34 ED 144/5. CSS 40.
- 35 CSS 14 and 15.
- 36 The papers of the Trend Committee are in CAB 124/1812-1880 and DSIR 17/384-419. The report was published as Cmnd 2171.
- 37 DSIR 17/387, RC 10 (63-64).
- 38 See p.54.
- 39 Para 52.
- 40 T 227/number not yet assigned. Treasury reference 2SS677/624/01.
- 41 CAB 124/1939. The papers of the working party do not seem to have survived.
- 42 CAB 130/230. MISC 61/1st meeting.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 CAB 124/1939.
- 45 CAB 130/236.
- 46 CAB 130/236. CAB 124/1939.
- 47 CAB 130/230. MISC 61/2.
- 48 CAB 130/230. MISC 61/2nd meeting.
- 49 See pp.74-75
- 50 See pp.74-75
- 51 CAB 130/236 MISC 68/3.
- 52 See p.64.
- 53 CAB 130/230 MISC 61/2 para 9.
- 54 CAB 130/236 MISC 68/2.
- 55 CAB 130/236 MISC 68/4.
- 56 CAB 130/230, MISC 61/2.
- 57 CAB 124/1939.
- 58 CAB 130/236.
- 59 CAB 130/230.
- 60 RG 25/35.
- 61 See pp.45-47.
- 62 CAB 124/1939.
- 63 T 227/number not yet assigned. Treasury reference 2SS/1268/01.
- 64 DSIR 17/417.
- 65 T 227/number not yet assigned. Treasury reference 2SS/1268/01.
- 66 Hansard columns 697-704.
- 67 Hansard columns 165-201.

• THE BEGINNING OF THE SSRC: THE FIRST THREE YEARS* •

The membership of the SSRC was distinguished. The leading people in the different fields were asked to sit on it and there were no refusals. Michael Young was heavily involved in their selection.** W O (Campbell) Adamson was general manager of the Spencer works at Richard Thomas and Baldwin Limited in Newport, Manchester;*** Alan Bullock was master of St Catherine's College, Oxford, and had chaired the National Advisory Committee on the Training and Supply of Teachers in 1963; Professor J Drever was professor of psychology at the University of Edinburgh; Professor R W Firth was professor of anthropology at the University of London; Sir William Hart was clerk to the Greater London Council; Professor Marie Jahoda was professor of psychology at the University of Sussex; Lord James of Rusholme was vice-chancellor of the University of York and had previously been a member of the UGC; Professor R G Lipsey was dean of the school of social studies and professor of economics at the University of Essex; Professor W J M Mackenzie was professor of government at the University of Manchester, and had been a member of the Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London; Professor T H Marshall was professor emeritus at the University of London and had been director of the Social Science Department of UNESCO; Professor C A Moser was professor of social statistics at the LSE and had been statistical adviser to the Robbins Committee; Len Murray was head of the research and economic department of the Trades Union Congress; Professor R M Titmuss was professor of social administration at the LSE; and G D N Worswick was director of the National Institute of Economic and Social Research.¹ H C Rackham, from the DES, was appointed as secretary, and Cherns, previously secretary to the Heyworth Committee, was appointed as the first scientific secretary.²

* The records of the SSRC itself have the letter code EY. They are not public records but the council operates the 30-year rule on access. At the time of writing only the records up to 1969 are open. Unfortunately the private office papers of Crosland (Secretary of State for Education and Science from January 1965 to August 1967) have been destroyed. The records of the Science Branch of the DES, which was responsible for the SSRC, are completely unsorted and so are not yet available.

** Information provided by Lord Young. He was made a life peer in 1978.

*** He was chairman of the Confederation of British Industry from 1969 to 1976.

New Society, in its observation column on 11 November 1965, when the members of the SSRC had been named, agreed that they were "extremely distinguished people" but had some doubts. It thought that they had made it a very respectable body: almost too respectable? Individually the choices appeared right. Collectively they looked a bit predictable and elderly. It said that they made the council a bit like an old Fabian reunion: those on the moderate left, with here and there the odd liberal.

It was never intended that the membership of the council should be static. By the end of 1966 Bullock and Titmuss had retired, and Moser departed in April 1967. Firth left during 1968, and at the end of that year the three-year appointments of Lord James, Lipsey, and Marshall came to an end. Young himself also retired at the end of 1968. He was succeeded as chairman by Andrew Shonfield, director of studies at the Royal Institute of International Affairs. By the beginning of 1969 the new members were Sir Roy Allen, professor of statistics at the LSE, Professor T Burnes, professor of sociology at the University of Edinburgh, Mr M Chisholm, reader in geography at the University of Bristol, Professor H J Habakkuk, principal of Jesus College and Chichele professor of economic history at Oxford; Dr E R Leach, provost of King's College and reader in social anthropology at Cambridge, Professor R C O Matthews, professor of political economy and fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, Professor J Tizard, professor of child development at the Institute of Education at London University, and Mr L Waddilove, director of the Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust. Despite these changes Lord James had some reservations. In giving his views to the council at its meeting in November 1968 on the achievements and shortcomings of the past three years, at Young's request, he stressed the importance of the membership rotating, and wrote of the risk of appearing an "in" group.³ Cherns, the scientific secretary, left early on to become professor of social sciences at Loughborough University. He was succeeded by Jeremy Mitchell.⁴

The first meeting of the council was held in January 1966, but an informal meeting was held on 11 November 1965.⁵ Lord Heyworth attended this meeting and spoke about the council's background. He stressed the need for trained research workers, and for more training in actual research techniques and methods. He thought there should be a consideration of existing specialisations, and wanted less restricted careers for research workers. He was interested in the application of research in the social sciences, and hoped that the council would look at the use of research. He also emphasised the importance of co-operation with the UGC and the other research councils. At the first formal meeting in January, Crosland presented the council with its charter.⁶

One of the crucial issues to occupy the council in its early years was its actual role. It was to provide support for research in the social sciences, and to keep under review the state of that research. It was to advise government on the needs of social science research and keep

under review the supply of trained research workers. It was to contribute resources to their training. It was to give special consideration to the application of research in the social sciences, and the dissemination of information about research that was projected and completed. It was also to give advice to users of research such as those in government, local government, and industry. One of the points that had been reiterated during discussions which led to the establishment of the council was the political nature of the social sciences. This could prove embarrassing should the council set up its own research units and make recommendations which the government would be unable to accept. Crosland picked up this point in a letter to Young on 3 December 1965.⁸ In this letter he said that they had agreed that the research activities of the council would mainly concentrate on supporting research carried out in universities and research institutes. If it were to be done through the council's own employees, then Crosland would have to agree.⁹ This was followed up by a paper by Young and Cherns put before the council at its meeting on 21 January 1966. This said that council policy could not and should not be to "direct" research. Research initiatives should come from university staff rather than from the council. This was being queried by October 1966, when the financial estimates initially suggested that there should be separate provision for independent research institutes and commissioned research. This was dropped, for the time being.¹⁰ However, in January 1967 the council's proposed forward expenditure included an amount for research units from 1968-69.¹¹ In June 1967, in response to a paper from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research, the idea was floated that the Institute might, in whole or in part, become an SSRC unit.¹² But it was not until the meeting in October 1967 that a serious suggestion was made that the council might become more proactive. The government had turned down an SSRC proposal that the latter should take over the social survey. The suggestion was therefore made that the SSRC should set up its own. This had been brought up earlier in the year at conferences in Manchester and Sheffield, and it had also come up in one of the working groups at the conference in Warwick which immediately preceded this meeting. It was suggested that a list should be drawn up of topics for research units, for which government approval would be necessary. The possibility of having an industrial research unit in industrial relations was suggested.¹³ The minutes pointed out that an industrial relations research unit was needed by government, by employers, and by trades unions. It was agreed that this should be discussed by the management committee, and that the views of the sociology committee should be obtained.¹⁴

A small panel chaired by Sir Roy Allen looked at the costs of a social survey unit and estimated that net expenditure for 1968-69 would be £11,750, rising to £23,500 in 1972-73. The panel recommended that the council seek approval to establish a social survey unit for an initial period of five years, and that it should ask the DES to make separate and adequate provision for it.¹⁵ This recommendation was discussed by the council at its meeting on 2 February 1968, but the relevant page of the minutes is

missing.¹⁶ The same meeting discussed the industrial relations research unit. The management and sociology committees had further details on this, which they thought for a full operational year would cost £31,750. They recommended that authority should be sought to set up such a unit for an initial period of five years and that it should be located at Oxford. As with the social survey unit, they wanted separate and adequate provision for the unit.¹⁷ However, it would appear that the council decided to pursue the social survey unit, but wanted more information about the industrial relations one. In the minutes of the meeting on 5 April¹⁸ the secretary reported on a letter that had been received from the DES about the proposed social survey unit. The letter said that the cost would be met from funds allocated to research grants. The council agreed to this, but their forward planning would have to be reviewed in the light of any agreement to set up units. It was thought that the whole question of units needed review and the number might have to be limited to two. Priorities must be considered, especially as units would be in competition with research grants. At the meeting in June 1968, it was reported that the proposal for a social survey unit had been passed to the Treasury.¹⁹

The meeting in July had another paper on research units before it.²⁰ There was a new paper on the industrial relations research unit, in which the management committee recommended that authority be sought to set one up for an initial period of five years.²¹ Another paper raised the possibility of setting up an automation research unit.²² There was a further recommendation that a race relations research unit be set up, which was proposed by a working party with Young as the chairman.²³ Yet another paper discussed a poverty research unit, but this paper was not seeking a decision, but merely asking if it were worth going any further with the idea.²⁴ The council agreed that authority should be sought to establish an industrial relations research unit and a race relations research unit, each for an initial period of five years.²⁵ In the matters arising from these minutes, on 1 November 1968, it was reported that this proposal had been sent to the DES, but that there had as yet been no reaction. It was also reported that no decision would be taken on the social survey unit until the future plans of the government social survey were decided.²⁶ At the same meeting in November it was decided to add an estimated £60,000 to the financial estimates for 1969-70 for expenditure on units. In the SSRC newsletter number 5, for March 1969, it was reported that the SSRC was to set up its first unit. It was to be a survey research unit (SRU), designed to help university and institute researchers by conducting surveys, advising on the planning and execution of any surveys which they were contemplating, doing research on methodology, and providing training facilities.

The question of setting up research units was not something on which the council had no doubts, although these were not recorded in the minutes. Lipsey was one who expressed some unease about this when he gave his views on the successes and failures of the council at their meeting in November 1968. Referring to research grants he said that it was most

important to support bread-and-butter research in existing organisations and not to spend too much on units unless more funds were available.²⁷

The usual question of what topics should be covered came up at the first informal meeting. It was suggested that social science coverage should comprise economics, political science, social anthropology, psychology, sociology, social administration, and social and economic statistics, including demography. The council should also be responsible for research in education and management. It would not yet concentrate on the overlapping disciplines, such as economic and social history, and law (including criminology).²⁸

Another problem, of course, was not just which disciplines were covered, but straddling the sciences and the humanities. In March 1968 the council discussed the draft evidence to the Dainton Committee on libraries.²⁹ The minutes record Young's view that to split science and non-science would mean a split down the middle of the social sciences and cause chaos.³⁰

The question of who should be responsible for psychology was a somewhat vexed one. The Human Sciences Committee of the DSIR had suggested that a working party should be set up to look at how it should be divided. It should consist of representatives of the MRC, the new SRC, and the SSRC. The council, when formally constituted, accepted this recommendation.³¹ The working party suggested how psychology should be divided between the three councils. The SRC should be responsible for research into basic human psychological processes studied experimentally. This would cover laboratory studies of sensory processes, perception, learning, and aspects of motivation. The MRC should be responsible for psychological research with reference to health in the broadest sense. The SSRC should cover psychological processes involved in human interaction and developmental psychology. It should also be responsible for aspects of psychology not covered by the other two councils. The working party also recommended that a joint advisory committee on psychology should be set up to keep under review developments in the whole field and the arrangements among the councils, so that there was adequate support for all aspects. This advisory committee should recommend to the council the need for any further steps to encourage new lines of research, and it should also allocate research studentships.³²

