

left the entire management, so far as regards the High Schools, in the hands of the Rector and Lady Principal respectively. The result was, that these head teachers were made practically responsible for the success of the institutions intrusted to their care, although theoretically that responsibility rested with the Executive. Thus they were not under the control, at least not under any beneficial control, of an outside governing body, nor—what is equally important—were they subject to periodical inspections. In fact, they may be said to have been left altogether to themselves. The public had no means of knowing what their excellencies or defects might be, and there was no authority which could record the former or correct the latter. The consequence of this state of things appears to be that the public, in the absence of authoritative judgment upon the subject, formed its own opinion as to the merits of these institutions.

The Commissioners have been much struck with a fact which seems to bear out this assertion. In the interviews which they have had with those interested in the success of the High Schools they have observed that the main source from which these persons have derived their information as to the state of the High Schools is the report of the children attending them. They have no official document to appeal to, beyond the annual report furnished by the Rector, and are therefore compelled, in forming their judgment, to rely upon what they can pick up indirectly. Thus the public at large may be said to have gradually taken the place of a governing body.

But this censorship of the public has been attended with very lamentable results. It has not only been an annoyance to the teachers, and imputed blame where no blame was due, but it has also had the effect of actually standing in the way of beneficial reforms, from a fear that the motives for introducing those reforms might be misconstrued. The above remarks, though relating to the Boys' High School, are, except where they relate to special cases, applicable to the Girls' High School, and will probably explain much of the dissatisfaction which has been expressed with regard to that institution.

The Commissioners are of opinion that one great cause of alarm and anxiety on the part of the public is the dislike to the occurrence of constant changes, and the fear that every fresh emergency will be met by a general reorganization.

The Boys' High School, as has already been mentioned, has suffered greatly from a frequent change of Rectors, and now the Girls' School, which until lately has enjoyed some stability in its system, has also undergone, within the last eighteen months, two radical transformations, or, speaking more exactly, one transformation has taken effect, and the other is in contemplation. In both cases, the health of the Lady Principal has been the chief cause.

The circumstances which have given rise to the present state of embarrassment are, shortly, as follows:—The first break of continuity in the management of the Girls' High School took place in the year 1874, when the Lady Principal was compelled for a short time to obtain leave of absence, the temporary vacancy being filled by that lady's sister; but this slight interruption appears to have been of no material importance. The second change was one of more consequence. In the early part of last year (14th March, 1876), Mrs. Burn, finding that her strength was not equal to the discharge of her multifarious duties—the management of the boarding establishment, the superintendence of the school, and the teaching of her class—requested the Board to relieve her of the boarding establishment, and to appoint a competent person in her stead. On Mrs. Burn's recommendation, Mrs. Martin was appointed, and has continued to carry on the duties to the present time. At the above date, it appears that there were thirty-five boarders. Towards the end of the year (1876) Mrs. Burn recommended and the Board agreed to a further change. Till then it appears that there was no sewing-mistress in the school specially charged with the teaching of this branch. The duty was performed by the teaching-staff generally. Mrs. Burn desired to relieve the more experienced teachers of this duty, in order that they should devote themselves exclusively to the work of tuition properly so called. This plan would enable her to dispense with the services of the junior assistant, so that there would be no increase in the number of the staff. Mrs. Burn strongly recommended the appointment of Mrs. Browne as sewing mistress.

The relief afforded to Mrs. Burn by the transfer of the boarding establishment to Mrs. Martin seems to have been rendered nugatory by disadvantages hereinafter referred to.

In June of the present year Mrs. Burn resigned altogether. This resignation, on becoming generally known, seems to have had an injurious effect upon the school, for, whereas in the first quarter of 1877 the attendance was 173, it is now only 148; while the number of boarders in the former of these periods was 25, in the latter it was reduced to 16. This serious falling off in the number of her boarders induced Mrs. Martin to apply to the Board for some assistance, on the ground that she was a loser by the boarding establishment, at the same time intimating that, in case this application should not be acceded to, she would reluctantly be compelled to resign at Christmas. Thus the Board found itself confronted by a twofold difficulty of a very serious nature. It was required, in a comparatively short space of time, to find two ladies, with special qualifications, to fill the post, one of Lady Principal and the other of Lady Superintendent, hitherto occupied by Mrs. Burn and Mrs. Martin respectively.

The reasons which led to Mrs. Burn's final resignation were as follows:—First, shortly after Mrs. Martin's assumption of the care of the boarding establishment, Mr. Pope, on whose assistance as a teacher and organizer she specially relied, resigned his connection with the school; secondly, without in any way reflecting on Mrs. Martin's management, the separation of the boarding and teaching establishments under two independent leaders, yet under one roof, was not productive of satisfactory results as regards discipline; thirdly, having ceased to reside at the school, she was unable to exercise that constant and watchful supervision which had been customary, while the immediate proximity of the Boys' High School increased her anxiety in this respect. The scheme propounded by the Board contained the following main provisions:—

1. To reinstate Mr. Pope.
2. To appoint an efficient assistant, who should relieve the Lady Principal of all special class work.
3. To remove the Boys' High School to a more suitable position.
4. To place the boarding establishment again under the charge of the Lady Principal.