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THE CRITERIA THAT COUNT

An open memorandum to every Member of the Senate  
and the House of Commons of Northern Ireland

As a Member of Parliament you have the opportunity and the responsibility of examining the Report of the Lockwood Committee on Higher Education and the Government's Statement on that Report before action is taken on either of these documents which, once initiated, may be irrevocable.

There are few who will quarrel with the general conclusions reached by the Lockwood Committee. But there are many who believe that the Committee exceeded its terms of reference in recommending a location for the new university; who question its competence to do so in the light of the philosophy which it itself propounds for the new university; who disagree, on grounds far removed from sentiment, with its choice of location and with its rejection of Magee University College as a possible starting-point for development; and who are profoundly perturbed by its failure to give satisfactory explanations for recommendations of such far-reaching importance. Those who hold these views are not all ill-informed academically or partisan in their judgment. They include many in responsible positions, leaders of thought and action in their own fields, and their views cannot be lightly dismissed.

These are the questions which they have asked about the location of the new university. These, it is suggested, are the questions which you also must ask :

*Is it not right that a university in which prominence is to be given to the biological sciences (particularly marine biology and oceanography) and to agriculture, should be located in the area which can offer the greatest variety of natural resources for study and research in these subjects ?*

*Is it not right that a university which is to develop studies in the social and behavioural sciences (particularly economics, management studies, and business administration in terms of local conditions and problems), should be located in the area with the widest range of institutions in which theory can be studied in application ?*

*Is it not right that a university which is also to be a centre of teacher education, should be located in the area which can provide within easy reach the greatest variety of educational institutions ?*

*Is it not right that a university which is to counteract the attraction now exercised by the concentration of higher education facilities in Belfast, should be located in or immediately adjacent to the only major centre of population in the Province beyond the periphery of greater Belfast ?*

*Is it not right that a university which is to fulfil the extra-mural and cultural responsibilities now expected of such an institution, should be situated at, and only at, the focal point of the area which is least effectively served by The Queen's University of Belfast ?*

ARE NOT THESE CONSIDERATIONS OF FAR MORE IMPORTANCE THAN THE AVAILABILITY OF BOARDING-HOUSES AND HOTELS THROUGHOUT THE WINTER MONTHS FOR SHORT-TERM STUDENT ACCOMMODATION, PARTICULARLY WHEN SUCH ACCOMMODATION HAS PROVED UNSATISFACTORY ELSEWHERE ? AND IS THERE NOT ONLY ONE LOCATION WHICH SATISFIES ALL THESE REQUIREMENTS AS WELL AS THE CRITERIA OF THE UNIVERSITY GRANTS COMMITTEE - LONDONDERRY, WHICH IN MAGEE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE ALREADY POSSESSES ALL THE ACCOMMODATION, TEACHING, ADMINISTRATIVE, AND LODGING, NECESSARY TO SERVE AS A READY-MADE SPRING-BOARD TO THE NEW UNIVERSITY ?