Much of the council's work was to be done through committees.³³ This followed the pattern of the other research councils. In expectation of this the council's charter made provision for them to be set up. This was a priority for the council, and at its first formal meeting in January 1966 it had before it a paper with a list of recommended committees with proposed chairmen. These were economics (chairman G D N Worswick); political science (chairman Professor W J M Mackenzie); social anthropology (chairman Professor R W Firth); sociology and social administration (chairman Professor T H Marshall);

psychology (chairman Professor J Drever); social and economic statistics (chairman Professor C A Moser); and management (chairman Campbell Adamson). The paper recommended that the subject committees should be responsible, under the council, for reporting the main trends in research by the winter of 1966–67. One further committee was proposed. It was thought that a lot of the work of the council would be humdrum, and therefore something was needed that was more creative (and risky). It was recommended that a committee be set up for this purpose: the committee on 1980. This committee would be chaired by Michael Young.³⁴

This paper was introduced to the January meeting by the chairman. It was agreed that subject committees should be set up as proposed, with the exception of the committee on management, which would be discussed at the next meeting in February. The committees would be responsible for studentships and research grants. The committee on 1980 became the committee on the next 30 years. This committee was to consult users in industry, commerce, government (including local government), and the social services about the kind of problems that might arise in the future on which research might usefully be done. A paper with the names of those who might serve on the committees, which included both council members and outsiders, was before the meeting on 11 February,³⁵ and approved.³⁶ At the meeting in February it was also proposed that the management and administrative studies committee should be set up under Adamson's chairmanship, and terms of reference were suggested.³⁷ This was agreed.³⁸ This committee was later called the management and industrial relations committee. In July 1968 the council discussed a proposal from the National Economic Development Office for a council for grants in management studies.³⁹ The meeting referred this to the management committee.⁴⁰ The council agreed at its meeting in December 1968 that it did not want to divorce management from other SSRC disciplines.⁴¹

The council also set up an Educational Research Board on the same lines as its other subject committees. It differed from them only in that it had to deal with other bodies which were wholly or in part engaged in educational research. The Heyworth report had recommended that such a board be set up, and this was done in the spring of 1966 under the chairmanship of Lord James. Lord James had at first grave doubts as to whether or not the Educational Research Board had a function, because of the other bodies operating in this field. However, having identified gaps in the existing structure where the Educational Research Board could help, he became convinced that there was a useful function for it to perform.⁴²

There was some disquiet over the disciplines which had committees. Professor Postan, professor of economic history at Cambridge and president of the Economic History Society, had threatened public action over the omission of economic history and had been told that

further consideration would be given in a year's time.⁴³ In the event the matter came up again much earlier. A paper before the eighth meeting, on 14 October 1966, was on the possible extension of the council's activities to other disciplines. On 28 September the DES had written about the possible extension to human geography, economic history, criminology, ethnology, town and regional planning, and accountancy.⁴⁴ It was agreed by the council that economic history and human geography should be accepted, but that the others should be considered by the economics, sociology and social anthropology committees. The chairman then wrote to the Economic History Society and the conference of heads of departments of geography asking if they were happy for economic history and human geography to be included as social science disciplines. They confirmed that they were.⁴⁵ However, there were still doubts about economic history. In discussion of a paper⁴⁶ before a council meeting on 13 January 1967 it was minuted that it must be made clear to the Economic History Society that council members did not attempt to represent subjects on the council.⁴⁷ By March 1967 the LSE had entered the fray and was urging that a committee be set up for economic and social history.⁴⁸ The chairman thought there was a good case, but the economics committee disagreed.⁴⁹ Then the Economic History Society expressed the strong wish that economic and social history should be seen as a social science, and Young agreed to write to the secretary of state (still Crosland) asking him to approve the addition of an economic and social historian to the council and to take over from the DES the responsibility for grants.⁵⁰ Two months later, in July 1967, Professor Habbakkuk proposed that there should be a separate economic and social history committee,⁵¹ and this was finally agreed by the council.⁵² Habbakkuk was to chair it.

The same meeting that agreed the setting up of the economic and social history committee agreed also to a committee on human geography. It was suggested that at a later date planners, and possibly another geographer, might be invited to become members of council.⁵³ This suggestion followed the recommendation that the council agree that town and country planning be transferred to the SSRC.⁵⁴ In October 1967 names were suggested for membership of the new committee for human geography and planning which was to be chaired by Chisholm. These were agreed by the council.⁵⁵ Later, in October 1968, Chisholm wrote a paper for the council proposing that this committee be split into two, one for human geography and another for planning.⁵⁶ The meeting considered three propositions: (a) that there should be a new planning committee; (b) that more planners should be added to the committee and separate sub-committees should be set up for the allocation of awards, and also that the whole question of the committee structure should be reviewed; and (c) there should be delay for six months whilst the committee structure was reviewed.⁵⁷ The council agreed on (b).⁵⁸

One further committee was set up late in 1967. This was the committee on social science and government under the chairmanship of Sir Roy Allen. It was to examine the general

availability from government departments of information relevant to social science research; the relationship between government departments and other bodies; and the use by the public sector of research in the social sciences.⁵⁹

The only other change to the disciplines involved in the committees' structure was a readjustment. It was suggested in December 1966 that economics and economic and social statistics should combine. However, instead it was recommended that econometrics should be added to the economics committee, and that the economic and social statistics committee should be renamed the statistics committee. This was agreed.⁶⁰ In addition, the council took an interest in automation, quality studies, and cohort studies.⁶¹

The question of assessors on both the council and the committees was decided at an early stage. A paper was discussed at the first meeting of the council⁶² and it was agreed that the UGC should appoint an assessor and that there should be an SSRC assessor on the UGC. Papers would be exchanged between the two. The earlier proposal that there should be an assessor from the DES on the council was not taken up. Instead copies of papers were to be sent to it, and also to the other research councils. Finally, committees would be able to invite assessors to meetings as appropriate.⁶³ By April 1966 the Treasury had established an inter-departmental committee to collate information about social studies.⁶⁴ Young went to one of its meetings, which he reported to council as having been very friendly. It was anxious to maintain liaison with the SSRC, and suggested that it should have an assessor on the council, as should the economic committee of the Department of Economic Affairs. It also suggested that they should be invited to meetings of the next 30 years committee.⁶⁵ This was agreed by council.⁶⁶

Two of the most important jobs of the committees were to authorise postgraduate awards and research grants. At the informal meeting in November 1965 the council agreed that the first priority should be postgraduate awards and that a circular letter should go to heads of social science departments telling them this. The minutes do not record the discussion or any disagreement. When it came to the scheme of the award there were two possibilities. One was the quota scheme used by the former DSIR and by the SRC. This involved giving quotas of awards to universities. They then selected students to be nominated for the awards. The other was the competitive scheme run by the DES, by which awards were offered to the best candidates regardless of subject or university. The Heyworth Committee had recommended the quota scheme, and this was adopted by the SSRC. The offer of the SRC to co-operate in its running in the first year was accepted. It was thought that student mobility should be encouraged. The paper also looked at support grants. It was thought that one was needed for each research studentship, and that £200 was a realistic sum. This would need Treasury funding. The paper also looked at the need for special allocation for research abroad for, in particular, anthropologists.⁶⁷

The quota system was discussed further in January 1966. It was thought that it should be allocated specifically to departments, rather than going into university pools.⁶⁸ University reaction to a quota system had on the whole been favourable. It was agreed that the quota system was better than competition, although it would create a need for more staff to cope with the extra administration. Oxford was concerned that the quota system meant individual students having to find a university willing to take them, which might discourage mobility.⁶⁹ Because of the timing it was agreed that for the first year the Human Sciences Training Awards Committee of the SRC should be invited to consider and recommend grants to the SSRC. The chairmen of the subject committees should attend its next meeting.

The meeting was held on 7 March, and Dr Welford, its chairman, attended the next meeting of the council. He reported that both applications for grants in social anthropology had been accepted; one out of six for sociology and social administration; three out of six for economics and economic administration; one out of two for social and economic statistics; two out of nine for political science; four out of eight for psychology; and two out of seven for management.⁷⁰ There were some questions about this allocation. Concern was expressed as to how to achieve a balance between well-established departments and those in new universities.⁷¹ In April⁷² the council was worried that the Treasury had not decided the final number of awards. They also thought that the awards had been spread rather widely.

Complaints about the quota system were then received and were aired at a conference at Canterbury in July 1966. Decisions were seen to have been arbitrary, with the principles on which they were awarded not being stated. Students who had not been given a place on the quota system had left before the appeal stage had been reached. Student preferences as to which university they would like to go to for their postgraduate training had not been sufficiently taken into account. Finally, it was important to attract graduates from other universities to help build up new courses.⁷³ It was thought that this had not been addressed. It was agreed that there should be a survey to obtain information for a review of the scheme's operation.⁷⁴

The complaints about the system were taken seriously. At the eighth meeting, in October 1966, a report on the appeals stage addressed those complaints⁷⁵ by making some procedural changes. There was also a proposal for an amended studentship scheme. They wanted to give weight to student preferences in deciding the quota and to alert students and universities to each other's needs.⁷⁶ It was decided that there should be a dummy run in a few universities on both retaining quotas and relating them to preferences. The timetable for this was seen as extremely tight.⁷⁷ There followed a proposal for a link with the UCCA.⁷⁸ The full clearing house scheme was seen as time-consuming, and a simplified one was preferred.⁷⁹

The council continued to try to improve postgraduate studentship schemes. In February 1967 they discussed subject distribution of quotas and how to determine demand. They wanted the distribution of awards to be related to the demand from eligible students, as well as the training capacity of the universities. One way would be to take the output of new graduates in each subject, but this penalised those studies with fewer undergraduates. It was agreed to take the distribution of awards for the previous year as a basis for the subject distribution, although numbers for education were reduced and those for statistics were increased.⁸⁰ Another aspect of the studentship awards was how to distribute the quotas to departments. It was decided to keep the scheme whereby there was a balance between the well-established departments, and the new ones.⁸¹ This scheme seemed to work better. In June 1967 there was a report on the distribution which had been made by the committees, which said that there was not as much criticism by the universities as there had been the previous year.⁸²

By October 1967 places were distributed to economics, 112; education, 14; management, 36; psychology, 40; politics, 110; social anthropology, 35; sociology, 111; and statistics, 22.⁸³ It was decided that the 1967 scheme should continue for the following year, but in a paper in March 1968 it was suggested that the national need should be taken into account.⁸⁴ Because of this it was agreed that there should be an extra quota granted to economics and statistics. There was a problem with planning, because of the difficulty in distinguishing between planning and geography departments and courses. It was agreed to seek from the DES an increased allocation for planning.⁸⁵ This foreshadowed the proposal that the committee on human geography and planning should be divided.⁸⁶

Improvements were also sought in the operation of the pool. Into the pool was put 10 per cent of awards for later allocation to those who had not been successful in gaining an award. It was seen as a valuable corrective to the quota distribution. In July 1968 it was proposed that a priority system as for the quota system should also operate at the pool stage.⁸⁷ It was agreed that priority should be given to statistics, management or planning, but that not more than 25 per cent of the pool should go to those subjects.⁸⁸ This seemed to work, although a report in October 1968 drew attention to the large amount of work needed to operate it.⁸⁹

Debate continued during 1968 on the use of students' preferences. A detailed paper before the council on 7 June 1968 set out the arguments for and against them. One of the arguments in favour of them was that at that time, one of student unrest, it was important to allow for the feelings of "consumers". It would be strange, and perhaps unwise, at such a time to abandon a scheme of student consultation even if it were not wholly satisfactory. The paper recommended that preferences should continue to be the main guideline⁹⁰ and this was agreed.⁹¹ This was again discussed in July 1968, when it was again recommended

that preferences should be retained as the main guideline, but that committees should be enabled to allocate 10 per cent of awards, or 5 per cent, whichever was the greater, at their discretion.⁹² This was agreed.⁹³

In order for university departments to qualify for awards they had to be approved. This was a matter of some difficulty for the council. In March 1968 a UGC memorandum of general guidance was circulated. This had implications for the council's policy.⁹⁴ The council acknowledged that there had to be recognition of courses, but it did not want to have to spend less time on research because of having to spend more on considering courses. It was agreed that they should ask universities for information about their courses in April or May.⁹⁵ A pilot exercise was carried out which on the whole met with a favourable response, although it was thought to take too much time.⁹⁶ Some changes were introduced, and it was suggested that the exercise should be carried out every three years.⁹⁷ By November 1968 draft instructions to committees about the approval of courses were ready. Approval was sought for the suggested guidance and to a 20 per cent reduction in the number of approved courses.⁹⁸ Some disquiet was expressed but it was decided to go ahead, and a special meeting of the council was arranged for 18 December.⁹⁹ At that meeting it was reported that the total reduction in approved courses so far was 36 per cent. A course would not be eligible for an award if there were inadequate evidence of students being likely to take the course; departments would be unlikely to have more than one course approved; the standard of the course might be inadequate to count as a postgraduate one; the syllabus for examination papers might be too narrow for adequate training; staffing might be inadequate; the course might be aimed primarily at overseas students; and diploma courses open to those with lower second-class degrees would not be approved when there was a comparable masters or BPhil qualification.¹⁰⁰

The whole system of administering postgraduate awards was questioned by the DES, which in June 1968 had produced a paper on the possible centralisation of all postgraduate awards.¹⁰¹ The council thought it was better to have more than one source for awards, but agreed to consider the matter again when the DES made further proposals.¹⁰² There was a further paper before the council at its meeting in July 1968. It had been proposed that the awards given by local education authorities which were relevant should be transferred to the SSRC. However, these courses did not on the whole demand a degree; if the council took them over it would introduce a new type of function to the studentship scheme.¹⁰³ The council did not welcome the possibility of taking over awards for which a degree was not an essential qualification.¹⁰⁴ Despite this a report for the council on 6 December recommended that postgraduate awards should be centralised from the academic year 1969–70 and that the DES and all research councils should accept responsibility for those within their own respective fields of

activity.¹⁰⁵ The council did not view this favourably, but decided in the end that the secretary of state* should be informed that it was prepared to accept responsibility for postgraduate awards in specified groups subject to certain conditions.¹⁰⁶

Although the council had not liked centralisation of postgraduate awards, there was a successful collaboration with the SRC. In March 1968 it had proposed collaboration in training in areas of concern to each, particularly where there were combinations of technology, economics and human relations. It suggested setting up a joint committee to encourage development of broadly based training at postgraduate level.¹⁰⁷ The management and industrial relations committee liked this proposal,¹⁰⁸ and the council agreed to the new committee.¹⁰⁹

Other matters concerning awards also came before the council. They looked at overseas matters. Were postgraduate awards tenable at overseas universities?¹¹⁰ The social anthropology committee wished to know if the families of those working overseas could be paid to go with them. It was agreed that as civil servants required to go overseas for more than 12 months were paid to take their families, then the same should apply.¹¹¹ The social anthropology committee also raised the question of additional costs of those engaged in fieldwork for things such as hard equipment, and the employment of field assistants. The latter could often be local people, being paid at a local rate. In the past the Treasury and Colonial Office had met these expenses, and the SSRC office was instructed to seek approval for these additional costs not met by the awards.¹¹²

The council also discussed postgraduate student loans, which the SSRC office was asked to pursue.¹¹³ Qualifications were another matter to engage the council's attention. What qualification was the equivalent of a good honours degree? The DES accepted none. The committees were asked to discuss this¹¹⁴ and came up with a long list, such as associateship of the Institute of Chartered Accountants, the final examination of the Law Society, and fellowship of the Institute of Actuaries. The council decided that only a good honours in the diploma in technology would be acceptable, although the others could be discussed as they came up.¹¹⁵

Finally, the council looked at the length of studentships. Social anthropologists in many cases needed a fourth year for a doctorate.¹¹⁶ A paper from the social anthropology committee was before the council in July 1968 and it was agreed that a four-year studentship was necessary where part of the work for a doctorate involved work overseas. The office was to make an estimate of the cost and to seek authority to make awards in special cases for a fourth year.¹¹⁷

* Gordon Walker had taken over as secretary of state in August 1967.

Postgraduate awards had been the first priority of the council, and the need to get the allocation of studentship quotas as equitable as possible meant that much of the work of the council was taken up with the universities and their awards. This did not mean that the research institutes, whose omission from the Clapham report had been widely criticised, were forgotten. Arrangements for research grants were discussed at the first meeting of the council in January 1966. Closing dates for applications were agreed, and for a single occasion, in March 1966, the former grants sub-committee of the Human Sciences Committee of the SRC* was invited to consider and recommend grants to the council. The chairmen of the subject committees would attend the meeting and take part. The SRC way of working would be adopted. The applications would be divided into four groups. A would be the highest priority; B was for research of a high quality, but ranking below A if money were short; C were promising applications, but not acceptable as they stood; and D was for rejected applications. There would be discussions with the research institutes about support for their programmes of research.¹¹⁸

A paper by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research was before the council at its meeting in March 1966. This drew attention to their financial difficulties, and also the development of their work, which was of interest to government departments.¹¹⁹ This was taken on board, and by the May meeting the chairman produced a report with positive suggestions. He said that, following the meeting in January, he had had discussions with lots of institutes. This had enabled him to identify particular difficulties, and he put forward suggestions as to how they might be addressed. One major problem was that the grants were tailored to university departments where overhead expenses were met from university funds. The project grants awarded to institutes left their overheads uncovered. Young's suggestion was that the SSRC should cover part of the overheads: the amount should be proportionate to each programme project. Another difficulty was time. Short-term grants gave institutes no long-term security. It was suggested that applications for programmes of work of up to five or more years should be considered. A lack of security was also a problem for permanent staff. Institutes wanted to discuss with the SSRC the possibility of pay for a couple of years after a grant ran out. Young thought that this should be considered further. Institutes also raised the question of inflation. It was suggested that if the university salary scales rose then a supplementary amount should be provided to the institutes for the period of the grant. Another difficulty identified by the institutes was the practice of grants being paid in arrears. It was thought that this should be continued but there could be exceptions. All these suggestions won the support of the council. On Young's final suggestion, that the SSRC might offer management advice, it was agreed that Young should write to the institutes.¹²⁰

* It is described as such.

The institutes seem to have found this satisfactory, but in December 1967 the question of research facilities again came up.¹²¹ There was an increasing number of applications for help towards the cost of research facilities, which had so far been refused. The council approached the Treasury through the DES and in April it was reported that the Treasury had agreed to special applications, but it would need a closer definition of the term "research facilities" before it would give general approval.¹²² By November 1968 the Treasury had agreed to delegate to the council special powers for making grants for research facilities provided that capital expenditure was no more than £400.¹²³ At the same November meeting it was agreed to consider paying established university staff, seconded to work full-time on a project, out of research grants. This was not at that time allowed.¹²⁴

The question of research assistants registering for higher degrees also came up at the meeting in December 1967.¹²⁵ The council agreed that it should look more favourably upon such requests, but that the work of research assistants on research projects must not be diminished.¹²⁶

The National Institute for Economic and Social Research was supported by the SSRC, and in June 1967 it put forward a paper with proposals for its long-term support. It pointed out that by September 1968 the two-year grant from the SSRC would have expired. It wanted continuous central finance.¹²⁷ The council agreed that the Institute's standard of work was high. It also did some work that could not be done by the universities. However, a lot of it was down to government departments, and there was a danger if it became too dependent on the SSRC. Also, the sum needed was one-sixth of the SSRC's budget. Although the council had strong sympathy, they did not want to give a general subsidy of the kind wanted. Perhaps the Institute could put forward a programme of research? It was also suggested that the Institute, in whole or in part, might become an SSRC unit.¹²⁸

The allocation of research grants seems to have worked quite well. The main difficulty was when applications crossed disciplines, so that more than one committee was involved. This meant that in July 1967 the council itself had to take decisions. Committees had discretion to make awards of up to £10,000, and in single subjects, out of 19 applications, they made 11 awards. However, when it came to cross-disciplines, from 31 applications only seven awards were made, and in 13 instances the committees were unable to agree. The council had to approve awards over £10,000, and in the single subjects from ten applications five had marks of A or B, and were granted awards. However, there was again a problem with the cross-disciplines. There were 16 applications, but only three As or Bs. It was thought that where there was no agreement, talks would have to continue.¹²⁹

However, it was apparent that further steps would have to be taken as the number of

applications for grants rose. There were 55 applications in January 1967, and 111 in January 1968.¹³⁰ At the meeting in July 1968, at which research grants were discussed, it was noted that the increasing number of applications made it difficult for the committees and for their staff. It had been decided that the way of dealing with this was to reduce the number of applications going to more than one committee; this was now 45 per cent as opposed to 55 per cent.¹³¹ By December the proportion of applications going to more than one committee had been reduced to 32.5 per cent.¹³²

One matter to concern the council was the quality of research. Young prepared a paper on this for the meeting in June 1968. He said that the quality of research grant applications continued to be generally disappointing. The council's approval rate was 30–35 per cent of applications (in monetary terms), compared with the SRC approval rating of 50–55 per cent. He recommended that two part-time scientific consultants, at a professorial level, should be appointed to discuss future research projects with intending applicants and provide stimulus and advice to research workers in their field.¹³³ In discussing this the council did not question the basic premise, about the quality of research grant applications, but it was not enthusiastic about employing consultants. The views of the economics, management and sociology committees were sought.¹³⁴ They were not in favour, so Young proposed that the secretariat should be strengthened by employing experts in two or three fields of economics, management and sociology. Consultants might be retained for some projects. He agreed to keep in touch with the committee chairmen about this.¹³⁵ In October 1968 the DES decision was reported that research consultants would have to count against office expenditure, which meant that any appointments would have to be flexible.¹³⁶

Before the council was set up concern had been expressed that those who were on it would also be applicants for grants. This was indeed the case and, for example, both Moser and Worswick received substantial ones.¹³⁷ This may have attracted comment, for in the SSRC newsletter number 6, of June 1969, there is a note on the membership rules. This said:

"most members of the SSRC's Committees are academic because the two main functions of the Committees (judging grant applications and allocating postgraduate awards) require academic expertise; there are also some users of research and non-academics among the members.

Committee members are not debarred from applying for research grants – but they are not, of course, present when decisions are taken on their own applications, nor do they see comments on them. The Council needs the advice of those most closely informed in the best research – and these inevitably include a proportion of those most likely to need and make best use of the SSRC's funds."

Some applications for grants went as separate papers to the council. For example, there was a request for payment to the Royal Institute of International Affairs of £15,000 over three years to support the library of international press cuttings. A visit to Chatham House was organised by the political science committee and with Treasury approval the grant was confirmed for 1968–69.¹³⁸ Another application came through the next 30 years committee for a grant for an Institute of Forecasting Studies. Michael Young introduced a paper on this in October 1967,¹³⁹ and the council agreed payment of £6,000 for nine months to review research already done but thought that more information was needed before approving the main application for the grant.¹⁴⁰ This grant was not taken up. In November 1968 Young made a progress report on other possible sources of funding and ideas about what kind of research projects might be conducted. These were on topics such as the distribution of income between income groups at various points in the future; the future of international trade in technologists, scientists, etc. and the study of expectation in decision making.¹⁴¹

The council discussed a number of other matters connected with grants and money. They awarded fellowships: 11 in 1966–67. These were of two kinds. There were research fellowships for those who had completed postgraduate training, and fellowships for mature students who had outside experience.¹⁴² The following year senior research fellowships were proposed. This followed the Education Research Board suggesting two-year fellowships should be provided each year for teachers who had been in post for about five years. Lord James thought that this was the greatest achievement of the board.¹⁴³ They could become good researchers with training, and would be more valuable because of their experience. The SSRC studentships did not give them enough money, and £1,500 a year was proposed. The council liked this suggestion, and thought it should be extended to all disciplines in the social sciences. Treasury approval would be necessary.¹⁴⁴ In February 1968 it was agreed that there should be ten senior research fellowships and ten research or conversion fellowships for 1968.¹⁴⁵ Conversion fellowships were for those who wanted to move into the social sciences from outside, or who had gained a doctorate in one of the social sciences and wished to transfer to another. In July 1968 it was reported that for the senior research fellowships there had been 105 candidates and ten awards and for research and conversion fellowships there were 11 candidates (two for conversion fellowships and the rest for research fellowships) and eight awards were made. The quality of candidates for the senior research fellowships was seen not to be good; that for the research and conversion fellowships was better. There was discussion as to how the fellowship scheme could be improved, and in particular at whom senior research fellowships were aimed.¹⁴⁶ This was discussed further in November 1968, when it was agreed that senior research fellowships should be retained but should not normally be available to staff of universities or research institutes; that a more flexible kind of training for senior research fellows should be sought; and that conversion fellowships should continue.¹⁴⁷

The council also looked at others offering grants in the social sciences. The Nuffield Foundation offered small grants¹⁴⁸ and in 1968 announced a new scheme for social science fellowships.¹⁴⁹ The Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851 told the council that it was interested in the social sciences and was contemplating extending its fellowships and scholarships to them. The council welcomed this, and hoped that it could act in an advisory capacity.¹⁵⁰ The British Academy told the council that it was offering a research fellowship in the social sciences.¹⁵¹ Finally the Ecole des Hautes Etudes, in Paris, appointed a visiting fellow, Peter Laslett of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure,¹⁵² on the nomination of the SSRC.¹⁵³

In January 1966, although discussions with the UGC about taking over grants had not yet taken place, financial estimates had, of course, to be prepared. The council agreed that as the postgraduate awards were remaining with their respective votes for 1965–66, there were only administrative and central expenses, which were estimated at £28,000. This was working on the assumption that staff would build up to 20 by the end of March 1966. In 1966–67 administrative costs were estimated at £124,000, with a budget for research grants of £250,000.

For postgraduate training awards and fellowships £401,000 was estimated. Heyworth had recommended an increase from 220 studentships in 1964–65 to 400 in 1965–66 with a further 100 in 1966–67. His report had also recommended provision for post-experience courses and at least 20 research fellowships. Because of the delay in the establishment of the council and because of the demand, it seemed reasonable to allow for 500 new awards of all kinds in 1966–67, an addition of 235 to the 265 already estimated. These figures were agreed as a basis for negotiation with the Treasury.¹⁵⁴ By June the Treasury had approved the administrative estimates and the research grants, and had granted the £401,000 towards postgraduate training.¹⁵⁵ The main point of contention was support grants. Each postgraduate student holding a research studentship had been awarded a support grant of £200. The Treasury view was that those enjoying the grant should continue to receive it, but new ones would have to be considered on merit with the sum shown to be necessary. There would be a maximum of 25 support grants a year. The council considered three possibilities. They could argue that a case be made for continued support; they could restrict the grants to specific subjects; or, because it would be invidious to give only 25 students out of 200 a grant, none should be given.¹⁵⁶ In the discussion the chairman pointed out that this was the same as other research councils, but the agreement was that extra money must be sought.¹⁵⁷ However, it was later agreed that the universities should be asked to make out a case for the grant.¹⁵⁸ In the event the council sought Treasury approval to distribute the money more widely than to just 25 students, and this was agreed.¹⁵⁹ By February 1968 the Treasury was prepared to agree to a flat rate of £40 per annum provided that the council had assurance from each department

concerned that the additional expenditure had indeed been incurred. Students undertaking fieldwork had an additional grant of £45.¹⁶⁰

In October 1966 a preliminary submission of estimates to the DES proposed an increase from £772,000 in 1966–67 to £1,632,000 in 1967–68. Perhaps it is not surprising that the DES suggested that this was a higher rate of growth than was likely to win approval.¹⁶¹ By January 1967 the council had prepared the forward expenditure proposed for the next five years.¹⁶²

	1967–68 (£000)	1968–69 (£000)	1969–70 (£000)	1970–71 (£000)	1971–72 (£000)
Grants research	567	1,150	1,820	2,700	4,000
A student awards	479	780	1,106	1,306	1,389
B Fellowship awards	23	46	70	85	92
C Research, training and support awards	31	53	77	96	105
Headquarters administration (including publications)	164	225	249	339	452
Research units		195	325	390	390
TOTAL	1,264	2,449	3,647	4,916	6,428

This was agreed as the basis for forecasts. The Treasury was not enthusiastic. Its initial reaction was for 1967–68 to allow £900,000. It raised this to £1.2 million on condition that for 1968–69 the grant would be £1.4 million; for 1969–70 £1.8 million; for 1970–71 £2.2 million; for 1971–72 £2.2 million. In the end it was decided that the grant for 1967–68 would be accepted, but that the forecast for a further five years should be postponed for a year.¹⁶³ A draft resolution was prepared by the council to protest at the Treasury's parsimony. The chairman persuaded them not to pass it. He pointed out that their grounds for protest were not strong until the applications had built up more.¹⁶⁴ By October 1967 the council had managed to get the estimate for 1968–69 down to just less than £1.9 million, but that still left rather a large gap.¹⁶⁵ In February 1968 it was agreed that these were the figures that should go forward.¹⁶⁶ In October 1968 the estimates for 1969–70 had been reduced to £2.3

million.¹⁶⁷ To this council added an estimated £60,000 for expenditure on units.¹⁶⁸

In the event the budget for 1968–69 was £1.7 million, rising to £2.4 million in 1969–70. This was a very small sum compared with the other research councils. For 1968–69 the SRC had a budget of £42.1 million; the MRC one of £15.3 million; the Agricultural Research Council one of £13.5 million; and the Natural Environment Research Council one of £19.2 million.¹⁶⁹

In addition to awards and grants, the main work of the committees was the survey of the present state of play. At the meeting in March 1966 the council had before it a copy of a letter sent by the chairman to the chairmen of each committee suggesting what form the research reviews might take. They should be aware of the audience for their reports, which was the council, the users, and younger researchers seeking guidance on what kind of research they might do. The review should take note of what was going on, and what reviews had already taken place. They should assess what needed to be done. They should find out the numbers involved and the sources of finance. They should also find out the different types and sizes of research organisations.¹⁷⁰ The council thought that more than a year would be needed to produce the reports, but the chairman was insistent that something must be produced after one year. Concern was expressed that the reports might be too large, and there was some discussion on how they should be published.

A year later, at the meeting in February 1967, the council had before it a paper written by the chairman, saying that he would like publications based on the reviews to be the major event of the second year.¹⁷¹ The arguments in favour of their publication were that they would be useful for social scientists and for those in other disciplines, and also, because public money had been spent, it would be appropriate for the information to be in the public domain.¹⁷² In July it was suggested that they should be published as a series of monographs. The question of whether or not they should be published was also raised. The monographs were to cover not only the surveys undertaken by the subject committees, but also other topics in which the council had taken an interest. When the council was first set up it was suggested that it should take over the automation panel.¹⁷³ This had been set up by the Human Sciences Committee which had been asked by the DSIR Council to look at the need for research in aspects of automation. The report of the panel was ready by March 1967 but it was not discussed until June. Further discussion was then needed, because the report excluded economics in its definition of the social sciences. A monograph was also suggested on poverty. This followed the agreement of the council to the setting up of a committee on poverty studies¹⁷⁴ in February 1967, to review what was already known about the extent and spread of poverty. By June this committee had already met twice.¹⁷⁵ A report of the poverty panel was submitted to council in March 1968.¹⁷⁶

A third topic on which a monograph was recommended was cohort studies, otherwise known as longitudinal studies. These were studies of a sample of the population. SSRC help with these had been raised in June 1966,¹⁷⁷ and it was later agreed that the universities should make out a case.¹⁷⁸ In January 1967 the National Federation of Educational Research was commissioned to make a study on the policy and action of future studies. There was an application for another four years of study for the National Child Development Study (NCDS). This was a national cohort study of 17,000 children born in early March 1958, under the joint direction of Dr M L Kellmer-Pringle, co-director of the NCDS, and Professor N R Butler. A decision on this was postponed in January until the general issue of support for cohort studies was decided.¹⁷⁹ The report had been received by July 1967, when it needed further study.¹⁸⁰ By December it had been decided not to support it. Young wrote to Kellmer-Pringle and Butler, but they were not going to accept this decision easily. The meeting in January 1968¹⁸¹ stood by the refusal, and a revised application was submitted. This came before the council again and was discussed in April. The chairman expressed concern at the amount of lobbying that had taken place. The possibility of turning down the application because of this was considered. This led to a discussion on lobbying. In the end the application was considered on its merits, and an award of up to £65,000 was agreed.¹⁸² A condition of the grant was that there was an assessor from the council on the steering committee.¹⁸³

The other three topics on which monographs were suggested arose from the work of the next 30 years committee. This reported to the council in July 1967. Its brief had been to consult users of research, and researchers themselves, on problems which might emerge in the future in which social sciences might be useful. At their first meeting they had identified six pressing problems which they thought would persist. These were how to reduce the threat of war; how to reduce the growth in the population in developed and developing countries; how to increase the rate of economic growth in both poor and rich nations; how to ensure more equal distribution of wealth between the poor and the rich; how to create supranational authorities (e.g. the Common Market) which would command the loyalties which were otherwise attached to nations or states; and how to ensure that democracy could cope with these and many other problems of an ever more complex society. The question of how to moderate "racial" conflicts was later added. They had consulted widely, and a pilot survey had revealed a significant difference between what people wanted in the future and what people thought they wanted. Three groups had been asked to advise on research necessary for war studies, international relations, and race relations. It was these three reports which were recommended as suitable for monographs. The next 30 years committee report made the point that it would be a pity if reports on their more interesting work did not get out of the files. It recommended a wider selection of papers should be published. The next 30 years committee also wanted to award a contract for a survey to be done of views of the future. The council agreed to publication of

the reports, and for a contract to be awarded.¹⁸⁴ Heinemann Educational Books early in October 1968 contemplated publishing the research reviews at their own risk, but then decided that the series was not commercially viable. The council therefore agreed to underwrite five publications.¹⁸⁵

The council also considered the preparation of guides to government data. A sub-committee of the social science and government committee considered two options. Firstly a guide to the main sources of government data of interest to social scientists with a note of their availability and the nature of access that was granted, as well as the techniques used in their study. The aim of this guide would be to provide the less-experienced researcher with a helpful panoramic view of the whole field. This would cover published and unpublished data and would include not only government, but the nationalised industries and similar organisations in the public sector.¹⁸⁶ The council agreed to this, and a contract was awarded to the LSE.¹⁸⁷ The second proposal was for a series of much more intensive guides to particular sectors of government statistics, on the lines of those prepared by the North Committee. This was rejected by the sub-committee.¹⁸⁸

One application for funding from the SSRC which was not dealt with by the committees, but had to be dealt with by the council, was a proposal from the University of Essex for support for a social and economic archive.¹⁸⁹ It was hoped that in time the university would fund this, but it was thought that in order to provide a national service it was necessary to have the council's support. The council set up a panel to consider this further. Was Essex the best place, and what should be the council's participation? In December 1966 it was agreed that the proposed data bank should be supported, and the DES had given its blessing. Another question that had now arisen was whether the SSRC should let its name be used.¹⁹⁰ The minutes report that the Treasury had questioned the grant, but that with DES support the go-ahead had been given.¹⁹¹ There are further papers about the setting up of this archive, which is now, of course, the ESRC Data Archive at the University of Essex.¹⁹²

The council did not duck some difficult and contentious issues. Two of these were educational priority areas and student unrest. At the beginning of 1968 a paper by Young recommended establishing educational priority areas throughout the country, and suggested setting up as an experiment different kinds of ventures, such as pre-school playgroups. These were the responsibility of the local education authorities, which would therefore need to be closely involved.¹⁹³ The council gave general approval to this.¹⁹⁴ Lord Young thinks that his greatest achievement was to have got £100,000 out of the council to match funds from the DES in order to set up these educational priority areas throughout the country. They ran on until the 1990s. The idea arose from the Plowden

Committee on primary schools, of which he was a member at that time.*

The year 1968 was one of student unrest, and the council set up a working party to look at this. It discussed establishing an independent grant-awarding committee, to overlap with the existing committees, but decided against this. Instead it recommended the establishment of a research seminar to exchange ideas, observations, methods and results. It recommended that the seminar should look at universities as organisations and social institutions; it should try to invent methods to allow understanding of the international scope of the activities of insurgent youth, and see if it were possible to disentangle the elements of social contagion from those of common causes; it should also look at new ideologies, arguing that if their nature and scope were better understood then their consequences for society, as well as for the universities, would be clearer.¹⁹⁵

Marshall commented on these two issues when he reviewed the work of the council just before his departure at the end of 1968. He asked if the council should keep clear of political and controversial issues, and agreed that it should not in principle, as that would limit unnecessarily its concern with the application of the social sciences. He saw a danger that such research might be rushed into with pressure to reach some sort of usable conclusion, which would be bad. But if the research were conducted as if the issue were not immediate it could do good. He thought that if the council acted with caution, then an intelligible and generally acceptable code of conduct could be built up.¹⁹⁶

Because of the range covered by the council it had to liaise with many other bodies. Marshall thought that the external relations of the council were pretty good with the academic and government worlds. Lord James was less sure about the academic world. He thought that a meeting with two or three vice-chancellors would have been worthwhile, and he thought that liaison with the universities, something to which he attached great importance, ought to be developed. Both Marshall and James thought that closer links with the UGC would have been desirable. Marshall did not think that the council had made much impact on the general public.¹⁹⁷ Neither mentioned the academic liaison officers who had been appointed by most government departments concerned with social science research.¹⁹⁸

At an early stage the council had before it two papers charting its future plans. The first of these, written by Young, was before its first informal meeting in November 1965. It was a priority list of matters which should be dealt with in the first year. Unfortunately it has not survived.¹⁹⁹ The minutes tell us that paragraph 2 of that paper suggested that

* Information provided by Lord Young.

committees should initially survey research in progress but that they should also do more. This had on the whole been achieved, with an agreement that the surveys should be published. Paragraph 3 of the paper drew attention to the European Institute for Advanced Study in the Social Sciences. The meeting agreed that it would welcome such a centre in Great Britain but more information was needed. It was later discovered that the institution would be established in one of the Mediterranean countries, so it was not given high priority.²⁰⁰

The second paper on future plans was before the meeting of the council on 11 February 1966.²⁰¹ This was also written by Young. The paper looked at grants and awards, which were to occupy so much of the council's time. One of the strengths of the early meetings was that criticism was always taken seriously, and there were constant attempts to improve the system. The main thrust of the rest of the paper was about information. There was danger of an information overload. Two suggestions were that an information development officer should be appointed and also a research adviser, to advise on the problems of research technique. Although these two appointments were agreed by the council²⁰² there is no record of the council approving appointments before the end of 1968. It seems probable that they metamorphosed into the consultants proposed by Young.²⁰³ Another suggestion, that SSRC fellows should be appointed, was successfully followed through.

The fact that Young wrote these two papers is indicative. He was an active chairman and his strong influence on the work of the council is apparent from the papers he wrote and the minutes. On one occasion a council member felt uneasy about the way the council was being run. Professor Marshall wrote a note on procedure for the meeting in November 1966. He was worried about the competence of the subject committees vis-à-vis the council. He was concerned that the council was informed that Cherns had been replaced by Mitchell as science secretary, with no consultation.²⁰⁴ This may be because the relationship between Young and Cherns was somewhat uneasy.* Marshall was also concerned that the council was not given full information about administrative expenses. He proposed that "the chairman be asked to prepare and submit to council proposals regarding the procedures to be adopted to enable council to discharge to its full satisfaction the responsibilities placed upon it by its Charter". It was typical of Young that he took this on board. In a paper before the meeting in January 1967²⁰⁵ he set out in detail the council and committees' organisation, with full recommendations on things like delegation of financial powers. The council was in general agreement with this paper.²⁰⁶

* Information provided by Lord Young.

It was also typical of Young that he asked the three members who were retiring at the end of 1968, James, Lipsey and Marshall, to write a review of the past three years. James went out of his way to praise Young, and also the staff of the council, in getting the whole thing started. He was deeply impressed by the achievement. To get a workable committee going reasonably smoothly in so short a time he thought was a first-class piece of administration. Marshall agreed that the council had been well and truly launched. He said that thanks to Young's dynamic leadership and fertile mind there was never any risk that the SSRC would be a stolid and unimaginative body. Both James and Lipsey had some criticism of the actual way the council itself had operated. James felt that the meetings were too short and perhaps too frequent, whilst Lipsey thought that too many issues had had to be considered with not enough time for key problems. Marshall thought that the basic problem with the council was to identify its role. Was it a passive one of a service, or an active one of an influence on developments? He thought that on the whole the correct balance had been struck, and that it had been successful. James saw the council's role as three-fold. It should allocate money for studentships and research projects fairly; it should judge the value of other people's ideas; and it should stimulate others and initiate ideas of its own. When it came to the first of these, the allocation of money, Lipsey thought that most had agreed on a basic strategy for the studentships. He had, however, some concern about the units which had been set up.²⁰⁷ Marshall thought that the committee system, whereby the funds were allocated, was clumsy. He thought that committees had three distinct but related roles. They had to fix quotas and in general look after student awards, and for this the committees should reflect university departments' structure. They had to recommend grants for research and advise on research policy, and for this some multidisciplinary element was necessary to avoid the difference of opinion between the different committees. Finally the committees should represent their subjects to the world at large, which meant that the committees had to represent a discipline or subject area. Judging the value of others' ideas was something that continued to exercise the council. When it came to stimulating others and initiating ideas of its own, James thought that council had perhaps been too pedestrian.

All the points made were suggestions as to how to improve what the council was already doing, rather than identifying gaps. Operating with a comparatively small budget the SSRC had achieved a great deal in its first three years. With a strong chairman and eminent members this is not perhaps surprising. In the draft of its second annual report, discussed in October 1967, it said that the council had "unavailingly" attempted to keep all options open for exploring lines of policy.²⁰⁸ This may have been so: the main purpose of the council was the distribution of awards and grants, and this inevitably took up a great deal of time. But the council did not lack direction or purpose, and the praise given by James and Marshall, that the council had started so well, is eloquent.

NOTES

- 1 EY 1/1 CP 9. The agenda, minutes and papers of the council are in EY 1. All have a CP prefix.
- 2 EY 1/1 CP 17.
- 3 EY 1/25, a paper appended to CP 79/68.
- 4 EY 1/9 CP 102. See p.118.
- 5 The minutes for this meeting are in EY 1/1, CP6, but the papers CP1-4 do not seem to have survived. The papers of the SSRC are arranged by meeting, with a file for each meeting. This means that EY 1/1 contains the agenda and papers for the January 1966 meeting, with the minutes of the November 1965 meeting. EY 1/2 should have the agenda and papers of the February meeting, with the minutes of the January meeting, these minutes incorporating matters arising from the minutes of the November meeting. EY 1/3 should have the agenda and papers of the March meeting, with the minutes of the February meeting, incorporating matters arising from the January meeting. However, pieces EY 1/2 and EY 1/3 have been transposed, so that EY 1/3 has the papers for the February meeting, and EY 1/2 the papers for the March meeting.
- 6 EY 1/3 CP 20.
- 7 EY 1/1 CP 8.
- 8 EY 1/1 CP 8 Appendix 2.
- 9 See p.86.
- 10 EY 1/8 CP 82.
- 11 See p.113.
- 12 EY 1/16 CP 54.
- 13 EY 1/17 CP 78/67.
- 14 EY 1/18 CP 88/67. For the setting up and work of the committees see p.100ff.
- 15 EY 1/19 CP 9/68.
- 16 EY 1/20 CP 22/68.
- 17 EY 1/19 CP 10/68. Again the relevant page of the minutes is missing.
- 18 EY 1/22 CP 42/68.
- 19 EY 1/23 CP 52/68.
- 20 EY 1/23 CP 62/68.
- 21 EY 1/23 CP 62a/68.
- 22 EY 1/23 CP 62c/68.
- 23 EY 1/23 CP 62b/68.
- 24 EY 1/23 CP 62d/68.
- 25 EY 1/24 CP 68/68.
- 26 EY 1/25 CP 79/68. The social survey became a government department in its own right in 1967.

- 27 EY 1/26, a paper appended to CP 79/68.
- 28 This was slightly different from the Heyworth recommendations, see pp.74-75.
- 29 EY 1/20 CP 26/28.
- 30 EY 1/21 CP 30/68.
- 31 EY 1/3 CP 20.
- 32 EY 1/1 CP 16.
- 33 The records of the committees will be in EY 3. They are not yet open to the public.
- 34 EY 1/1 CP 10.
- 35 EY 1/3 CP 21.
- 36 EY 1/2 CP 28.
- 37 EY 1/3 CP 22.
- 38 EY 1/2 CP 28.
- 39 EY 1/23 CP 61/68.
- 40 EY1/24 CP 68/68.
- 41 EY 1/26 CP 91/68.
- 42 EY 1/26, appended to CP 79/68. A report by Lord James on the first 18 months of the board is in SSRC newsletter 2, February 1968.
- 43 EY 1/4 CP 28 (minutes of the meeting of 11 March).
- 44 EY 1/8 CP 84.
- 45 EY 1/10 CP 105.
- 46 EY 1/11 CP 109.
- 47 EY 1/12 CP 10/67.
- 48 EY 1/13 CP 25/67.
- 49 EY 1/14 CP 32/67.
- 50 EY 1/14 CP 42/67 and EY 1/15 CP 45/67.
- 51 EY 1/16 CP 67/67.
- 52 EY 1/17 CP 70/67.
- 53 EY 1/16 CP 55/67 and EY 1/17 CP 71/67.
- 54 EY 1/15 CP 52/67.
- 55 EY 1/17 CP 72/67 and EY 1/18 CP 88/67.
- 56 EY 1/24 CP 74/68.
- 57 EY 1/25 CP 79/68.
- 58 EY 1/25 CP 79/68.
- 59 SSRC newsletter 2, February 1968.
- 60 EY 1/10 CP 108 and EY 1/11 CP 2/67.
- 61 See pp.114-115.
- 62 EY 1/1 CP 11.
- 63 EY 1/3 CP 20.
- 64 See p.90.
- 65 EY 1/4 CP 44.

- 66 EY 1/5 CP 46.
- 67 CP 1 missing EY 1/1 CP 6.
- 68 EY 1/1 CP 12.
- 69 EY 1/1 CP 13.
- 70 EY 1/2 CP 32 and 33, EY 1/4 CP 36.
- 71 EY 1/4 CP 39.
- 72 EY 1/5 CP 47.
- 73 EY 1/7 CP 73.
- 74 EY 1/7 CP 65, EY 1/8 CP 77.
- 75 EY 1/8 CP 78.
- 76 EY 1/8 CP 79.
- 77 EY 1/9 CP 95.
- 78 EY 1/9 CP 96.
- 79 EY 1/10 CP 106, EY 1/11 CP 2/67.
- 80 EY 1/12 CP 14/67, EY 1/13 CP 20/67.
- 81 EY 1/13 CP 23/67, EY 1/14 CP 30-32/67.
- 82 EY 1/15 CP 48/67.
- 83 EY 1/17 CP 75/67.
- 84 EY 1/20 CP 24/68.
- 85 EY 1/21 CP 30/68.
- 86 See p.102.
- 87 EY 1/23 CP 54/68.
- 88 EY 1/24 CP 68/68.
- 89 EY 1/24 CP 71/68.
- 90 EY 1/22 CP 46/68.
- 91 EY 1/21 CP 52/68.
- 92 EY 1/53 CP 55/68.
- 93 EY 1/4 CP 68/68.
- 94 EY 1/20 CP 23/68.
- 95 EY 1/21 CP 30/68.
- 96 EY 1/23 CP 59/68.
- 97 EY 1/24 CP 68/68.
- 98 EY 1/25 CP 82/68.
- 99 EY 1/26 CP 92/68.
- 100 EY 1/27 CP 111/68.
- 101 EY 1/22 CP 45/68.
- 102 EY 1/23 CP 52/68.
- 103 EY 1/23 CP 56/68.
- 104 EY 1/24 CP 68/68.
- 105 EY 1/26 CP 97/108.

- 106 EY 1/27 CP 110/68.
- 107 EY 1/20 CP 25/68.
- 108 EY 1/23 CP 66/68.
- 109 EY 1/24 CP 68/68.
- 110 EY 1/7 CP 62.
- 111 EY 1/14 CP 39/67, EY 1/15 CP 45/67.
- 112 EY 1/14 CP 40/67, EY 1/15 CP 45/67.
- 113 EY 1/11 CP 8/67, EY 1/12 CP 9/67.
- 114 EY 1/13 CP 24/67, EY 1/14 CP 30-32/67.
- 115 EY 1/16 CP 61/67, EY 1/17 CP 71/67.
- 116 EY 1/14 CP 41/67.
- 117 EY 1/23 CP 58/68, EY 1/24 CP 68/68.
- 118 EY 1/1 CP 14.
- 119 EY 1/2 CP 31.
- 120 EY 1/5 CP 49, EY 1/6 CP 44.
- 121 EY 1/18 CP 93/67.
- 122 EY 1/21 CP 30/68.
- 123 EY 1/25 CP 79/68.
- 124 EY 1/25 CP 87/68.
- 125 EY 1/18 CP 93/67.
- 126 EY 1/19 CP 2/68.
- 127 EY 1/15 CP 49/67.
- 128 See p.98.
- 129 EY 1/16 CP 57/67, EY 1/17 CP 71/67. In class EY 2 are preserved the files of all research grants in excess of £50,000, a sample of 10 per cent of other research award files of successful applicants, and a sample of 5 per cent of unsuccessful applicants. Few are yet open.
- 130 EY 1/19 CP 8/68.
- 131 EY 1/23 CP 53/68 and EY 1/24 CP 68/68.
- 132 EY 1/26 CP 96/68.
- 133 EY 1/22 CP 48/68.
- 134 EY 1/23 CP 52/68.
- 135 EY 1/24 CP 68/68.
- 136 EY 1/25 CP 79/68.
- 137 Their files are not yet open. The newsletters list the successful applicants.
- 138 EY 1/21 CP 30/68 and EY 1/22 CP 42/68.
- 139 EY 1/17 CP 82/67.
- 140 EY 1/18 CP 88/67.
- 141 EY 1/25 CP 86/68.
- 142 EY 1/5 CP 48, EY 1/6 CP 54.

- 143 EY 1/26, a paper appended to CP 79/68.
- 144 EY 1/14 CP 37/67, EY 1/15 CP 45/67.
- 145 EY 1/19 CP 7/68, EY 1/20 CP 20/68.
- 146 EY 1/23 CP 60/68, EY 1/24 CP 68/68.
- 147 EY 1/25 CP 83/68 and EY 1/25 CP 92/68.
- 148 EY 1/9 CP 103.
- 149 SSRC newsletter 4, November 1968, p.19.
- 150 EY 1/9 CP 101, EY 1/10 CP 105.
- 151 EY 1/10 CP 112 and EY 19 CP 112.
- 152 SSRC newsletter, November 1967, p.10.
- 153 EY 1/13 CP 29/67, EY 1/18 CP 88/67.
- 154 EY 1/1 CP 15, EY 1/3 CP 20.
- 155 EY 1/6 CP 56.
- 156 EY 1/6 CP 57.
- 157 EY 1/7 CP 64.
- 158 EY 1/8 CP 77.
- 159 EY 1/9 CP 100, EY 1/10 CP 105, EY 1/11 CP 2/67.
- 160 EY 1/19 CP 6/68.
- 161 EY 1/8 CP 82.
- 162 EY 1/11 CP 4/67.
- 163 EY 1/15 CP 47/67.
- 164 EY 1/16 CP 54/67.
- 165 EY 1/17 CP 74/67.
- 166 EY 1/19 CP 5/68, EY 1/20 CP 20/68.
- 167 EY 1/24 CP 69/68.
- 168 EY 1/25 CP 79/68.
- 169 Newsletter 6, June 1969, p.4.
- 170 EY 1/2 CP 30.
- 171 EY 1/12 CP 17/67.
- 172 EY 1/16 CP 56/67.
- 173 EY 1/1 CP 18.
- 174 This was not a subject committee; see p.100ff.
- 175 EY 1/12 CP 18/67, EY 1/14 CP 30-32/67, EY 1/15 CP 45/67.
- 176 EY 1/20 CP 21/68.
- 177 EY 1/6 CP 58.
- 178 EY 1/8 CP 77.
- 179 EY 1/11 CP 6/67 and 7/67, EY 1/12 CP 10/67.
- 180 EY 1/16 CP 64/67, EY 1/17 CP 70/67.
- 181 EY 1/19 CP 3a/68.

- 182 EY 1/21 CP 34/68.
- 183 EY 1/25 CP 79/68.
- 184 EY 1/16 CP 66/67 and CP 69/67, EY 1/17 CP 71/67.
- 185 EY 1/21 CP 39/68 and EY 1/22 CP 42/68.
- 186 EY 1/20 CP 27/68.
- 187 EY 1/21 CP 30/68.
- 188 EY 1/20 CP 27/68.
- 189 EY 1/9 CP 97.
- 190 EY 1/11 CP 5/67.
- 191 EY 1/12 CP 10/67.
- 192 EY 1/14 CP 36/67, EY 1/16 CP 36/67, EY 1/16 CP 62/67, EY 2/34, 39, 41, 42, 44.
- 193 EY 1/19 CP 17/68.
- 194 EY 1/20 CP 20/68.
- 195 EY 1/27 CP 112/68.
- 196 EY 1/26 with a paper appended to CP 79/68.
- 197 EY 1/26 papers appended to CP 79/68.
- 198 SSRC newsletters 3 and 4, May and November 1968.
- 199 See p.120, footnote 5.
- 200 EY 1/3 CP 20.
- 201 EY 1/3 CP 24.
- 202 EY 1/2 CP 28.
- 203 See p.110.
- 204 EY 1/9 CP 102.
- 205 EY 1/11 CP 3/67.
- 206 EY 1/12 CP 10/67.
- 207 See p.99.
- 208 EY 1/17 CP 73/67.

• CONCLUSION •

There are many issues which this book does not address but which could profitably be explored. Looking back, work in the social sciences had been going on long before the Clapham inquiry. This early work, and its development, would be interesting. Looking forward, this book covers only the first three years of the council's work because the later records are not yet open. In time, the more recent history of the council will be able to be written.

Many of the issues which were raised before the council was set up, and were discussed by it in its first years, continued, and still continue, to be debated. One of the recurring questions is what constitutes the social sciences? A wider question is how far are the social sciences a science? Before it was set up the council was not always called the SSRC and the usual approach was to list the subjects which it was thought to cover. The list did show some variations. Perhaps the most obvious manifestation of how this continued to exercise the council was when its name was changed to the Economic and Social Research Council in 1984.

The multidisciplinary nature of the social sciences has affected the way the council has worked. At the beginning the council members were not meant to see themselves as representatives of disciplines. This was difficult, especially when so much of the work of the council was done through its subject committees. The difficulty with agreeing the awards for subjects in cross-disciplines suggests that it was an ideal that was not readily achieved. It is interesting that the organisation of the council has since moved away from the subject committee structure. The records of the committees are not yet open, but a study of their changing structure would be worthwhile.

The question of what topics the council might address is a continuing theme. The next 30 years committee identified problems (see p.115) which remain as relevant today as they were then. Other topics could now be added to the list, such as the effect of the increased speed in communications and the role of the media. The council also reacted to matters of more immediate concern, in particular educational priority areas and student unrest. These could have brought it into conflict with the government. Marshall warned of the dangers of rushing into research on contentious issues. It would be interesting to explore how the council reacted to other issues on which its views may have been unwelcome. It would also be interesting to examine if it were constrained by being financially supported by the government.

Continuing on this theme, government-sponsored research can attract criticism from those who think that it might compromise the independence of the research. Andrew Shonfield discussed this in his 1972 Haldane memorial lecture "The Social Sciences in the Great Debate on Science Policy".¹ He argued that this was not a problem in the early years because research projects were only referred to the council when their planning had reached an advanced stage. The council was largely responsive. This started to change when the SSRC set up its own research units and placed individual research contracts on topics of its own choosing. It would be worth exploring how this developed and how the SSRC reacted to it.

The question of what sort of research should be supported is also ongoing. Cohort studies are an example: the council had not solved the problem of what to do about them by the end of 1968. This is part of the wider picture of what the priorities of the council should be, and how they have changed over the years.

The council was eventually set up as a result of pressure from a number of interested parties. These people thought of themselves primarily as economists or social anthropologists (two disciplines chosen at random) rather than social scientists. To have brought them together to work coherently as a council was no mean achievement. How did the interplay of personalities affect the work of the council? Were there conflicts of interest at an individual level so that, for example, the interests of economists had to give way to the interests of the wider social sciences.

The multidisciplinary nature of the social sciences meant that there were links with numerous other bodies. The list of those who gave evidence to the Heyworth committee gives a good indication of their very wide ranging interests. This could lead to conflict where interests were (and are) perceived to overlap. Examples are the initial opposition of the MRC to an SSRC and the difficulties felt at first by the Education Research Board because of the large number of other organisations which had an interest in the field. The relationship between the council and central government would repay study when the records of the Science Branch of the DES become available. The Colonial Office was a player in the social science field through its grants to archaeologists working overseas. It was not, however, involved in the events leading to the establishment of the council. Although international colleagues gave evidence to both the Clapham and Heyworth Committees this book has not touched on the international scene.

The application of the research was a theme in the early days, and continues to be so. How was the research used, what effect did it have, and how could this be measured. The quality of the research was also something that was beginning to exercise the council by 1968. This was not something unique to the SSRC. Since the 1960s many organisations have put in place measures to ensure that money has been well spent, with results delivered on time. The careers of social scientists are of interest here. The Heyworth Committee found industry, for example, making little use of social scientists working as social scientists. How far has that changed? Do most organisations employ them? How far are their skills as social scientists used?

Finally there is the question of the perception of the social sciences. Marshall, in summing up the work of the council after the first three years, thought that although its relations with academics and government were relatively good, it had not yet made much impact on the general public. He suggested that it had made less impact than *New Society*. He thought that this would change. How far has it? The question of how the social sciences and the work of the ESRC are now perceived by fellow professionals and the general public is one that would repay study.

NOTES

- *Minerva*, Vol. X, No. 3, July 1972.

• APPENDIX •

ORIGINAL SOURCES

The great majority of records used are at the Public Record Office (PRO). The PRO houses the national archive of England and Wales and the United Kingdom, that is, records created by the actions of central government and of the courts of law of England and Wales. Most of the records preserved in the PRO are open to public inspection after 30 years.

The records are arranged alpha-numerically. There is a letter code of between one and four capital letters. This refers to a government agency, often the one that created the records. This letter code is followed by a number representing a class, which contains, usually, an original series of documents created in relation to a particular function or activity of a government agency. There is a second number which relates to a particular file or record.

The following classes have been used in this book.

CAB classes: records of the Cabinet Office, Committee of Imperial Defence, Central Statistical Office, and related bodies.

- CAB 123 Office of the Lord President of the Council: Registered Files, Correspondence and Papers
- CAB 124 Offices of the Minister for Reconstruction, Lord President of the Council and Minister for Science: Records
- CAB 130 Cabinet: Miscellaneous Committees: Minutes and Papers (GEN, MISC and REF series)
- CAB 132 Cabinet: Lord President's Committees and Subordinate Committees and Home Affairs Committee, Sub-Committees: Minutes and Papers (LP and other letter series)
- CAB 134 Cabinet: Miscellaneous Committees: Minutes and Papers (General series)
- CAB 139 War Cabinet and Cabinet Office: Central Statistical Office: Correspondence and Papers

DSIR classes: records created or inherited by the Department of Scientific and Industrial Research, and of related bodies.

- DSIR 1 Minute Books
- DSIR 17 Registered Files: General series
- DSIR 46 Council for Scientific and Industrial Research: Minutes and Papers

ED classes: records created or inherited by the Department of Education and Science, and related bodies.

- ED 116 Committee on Higher Education (Robbins Committee):
Agenda and Minutes
- ED 117 Committee on Higher Education (Robbins Committee): Papers
- ED 118 Committee on Higher Education (Robbins Committee):
Surveys and Evidence
- ED 136 Board of Education and successors: Private Office: Files and Papers
(series II)
- ED 144 Committee on Social Studies (Heyworth Committee): Minutes,
Papers and Report

EY classes: records of the Social Science Research Council and the Economic and Social Research Council.

- EY 1 Social Science Research Council:
Main Council: Minutes and Papers

FD classes: records created or inherited by the Medical Research Council.

- FD 5 Medical Research Committee and Medical Research Council:
Registered Files, Policy and Personnel Matters (PF series)
and related records

RG classes: records of the General Register Office, Government Social Survey Department, and Office of Population, Censuses and Surveys.

- RG 25 Inter-Departmental Committee on Social and Economic Research

T classes: records of the Treasury, Chancellor of the Exchequer's Office, and Rating of Government Property Department.

- T 161 Treasury: Supply Department: Registered Files (S series)
- T 227 Treasury: Social Services Division: Registered Files (SS and 2S series)

UGC classes: records created or inherited by the Higher Education Funding Council.

- UGC 1 University Grants Committee: Minutes, Agenda and Papers
- UGC 2 University Grants Committee: Agenda and Papers to 1971

- UGC 6 University Grants Committee: Reports and Annual Surveys
- UGC 8 University Grants Committee: Sub-Committees Minutes
- UGC 9 University Grants Committee: Sub-Committees Agenda and Papers

The private office papers of Crosland (Secretary of State for Education and Science from January 1965 to August 1967) have been destroyed. The records of the Science Branch of the DES, which was responsible for the SSRC, are completely unsorted and so are not yet available.

Information about the PRO can be obtained by telephoning 0181 392 5200, sending an e-mail to enquiry@pro.gov.uk or visiting the web site at <http://www.pro.gov.uk/>

Other sources used were records of the British Academy, the National Institute of Economic and Social Research and Nuffield College, Oxford, all of which hold their own records. Records of Parliament are held at the House of Lords Record Office and the Labour Party Archives are held at the National Museum of Labour History.

• INDEX •

A

Aberdeen, University of, 57
 Actuaries, Institute of, 19, 107
 Adamson, W O (Campbell), 96, 101
 Adrian, Lord, 50
 Advisory Committee for Economics and Sociology *see under* SSRC
 Advisory Council for Sociological Research *see under* SSRC
 Advisory Council on Scientific Policy *see under* Scientific
 Agricultural Research Council, 1, 3, 4, 5, 50, 57, 88, 114
 Agriculture, Ministry of, 18, 21, 48
 Albu, Austen, MP, 52, 55, 56, 60, 63, 68, 78
 Allen, Sir Philip, 87
 Allen, Professor R G D, *later* Sir Roy, 18, 97, 98, 102
 Amalgamated Weavers' Association, 49
 Amann, Professor Ronald, vii
 Anderson, Sir John, 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 11
 Andrew, Sir Herbert, 84, 85
 Annan, Noel, 68, 69, 73, 79
 Appleton, Sir Edward, 2, 7, 14
 Applied Social Science, Committee on, *see under* Scientific Policy
 Archaeology, Institute of, *see under* London, University of
 Armstrong, Sir William, 84
 Assistance Board *later* National Assistance Board, 23, 26, 67
 Association of Scientific Workers *see under* Scientific
 Attlee, Clement, MP, 1-8, 11

B

Balogh, Tommy, 90
 Bank of England, 6
 Barber, Anthony, MP, 65, 66
 Barlow, Sir Alan, 2, 3, 8, 10, 15, 18, 19
 Barnard, G P, 9, 25
 Bartlett, Sir Frederick, 48
 Bell, G R, 67
 Beveridge, Lord, 50
 Blenkinsop, Arthur, MP, 93
 Board of Trade *see under* Trade
 Bowra, Sir Maurice, 54
 Boyd-Carpenter, John, MP, 68
 Bristol, University of, 97
 British Academy, ii, 6, 40, 41, 54, 55, 57, 59, 60, 63, 78, 83, 112
 British Association for the Advancement of Science, 2, 10, 50, 54, 78
 British Institute of Management *see under* Management
 British Sociological Association, 25, 36, 78
 Brogan, Professor D W, 11, 29
 Brooke, Henry, MP, 58, 59, 62, 65
 Building Research Station, 25
 Bullock, Alan, 96, 97
 Burnes, Professor T, 97
 Butler, Dr N R, 115
 Butler, R A, MP, *later* Lord, 62, 65, 66, 68, 69, 73, 85

C

- Cabinet Office (including War Cabinet), 5, 8, 61, 63, 90, 93
 - Central Economic Section, 4, 5, 6, 18
 - Central Statistical Office (CSO), 4, 5, 9, 10, 18, 27, 62, 67
 - secretary of, 84
- Callagan, James, MP, 69
- Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, 112
- Cambridge, University of, 6, 11, 12, 48, 97, 101
 - King's College, 68, 97
 - Trinity College, 50, 85
- Campion, Harry *later* Sir Harry, ii, 9, 10, 18, 22, 40, 62-68
- Canterbury, 104
- Cardiff, 80
 - Welsh National School of Medicine at, 57
- Carr-Saunders, Sir Alexander, 6, 8, 18, 40
- Carter, Professor C F, 68, 69, 73
- Central Economic Section *see under* Cabinet Office
- Central Office of Information (COI) *previously* Ministry of Information, 13, 24, 46, 67, 77, 79
 - social survey, 13, 46, 50, 77, 79, 98
- Central Statistical Office *see under* Cabinet Office
- Chambers, Paul, 67
- Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1, 5, 12, 15, 19, 25, 40, 47, 58, 59, 65, 66
- Chartered Accountants, Institute of, 107
- Chatham House, 111
- Cherns, A B, 49, 67, 73, 76, 81, 96, 97, 98, 118
- Chester, D N, 18, 54
- Childe, Professor V Gordon, 42, 43

D

- Chisholm, M, 97, 102
- Clapham Committee (Committee on the Provision for Social and Economic Research), i, 1, 6-16, 18, 25, 29, 35, 40, 41, 46, 53, 54, 56, 57, 79, 81, 82, 83, 126, 127
 - report, 11-16, 18, 29, 30, 32, 33, 35, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 57, 59, 61, 79, 81, 82, 83, 93, 108
- Clapham, Sir John, 1, 6-13
- Clarke, G M, 29
- Clay, Sir Henry, 5, 8, 18, 29, 40
- Cole, Professor G D H, 2, 29, 30
- Coleridge, A N, 3
- Colonial Office, 107, 127
- Confederation of British Industry *see under* Federation
- Cotton Board, 1
- Cripps, Sir Stafford, MP, 42, 45
- Crosland, Anthony, MP, ii, 86, 87, 90, 91, 93, 96, 97, 98, 102, 131
- Crowther, Geoffrey, 29
- Daily Telegraph, The*, 63
- Dainton Committee on Libraries, 100
- Dalton, Hugh, MP, 12, 15
- Darby, Professor H C, 29
- Davies, Colonel J G W, 12
- Dean, Sir Maurice, 79
- Deedes, W F, MP, 63
- Defence, Ministry of, Directorate of Selection of Personnel, 13

Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), ii, 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 25, 47-58, 62, 67, 73, 78, 79, 81, 82, 91, 100, 103, 114

Advisory Council for Scientific and Industrial Research *later* Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (The Research Council), ii, 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 14, 48, 49, 51, 52, 56, 80

Committee on Human Sciences in Industry, 49, 51, 52, 56, 67, 80, 81, 91, 100, 114

Committee of the Privy Council, 1, 7

Committee on Post-War Development, 6

Industrial Grants Committee, 1

Mathematics Division, 9

Dilhorne, Lord, 62

Dodds, Professor E R, 54

Drever, Professor J, 96, 101

Dudley, Brian, 63

Durbin, E F M, *later* MP, 5, 40

Durham, University of (Newcastle Division), 6

E

Easterfield, T E, 25

Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Paris, 112

Economic Affairs, Department of, 84, 85, 103

Minister for, 42, 84

Economic History Society, 101, 102

Economic and Social Research, Interdepartmental Committee on (North Committee), i, 15, 16, 18-27, 29, 30, 40, 43, 47, 52, 54, 74, 116

Economist, The, 21, 26

Edinburgh, University of, 96, 97

Education and Science, Department of, 79, 83, 84, 85, 87, 89, 90, 91, 96, 98, 99, 102, 103, 105, 106, 107, 109, 110, 113, 116

Minister of State for, 93

Secretary of State for, ii, iv, 84, 86, 88, 89, 90, 96, 102, 107, 131

private office papers, 96

Science Branch, 90, 96, 127, 131

Universities and Civil Science, 79

Education, Higher, Committee and report on, *see under* Robbins

Education, Institute of, *see under* London, University of

Education, Minister for, 58

Ministry of, 4, 19, 20, 21, 49, 57, 58, 68, 79, 83

Education, Science and, joint Committee for, *see under* Science

Educational Research, National Federation of, 53, 115

Essex, University of, 96, 116

ESRC Data Archive at, 116

European Institute for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, 118

F

Feavearyear, A E, 11

Federation of British Industry *later* Confederation, 2, 96

Industrial Research Committee, 2

Fieldhouse, H, 23

First Secretary of State, 65, 66, 69, 73, 84

Office of, 67

Firth, Professor Raymond, 12, 29, 54, 55, 96, 97, 100

Fletcher, E G M, MP, 60

Florence, Professor Sargant, 10

Food, Ministry of, 11, 18, 26

Department of Scientific and Industrial Research (DSIR), ii, 1, 2, 4, 6, 8, 9, 14, 15, 25, 47-58, 62, 67, 73, 78, 79, 81, 82, 91, 100, 103, 114

Advisory Council for Scientific and Industrial Research *later* Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (The Research Council), ii, 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 14, 48, 49, 51, 52, 56, 80

Committee on Human Sciences in Industry, 49, 51, 52, 56, 67, 80, 81, 91, 100, 114

Committee of the Privy Council, 1, 7

Committee on Post-War Development, 6

Industrial Grants Committee, 1

Mathematics Division, 9

Dilhorne, Lord, 62

Dodds, Professor E R, 54

Drever, Professor J, 96, 101

Dudley, Brian, 63

Durbin, E F M, *later* MP, 5, 40

Durham, University of (Newcastle Division), 6

E

Easterfield, T E, 25

Ecole des Hautes Etudes, Paris, 112

Economic Affairs, Department of, 84, 85, 103

Minister for, 42, 84

Economic History Society, 101, 102

Economic and Social Research, Interdepartmental Committee on (North Committee), i, 15, 16, 18-27, 29, 30, 40, 43, 47, 52, 54, 74, 116

Economist, *Tbe*, 21, 26

Edinburgh, University of, 96, 97

Education and Science, Department of, 79, 83, 84, 85, 87, 89, 90, 91, 96, 98, 99, 102, 103, 105, 106, 107, 109, 110, 113, 116

Minister of State for, 93

Secretary of State for, ii, iv, 84, 86, 88, 89, 90, 96, 102, 107, 131

private office papers, 96

Science Branch, 90, 96, 127, 131

Universities and Civil Science, 79

Education, Higher, Committee and report on, *see under* Robbins

Education, Institute of, *see under* London, University of

Education, Minister for, 58

Ministry of, 4, 19, 20, 21, 49, 57, 58, 68, 79, 83

Education, Science and, joint Committee for, *see under* Science

Educational Research, National Federation of, 53, 115

Essex, University of, 96, 116

ESRC Data Archive at, 116

European Institute for Advanced Studies in the Social Sciences, 118

F

Feavearyear, A E, 11

Federation of British Industry *later* Confederation, 2, 96

Industrial Research Committee, 2

Fieldhouse, H, 23

First Secretary of State, 65, 66, 69, 73, 84

Office of, 67

Firth, Professor Raymond, 12, 29, 54, 55, 96, 97, 100

Fletcher, E G M, MP, 60

Florence, Professor Sargant, 10

Food, Ministry of, 11, 18, 26

Hospital Almoners, Institute of, 10
 House of Commons, 2, 3, 4, 12, 13, 51, 52, 54, 60, 68, 69, 93
 House of Lords, 13, 47, 50, 52, 92
 Housing and Local Government, Minister for, 58
 Ministry of, 58, 67, 78, 83, 89
 Howe, Geoffrey, MP, 93
 Hughes, Hector, MP, 63, 70
 Hughes, R P S, 73, 81
 Human Relations, joint Committee on, 48, 49
 Human Sciences Research Council *see under* SSRC

I

ICI, 67
 Imperial College of Science and Technology *see under* London, University of
 Industrial Efficiency, joint Committee on, 48, 49
 Industrial Psychology, National Institute of, 46
 Industrial Productivity, Committee on, ii, 47
 Panel on Human Factors (Schuster Panel), ii, 47
 Research Advisory Group, 47
 Information, Ministry of, *see under* Central Office of
 Inland Revenue, 24
 Innes, R, 43
 Institute of Actuaries *see under* Actuaries
 Institute of Advanced Legal Studies *see under* London, University of
 Institute of Archaeology *see under* London, University of
 Institute of Chartered Accountants *see under* Chartered

Institute of Education *see under* London, University of
 Institute of Forecasting Studies *see under* Forecasting Studies
 Institute of Hospital Almoners *see under* Hospital
 Institute of Race Relations *see under* Race
 International Affairs, Royal Institute of, 97, 111

J

Jahoda, Professor Marie, 52, 96
 James, Lord, of Rusholme, 96, 97, 101, 111, 117, 119
 Jenkinson, Sir Hilary, 19
 Jewkes, Professor John, 29
 Joseph, Sir Keith, MP, iv
 Joseph Lucas Industries Ltd, 48
 Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust, 97

K

Kellmer-Pringle, Dr M L, 115
 Kilmuir, Lord, 62
 King, Dr, 21
 Kingston on Thames, 80

L

Labour, Ministry of, *previously* Labour and National Service, Ministry of, 9, 18, 21, 22, 24, 48, 49, 58, 67, 79
 Statistical Department, 20
 Labour Party, ii, 40, 41, 44, 45, 46, 47,
 National Executive Council, 45
 Policy and Publicity Committee, ii, 45, 46

Hospital Almoners, Institute of, 10
 House of Commons, 2, 3, 4, 12, 13, 51, 52, 54, 60, 68, 69, 93
 House of Lords, 13, 47, 50, 52, 92
 Housing and Local Government, Minister for, 58
 Ministry of, 58, 67, 78, 83, 89
 Howe, Geoffrey, MP, 93
 Hughes, Hector, MP, 63, 70
 Hughes, R P S, 73, 81
 Human Relations, joint Committee on, 48, 49
 Human Sciences Research Council *see under* SSRC

I

ICI, 67
 Imperial College of Science and Technology *see under* London, University of
 Industrial Efficiency, joint Committee on, 48, 49
 Industrial Psychology, National Institute of, 46
 Industrial Productivity, Committee on, ii, 47
 Panel on Human Factors (Schuster Panel), ii, 47
 Research Advisory Group, 47
 Information, Ministry of, *see under* Central Office of
 Inland Revenue, 24
 Innes, R, 43
 Institute of Actuaries *see under* Actuaries
 Institute of Advanced Legal Studies *see under* London, University of
 Institute of Archaeology *see under* London, University of
 Institute of Chartered Accountants *see under* Chartered

Institute of Education *see under* London, University of
 Institute of Forecasting Studies *see under* Forecasting Studies
 Institute of Hospital Almoners *see under* Hospital
 Institute of Race Relations *see under* Race
 International Affairs, Royal Institute of, 97, 111

J

Jahoda, Professor Marie, 52, 96
 James, Lord, of Rusholme, 96, 97, 101, 111, 117, 119
 Jenkinson, Sir Hilary, 19
 Jewkes, Professor John, 29
 Joseph, Sir Keith, MP, iv
 Joseph Lucas Industries Ltd, 48
 Joseph Rowntree Memorial Trust, 97

K

Kellmer-Pringle, Dr M L, 115
 Kilmuir, Lord, 62
 King, Dr, 21
 Kingston on Thames, 80

L

Labour, Ministry of, *previously* Labour and National Service, Ministry of, 9, 18, 21, 22, 24, 48, 49, 58, 67, 79
 Statistical Department, 20
 Labour Party, ii, 40, 41, 44, 45, 46, 47,
 National Executive Council, 45
 Policy and Publicity Committee, ii, 45, 46

Minister without Portfolio, 63
 Moberley, Sir Walter, 3, 6, 8, 29
 Morrison, Herbert, *later* Lord Morrison, ii, 13, 15, 43–47, 50
 Moser, Professor C A, 96, 97, 101, 110
 Murray, Sir Keith, 57, 58, 59, 78, 79
 Murray, Len, 96

N

National Advisory Committee on the Training and Supply of Teachers *see under* Training
 National Assistance Board *see under* Assistance
 National Child Development Study, 115
 National Council of Social Science *see under* Social
 National Economic Development Office, 101
 National Federation of Educational Research *see under* Educational
 National Institute of Economic and Social Research, ii, 6, 18, 20, 22, 40, 41, 43, 44, 45, 67, 78, 96, 98, 108, 109
 Council of Management, 40, 41
 President of, 6
 National Institute of Industrial Psychology *see under* Industrial,
 National Insurance, Ministry of, 18
 National Statistics, Office of, vi
 Social Survey Division, vi
 National Survey Centre *previously* Social and Community Planning Research Centre, vi
 Natural Environment Research Council, 85, 88, 114
 Nature, 63
 New Scientist, 51

New Society, 62, 97, 128
 Newcastle Division of University of Durham, 6
 Nicholson, Max, 42, 45, 46
 North, George, *see also under* Economic and Social Research, 18, 20, 21, 23, 25, 26, 30
 Nuffield College *see under* Oxford, University of
 Nuffield Foundation, 112

O

Organisation of Science in Civil Life, Trend Committee on, *see under* Trend
 Owen, A D K, 11
 Oxford, University of, 54, 97, 99, 104
 All Souls College, 97
 Jesus College, 97
 Nuffield College, 2, 18, 26, 54, 66
 St Catherine's College, 96
 Wadham College, 54

P

Page, Graham, MP, 93
 Paris, 112
 Parliamentary and Scientific Committee, 2, 3
 Chairman of, 2, 3
 Particular Instance Papers, Committee on, 20
 Parry, Sir David Hughes, 29
 Pensions and National Insurance, Minister for, 58
 Ministry of, 58, 67
 Percy, Sir Eustace, 6

Petch, L, 77

Platt, Sir Robert, 69

Plowden Committee on Primary Schools *see under* Primary

Political and Economic Planning (PEP), 11, 78
Chairman of, 11

Poston, Professor Michael, 101

Prentice, Reg, MP, 93

Price, David, MP, 93

Primary Schools, Plowden Committee on, 116, 117

Prime Minister, 60, 90
Deputy, 1

Proctor, P D, 40, 41

Production, Ministry of, 8

Public Administration, Royal Institute of, *see under* Royal

Public Record Office, 19, 20, 129–131

Public Records, Deputy Keeper of, 19

R

Race Relations, Institute of, 78

Rackham, H C, 96

Raphael, Mrs W, 46

Reconstruction, Office of the Minister for, 3

Registrar General, 18, 21, 26, 30

Registrar General for Scotland, 18, 26

Research Productivity, Committee on, 21

Rickett, D H F, 8

Riverdale, Lord, 1

Robbins Committee (Committee on Higher Education), ii, 6, 53, 54, 77, 96
report, 54, 64, 80

Robbins, Professor L C, *later* Lord, 6, 8, 13, 18, 29, 30, 32, 53, 54, 55, 78

Robertson, J H, 63

Robinson, E A G, 29

Rockefeller Foundation, 13, 33

Roll, Sir Eric, 84

Roskill, O W, 2

Rothschild, Lord, iv

Rowntree Memorial Trust *see under* Joseph

Royal Commission for the Exhibition of 1851, 112

Royal Commission on Local Government in Greater London *see under* London

Royal Economics Society, 68

Royal Institute of International Affairs *see under* International

Royal Institute of Public Administration, 78

Royal Society, 40, 50, 78

S

Salt, Edward, MP, 2, 3, 4

Schools, Chief Inspector of, vii

Schuster, Sir George, 47

Science and Education, joint Committee for, 54

Science, Minister for, 50, 53, 55, 56, 64, 69, 76
 Ministry of, 4, 53, 79
 Parliamentary Secretary for, 51, 56, 60, 62, 63

Science in Civil Life, Organisation of, Trend Committee on, *see under* Trend

Science Research Council (SRC), 82, 88, 100, 103, 107, 108, 110, 114
 Human Sciences Training Awards Committee, 104

Scientific Advisory Committee, 6

Scientific and Industrial Research, Department of, *see under* Department

Scientific Policy, Advisory Council on, *later* Council on, ii, 42, 43, 85, 86
 Applied Social Science, Committee on, 42

Scientific Policy, Committee on the Future of, *see under* Future

Scientific Workers, Association of, ii, 43, 44, 54
 Social Science Committee, 43

Scottish Office, 58, 67

Sheffield, 98

Shonfield, Andrew, 97, 127

Simey, Professor T S, 10, 18, 22, 23, 25, 29, 48, 49, 78

Smieton, Dame Mary, 68, 69, 73

Snow, Lord, (CP Snow), 92

Social and Community Planning Research Centre *see under* National Survey

Social and Economic Research, Committee on the Provision for (Clapham Committee), *see under* Clapham

Social Science, National Council of, 66

Social Science Research Council (SSRC), *passim*,
also described as,
 Advisory Committee for Economics and Sociology, 10

Advisory Council for Sociological Research, 7, 14

Human Sciences Research Council, 50, 51, 53

Social and Economic Research Council, 14, 40

Social Research Council, 7, 13, 26, 43, 44

Sociological Research Council, 15

Automation Panel, 114

Built Environment Board, 89

Committees,
 Economics, 100, 102, 103, 110
 Economic History/Economic and Social History, 102
 Human Geography and Planning, 102, 105
 Management/Management and Administrative Studies/Management and Industrial Relations, 98, 99, 101, 107, 110
 On 1980/Next 30 Years, v, 101, 103, 111, 115, 126
 Political Science, 100, 111
 Poverty Studies, 114
 Psychology, 101
 Social Anthropology, 100, 102, 107
 Social and Economic Statistics/Statistics, 101, 103
 Social Science and Government, 102
 sub-committee on guides to government data, 116
 Sociology, 98, 99, 102, 110
 Sociology and Social Administration, 100

Education Research Board, 101, 111, 127

Research Units,
 Automation, 99
 Industrial Relations, 98, 99
 Poverty, 99
 Race Relations, 99
 Social Research Unit, 99
 Social Survey Unit, 98, 99

Social Studies, Committee on (Heyworth Committee), *see under* Heyworth
 Spencer Works at Richard Thomas and Baldwin, 96
 Starke, L G J, 11
 Steven, Professor, 11
 Stocks, Mrs J L, 29
 Stone, Professor J R N, 12, 18, 20, 22, 23, 29, 41
 Stone, Mrs Feodora, 20, 40, 41
 Stradling, Sir Reginald, 42
 Streat, Sir Raymond, 1
 Sussex, University of, 96

T

Tawney, Professor R H, 8, 13, 29, 30
 Tavistock Institute, 54
 Taylor, Stephen, MP *later* Lord Taylor, 13, 50, 51, 55, 92
 Thatcher government, iv
Times, The, ii, 42, 62, 87
 Titmuss, Professor R M, 96, 97
 Tizard, Sir Henry, 42
 Tizard, Professor J, 97
 Town and Country Planning, Ministry of, 19
 Trade, Board of, 6, 18, 21, 22, 25, 48, 67, 93
 Patent Office, 26
 Statistical Section, 22
 Trades Union Congress (TUC), 96
 Research and Economic Department, 96

Training and Supply of Teachers, National Advisory Committee on, 96
 Transport, Ministry of, 78
 Treasury, *The*, ii, iv, 2, 8, 18, 19, 24, 33, 34, 40, 41, 45, 46, 55, 56,
 58-69, 76, 77, 79, 80, 82, 84, 85, 86, 87, 89, 90, 99, 102, 103, 104, 107,
 109, 111, 112, 113, 116
 Chief Secretary to, 55, 59, 60, 61, 66, 68
 Financial Secretary to, 65, 66
 Trend, Sir Burke, 84
 Trend Committee (Committee on the Organisation of Science
 in Civil Life), 61
 report, 61, 80, 91
 Trueman, Sir Arthur, 29
 Turnbull, F F, *later* Sir Frank, 53-68, 76, 84, 85, 90

U

UCCA, 104
 UNESCO, Social Science Department, 96
 Unilever *previously* Lever Brothers, 66
 United Nations, Economic Affairs Department, 11
 United States of America, 11, 46, 53, 54, 76
 Social Science Research Council, 11
 Social Services Council, 11
 University Grants Committee (UGC), i, ii, 3, 6, 12, 15, 29-38, 49, 53, 57, 58,
 59, 66, 67, 78, 79, 80, 83, 87, 89, 96, 97, 103, 106, 112, 117
 Medical Advisory Committee, 38
 Sub-committee on Oriental and African Studies, 37
 Sub-committee on Slavonic and East European Studies, 37
 Sub-committee on Social Science, 15, 29-38, 43, 47
 Urban Planning Research Institute, 89

V

Vernon, Major, MP, 12, 13

W

Waddell, J H, 61

Waddilove, L, 97

Walker, Gordon, MP, 107

Waring, A P, 48

War Cabinet *see under* Cabinet Office

Warwick, 98

Washington, USA, 8

Welford, Dr, 104

Wilshaw, C T, 44

Wilson, Charles H, 68, 69, 73, 74

Wilson, T M, 8

Woodhead, Chris, vi

Woolton, Lord, 48

Wootton, Professor Barbara, 29

Works, Ministry of, 42

Woswick, G D N, 96, 100, 110

Wright, L T, 49, 51

Y

Yorkshire Post, 4

York, University of, 96

Young, Dr Michael, *later* Lord, ii, v, 45, 46, 90, 91, 93, 96–103, 108, 110–119

